

Nonnus of Panopolis in Context

Trends in Classics – Supplementary Volumes

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Volume 24

Nonnus of Panopolis in Context

Poetry and Cultural Milieu in Late Antiquity
with a Section on Nonnus and the Modern World

Edited by
Konstantinos Spanoudakis

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Preface

When we look back to older Nonnian scholarship the picture appears rather grim: the shadowy poet and his extensive output, too late for classical Hellenists and too early for Byzantinists, find themselves caught between the preconceptions of the former and the latter. To a large extent these are the outcome of the dissociation of Nonnus' oeuvre from its era of transition that was to seal the centuries to come. Most classical Hellenists at some point have come across the *Dionysiaca*: passages from the *Dionysiaca* are in passing plundered either as a source of mythology or as a source allegedly providing insights into someone else's lost work. Insidiously the poem came to be regarded a mythological handbook of the same sort as Ps.-Apollodorus' *Bibliotheca*, if less systematic, certainly "poetic" and (of course) degenerate. No wonder the editors of the widely used Loeb edition of the *Dionysiaca* saw fit to assign the mythological notes to an expert (H. J. Rose) who provided also a ten-page long "Mythological Introduction", all set to explain Nonnus' idiosyncratic "mythology" marred by a taste for the surreal and the erotic. Even modern scholars who consider Nonnus seriously from the perspective of a classical Hellenist often lay emphasis on his epic and Hellenistic models at a verbal or thematic level, failing to recognise the vast *risemantizzazione* those models have suffered. And at any rate for most classical Hellenists the *Paraphrase* remains *terra incognita*. On the other hand, Byzantinists never felt a genuine allegiance to Nonnus or his "school" and rarely ever regarded him as appropriately an author of "theirs". Too far from Constantinople and strongly affiliated to an epic and Hellenistic past, unlike George of Pisidia, Nonnus was felt to belong to a different literary context, and perhaps rightly so. On the rare occasions when Nonnus was found to have left a trace on a Byzantine author, he would be treated by Byzantinists as another classic of the past. Unbiased readers have not been numerous and have often been deterred, or even repulsed, by the artificial style and content, the protracted circular narrative and the long and winding composites. And those who have studied Nonnus or a "Nonnian" poet have suffered, and still suffer, from a crisis of identity simply because in the field of Literary Studies (unlike Art, History, Philosophy or Patristics) Late Antiquity has not (yet?) been widely established as an independent area of research.

Charting the map proved more complex upon realisation of the fact that it was the same man who wrote the *Dionysiaca*, a poem with an exuberant interest in astrology, apocryphism and not least the female body, and the *Paraphrase of the Gospel of Saint John*, then (and indeed sometimes even today) regarded as an arid and graceless rendition of the holy model. The persona of

Nonnus suffered accordingly: he was made to become a convert, a proselyte, a pagan, a Christian, a crypto-Christian, a false Christian, a nothing and an all in the world of Late Antique poetics. No word of Nonnus in context; no concern for the cultural milieu that made the Nonnian paradox (which is not) possible; no word of the large doses of Late Antique *paideia* injected in both his works; no interest in the influence of coeval visual arts; and no hint at the ambitious plan of a highly educated man, gifted in producing hexameters, to represent world-history beginning from the earliest times, centred around a god of salvation, with his eye fixed to a more perfect world dominated by a more accomplished God, who had planned everything in the first place. The episodes narrated in the longer poem, a tour de force of artistry and erudition, seem like the tesserae forming the chaotic mosaic of the advances and drawbacks in the history of man. The raging language, laden with all sorts of contradictions and prolepses, and widely shifting like the world it purports to convey, enhances the same effect. The minor work brings the plan to a magnificent conclusion, the triumph of God's plan to lift man to a superior level. This is celebrated by means of sublime poetry merging the best of man's thought with the inspiration lavished by faith in the true God. The *Paraphrase*, no doubt, was a risky undertaking at a time when Christian dogmas were largely solidified but still beset with controversy from in and out of the Church. Yet, the risk was worthwhile. It is nothing other than a convinced Christian mind behind this plan.

Despite all this, even today the intrinsic unity of Nonnus' works tends to be forgotten. Nonnus is de facto partitioned between the *Dionysiaca* and the *Paraphrase*. The *Paraphrase* is often considered, or relegated, to be a subject (only) for theologians to study. The *Dionysiaca* would be tolerated as a University course in Classics; the *Paraphrase* remains out of the question. Classics libraries pile up books on the *Dionysiaca* whereas they ignore the *Paraphrase*. This insanity in a way made it desirable to organise an event in which Nonnus would be studied for his own sake, and other scholars would be invited to reflect on him in context. For this generation of scholars the goal was less hard to attain as significant work had already been undertaken on an individual basis.

The first International Conference entirely devoted to the Panopolitan poet and his ambience ("Nonnus of Panopolis in Context: Poetry and Cultural Milieu in Late Antiquity": <http://www.philology.uoc.gr/conferences/Nonnus/>) was held in Rethymno, Crete, 13–15 May 2011. "Once scattered but now all united in one fold, in one flock": the words of Artemidorus the Grammarian about the "bucolic muses" (*AP* 9.205), would apply well to Nonnian scholars and students coming together for the first time. Those shiny days in Crete marked

quite an achievement. The articles collected here are essentially the Proceedings of that conference enriched by three additional contributions. They cover a wide range of topics that live up to the original plan and bring discussion up to date. Old questions are recast and new insights into the poetry itself and its parameters are offered.

As an organiser I am grateful to the Department of Philology of the University of Crete for funding, to the participants of my post-graduate seminar on Nonnus that year, and to my colleagues in Rethymno for their support. I am also grateful to Eva Gemenetzi (Rethymno) and Nestan Egetashvili (Tbilisi) for helping to organise the event. As an editor I am grateful to Mary Whitby and Katherine LaFrance (Oxford) for their help. I am also indebted to the editors of the series and the anonymous readers for many valuable suggestions. The largest part of the credit goes to the participants and contributors, who were the actual event and “are” the present volume. To them I am also grateful for their spirit of congeniality, their promptness and their understanding.

Konstantinos Spanoudakis,
Florence, December 2012.

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Abbreviations

ACO	Schwartz, E. 1924–40. <i>Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum</i> , I–IV, Berlin.
APApp.	Couigny, E. 1890. <i>Anthologia Palatina</i> , III: <i>Appendix</i> , Paris.
BDAG	Bauer, W. – F. W. Danker, <i>al.</i> 2000 ³ . <i>A Greek–English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature</i> , Chicago – London.
CA	Powell, J. U. 1925. <i>Collectanea Alexandrina</i> , Oxford.
Chantraine GH	Chantraine, P. 1958 ² –1953. <i>Grammaire homérique</i> , 2 vols., Paris.
D–K	Diels, H. – W. Kranz. 1952 ⁴ . <i>Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker</i> , 3 vols., Berlin.
FGrH	Jacoby, F. 1923–58. <i>Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker</i> , parts I–III, Berlin – Leiden. Schepens, G. (ed.) 1998–. <i>FGrH</i> , parts IV–, Leiden.
GPh	Gow, A. S. F. – D. L. Page. 1968. <i>The Garland of Philip and some contemporary Epigrams</i> , 2 vols., Cambridge.
GVI	Peek, W. 1955. <i>Griechische Versinschriften</i> , I: <i>Grabepigramme</i> , Berlin.
HE	Gow, A. S. F. – D. L. Page. 1965. <i>The Greek Anthology: Hellenistic Epigrams</i> , 2 vols., Cambridge.
IEG	West, M. L. 1989 ² –1992 ² . <i>Iambi et Elegi Graeci ante Alexandrum cantati</i> , 2 vols., Oxford.
IG	1873–. <i>Inscriptiones Graecae</i> , Berlin.
IGUR	Moretti, L. 1968–90. <i>Inscriptiones Graecae Urbis Romae</i> , 4 vols., Rome.
Lampe	Lampe, G. W. H. 1961. <i>A Patristic Greek Lexicon</i> , Oxford.
LfgrE	B. Snell – H. Erbse, <i>al.</i> 1955–2010. <i>Lexikon des frühgriechischen Epos</i> , 4 vols., Göttingen.
LIMC	H. C. Ackermann – J. R. Gisler (eds.) 1981–97. <i>Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae</i> , I–VIII, Zurich – Düsseldorf.
LSJ	Liddell, H. G. – R. Scott – H. S. Jones. 1996 ⁹ . <i>A Greek–English Lexicon</i> , with a Revised Supplement ed. by P. G. W. Glare, Oxford.
OF	Bernabé, A. 2004–07. <i>Poetae Epici Graeci</i> , pars II: <i>Orphicorum et Orphicis similium testimonia et fragmenta</i> , fasc. 1–2 Munich – Leipzig; fasc. 3 Berlin – New York.
OGIS	Dittenberger, W. 1903–05. <i>Orientis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae</i> , 2 vols., Leipzig.
OLD	Glare, P. G. W. (ed.) 1982 (2012 ²). <i>Oxford Latin Dictionary</i> , Oxford.
Peek Lex.	Peek, W. 1968–75. <i>Lexikon zu den Dionysiaka des Nonnos</i> , 4 fascs., Berlin.
PMG	Page, D. L. 1962. <i>Poetae Melici Graeci</i> , Oxford.
PG	Migne, J.-P. 1844–66. <i>Patrologiae cursus completus</i> , series Graeca, Paris.
PL	Migne, J.-P. 1844–55. <i>Patrologiae cursus completus</i> , series Latina, Paris.
RAC	Klauser, Th., <i>al.</i> 1950–. <i>Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum</i> , Stuttgart.
RE	Wissowa, G., <i>al.</i> (eds.) 1893–1978. <i>Real-Encyclopädie der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft</i> , Stuttgart – Munich.
Roscher	Roscher, W. H. 1886–1937. <i>Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie</i> , 6 vols., Leipzig.
SGO	Merkelbach, R. – J. Stauber. 1998–2006. <i>Steinepigramme aus dem griechischen Osten</i> , 5 vols., Munich – Leipzig.

<i>SH</i>	Lloyd-Jones, H. – P. J. Parsons. 1983. <i>Supplementum Hellenisticum</i> , Berlin – New York.
<i>SLG</i>	Page, D. L. 1974. <i>Supplementum Lyricis Graecis</i> , Oxford.
<i>SVF</i>	Arnim, H. von. 1903. <i>Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta</i> , 4 vols., Leipzig.
<i>TDNT</i>	Kittel, G. – G. Friedrich (eds.) 1964–77. <i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> , transl. G. W. Bromiley, 10 vols., Grand Rapids, MI.
<i>TLG</i>	Thesaurus Linguae Graecae (http://www.tlg.uci.edu/).
<i>TrGF</i>	Snell, B. – R. Kannicht – S. Radt. 1971 (1986 ²)–2004. <i>Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta</i> , 5 vols., Göttingen.

List of Contributors

Domenico Accorinti teaches Greek and Latin at the Liceo “G. Galilei” of Pisa. His research interests include Late Antique poetry, the history of religions, mythology, the reception of classical literature, and the history of classical scholarship. He has published an edition of Book 20 of Nonnus’ *Paraphrase of the Gospel of St John* (Pisa, 1996) and the fourth volume (Books 40–48) of the Rizzoli edition of the *Dionysiaca* (2004). He has edited *L’épopée posthomérique* by F. Vian (Alessandria, 2005) and co-edited with Pierre Chuvin *Des Géants à Dionysos. Mélanges de mythologie et de poésie grecques offerts à Francis Vian* (Alessandria, 2003). He is also the author of a forthcoming edition of the correspondence between Raffaele Pettazzoni (1883–1959) and Herbert Jennings Rose (1883–1961). He is currently working on editing the *Brill’s Companion to Nonnus*. Email: domenico.accorinti@gmail.com

Gianfranco Agosti is Assistant Professor at the Department of “Scienze dell’Antichità” at the University of Rome “La Sapienza”, and an associate member of the *Centre d’Histoire et Civilisation de Byzance* (UMR 8167). He published widely on Late Antique literature, art, religion and civilisation including an edition with Introduction and Commentary on Nonnus *Paraphrasis* 5 (Florence, 2003) and the third volume of the Rizzoli edition of the *Dionysiaca* (Books 25–39; Milan 2013²). He is currently preparing a critical edition of Greek epigrams on poets of the Imperial period and Late Antiquity (with Enrico Mag-nelli), an edition of fragmentary Imperial and Late Antique poets (with Jean-Luc Fournet), and a monograph on Late Antique and Early Byzantine inscribed epigrams. Email: gianfranco.agosti@uniroma1.it

Nina Aringer is Research Assistant at the Department of Classical Philology at the University of Vienna and staff member of the project “Religion and Poetry in the Epic of Nonnos of Panopolis”, co-ordinated by Professor Herbert Bannert. In addition, she teaches Latin, Greek and German since 1994 and offers seminars for teachers and students to develop further skills. She is co-author with Herbert Bannert and Nicole Kröll of a research report on Nonnus (*AAHG* 64 [2011]) and is currently working on Jungian Archetypes and their relevance (“Monomyth”) for the *Dionysiaca*. Email: nina.aringer@univie.ac.at

Katerina Carvounis is Lecturer in Ancient Greek Literature at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. Her main research interests include early hexameter poetry and later Greek epic. She has co-edited (with Richard Hunter) the volume *Signs of Life? Studies in Later Greek Poetry* (*Ramus* 37.1 &

2, 2008) and is currently completing a Commentary on Quintus of Smyrna *Posthomerica* 14. Email: kcarvounis@phil.uoa.gr

Pierre Chuvin is a former Professor of Ancient Greek Literature at Blaise-Pascal (Clermont-Ferrand) University, then at Paris-Ouest (Nanterre-La Défense), emeritus from October 2011. Former Director of the French Institute for Central Asian Studies at Tashkent (1993–1998), then of the French Institute for Anatolian Studies at Istanbul (2003–2008), he published *Chronique des derniers païens* (Paris, 1990); *Mythologie et géographie dionysiaques. Recherches sur l'œuvre de Nonnos de Panopolis* (Clermont-Ferrand, 1991); *Mythologie grecque. Du premier homme à l'apothéose d'Héraclès* (Paris, 1992). He edited *Nonnos de Panopolis, Les Dionysiaques, chants 3–5* (Paris, 1976); ch. 6–8 (1992); ch. 41–43 (with M.-C. Fayant, 2006); Paul le Siléntaire, *Description de Sainte-Sophie* (with M.-C. Fayant, Die, 1997). He is preparing a new edition of Paul's poem. Email: pierre.chuvin@gmail.com

Claudio De Stefani is Assistant Professor at the Department of Humanities, University of Naples II. He published an edition of the first chapter of Nonnus' *Paraphrasis* (Bologna, 2002), the Teubner edition of the ecphrastic poems of Paul the Silentiary (2011), the edition of the Arabic translation of Galen's *De differentiis febrium* (Rome, 2011), and numerous articles and reviews on tragedy, Hellenistic and Late Antique poetry, Greek and Arabic medicine and Byzantine poetry. He is currently preparing an edition of the *Epigrams* of Paul the Silentiary, of Galen's *De differentiis febrium* and *De optimo medico cognoscendo* and of Aristides *Orationes* 17–25; he is working on Manetho's *Apotelesmatica* and Christophorus Mitylenaeus. Email: claudiokochdestefani@gmail.com

Filip Doroszewski is Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Humanities at Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw. He has published a number of articles on Early Christianity and on Late Antiquity which have focused mainly on the *Paraphrasis of St. John's Gospel* by Nonnus of Panopolis. He is currently preparing a book on the mystery terminology in Nonnus' *Paraphrasis*. Email: fdoroszewski@gmail.com

Andrew Faulkner is Associate Professor in the Department of Classical Studies, University of Waterloo. He has published a commentary on the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* (Oxford, 2008), edited a volume of collected essays on the *Homeric Hymns* (Oxford, 2011), and published articles on Greek poetry of the Hellenistic period and Late Antiquity. He is currently preparing an edition with Introduction and Commentary of the *Metaphrasis Psalmorum*, a hexameter paraphrase of the *Psalms*. Email: afaulkner@uwaterloo.ca

Rosa García-Gasco is Postdoctoral Researcher in the Department of Greek Philology and Indoeuropean Linguistics, University Complutense of Madrid, where she has been collaborating in several projects directed by Professor Alberto Bernabé. Her PhD (2007) was on *Orpheus and Orphism in Nonnus' Dionysiaca*. She has since then published numerous articles on Greek religion and myth in collective volumes, as well as on Greek drama and rhetoric. She has also co-edited with D. Hernández de la Fuente and S. González *The Theodosian Age (AD 379–455): Power, Place, Belief and Learning at the End of the Western Empire* (Leicester, 2013). She continues working on epic, Dionysus, dramatic literature and performance. Email: rosaggv@gmail.com

Daria Gigli Piccardi is Associate Professor at the Department of “Lettere e Filosofia”, University of Florence. She published a monograph on *Metafora e Poetica in Nonno*, (Florence, 1985); an edition with translation and commentary of the fragmentary epic poem handed down in *P. Argent. 480 (La Cosmogonia di Strasburgo*, Florence, 1990); she edited Books 1–12 of the *Dionysiaca* of Nonnus of Panopolis, with an extensive Introduction, translation and commentary for the Rizzoli edition (Milan, 2003). Her other main interests include the rhetoric of Imperial age, the interpretation of dreams in antiquity and the theological oracular poetry of Late Antiquity. She is currently preparing an edition with translation and commentary of John of Gaza's *Tabula mundi*. Email: daria.gigli@unifi.it

Claudia Greco teaches Latin and Greek at high school. She published an edition with Italian translation and commentary on chapter 13 (the Last Supper) of Nonnus' *Paraphrasis of the Gospel of St. John* (Alessandria, 2004) and papers on chapter 12. Her interests include Late Antique rhetoric and the School of Gaza: she produced an edition with Italian translation and commentary on the funeral orations VII–VIII F.-R. by Choricus of Gaza (Alessandria, 2010), papers and reviews on classical and late prose. At present, her work is focused on the Old Testament quotations in Nonnus' *Paraphrasis* and on the relationship of the School of Gaza with neighboring cultures. Email: claudi.greco@tiscali.it

David Hernández de la Fuente is Assistant Professor at the Department of Ancient History at Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (Madrid, Spain) and Lecturer at the University of Potsdam (Germany). He has published a reading of Nonnus' *Dionysiaca (Bakchos Anax*, Madrid 2008), and numerous articles and reviews on Greek literature, philosophy and religion. Among his several books, he has edited *New Perspectives on Late Antiquity* (Newcastle,

2011) and authored *Vidas de Pitágoras* (Vilaür, 2011). He is currently preparing an edition and translation of Plato's *Laws* (I–III) and a monograph on Dionysus. Email: dhdelafuente@geo.uned.es / fuente@uni-potsdam.de

Nicole Kröll is Research Assistant at the Department of Classical Philology at the University of Vienna and staff member of the project “Religion and Poetry in the Epic of Nonnos of Panopolis”, coordinated by Professor Herbert Bannert. She is currently working on a doctoral thesis on the Ampelus episode in Nonnus' *Dionysiaca*. Email: kroell.nicole@gmx.at

Delphine Lauritzen holds a PhD in Greek Studies from the University Paris IV Sorbonne. She has written several articles in the field of Late Antique poetry and civilization. She edited together with M. Tardieu *Le voyage des légendes. Hommages à Pierre Chuvin*, 2013 with CNRS Éditions, Paris. She is also preparing a critical edition with introduction, French translation and notes of the *Description of the Cosmic Table* by John of Gaza. Email: delphinelauritzen@gmail.com

Jane L. Lightfoot is Charlton Fellow and Tutor in Classical Languages and Literature in New College, Oxford. She has published editions and commentaries on Parthenius of Nicaea (Oxford, 1999), Lucian's *On The Syrian Goddess* (2003), the *Sibylline Oracles* (2009), as well as a Loeb edition of selections of Hellenistic poets (2008). Her articles, reviews, and chapters follow her wide interests across the prose and poetry of the Hellenistic period and Late Antiquity, and her edition of Dionysius the Periegete's *Description of the Known World* is forthcoming with Oxford University Press (2014). Email: jane.lightfoot@new.ox.ac.uk

Enrico Livrea is Professor of Greek at the Department of “Lettere e Filosofia”, University of Florence. He has published widely on Greek literature, especially of the Hellenistic, Imperial and Late Antique era. A selection of his many books would include *Apollonii Rhodii, Argonauticon, liber IV* (Florence, 1973); *Pamprepius, Carmina* (Leipzig, 1979); *Triphiodorus, Ilii Excidium* (Leipzig, 1982); *Musaeus, Hero et Leander* (Leipzig, 1982); *Studia Cercidea* (Bonn, 1986); *Studia Hellenistica* (2 vols, Florence, 1991); *KPECCONA BACKANIHC. Quindici studi di poesia ellenistica* (Florence, 1993). He has produced editions with commentaries on two chapters of Nonnus' *Paraphrasis* (Σ: Naples, 1989; B: Bologna, 2000) and is currently preparing an edition with commentary on *Par. 3*. Email: euforione44@alice.it

Enrico Magnelli is Assistant Professor in Greek Literature at the Department of “Lettere e Filosofia”, University of Florence. He has published widely on Greek poetry from the Hellenistic to the Byzantine period, Attic comedy, and Greek metre, including *Alexandri Aetoli testimonia et fragmenta* (Florence, 1999) and *Studi su Euforione* (Rome, 2002). He is currently preparing a monograph on the use of Homer in Greek comedy and satyr-play, a critical edition of Greek epigrams on poets of the Imperial period and Late Antiquity (with Gianfranco Agosti), and an edition with Introduction and Commentary on the fragments of Euphorion. Email: em.phil@tin.it

Laura Miguélez Caveró is Research Associate at the University of Oxford. In 2008 she published *Poems in Context: Greek Poetry in the Egyptian Thebaid 200–600 AD* (De Gruyter). Her commentary on the *Sack of Troy* by Triphiodorus of Panopolis, furnished with an ample Introduction, has now been published with DeGruyter (2013). Her current projects keep focusing on Late Antique hexameter poems, not only those by Triphiodorus and Nonnus, but also those extant on papyrus. Email: laura.miguelezcavero@classics.ox.ac.uk

Marta Otlewska-Jung is a PhD candidate at the Institute of Greek and Latin Languages and Literatures at the Free University of Berlin. She currently explores the philosophical influences on the *Dionysiaca* of Nonnus of Panopolis in its Late Antique context. She holds a master’s degree in Classics from the University of Wrocław, Poland. Email: marta.otlewska@gmail.com

Michael Paschalis is Professor of Classics at the Department of Philology, University of Crete. He has published numerous articles on Hellenistic and Roman poetry and prose, the poetry of Late Antiquity, the reception of the Classics and Modern Greek literature. He is the author of *Virgil’s Aeneid: Semantic Relations and Proper Names* (Oxford, 1997) and has edited three volumes of *Rethymnon Classical Studies*. He has co-edited four volumes of *Ancient Narrative Supplements* and *The Reception of Antiquity in the Byzantine and Modern Greek Novel*. A book of his on Andreas Kalvos has just appeared (Heraklion, 2013) and another one on Nikos Kazantzakis is forthcoming. Email: michael.paschalis@gmail.com

Robert Shorrock teaches at Eton College, Windsor, and is co-editor of the journal *Greece & Rome*. He is the author of *The Challenge of Epic: Allusive Engagement in the Dionysiaca of Nonnus* (Leiden, 2001) and *The Myth of Paganism: Nonnus, Dionysus and the World of Late Antiquity* (London, 2011). Email: r.shorrock@etoncollege.org.uk

Konstantinos Spanoudakis is Assistant Professor at the Department of Philology, University of Crete. He published an edition of the poetical and grammatical fragments of Philitas of Cos (Leiden, 2002), numerous articles and reviews on Hellenistic poetry and the poetry of Late Antiquity, and co-edited with F. Manakidou *Alexandrine Muse. Tradition and Innovation in Hellenistic Poetry* (Athens, 2008). His edition with Introduction and Commentary on chapter 11 (The Resurrection of Lazarus) of the *Paraphrasis of the Gospel of St. John* by Nonnus of Panopolis is forthcoming with Oxford University Press. Email: kspanoudk@gmail.com

Mary Whitby is Faculty Instructor in Greek and Latin in the University of Oxford and a lecturer at Merton College, Oxford. Her research interests lie primarily in the poetry of Late Antiquity on which she has published a number of articles. For some years she has been working in particular on George of Pisidia with a view to producing an English translation and commentary of his works. Email: mary.whitby@classics.ox.ac.uk

Maria Ypsilanti is Assistant Professor of Ancient Greek Literature at the University of Cyprus. She has published several articles on Greek tragedy and on Hellenistic and Late Antique poetry, and has just completed a research program on Nonnus' *Paraphrasis of St. John's Gospel*, funded by the University of Cyprus. She is also preparing an edition with commentary of the Epigrams of Crinagoras, forthcoming with Oxford University Press. Email: mypsilanti@ucy.ac.cy

I: Introduction

Pierre Chuvin

Revisiting Old Problems: Literature and Religion in the *Dionysiaca**

The second part of the twentieth century, especially near its end, has been productive for Nonnian studies, singled out by several achievements—in terms of both literary criticism and text availability. First came, for the *Dionysiaca*, the three-volume translation by William Rouse that appeared in the Loeb series in 1940, in very sad times. Rouse, using Arthur Ludwich's edition (Teubner, 1909/11), gave the first English translation of the *Dionysiaca*. Then came Rudolf Keydell's edition, in 1959, followed by Werner Peek's *Lexikon*, 1968–1975. Keydell's work was the crowning of thirty-six years of publishing by this scholar, and gave impulse to a new, more positive, approach to the so many Nonnian problems; it was already the approach of Gennaro D'Ippolito, in his *Studi Nonniani* (1964), and it inspired two more editions, each one with a translation and a rich commentary. The one in France was directed by Francis Vian and counted not less than eight contributors for eighteen volumes, published from 1976 to 2006;¹ the other, in Italy, was the work of a team, with Daria Gigli (coordinator), Fabrizio Gonnelli, Gianfranco Agosti, Domenico Accorinti.² Consisting of four pocket-size thick volumes, it appeared at a much quicker pace in 2003–2004.³ Of course, the last editors made use – and a good use – of Vian's teamwork. In contrast to its popularity in former centuries, the *Paraphrase of John* might seem neglected; but a new edition, endowed with a rich commentary and directed by Enrico Livrea, has been in progress since 1989. Seven Books out of twenty-one (as many as there are chapters in John) are issued. Especially useful for the *Dionysiaca* is Book 5 of the *Paraphrase*, with commentary by Gianfranco Agosti (2003).

A result of all this work has been to underscore some major trends about not only the authorship of the *Dionysiaca* (there is now a consensus that he

* Translated from the French by K. Spanoudakis and Katherine LaFrance.

1 Collection des Universités de France ("Budé") series. Vian had been working on the *Dionysiaca* well earlier. For this collaborative project, probably one of the first, I was recruited by Vian in 1965–1966; the last volume of his edition of the *Posthomerica* by Quintus Smyrnaeus appeared in 1969; the appearance of the *Dionysiaca* spread out over thirty years, until 2006! Simultaneously he has given the three volumes of the *Argonautica* of Apollonius Rhodius (appearing from 1974 to 1981) and the volume of the Orphic *Argonautica* (1987). This says what we owe him for our understanding of Greek epic poetry.

2 And separately Francesco Tissoni 1998 for Books 44–46.

3 Biblioteca Universale Rizzoli (BUR), Classici greci e latini, Milan.

was the same Nonnus who wrote the *Paraphrase*)⁴ but also the religion of the common author of both poems: this Nonnus was a Christian, maybe even a bishop,⁵ learned in mythography on one side, and, on the other side, master of a real competence in Christian theology, a follower of Cyrillan (Chalcedonian) orthodoxy; he composed the two poems roughly during the same period. Thus the question of Nonnus' religious beliefs has somewhat shifted. It is no more to know whether he was a Christian. He was, and probably he was born so, to judge from his name. But which kind of Christian? The question is not so much about naming a person than characterising a mentality, difficult as such a task may seem. And yet another consensus, tightly bound to the former, is arising, about the overall design of the *Dionysiaca* and its – not obvious at first reading – consistency.

This last trend has challenged a long-established principle, starting from the fact that, at the very beginning of the *Dionysiaca*, Nonnus lays the poetic rule of *diversity*, ποικιλία; faithful to that rule, he would have been satisfied to pile up stories as if it were a serial, so that we do not have to look for too much consistency in his big poem, made of disconnected parts as a kind of *feuilleton* and, at best, left unfinished. Such was the Keydellian *doxa*; it was formulated in several papers since 1927 and *inter alia* in *Eine Nonnos-Analyse* (1932); it was generally approved, for instance, in France by Paul Collart (1930). But later on, other scholars, among them Gennaro D'Ippolito (1964), then Francis Vian, made conspicuous well-knit structures governing not only parts, but also the whole of the poem, in the wake of Viktor Stegemann, even though Stegemann's book, *Astrologie und Universalgeschichte* (1930), had been submitted to a harsh criticism, not always wrong, by Keydell. But it helped to lay a principle, that in Nonnus, stylistic ποικιλία does not preclude logic in the chain of events.

All this leaves more than one question open. Bishop or not, how could Nonnus waste so much time on such topics, that to his Christian eyes ought to be so futile, often immoral, almost always full of error? Did he write more than twenty one thousand so melodious verses, arrange so meticulous a composition, on matters he deeply despised? We feel here as pessimistic as Liebeschuetz: "in the last resort we cannot penetrate through what Nonnus wrote to what he was thinking".⁶

Anyway, we cannot avoid such a basic problem as the interpretation of Nonnus' huge secular work, that seems at times impregnated with a kind of

⁴ As stated by Alan Cameron 2011, 700–1.

⁵ A hypothesis advanced by Livrea 1987. *Contra*: Al. Cameron 2000; response by Livrea 2003.

⁶ Liebeschuetz 1996, 90.

mysticism,⁷ and at times full of irony, even farce.⁸ Did not Alan Cameron recently call the *Dionysiaca* “a soft porn mythological epic”?⁹ Provocative as is the formula, has it not nonetheless some reality? Indeed, the poem may seem frivolous in more than one passage.

1 The Hidden Consistency of the *Dionysiaca*: the Programmatic Book 25

In order to check the consistency of the *Dionysiaca*, I shall go through some major cases: first the pivotal Book 25, then two intersecting subjects, the female lovers of Dionysus and his long way to apotheosis, and eventually the contrasting pictures of Tyre and Beirut in Books 40–43. Book 25 is essential in the construction of the work in that it opens the second half of the poem – with a second prologue, a second profession of literary intention, and three types of scenes visibly composed each in relation to the others, and in relation to the important themes of the poem as a whole. By introducing these, the author thus presents the keys for reading it.

A first type of scene is made of rhetorical comparisons (*syncriseis*, vv. 29, 98) of Dionysus with three other sons of Zeus – Perseus (31–147), Minos (148–74) and Heracles (174b–252) – exalting Dionysus and denigrating, more and more strongly, his rivals. We meet again, near the end of the poem, Heracles in Book 40, and Perseus in Book 47; they are also rewarded with apotheosis and enter into a contrasting relationship with Dionysus: reception for the one, hostility for the other. Between them, the brief presence of Minos in twenty seven lines can be surprising, and we will come back to this. These three comparisons are themselves framed by the double proclamation of the superiority of the Indian war above all other wars, even the Trojan war, and of the inferiority of the Homeric heroes – but not of Homer himself (23–30 and 253–63).¹⁰ From this there results a ring comparison with five elements in response: (1) Nonnus, “competitor of both the Ancients and the Moderns” facing (5) his

7 So Gigli Piccardi 2003, 570, on 3.350f., concerning Electra’s toils and their award; Chrétien 1985, 106 concerning Ino in 9.84; Vian 1988, 445 concerning the “Hymn to Heracles Astrochiton”, near the end of Book 40.

8 Gigli 1981; Lasky 1978, 373–6; Vian 2003, 7–10 *à propos* the Gigantomachy that opens Book 48.

9 Al. Cameron 2007, 38. We might add that there is also some “hard porn” when the poet seems to enjoy describing sadistic rapes such as Philomela’s (4.320–30) or Aura’s bondage (48.652–88).

10 On Nonnus in relation to his model and rival Homer see Shorrock 2001, 171–2 and *passim*.

master, the unrivalled Homer; (2) Perseus against (4) Heracles, these “rings” having (3) Minos at their centre.

Yet Minos, unlike Perseus and Heracles, is not deified and does not play a very important role in the rest of the poem; as opposed to the Trojan war, the legend of Minos does not supply Nonnus with any literary model. In fact, among so many rich and varying stories involving him, only one exploit is retained by the poet and it is of an amorous, not heroic, sort: the capture of a town (Megara) by seducing the daughter (Scylla) of the king (Nisus). If Minos plays a part elsewhere in the poem, it is above all in the genealogies. Nonnus makes three allusions to his most famous role as judge of the Underworld, but none to Minos as legislator or as a conqueror; while Lycurgus, Solon, and Augustus, conqueror of the seas and king of justice, find their place in the epic. Yet, in Books 41–43, the coming of law is a major theme. Minos’ affair with Scylla might act as a foil to Dionysus’ love with Pallene (Book 48), but Nonnus eludes all comparison. The central piece of this ring-composition remains somehow empty.

Following the *syncriseis*, the second type of scene is borrowed from the Gospels. Brief (277–99) but situated exactly in the middle of the Book (285–7),¹¹ where line 286 is framed by two *tetracola* which solemnise it, it is a miracle of Dionysus, the healing of a person blind from birth (cf. John 9.1–12) where some drops of wine bring about the same effect as the paddy made from soil and the saliva of Christ. It is accompanied by parallels to the transformation of water into wine at the wedding of Cana (John 2.1–11) and, in a more discrete manner, to the sending out of the apostles (John 20.21).¹² A hunter, whose dogs have been made drunk by lapping up the water of the river turned to wine, runs up to the town to announce the “good news”. The poem offers other analogies to Gospel stories; this one here is highlighted by its place at the heart of a Book devoted to the praise of Dionysus.

In the second half of the Book, the third type of scene and the longest (300–572), which will delay the intended (264 f.) resumption of the narrative of the war is the arrival of the cosmic shield of Dionysus – a shield-talisman which symbolises the universality of the Dionysiac mission, presented by the Mother of the gods.¹³ This gift sets forward the same symbolism as the tunic with constellations which will be presented by Heracles in Book 40 (Vian *l.l.*). Its description is of double reference: the Homeric reference to the shield of

¹¹ The Book consists of 573 lines.

¹² Agosti 2004, 105–7.

¹³ Vian 1990, 33. A different perspective is offered by Spanoudakis in the present volume, p. 333 f.

Achilles, also customized, if I daresay, with cosmic decoration, is just as evident as the reference to the Christian theme of death and resurrection in the Lydian legend which provides the poet with narrative material.¹⁴

2 The Five Women of Dionysus

The five women, wives or lovers, whom Dionysus pretends to during the poem, are introduced according to a ring-shaped composition: the first, Nicaea (15.169–422 [end]), corresponds to the fifth and last, Aura (48.238–942); the second, Beroe (Books 41–43), corresponds to the fourth, Pallene (48.90–237); the third, Ariadne (47.265–471, then 664–75), is in the central position.¹⁵ At the top of the pyramid thus is the place for Ariadne, who is clearly the most prominent of the five: Dionysus marries her and she gives him many an offspring – unnamed offspring; she will be the only one among the “women of Dionysus” to get a place in heaven, in the form of the Crown. She does not experience, however, the same triumphal apotheosis as Semele at the end of Book 8.

Then two lovers, not spouses, are raped by Dionysus while they are paralysed by intoxication: Nicaea and Aura; they each give him only one child (Telete, Iacchus), but the girl and the boy are promised to play a key role, although not otherwise divulged, in the mysteries of Dionysus. Telete “Initiation” appears only at her birth (16.399–402), then one time near the end of Book 48 (v. 886) with Iacchus, who is hardly better off: he is only named four times in the poem, three of which are in two passages very close to each other at the very end of Book 48, vv. 884 (883–6), 965, 968 (951–68) where he is “the third Dionysus”. The other mention of him, at 31.68, as the older “Eleusinian Dionysus”, comes from an isolated version. In Book 48, Nonnus uses local versions of the story adapted to his narration:¹⁶ Aura had to give birth to twins because of her connection with Mount Dindymon (the “Twin-summits Mountain”). The poet only needed one child, the future Iacchus; the name of the nymph evokes the breeze: it is possible that Nonnus himself had combined these elements, imagining that Breeze sends to the breezes the superfluous twin (see the puns at 48.892–4).

¹⁴ Cf. John 11.1–44, resurrection of Lazarus; the details of the two miracles are very different.

¹⁵ Nonnus evidently knew other lovers of Dionysus, cf. allusions to Coronis, mother of the Charites, and to Althaia; see Vian 2003, 118 with n. 5.

¹⁶ See also Vian 1994, 208–14 (= 2005, 524–30).

The median ring in the Nonnian cycle of Dionysus' wives is represented by two incomplete unions: with Beroe, who is refused to him; with Pallene, whom he marries but with whom strangely (according to criteria of ancient mythography) he does not beget a child; the two episodes give pretext to lascivious or "soft-porn", by a speech (from Dionysus in the guise of a gardener to Beroe, 42.282–312) and by a lascivious but non-violent struggle (Dionysus' *corps-à-corps* with Pallene, 48.106–82); while Dionysus, who failed in 41–43 to marry Beroe and so to become the patron of Roman law, reappears in Book 48, in the episode of Pallene, as "a god of justice and mercy",¹⁷ punishing the criminal father and saving the innocent daughter (Vian 2003, 21).

3 Dionysus' Long Way to Apotheosis

The frequent presence of circular groupings, on various levels of the poem's composition, is accompanied also by linear progressive schemas, without which the narration would progress by jolts. This holds true also for the major theme of the poem – Dionysus' ascent to Olympus – which forces him to triumph over multiple tests.

The first birth of Dionysus is marked by the triumphal conflagration of Semele and her ascension into the sky, immediately after her death;¹⁸ immortality is conferred onto her in its plenitude, without her having to pass through Hades. This point is remarkable, because, in the most notorious version of the apotheosis of Semele, it is Dionysus who, crossing the infernal mouth of Lerna marshes near Argos, descends to fetch his mother from Hades. Without saying it, the poet thus takes here the opposite course to the tradition.¹⁹ There is no room for the episode of Lerna outside the passage of Dionysus in Argos in Book 47, where it is wholly ignored. Semele's fate in Book 8 is much more like Virgin Mary's, leaving the earth and ascending up to heaven rather than dying, without any earthly or subterranean trip, a Dormition (κοίμησις) and not a death. Concerning Dionysus, at the time of his very first birth, when Semele is struck by Zeus' lightnings, he receives a bath, not in water but in fire, which

¹⁷ Vian 2003, 10. On the amorous failures of Dionysus cf. *ibid.* 47–8.

¹⁸ The last verses of Book 8, vv. 396–418, in terms taken up at the very end of the poem, 48.975–8, thereby setting in parallel the apotheoses of mother and son.

¹⁹ The mysteries of Lerna remained active until the fourth century, according to the testimony of literary and epigraphic sources, see Chuvin 2009, 217–20.

purifies him for immortality.²⁰ In Book 9, his three successive nurses give him more tastes of it.

The first ones, reminding us of the Nymphs to whom Aphrodite entrusted her son Aeneas (*Hom. Hy. Aphr.*), are the Naiad Nymphs, daughters of the river Lamos; they offer Dionysus their milk which flows by itself (9.31) – a characteristic of divine milk;²¹ but Hera plunges them into a murderous madness.²² Hermes then carries the suckling infant to his aunt Ino, a simple mortal who will be recompensed with apotheosis and whom Dionysus will meet again, when she has become a goddess, during his dive into the depths of the sea (21, see *infra*). After Ino the little Dionysus will have Mystis the Sidonian as a nurse to initiate him in Dionysiac practices (9.91–134), just like in Book 48 the little Iacchus, “the third Dionysus”, will have his half-sister Telete to serve him. At the two ends of the work, between Book 9 (appearance of Dionysus on earth) and Book 48 (his final admission to the banquet of the gods), the parallelism between the role of Mystis and that of Telete is obvious. The role of Mystis constitutes one of the “mystical” passages of the poem.²³ In Book 9, again Hera hunts out the infant, again Hermes carries him away, this time to entrust him to a higher power – Rhea the Mother of the gods – who safeguards him at the time of his infancy from the malice of Hera.²⁴ In these three stages of the first infancy, there is thus a continuous progression, for which Nonnus reversed the usual sequence, which placed first the stay of Dionysus with Ino.²⁵

When Dionysus reaches adulthood, the most outstanding stages of his deification make him roam the universe before his final entry in Olympus (48.974–8), which echoes the ascent of Semele in Book 8, and they are characterised by the consumption of the food of immortality: first of all, after his terrified flight (20.352) before Lycurgus and his dive into the depths of the sea (the episode was transferred from the early childhood of Dionysus, where it is placed in Homer), Dionysus is accommodated by members of his family (Ino, Melicertes) who offer to him nectar (21.170–7); then, at the beginning of the

²⁰ Cf. Chrétien 1985, 102, on 9.25; Chuvín, 1992, 135 n. 2, on 8.401.

²¹ Cf. Vian 2003, 212, on 48.956. Human milk has to be pressed out: 9.58.

²² They are mentioned three more times in the poem, in Books 14, 24 and 47, the latter echoing their role in Book 9.

²³ For a discussion see García-Gasco's contribution to the present volume, p. 211 f.

²⁴ According to 11.241–3 and 12.207, Rhea had furnished Dionysus with a bottle of ambrosia with which the future god coats the wounds of Ampelus, without reviving him, but conferring on the vine its exquisite aroma. It does not come up in the passages relating to the stay of Dionysus at Rhea.

²⁵ See Chrétien 1985, 19–20.

last year of this seven-years war, Dionysus receives from the Mother of the Gods a shield, gifted with a strong symbolic meaning (domination over the Universe, invincibility at war ...).

Later on, in Books 32–35, to cure the madness inflicted on him by Hera, his anointing and breast-feeding by the goddess, although it takes place in this world, creates the Milky Way and opens the heavens to him (35.319–35, cf. 302–5): Hera’s milk is ambrosia; finally, after his victory over the Indians, it is in Tyre, city which has the immortal rocks (ἀμβρόσiai πέτραι), that the reception by Heracles Astrochiton “with the starry tunic” occurs – which makes Dionysus taste, for the first and only time in a regular meal before his final apotheosis, the food of immortality, ambrosia and nectar joined together (40.418–21, with a recollection of Book 35). The most precious dish is obviously the ambrosia, used also in ointments.²⁶ In this world, Dionysus consumes it only in Tyre, at the table of Heracles with the starry tunic.²⁷ There is a crescendo: in the depths of the sea, Melicertes (god, but not son of Zeus) gives him nectar to drink (21.176–7); on the earth, Heracles/Melkart (god son of Zeus and a mortal woman) gives him nectar to drink and ambrosia to eat (40.419–20); in the Olympian sky, he sits at the table of Apollo and Hermes, both gods sons of Zeus and a goddess (48.976–8, last lines of the poem).

4 Tyre and Beirut in Contrast (40.298 to 43 end)

Immediately after his victory over the Indians, Dionysus demobilises his army (40.275–80), divides the spoils; then his route is skirted round; from India, after the crossing of Arabia (40.294), he directly reaches Tyre, fatherland of his ancestors; setting out again from Tyre, crossing mount Lebanon, he actually arrives, after a short trip, on the site of the future Beirut, which is not yet founded. Tyre and Beirut are located in a vague “Assyria”. After departing from Beirut, Dionysus will find himself, as if by a touch of a magic wand, in Lydia, in the area of Sardes (43.440–5) where he will offer to Rhea not the

²⁶ 9.280, Apollo rubs Ino with ambrosia; also Dionysus and Ampelus, Hera and Dionysus. In a “minor” mode, the receptions by simple mortals: at Brongus (17.32–86), Staphylus (18), Icarius (47) were put in a series by B. Gerlaud (1994, 131–2); they do not contribute to the deification of the benefactor but to the diffusion of his benefit, the wine. See also the discussion by Frangoulis 2006, 34–41.

²⁷ We might add two complementary gifts made to Dionysus by gods: the starry shield for the war (25.338, 387–412) and the “civilian”, peaceful if majestic, starry tunic (40.578), in a society where dress is of the utmost significance in Late Antique society.

purple of Tyre celebrated in 40.298–310 but the pearls of the Indian Ocean: the Phoenician interlude seems forgotten. Unrelated to Dionysus' travel to far eastern India, the tales of the two cities are bound together by a short negative comparison, to the detriment of Tyre (41.14–27); a comparison that Keydell's text, following a mistaken conjecture by Koechly, does not allow us to perceive (41.15).

The way these two stops are staged makes clear once more the poet's search for ποικιλία, playing with contrasts, at first by their volume – nearly half a Book for Tyre (40.298–580: 297 lines against 283) and three Books for Beirut (41–43) – although the Tyrian half-Book looks much more abundant in local data than the three Berytian Books. They are contrasted also by their subject: seen through the eyes of Dionysus, Tyre is an existing city, well built, with real monuments, having a history, even if this history is a mythical one, a κτίσις story; Beirut, though “the oldest city” in the world (41.361–7), is nothing more than a natural landscape, where the two rival gods, Dionysus and Poseidon, are wandering; the tale can not yet be told. The reception scene in Tyre is quite urban; at Beirut's site, we are in the wild.

For Tyre, Nonnus follows a twofold pattern from the beginning to the end, a hospitality scene and a cultic one: greetings / invocation (366–410), reception / apparition of the god in his divine shape (411–7), meal (418–21), conversation (422–575), exchange of gifts (576–8), departure (579–80); this meeting combines skilfully traditional elements – Dionysus' prayer ends as expected by a call to the benevolence of the god (410) – with a theurgical evocation in the mood of the one arranged at Pergamum by Maximus of Ephesus for the Emperor Julian;²⁸ the κτίσις story of Tyre, told by Heracles Astrochiton, occupies the conversation after dinner. We may notice that it is the only foundation story developed at length in the whole of the *Dionysiaca*. So, a “theological” discourse, by Dionysus, being an inquiry about the god's identity, is followed by a “mythological” discourse, by the god Heracles, disclosing the origins of Tyre (and of a part of mankind).

Let us turn now to Beirut. Local elements are there; but not as flagrant as in the case of Tyre and they are spread out here and there during the three Berytian Books of the poem, each of these Books being allowed a major theme, cosmological (41), erotic (42) and warlike (43). Nonnus proceeds here by juxtaposition instead of fitting parts of his narrative one into the other, according to the usual “ring composition” scheme. So, he is more at large to expand his themes, displayed from the most solemn (Aphrodite and Beroe's birth, Beroe's fate) to the most conventional for us (the two pretenders, their fight). As subtly

²⁸ Eunapius *Vit. soph.* 7.2, p. 475 Boissonade.

noticed by M.-C. Fayant,²⁹ Books 41–43 tell one story in three Books (about Beirut), and so do 44–46 (about Thebes), while Book 47 offers three successive themes in one Book (Athens, Naxos, Argos), analogous in theme to those in 41–43: progress of mankind / love story (Ariadne on Naxos / war (for Argos), and Book 48, three in one again (Giants, then Pallene, both in Thrace, and Aura in neighbouring Bithynia).

5 Rhetoric and Religion in the *Dionysiaca*

One passage in the *Dionysiaca* might be inspired by pagan theology: in Book 40, the call, following the rules of a cultic hymn, devoted by Dionysus to Heracles Astrochiton “Starclad” (Rouse), great god of Tyre. The fervour and polytheistic (syncretist) theological knowledge that it seems to convey give to what might be a plain courtesy visit, the tone of a pilgrimage.

Dionysus’ prayer begins and ends with the name Astrochiton (369, 408): within this frame, the invocation consists of two parts, 369–91 (23 lines) and 392–409 (18 ll.); the first part describes a solar Heracles, master of cyclical time; the second one is devoted to a catalogue of syncretisms of this solar god with other gods, foreign or native (392–3, 399–401, 407–8); it is interrupted twice by small “miniatures”; one (394–8, five lines), tells the story of the bird phoenix, illustrating the perpetual alternate ageing and rejuvenation of Aeon-Chronos who is also a picture of Life, “l’Âme du monde”;³⁰ the second tells the birth of mountains from the cultivated earth, made pregnant by the sperm poured out from sleeping Zeus³¹ (402–6, five lines). Two words opposite to each other, ἀρούρη and ἐρίπναι, remind us of the cultivated flat plain along the coast and the mountains behind: a landscape familiar in Lebanon, and specially in Tyre’s surroundings. Contrasting with this picture, in the first of the three Berytian Books, in 41.55–7, Nonnus describes another creative process: the creation of man, without any crude fecundation but by a mixing of primeval elements, water, fire, air and mud, which reminds us of Phoenician conceptions.

²⁹ Fayant 2000, 3–4.

³⁰ Vian 1993, 46 and 48, on v. 398, cf. 374.

³¹ Domenico Accorinti (2003) has solved the problems laid by this passage and explained the birth of mountains, in a decisive way. In two lines three complementary entities intervene: Eros, desire (ἔρως) and union (γάμος): Eros awakes desire who in turn provokes sexual intercourse. It is not necessary to suppose a god Gamos, who appears elsewhere mainly in licentious wedding-songs, in accordance to the crude meaning of the word *gamos* in Greek, from Roman times till ours (Chuvin 1991, 236–7, after Robert 1967; see also Al. Cameron 2000).

The perfection of the first men in 58, made “at the semblance of gods” (65 θεῶν ἰνδαλμα), modelled from mud, recalls evidently the Biblical creation, but without any mention of a Creator – and without any explanation of how the spirit comes into these creatures (compare the famous mosaic from Shahba / Philippopolis, where ψυχαί are expecting their turn to enter into bodies just modelled).³² To be sure, we note, in the same Nonnian passage, one more pouring of divine sperma; but it is an error of Nature, giving birth to the Athenian serpentiform monster, Cecrops, son of the Earth and Hephaestus (58–66), and not to the Berytian first men, the “golden ear” (41.51, 66).

So, Nonnus puts different tales side by side, less about the origins of mankind and of the world, than about the origins of precise χῶραι and γένη. He is eclectic, not attempting to give a unified version. Nonnus plays again a *syncrisis* game, here between Berytian (Phoenician) and Athenian (Hellenic) traditions, the latter being clearly inferior to the former.

Francis Vian (1994) has devoted a thorough paper to “Théogamies et sôterologie dans les *Dionysiaques*” based upon a meticulous study of words, related to the contexts where they are used; he concluded that, except in a dubious case, Nonnus nowhere refers to truly Dionysiac mysteries: “Nonnos ne fait nulle part référence à d’authentiques mystères dionysiaques”. We can only endorse this opinion.³³ There are striking facts pointing to a conscious omission by the poet, and not merely a lack of knowledge. The word “saviour” (σωτήρ) is not used at all in the *Dionysiaca* (as noticed by Liebeschuetz 1996, l.c. *infra*), and the verb σώζω is uniquely used to say “farewell” (5× only). As if Nonnus deliberately avoided reminding his reader of the Saviour *par excellence*, Christ. But, in a warlike and mythological epic, he needed a verb meaning “to protect, to save” and also “to heal”; for that purpose, he uses the doublet σαώω (27×), for “safety”, never for “salvation”.³⁴ The poet carefully avoids references to forms of polytheism which might be still surviving, still “hot” at his time, as the cult of Asclepius, the mysteries of Lerna or the magical use of names and onomatopoeias drawn from Aristophanes, branded by Schenoute.³⁵ Asclepius, Hygie, Telesphorus and the other members of Asclepius’ retinue are wholly absent from the *Dionysiaca*.³⁶ Three mentions of Παιεὼν in 29.144, 25.62 and 40.407 make him distinct as well from Apollo than

32 First published by Will 1953. Cf. Balty 1995, 144–5; Dunbabin 1999, 168–9.

33 See also García-Gasco in this volume pp. 220, 234. A different conclusion is drawn by F. Doroszewski in his contribution to the present volume, p. 287 f.

34 For other ways of expressing this notion, see below.

35 Chuvin 2009, 162–4.

36 See the survey by Agosti 2003, 81–9 (“Asclepio nella Tarda Antichità”).

from Asclepius; in the last passage he is identified with the supreme god, Astrochiton.³⁷ Healings are the work of Aristaios (or Dionysus himself).³⁸

We do not even feel a true Dionysiac enthusiasm in the poem. There is not much here for the reader in Rabelais' mood. Anyway, how could we fancy that wine and drunkenness bring a mystical revelation, except by metaphor? How could wine, alone, bring joy and happiness into that world? At most, forgetfulness of sorrows ... The pleasure of wine, here, is purely mundane.

6 Christian Theology in the *Dionysiaca*

We see, nonetheless, the emergency of what looks like religious fervour in the *Dionysiaca*, whose most obvious instances are Semele's apotheosis at the end of Book 8 and the prayer to Astrochiton in the second part of Book 40.³⁹ This fervour is of polytheistic expression but, on the whole, of similar nature to the Christian one.

Christian books are open to public utterance, while the books of mystic religions, even if inspired from Heaven, are initiatory; for instance, Cadmus, ancestor of Dionysus, is depicted during his infancy, in 4.267, "sucking the ineffable milk from all-divine books" (ζαθέων ἄρρητον ἀμελγόμενος γάλα βίβλων). An important word here, ἄρρητον, is a hapax in the *Dionysiaca*. It makes the difference. There is no predication, no apostolate in the civic polytheist cults, but a knowledge acquired once for all. Dionysiac mysteries had much less to do with a religion of the Book than Christian cults, centered around common reading since the first testimonies we have from them, for instance the famous letter of Pliny to Trajan.⁴⁰ So, when we inquire about religious feelings in the *Dionysiaca*, that means they are inspired by the poet's own holy books, which can be no other than the Christian ones; echoes from the Gospels filtered into his secular work. Three cases have drawn the attention of scholars:

- a. Echoes of Luke 1.28, the evangelical greeting, Χαῖρε, κεχαριτωμένη, ὁ κύριος μετὰ σοῦ. Εὐλογμένη σὺ ἐν γυναιξίν καὶ εὐλογημένος ὁ καρπὸς τῆς

³⁷ See Vian 1990, 202 with notes.

³⁸ Gerlaud 1994, 148–9.

³⁹ See the conclusion of my *Notice* to Book 8 (1992, 116–7). Semele's apotheosis takes place just before the end of the eight first books of the poem; Dionysus' "first apotheosis, just before the beginning of the last eight".

⁴⁰ Pliny *Epist.* 10.96 (97); βίβλος ζάθεος; see Procl. *Hy.* 4.5, Nonn. *Par.* 1.82 and Paul Sil. *Soph.* 778f.

κοιλίας σου, in *Dion.* 3.425–6 (Hermes, messenger of the gods, to Electra; see Gigli Piccardi 2003, 323) Χαῖρε, γυναικῶν πασάων μετόπισθε μακαρτάτη, and *Dion.* 9.72 (not in Gigli Piccardi) Ὀλβίη ἐν πάσῃσιν θυγατράσιν ἔπλεο Κάδμου.

- b. A child born to a virgin ἀμαίευτος⁴¹, ἀνύμφευτος (Eros son of Aphrodite!), in 41.132–4 Καὶ παῖς ὠκυπόδης, τόκον ἄρσενα ποσσὶ τινάξας, / γαστρὸς ἀμαιεύτοιο μογοστόκον ἔφθασεν ὥρην, / μητρὸς ἀνυμφεύτοιο μεμνκότα κόλπον ἀράξας, and 48.834 (Aura pregnant, to give birth to the third Dionysus)⁴² οὐκ ἴδον, οὐ πυθόμην, ὅτι παρθένος υἷα λοχεύει.
- c. Tears of the man-God in 12.171, Βάκχος ἄναξ δάκρυσε, βροτῶν ἵνα δάκρυα λύσῃ, a Nonnian line famous since Golega, eighty years ago;⁴³ this compassion of the Lord towards the mortals is inspired by the death of Lazarus; in the *Dionysiaca*, Dionysus reacts to the death of Ampelus, who will live again, under another form, the vine. But he does not have the power of calling him back to life.

In none of these passages do we find the expression of an anti-Christian polemic; and not more in 41.56, “a childbirth without fecundation” (ἄσπορος ὠδὺς),⁴⁴ or in 7.79, (Zeus will give to the world his only son). Speaking of the mythological Zeus, to say “his only son” sounds like a joke; but it actually means that Dionysus will be the only Zeus’ son to whom his father gives birth through the miracle of the thigh. These witticisms, as others like 48.834, already quoted, come from the mere rhetorical tradition; they imply no personal opinion from the poet.

⁴¹ Ἀμαίευτος is used in [Opp.] *Cyn.* 1.40 (Mair: ἀμαιώτοιο *plurr.*) and twice in the *Dion.*, applied to Dionysus in 1.5 and 48.841; also in *Par.* 3.36; ἀνύμφευτος, several times of the Holy Virgin.

⁴² Cf. Vian 2003, 70–2, 95 with n. 1, after Liebeschuetz 1996, and Agosti 2003, 362 and 412. Note that the “immaculate conception” is Mary’s, not Jesus’, conception; *pace* Vian 2003, 95.

⁴³ Golega 1930, 69. Cf. Cyril’s comment on John 11.35 δακρύει δὲ ὁ κύριος ... ἵνα ἡμῶν περιστείλῃ δάκρυον, and Nonn. *Par.* 11.123–4. No spur of anti-Christian polemic: *contra*, erroneously, Bogner 1934, 332. See Vian 1995, 68.

⁴⁴ Ἀσπορος is employed in the official text of the Concil of Ephesus for the nativity of Christ; the Council says promptly “ἄνευ ὠδίνων”. Ὤδὺς is one of the favourite words of Nonnus (58× and 39× of the derivative verb).

7 Christian Theology in the *Dionysiaca* (continued): the “Hope”

By contrast, if salvation vocabulary is absent from the *Dionysiaca*, the vocabulary of solace through hope, with such words as παρηγορέω, παρήγορος, is quite conspicuous (37×). Its first appearance in the poem is at *Dion.* 3.351–3, where Electra gives some comfort to Cadmus by describing to him her own fate: “Ἐμπης τόσσα παθοῦσα παρήγορον ἐλπίδα βόσκω / Ζηνὸς ὑποσχέσθην, ὅτι ἐλεύσομαι εἰς πόλον ἄστρον. And she allows him a glimpse into a better fate (359, Electra to Cadmus καὶ σὺ) ἐσσομένων προκέλευθον ὑπέρτερον ἐλπίδα βόσκων. The astral apotheosis of souls after the death is quite explicit in Electra’s mouth; she will become the seventh star of the Pleiades constellation.⁴⁵ The theme occurs again and again, e.g. at 7.351 (Zeus to Semele/Thyone) Ἐλπίσιν ἐσσομένησιν παρηγορέων ἔο νύμφην, and *ibid.* 366. While other promises of immortality are postponed to a remote future, to Semele immortality, under the name of Thyone, is at once granted and actual.

But hopes are of more than one sort. At 9.84 (Hermes to Ino) we find again the theme of the “better hope” of eternity ἀντὶ δὲ Κάδμου ἐλπίδι λωιτέρῃ καλέσῃς Νηρῆα τοκῆα, παιδὶ τεῶ ζώουσα σὺν ἀθανάτῳ Μελικέρτῃ. Here we have not a catasterism, but a migration from this world to another realm of gods, not the highest of heaven, but the deepest of the seas, as Ino will become a Nereid (79). This is a manner of foretelling the ultimate fate of Dionysus, first welcomed by minor deities.⁴⁶ As expected, the question of apotheosis/fate *post mortem* is again in the foreground at the end of the poem.

At 46.360–3, we are at the end of the “Pentheus drama”, Cadmus, Agave and Autonoe are desperate after Pentheus’ (and Actaeon’s) deaths.⁴⁷ Dionysus is soothing the two mothers’ and old man’s grief by presenting the women a “drug of oblivion” (360), then addressing Cadmus with “healing words” (361), and at the end showing the women “primeval oracles of the hope to come” (363 ἐλπίδος ἐσσομένης πρωτάγγελα θέσφατα φαίνων). For the first kind of solace (as for the gift of the cosmic shield) the Homeric reference, here *Od.* 4.219–32, is clear but there is more than that. The contents of the “oracles,

⁴⁵ This belief is widespread in very different social groups; we find it also in Procl. *Hy.* 3.7, and at a more humble level in the funerary poem of a Phrygian astrologist, probably at the beginning of the fourth century CE, a certain Epitynchanos, on which see Robert 1937, 131–2; SGO 16/31/10.

⁴⁶ Cf. ad loc. Chrétien 1985, 106 and Gigli Piccardi 2003, 646 n. 1.

⁴⁷ Nonnus depicts also Dionysus as a god of solace in this world, soothing the pain of Pallene with the same “healing words” as for Cadmus, but without reference to “first oracles”.

first messengers of hope for the future” (363)⁴⁸ are not easy to guess, except if we admit that Christian hope is meant. The simplest and indeed the only way to understand the line, for a Christian, is to see in it an allusion to the superiority of Christian revelation over the pagan one.

We have no way to tell what else this hope could be; at all events, Cadmus and Harmonia’s final fate will be their metamorphosis into a pair of stone snakes on the Illyrian coast. This fate is recalled several times in the poem⁴⁹ and again, after 44.107–18, here at lines 364–7. The couple will become stone gods. Since Pindar’s verses, the pair was admitted in some sort of “Islands of the Blessed”. Here, Cadmus and Harmonia’s fate is at best an expiation for the murder of Dirke’s guardian snake by Cadmus. This peculiarity (stone snakes instead of living snakes) is attested only in Nonnus. It may, or may not, be Nonnus’ invention.⁵⁰ It is redolent of Christian polemic against pagan gods, mute and blind images. As for the allusion at 7.72, when Zeus shows Aion “oracles higher” than those of Delphi, it might be tempting to compare it with the representation of the Castalia fountain at the four rivers of Paradise, on the pavement of the Justinianic church at Qasr el-Lebia in Cyrenaica, where the four rivers stand for the four evangelical messages, and Castalia personifies a first kind of revelation, weaker but well timed.⁵¹ This enables us to explain both the interest taken by Nonnus in out-of-fashion tales and the double meaning of ποικιλία, in terms of aesthetics and of theology. A secular world, with Roman law and classics, asserts its presence, without breaking Christian faith.

So, the hope for a better fate *post mortem* and admission into heaven is actually present in the poem, but hardly where we should have expected it. The *Dionysiaca* gives to mankind a glimpse into eternal happiness in the after-life, even if the hopes remain selective. Most times, these hopes are aiming at catasterism to fulfil the soul’s expectations, giving reward and comfort: ἐλπὶς might take in a small number of places an eschatological meaning or *double sens*. Astral immortality is in no way restricted to an “elite” of philosophers or to imperial persons. It is an ancient, even common belief.

These are a few instances among many catasterisms in the poem.⁵² They are singled out by the use of some characteristic words, and they affect only

48 Almost the totality of the ten composites in πρωτα- or πρωτο- employed by Nonnus in the *Dion.* appear in cosmic passages or with an “original” connotation. Cf. also προάγγελα, 21x, of which three as an adjective, “fore-telling” in 21.304, 26.282, 38.16.

49 Chuvin 1976, 168, on 4.420.

50 See also 48.599–698, the devastation of Aphrodite’s sanctuary by Aura and my remarks in *Alexandrie la Divine* (in the press).

51 The interpretation of Qasr el-Lebia’s pavement is by Agosti 2003a, followed by Chuvin 2009a.

52 Cf. e.g. 47.246–9, 257–9, the catasterism of Erigone, and Fayant 2000, 25–38.

Cadmus, the daughters of Cadmus, and Electra. Nonnus, in his secular poem, is sometimes actually alluding to the Christian holy books he is using, even if at a much lesser degree than to his secular models. But anyway, the poet is sharing concepts familiar to any cultured Christian at his time. His Dionysus creates material happiness, as well as a first, rough, form of individual Justice, as noticed by Vian; and in the end, he leaves room for a superior form of Justice, that is Roman rule, at the level of the State as well as for individuals. This, to my opinion, is one of the meanings of the Beroe's and Pallene's affairs.⁵³ As seen by Francis Vian, Dionysus is neither a rival nor a prefiguration of Christ; he is a precursor, a forerunner: he does not imitate, does not explicitly announce, but alludes to the coming of the true Saviour and he prepares the material world to that. After all, wine is necessary for the eucharist.

⁵³ Vian 2003, 95 n. 1.

II: Nonnus and the Literary Past

Katerina Carvounis

Peitho* in Nonnus' *Dionysiaca*: the Case of Cadmus and Harmonia

Scholarly attention has long been drawn to the overtly rhetorical character of speeches and the limited amount of dialogue in the *Dionysiaca*: as Wifstrand has pointed out, there is seldom a reply to a speech in the epic, and most speeches are outbursts of feeling (with or without a listener) often directed to absentees, nature, or animals.¹ Yet speeches are not without consequence; in fact, the plot of the epic is often activated by speeches that aim to persuade the addressee to follow a particular course of action by means of verbal argumentation, rather than injunction, exhortation, threat, or supernatural intervention alone.² Such speeches of persuasion punctuate the epic at key points in Nonnus' Dionysiac saga and constitute a driving force for the progression of the narrative,³ while they are often associated with deception, as the speaker assumes a different *persona* or is endowed with powers unknown to the

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1 Wifstrand 1933, 142; cf. Agosti 2005, 46. According to Elderkin 1906, 2–3, there are 305 speeches in the *Dionysiaca*, which comprise 36 % of the epic.

2 On two occasions in the epic, the narrator explicitly praises the gift of persuasion of two seers: *Dion.* 6.33–4 Ἀλλὰ μόγῃς παρέπεισεν ἀναινομένην ἔτι Δῆώ / ἡδυεπὴς Ἀστραῖος ἔχων θελξίφρονα πειθῶ; 38.42–4 μαντιπῶλος δὲ γέρων γελῶντι προσώπων / Ἴδμων ἐμπεδόμυθον ἔχων ἐπὶ χεῖλεσι πειθῶ / λαὸν ὅλον θάρσυνεν.

3 Speeches of persuasion in earlier epic also have a direct impact on the narrative; for instance, Athena's speech (as the Antenorid Laodocus) to Pandarus in *Il.* 4.93–103, where she urges him to shoot at Menelaus (note ἧ ῥά νύ μοί τι πίθοιο, Λυκάονος υἱὲ δαΐφρον; *Il.* 4.93; ὥς φάτ' Ἀθηναίη, τῶι δὲ φρένας ἄφροني πειθεῖν, *Il.* 4.104), constitutes Nonnus' model for an Indian's speech to Melaneus, urging him to shoot at Dionysus (*Dion.* 29.52–67): see Vian 1990, 336, on *Dion.* 29.58–62. Yet the main turning points of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* (such as Hector's decision to fight Achilles, Achilles' return to the war, and Odysseus' recognitions with key members of his family) depend less on isolated speeches of persuasion than on other factors such as shame, revenge, and tokens of recognition respectively.

addressee.⁴ It is by means of speech and music that Cadmus (disguised as a herdsman) makes Typhoeus give him Zeus' sinews (1.486–506), which are necessary for the Olympian to secure his supremacy and establish cosmic order, while Aphrodite (equipped with her cestus and disguised as Peisinoë) persuades Harmonia to marry Cadmus (4.77–176), from which union will spring Semele, mother of Dionysus. At two critical moments in the *Dionysiaca* a disguised god appears to a mortal and persuades them to undertake a course of action that will lead directly to their death: Hera (as Semele's nurse) persuades Semele to ask Zeus to appear with his thunderbolts (8.207–63), and Ate (as Ampelus' companion) persuades the young man to get on a bull (11.118–54).⁵ The subsequent deaths of Semele and Ampelus lead to Dionysus' re-birth from Zeus' thigh and Ampelus' transformation into a vine respectively. Speeches of persuasion also have a pivotal role within the context of the Indian war in the centre of the epic: Hera (as Melaneus) moves the Indian chief Astraeis to raise war against Dionysus (14.309–14); Iris (as Night) persuades Hypnos to play his part in the deception of Zeus (31.136–90); Chalcomede deceitfully persuades Morrheus to take off his corselet (35.111–38);⁶ and Tectaphus' daughter Eerie persuades her father's guards to allow her to visit him, which enables her to nurse him from her own breast (26.121–34).

Nonnus' *Dionysiaca* includes examples of failed persuasion too: Helios cannot dissuade his son Phaethon from riding his chariot (38.196–211) and Teiresias cannot bring Pentheus to respect Dionysus (45.96–215). Whereas many speeches of persuasion are followed by the half-verses ὦς φαμένη παρέ-

⁴ For πειθῶ mingled with trickery and lies cf. *Dion.* 20.184–5 and 47.256–7 respectively. For deceit in the *Dionysiaca* cf. Newbold 2010.

⁵ There are marked correspondences between these two speeches: Hera and Ate argue that the gifts that Semele and Ampelus receive from Zeus and Dionysus respectively are not commensurate with the powers of these gods: Hera lists gifts that other gods could have brought Semele, as well as Zeus' gifts to his other brides, while Ate lists benefits reaped by other followers of Dionysus, as well as gifts received by friends of other gods. Although Zeus and Dionysus know what will happen (cf. *Dion.* 8.351 f. and 11.83–98), they cannot avert the tragic outcome; yet neither Semele nor Ampelus are altogether effaced by death, for the former is catasterised and the latter becomes the vine.

⁶ Chalcomede's speech recalls Cadmus' address to Typhoeus (*Dion.* 1.486–506): both speakers have received divine reassurance (1.378–407, 33.351–82) before they persuade their addressees (bewitched by music and struck with desire respectively) to let go of their sources of strength, and they also promise to honour them accordingly, as Cadmus will celebrate Typhoeus with song and Chalcomede will become Morrheus' bedmate. The apparently divergent contexts of these two speeches converge through the simile in *Dion.* 1.525–34, where Typhoeus listening to Cadmus' music is likened to a young man mesmerised by a girl.

πεισε(ν)⁷ or ὥς εἰπὼν παρέπεισεν,⁸ with the addressee then promptly acting as advised, the speeches by Helios and Teiresias conclude with the words εἶπε καὶ οὐ παρέπεισε (38.212 = 45.216) and are followed by disastrous consequences for the unyielding addressee. Furthermore, in *Dionysiaca* 42, Dionysus (42.282–312, 319–21, 363–428) and Poseidon (42.459–85) are unsuccessful in persuading Beroë to marry either of them, while Hymnus' unsuccessful attempt to court Nicaea leads directly to his death (15.290–369).

The *Dionysiaca* also contains numerous references to the goddess Peitho herself. Uniquely in Nonnus, Peitho features as the wife of Hermes,⁹ who is referred to as “leader of the tongue, guide of intelligent speech” (*Dion.* 26.283–4).¹⁰ But as in the earlier literary tradition,¹¹ here too the distinction between Peitho as goddess of verbal persuasion and Peitho as goddess of seduction is not clear-cut, and Peitho more commonly appears in the *Dionysiaca* in amatory contexts.¹² She is thus mentioned among (24.262–4) or alongside the Graces (47.315–8),¹³ as an attendant to Aphrodite (33.110–2), and in opposition to Athena (16.138–9, 25.150–1).¹⁴ What is striking in Nonnus' handling of Peitho in this epic is that her intervention can have a direct impact upon mortals in the course of the action (in contexts relevant to marriage and/or procreation).¹⁵

In the main part of this paper, I shall examine the prelude to the marriage of Cadmus and Harmonia in *Dionysiaca* 3–4 as a case study for Nonnus' treat-

7 Cf. *Dion.* 11.155, 14.315, 20.289, 26.135, 31.191, 32.1, 35.139, 40.31, 42.1.

8 Cf. *Dion.* 18.42, 24.170, 29.68, 36.470, 46.97. The half-verse in *Dion.* 47.728 follows a speech consisting mostly of exhortations with the argumentation being restricted in the explanation for these exhortations.

9 *Dion.* 5.574–5; 8.221; 33.128–30; 48.232, 710–2. See Vian 2003, 153 (on *Dion.* 48.232) and Fayant 1998, 147; cf. also Gigli Piccardi 2003, 445 on *Dion.* 5.574 f. For earlier associations between Hermes and Peitho in cult see Stafford 2000, 114–5.

10 Hermes is also associated with Beroë, city of Justice (*Dion.* 41.145, 159–61, 171). Fayant 1998, 157 has argued that the adjective πανθελγής (used of Hermes' rod in *Dion.* 35.234–6) qualifies the divine *logos* in the *Paraphrase* (*Par.* 18.177), thus pointing to Hermes-Logos of the hermetic tradition through a network of resonances between the two works ascribed to Nonnus. For Hermes-Logos and Christ see Accorinti 1995.

11 See Buxton 1982 and Stafford 2000.

12 *Dion.* 10.280, 34.292, 42.530, 47.329–30, 48.108–10, 48.299–300. Cf., e.g., *Carm. Anacr.* 16.24–4 West (γράφει χεῖλος οἷα Πειθοῦς, / προκαλούμενον φίλημα), where Peitho is situated on the lips and leads to a kiss. For the links between Peitho and Aphrodite, and for representations of the two goddesses, see LIMC VII.1, 242–50 s.v. Peitho.

13 Gerlaud 2005, 159–60 on *Dion.* 33.110–2 notes that whereas Peitho is one of the Graces in *Dion.* 24.263, she is differentiated from them in *Dion.* 47.315–8.

14 For persuasion also associated with erotic contexts in the *Dionysiaca* cf. *Dion.* 42.34 ἔφλεγε δ', ὅσπον ἔθελγεν ἐπιστάξας μέλι πειθοῦς (of Eros making Dionysus desire Beroë).

15 See Nonn. *Dion.* 3.83–130 and 48.594–600. As Vian 2003, 142 on 48.106–10 has argued, Peitho's presence in the contest between Dionysus and Pallene suggests that the latter will

ment of *peitho* and the goddess Peitho in materialising Zeus' promise to reward Cadmus with Harmonia. In *Dionysiaca* 3, Cadmus arrives at Samothrace and sets off inland to find the city; on his way to Harmonia's house, he is met by Peitho (in the form of a woman bearing a jug), who covers him in a cloud and leads him to the palace of king Emathion (3.83 f.). On the way a crow reproaches Cadmus for being tardy to reach his future wife Harmonia (3.97–123). Once the king's palace is in sight, Peitho points it out to Cadmus and disappears into the sky (3.124–30). The narrator describes the palace and then relates king Emathion's background and Cadmus' exchange with Electra, who is Emathion's mother and Harmonia's surrogate mother (3.248–372). Zeus sends Hermes as messenger to Electra to convey his will that Harmonia should marry Cadmus (3.373–444). Electra passes on the message to Harmonia, who vehemently rejects the proposed marriage. Aphrodite (as Peisinoe) appears to Harmonia equipped with the cestus and dressed in Peitho's garb. She pretends to be in love with Cadmus and through a lengthy speech (4.77–176) excites Harmonia, who then bids farewell to her family and fatherland, and expresses her resolution to marry Cadmus (4.182–96). As the young girl prepares to sail away with him, the Moon mockingly reproaches Aphrodite and tells Harmonia that she will bear the pains of love (4.213–25). Cadmus sets sail; he stays at the steering-oar and seats Harmonia on the stern, while a passenger comments on the resemblance of Cadmus and Harmonia to Eros and Aphrodite respectively (4.238–46).

This episode shows Peitho intervening directly in the course of action, while it also contains the longest speech of successful persuasion in the *Dionysiaca* with Aphrodite deploying rhetoric and argumentation to arouse Harmonia's desire and persuade her to marry Cadmus (4.177–8). The latter part of this paper will examine Peitho's critical intervention before Dionysus' rape of the virgin huntress Aura at the end of the *Dionysiaca*: Peitho there removes a cloud from Aura's eyes and invites the thirsty huntress to drink from a stream of wine created by Dionysus (48.597–8). The present paper thus seeks to illustrate how Nonnus adapts episodes from the earlier literary tradition and draws attention to the force of *peitho* and the role of the goddess Peitho while reflecting contemporary rhetorical practices.

eventually be persuaded by Dionysus' speech, as it is subtly hinted in the text (*Dion.* 48.234–5). For Peitho's role in the marriage ceremony cf. Plut. *Quaest.* 264b, and for her role in a married couple's life cf. Plut. *Coniug. praec.* 138c–d: see Stafford 2000, 136–7.

1 Cadmus and Harmonia, Jason and Medea

Cadmus' journey to securing Harmonia as his future bride (3.43–4.248) is framed by two supernatural speeches by the crow and the Moon, which find marked correspondences with the romance between Jason and Medea in Apollonius' *Argonautica* 3,¹⁶ where a crow addresses the seer Mopsus, who is accompanying Jason when the latter is about to meet Medea (Apoll. Rhod. 3.927–47), while the Moon mocks Medea as she flees Colchis with Jason (4.57–65). Both in the *Argonautica* and in the *Dionysiaca*, the crows begin with a dismissive comment towards the addressee (Apoll. Rhod. 3.932 ἄκλειής ὄδε μάντις “No fame has the seer”¹⁷ ~ *Dion.* 3.103 / νήπιος ἔπλετο Κάδμος “So Cadmus is a baby”),¹⁸ and the Moon mockingly refers to love as pain that must be endured (Apoll. Rhod. 4.64–5 ἀλλ' ἔρχεο, τέτλαθι δ' ἔμπης, / καὶ πινυτή περ ἐοῦσα, πολύστονον ἄλγος αἰεῖρειν ~ *Dion.* 4.224 τλήθι φέρειν πόνον ἴσον). Harmonia's departure is openly modelled on that of Medea in *Argonautica* 4: there are verbal echoes between their tearful (Apoll. Rhod. 4.34; *Dion.* 4.199) farewells (Apoll. Rhod. 4.32 ~ *Dion.* 4.183), and both maidens embrace their beds and the walls and doors of the home they are leaving (Apoll. Rhod. 4.26–7; *Dion.* 4.203–5), while they are then seated on the ship's stern as they depart from their respective homelands (Apoll. Rhod. 4.188–9 πρύμνῃ δ' ἐνεείσατο κούρην / ἀνθέμενος “He lifted the girl and seated her in the stern” ~ *Dion.* 4.233–4 ἐπὶ πρύμνῃ δὲ καὶ αὐτὴν / Ἀρμονίην ἄψαυστον ὁμόπλοον ἵδρυσσε κούρην “but he kept the girl Harmonia untouched sitting on the poop, his companion”).¹⁹

Both *Argonautica* 3 and *Dionysiaca* 3–4 broadly deal with a young maiden who desires a foreigner and willingly leaves her fatherland with him, while in both cases this desire is attributed to divine intervention (by Eros at Aphrodite's instructions, and by Aphrodite disguised as Peisinoe respectively).²⁰ Yet there are salient differences in the context and structure of the two episodes:

¹⁶ See (e.g.) Chuvin 1976, 6, 43–4; D'Ippolito 1964, 202–3. For Nonnus' engagement with *Argonautica* 3 for *Dionysiaca* 33–35 (Morrheus and Chalcone) see Montenz 2004.

¹⁷ All translations of Apollonius of Rhodes are by W. H. Race (Loeb).

¹⁸ All translations of the *Dionysiaca* are by Rouse 1940, sometimes adapted.

¹⁹ Cf., e.g., Chuvin 1976, 158, on *Dion.* 4.199; Vian 2001, 302–3 (= 2005, 106–7 = 2008, 405–6).

²⁰ The marriage between Jason and Medea will (eventually) result in the death of their children, while Cadmus and Harmonia too will witness, and lament for, their children's misfortunes, as Cadmus himself will acknowledge (*Dion.* 46.253–64). Cadmus and the foundation of Thebes are explicitly recalled in a digression explaining the origin of the dragon's teeth that Aetes gives the Argonauts in Apoll. Rhod. 3.1176–87.

unlike Medea, Harmonia does not (have to) betray her parents and fatherland to follow her future husband; and unlike Jason, Cadmus does not have to overcome dangerous obstacles. Furthermore, whereas in *Argonautica* 3 words are an important vehicle for Jason and Medea to interact with each other (Apoll. Rhod. 3.973–1147)²¹ and for Medea to externalise her inner struggle (3.464–70, 636–44, 771–801),²² there is no real interaction between Cadmus and Harmonia before they leave Samothrace,²³ but it is Aphrodite’s words that turn Harmonia’s mind from rejection to acceptance. In what follows, I shall illustrate Nonnus’ use of direct speech and rhetorical techniques to externalise thoughts, dreams, imagery and messages that are related by the narrator in Apollonius’ parallel episode between Jason and Medea.²⁴

Let us then look at the sequence of Medea’s inner thoughts and emotions as they develop in *Argonautica* 3 after Jason departs from Aeetes’ palace following the latter’s challenge to the Argonauts. Shot by Eros’ arrow, Medea brings to her mind’s eye “what he himself [= Jason] was like, what clothes he was wearing, what he said, how he sat on his chair, and how he walked to the door. As she pondered, she did not think that any other man was like him, and ever in her ears rang his voice and the honey-sweet words he had spoken”, Apoll. Rhod. 3.453–8:

προπρὸ δ’ ἄρ’ ὀφθαλμῶν ἔτι οἱ ἰνδάλλετο πάντα,
αὐτός θ’ οἷος ἔην, οἷοίσι τε φάρεσιν ἦστο,
οἷα τ’ ἔειπ’, ὥς θ’ ἔζετ’ ἐπὶ θρόνου, ὥς τε θύραζε
ἦϊεν· οὐδέ τιν’ ἄλλον οἶσατο πορφύρουσα
ἔμμεναι ἀνέρα τοῖον· ἐν οὔασι δ’ αἰὲν ὀρώρει
αὐδὴ τε μῦθοί τε μελίφρονες οὐς ἀγόρευσε.

Meanwhile, Aeetes gathers an assembly of the Colchians and reveals his destructive plans concerning the Argonauts (3.579 f.). The whole of Aeetes’

²¹ Words are crucial for Jason to win over Medea, as Mopsus reminds him: Apoll. Rhod. 3.945–6 οἷόςθι δ’ αὐτὸς / λίσσεό μιν πυκινῶσι παρατροπέων ἐπέεσσιν. Mori 2007, 464 highlights Jason’s “charming manner of speaking that will captivate Medea in Colchis”.

²² On “interior monologues” in Apollonius see Fusillo 2008, 147–66.

²³ As Hadjittofi 2010, 75–88 points out, there is no indication of Cadmus’ own feelings. For Medea’s troubled mind in the narrator’s voice cf. Apoll. Rhod. 3.443–62, 616–35, 744–69, 948–66.

²⁴ On persuasion in the *Argonautica* see Toohey 1994, 164–9. For Nonnus and the rhetorical tradition see Miguélez Caverio 2010 (invective); Agosti 2006 and Wifstrand 1933, 147–50 (*ethopoeae*); Massimilla 2003 (ὑποφορά); Lasky 1978 and Stegemann 1933, 209–30 (*encomium*); cf. also the comments in Cuartero i Iborra 1994, 294–6, Gerstinger 1943–47, 78–9, and Keydell 1936, 912.

proclamation in the assembly is related in extended indirect speech, which is, as Hunter points out, “possibly without real parallel in high Greek poetry”.²⁵ Aeetes adds that he would never have received Phrixus as suppliant in his palace if he had not been instructed to do so by Hermes, who had been dispatched by Zeus (3.584–8):²⁶

οὐδὲ γὰρ Αἰολίδην Φρίξον μάλα περ χατέοντα
δέχθαι ἐνὶ μεγάροισιν ἐφέστιον, ὃς περὶ πάντων
ξείνων μελιχίῃ τε θεουδείῃ τ' ἐκέκαστο,
εἰ μή οἱ Ζεὺς αὐτὸς ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ ἄγγελον ἦκεν
Ἑρμείαν, ὥς κεν προσκηδέος ἀντιάσειε.

For he said that he would not have received the Aeolid Phrixus as a guest in his palace in spite of his great need – he who surpassed all strangers in gentleness and fear of the gods – had not Zeus himself sent his messenger Hermes to him from heaven, so that he might find an affectionate host.

Following Aeetes' proclamation, Medea dreams that “a contentious disagreement arose between her father and the strangers, and both sides turned the decision over to her to be as she desired in her own mind. And she immediately chose the stranger with no regard for her parents”, 3.627–31:

νεῖκος πέλεν ἀμφήριστον
πατρί τε καὶ ξείνοισ· αὐτῇ δ' ἐπιέτρεπον ἄμφω
τὼς ἔμεν ὥς κεν ἐῴσι μετὰ φρεσὶν ἰθύσειεν·
ἢ δ' ἄφρων τὸν ξεῖνον, ἀφειδήσασα τοκῶν,
εἴλετο.

Medea deliberates whether or not to help Jason and even considers killing herself, but resolves to help as she had promised. Finally, when Jason arrives at the shrine of Hecate to meet Medea, he appeared “to her longing eyes, striding on high like Sirius from the Ocean, which rises beautiful and bright to behold, but casts unspeakable grief on the flocks”, 3.956–9:

αὐτὰρ ὃ γ' οὐ μετὰ δηρὸν ἐλδομένῃ ἐφάανθη,
ὑψόσ' ἀναθρώσκων ἅ τε Σείριος Ὠκεανοῖο,
ὃς δ' ἦτοι καλὸς μὲν ἀρίζηλός τ' ἐσιδέσθαι
ἀντέλλει, μήλοισι δ' ἐν ἄσπετον ἦκεν οἰζύν.

²⁵ See Hunter 1993, 147–8 and Hunter 1989, 160, on Apoll. Rhod. 3.579–605, where he explores the effect of this indirect mode.

²⁶ For Aeetes in the *Argonautica* see Williams 1996.

Jason is successful in persuading Medea to help him (3.975–1007) and she gives him a drug to anoint himself and detailed advice to face the challenges set by her father (3.1013–62). In the exchange that follows between the two, Medea asks Jason not to forget her (μνώεο: 3.1069, 1110), and he refers to the gratitude that Greece will owe her and to the wedding chamber they will share (3.1120–30). While Medea's monologues voice her inner struggle and her resolve to act, the narrative follows her emotions as they are being influenced by, and reflected in, dreams, images and thoughts.

In *Dionysiaca* 4, Harmonia is given two speeches to express first her outright rejection (*Dion.* 4.36–63) and then, following Aphrodite's speech, her wholehearted approval of Cadmus as her suitor (4.182–96), with this change of heart further emphasised through verbal contrasts: 4.25 ἀπειθεί ... κούρηι and 4.178 πειθήμονα κούρηι; 4.30 /ξεῖνον ἔχειν ἀπέειπε and 4.180 /ξεῖνον ἔχειν μενέαινε. From Harmonia's initial reaction to the divine message to her departure with Cadmus from Samothrace, this first part of *Dionysiaca* 4 contains five speeches.²⁷ Whereas, as we saw earlier, Apollonius' Aeetes had mentioned Hermes' visitation from Zeus within an extended passage of indirect speech, Hermes' visitation from Zeus to Electra is narrated in direct speech at the end of *Dionysiaca* 3. This speech is divided into two parts: the first is an extended address to Electra (3.425–35), while the second consists of Zeus' message (3.435–44), which Hermes frames with reminders to his addressee to obey (3.435–6 πείθεο; 3.444 πειθομένη).

Harmonia's objections to a marriage with Cadmus are related first in indirect speech (4.28–33) and then in direct speech (4.36–63). There is significant overlap in the content of these two versions, with the first part of Harmonia's speech amplifying her objections as stated in the narrator's voice, namely that Cadmus brings no gifts (4.38–9) and that he is a vagrant suitor (4.40–4). Here is the latter part of her speech, *Dion.* 4.44–63:

Ἄλλ' ἐρέεις, Κρονίωνι τεῶι χραίσμησεν ἀκοίτη·	45
πῶς Διὸς οὐ γέρας ἔσχεν Ὀλύμπιον, εἴ περ Ὀλύμπου,	
ὥς ἐνέπεις, προμάχιζε, καὶ οὐ Διὸς εὐνέτις Ἥρη	
Ζητὸς ἀοσητῆρι συνήρμοσε παρθένον Ἥβην;	
Οὐ χατέει Κάδμοιο τεὸς πόσις ὑψιμέδων Ζεὺς.	
Ἰλήκοι Κρονίδης· ἐψεύσατο θέσκελος Ἑρμῆς	50
ἀμφὶ Διὸς γενετῆρος· ἐγὼ δ' οὐκ οἶδα πιθέσθαι,	
εἰ λίπε θοῦρον Ἄρηα, κυβερνητῆρα κυδοιμοῦ,	
καὶ βροτὸν ἄνδρα κάλεσσεν ἐοῦ συνάεθλον ἀγῶνος	

27 Yet no dialogue, as Chuvin 1976, 41 points out.

ὁ κρατέων κόσμοιο καὶ αἰθέρος. Ἄ μέγα θαῦμα,
τοσσατίους Τιτῆνας ἐνεκλήισε βερέθρῳι, 55
καὶ Κάδμου χατέεσκεν, ὅπως ἓνα μοῦνον ὀλέσσει.

But you will say he helped your husband Cronion; why did the man not get from Zeus an Olympian gift of honour, if indeed he was defender of Olympus, as you say? And why did Hera, consort of Zeus, not join virgin Hebe to the helper of Zeus? Your husband Zeus who rules on high has no need of Cadmus. Son of Cronus, be gracious; divine Hermes lied about father Zeus. I do not know how I can believe that he abandoned furious Ares, leader of warfare, and called in a mortal man as partner in the game—he who rules over the world and sky. Here is a great marvel: he locked up so many Titans in a pit and was in need of Cadmus to destroy only one!

This part of Harmonia's speech can be related to the exercise of refutation (ἀνασκευή), one of the *progymnasmata* in the rhetorical handbooks.²⁸ Aphthonius claims that one should refute "what is neither very clear nor what is altogether impossible, but what holds middle ground".²⁹ He further recommends that those "engaged in refutation should first state the false claim of those who advance it, then add an exposition of the subject and use these headings: first, that it is unclear and incredible, in addition that it is impossible and illogical and inappropriate, and finally adding that it is inexpedient".³⁰ In the main part of her speech to Electra, Harmonia challenges Cadmus' greatest claim to fame, namely, that he has helped Zeus. She criticises Hermes who lied about the story (4.50–1 *ἐψεύσατο* θέσκελος Ἑρμῆς / ἀμφὶ Διὸς γενετῆρος "divine Hermes lied in what he said about Father Zeus"), and draws attention to the absence of logic (if Cadmus did help Zeus regain Olympus, why did he not receive a reward from Olympus?), to its incredibility (for she cannot believe – 4.51 ἐγὼ δ' οὐκ οἶδα *πιθέσθαι* – that Zeus neglected Ares, god of warfare, and resorted to a mortal's help), and its implausibility (it would be a great marvel [4.54] that Zeus was able to lock up so many Titans in a pit but require Cadmus to destroy one). Harmonia concludes by complaining that whereas both her fathers (Ares and Zeus) had wedded their sisters (Aphrodite

28 See Aphthon. 5; [Hermog.] 5; Nicol. 29–35. Note Chuvin 1976, 42: "Les v. 36–44 amplifient les v. 28–33. Les v. 45–56 réfutent la thèse d'une récompense de Zeus à Cadmos". For rhetorical elements in speeches see also Kröll in this volume, p. 251 f. (on the Ampelus episode).

29 Aphthon. 5.1 Ἀνασκευή ἐστὶν ἀνατροπὴ προκειμένου τινὸς πράγματος. Ἀνασκευαστέον δὲ τὰ μήτε λίαν σαφὴ μήτε ἀδύνατα παντελῶς, ἀλλ' ὅσα μέσην ἔχει τὴν τάξιν. All translations of Aphthonius are by Kennedy 2003.

30 Aphthon. 5.2 Δεῖ δὲ ἀνασκευάζοντας πρῶτον μὲν εἰπεῖν τὴν τῶν φησάντων διαβολήν, εἴτα ἐπιθεῖναι τὴν τοῦ πράγματος ἔκθεσιν, καὶ κεφαλαίοις χρήσασθαι τοῖσδε· πρῶτον μὲν ἀσαφεῖ καὶ ἀπιθάνῳι, πρὸς τούτῳ καὶ ἀδυνάτῳι καὶ ἀνακολούθῳι καὶ ἀπρεπεῖ, καὶ τελευταῖον ἐπενεγκεῖν ἀσύμφορον.

and Hera respectively), she is compelled to have a banished man (4.63 λιπόπατρην ἀκοίτην).

Aphrodite's speech in response to Harmonia (4.77–176) contains elements of an *encomium*, and the goddess brings to the fore, and engages with, images and thoughts similar to those that had been experienced by Apollonius' Medea.³¹ According to Aphthonius, an *encomium* typically opens with a proemium appropriate to the subject; one then moves to the subject's origin and upbringing, focuses on their deeds, offers a comparison to elevate the subject, and concludes with an epilogue.³² Aphrodite's speech starts with a sort of "proemium", where Harmonia is called ὀλβίη (4.77, cf. 4.96) and μακαρτάτη (4.78), while reference is made to Cadmus with three terms in ascending degree of intimacy: 4.77 οἶον ἀλήτην, which acknowledges Harmonia's main objection to this marriage; 4.78 οἶον ... μνηστῆρα, which is the term that Harmonia herself had used for local suitors that she could have married (4.42); and 4.78 οἶον ἀκοίτην, which picks up Harmonia's last word (4.63).

Harmonia's objection that Cadmus is a wanderer is answered partly through speculation on his real identity (4.80–4), which probes into Cadmus' origin (that is, the first topic in an *encomium*), and partly through the later claim that Peisinoe herself would go anywhere with him (4.114–8, 160–1), while the issue that he comes without gifts is addressed through consideration of the fact that she (Peisinoe) would not want any gifts anyway as long as she has Cadmus (4.119–23). In wondering about his real identity, Aphrodite-Peisinoe introduces comparisons that aptly elevate Cadmus: she compares him first with the mortal Adonis³³ and then with Zeus' Olympian sons (bar Harmonia's own father Ares), Hermes and Apollo. She thus acknowledges Harmonia's earlier point that a lie *does* surround Cadmus, but suggests that it refers to his descent rather than his actions (4.84 ἀλλὰ Διὸς γένος ἔσχεν, ἐὴν δ' ἐψεύσατο

31 See Aphthon. 8; [Hermog.] 7; Nicol. 47–58. Cf. Frangoulis 2006a, 42 and 45 for reference to the speech as an ἐγκώμιον to Cadmus.

32 Aphthon. 8.3 προοιμίᾳσιν μὲν πρὸς τὴν οὖσαν ὑπόθεσιν. Εἴτα θήσεις τὸ γένος (...). Εἴτα ἀνατροπὴν (...). Εἴτα τὸ μέγιστον τῶν ἐγκωμίων κεφάλαιον ἐποίσεις τὰς πράξεις (...). Ἐπὶ τούτοις τὴν σύγκρισιν ἐκ παραθέσεως συνάγων τῷ ἐγκωμιαζομένῳ τὸ μείζον. Εἴτα ἐπίλογον εὐχῇ μᾶλλον προσήκοντα "You will construct a prooemium appropriate to the subject; then you will state the person's origin (...) then upbringing (...). Then you will compose the greatest heading of the encomion, deeds (...) after these a comparison, attributing superiority to what is being celebrated by contrast; then an epilogue rather fitting a prayer".

33 Dion. 4.80–1 ἀτρεκέες Ἀσσυρίης ἀπὸ πατρίδος αἶμα κομίζει, / ἤχι ρόος χαρίεντος Ἀδώνιδος; cf. 42.376–7 (Dionysus to Beroë) Ἀσσυρίου δέ / εἰ ἐτεὸν χαρίεντος Ἀδώνιδος αἶμα κομίζεις. The comparison with Adonis, and the self-restraining ἤλιπον that follows (4.83) echo the crow's earlier words to Cadmus himself (3.107–11, 3.109).

φύτλην “no, he is sprung from Zeus and he has concealed his stock!”).³⁴ In suggesting that Cadmus may actually be Hermes, Aphrodite engages with Harmonia’s argument that her fathers had wedded their sisters, for if Cadmus is indeed Hermes, then he is her cousin so they, too, are related (4.87 Ἀρμονίη πόσις ἦλθεν ἀνεψιὸς ἄπτερος Ἑρμῆς “here’s cousin Hermes without wings come as husband for Harmonia”).

In considering the possibility that he may be Apollo, Aphrodite-Peisinoe claims that she would never reject him (like Daphne and Harmonia),³⁵ but would even leave her parents for him, 4.96–101:

αἶθε καὶ αὐτῆς
Πεισινόης σπεύσειεν ἔχειν ὑμέναιον Ἀπόλλων·
οὐ μὲν ἐγὼ ποτε Φοῖβον ἀναίνομαι, οἷά τε Δάφνη,
οὐ νόον Ἀρμονίης μιμήσομαι· ἀλλὰ λιποῦσα
κλῆρον ἐμόν καὶ δῶμα καὶ οὖς ποθέω γενετῆρας,
ἵξομαι Ἀπόλλωνι συνέμπορος εἰς ὑμεναίους. 100

I only wish Apollo would be as eager for marriage with Peisinoe herself: I do not renounce Apollo, like Daphne, I will not imitate Harmonia’s mind; but leaving my inheritance and house and my parents whom I love, I shall go to my travels to marriage with Apollo.

This is the sort of choice that had been raised in the narrative of Medea’s dream (Apoll. Rhod. 3.627–31, cited above), and it emerges once again in this speech to Harmonia when Aphrodite moves to visual “evidence” to support her inference that Cadmus may well be Apollo: she had seen a statue of Apollo’s, and when she saw that “vagrant” (104 ἀλήτην) she thought she saw Phoebus again. A possible counter-argument envisaged by Harmonia at this point is that Apollo has a gold-gleaming crown: 4.106 ἀλλ’ ἐρέεις, ὅτι Φοῖβος ἔχει χρυσαυγέα μίτρην “But you will say, Phoibos has a goldgleaming diadem”. Massimilla has convincingly linked this rhetorical trope, which Nonnus uses seventeen times in the *Dionysiaca* to introduce an objection that the speaker will then refute, to the ὑποφορά mentioned by rhetoricians.³⁶ This rhetorical

³⁴ Cf. *Dion.* 39.53 (Deriades questioning Dionysus’ divine descent) οὐ θεός, οὐ θεὸς οὗτος· ἔην δ’ ἐψεύσατο φύτλην; cf. 29.56–7 (anonymous speaker inciting Melaneus to shoot at Dionysus) μὴ τρομέεις ποτὲ Βάκχον, ὃς ἐκ χθονίοιο τοκῆος / ὠκύμορον λάχεν αἷμα, Διὸς δ’ ἐψεύσατο φύτλην.

³⁵ The use of Harmonia’s proper name in *Dion.* 4.99 sets her on a par with Daphne as a mythological *exemplum* to be adhered to or rejected (cf. Aphrodite’s address παρθένε πασιμέλυσσα in *Dion.* 4.92).

³⁶ See Massimilla 2003, 501–13.

trope offers to Aphrodite the opportunity to say that Cadmus is gold in his entire body and to reiterate her choice of Cadmus as bedfellow over everything else – including her parents, 4.111–3:

Εἰ θέμις εἰπεῖν,
δέχνυσο καὶ γενέτην καὶ μητέρα, δέχνυσο πάσας
ἀμφιπόλους, καὶ μοῦνον ἔμοι πόρε τοῦτον ἀκοίτην.

Accept, if I dare to say it, my father and mother too, accept all my waiting-women, and give me only this man for my bedfellow!

For the main part of her speech Peisinoe gives a detailed and eroticised portrait of Cadmus through her own first-hand impression that is underpinned by emphasis on verbs of seeing (*Dion.* 4.126 ἐσέδρακον; 128 εἶδον ... εἶδον; 146 ἴδοιμι) and expressed through metaphor, comparison, and hyperbole, *Dion.* 4.128–42:

Εἶδον ἐγὼ παλάμην ῥοδοδάκτυλον, εἶδον ὀπωπὴν
ἦδὺ μέλι στάζουσας· ἔρωτοτόκου δὲ προσώπου
ὡς ῥόδα φοινίσσουσι παρηίδες· ἀκροφαῖ δὲ 130
δίχροα χιονέων ἀμαρύσσεται ἵχνια ταρσῶν
μεσσοῦσι πορφυρόντα· καὶ ὡς κρίνον εἰσὶν ἀγοστοί.
Καλλεῖψω πλοκαμίδας, ὅπως μὴ Φοῖβον ὀρίνω
χροεῖι ὀνειδίζουσα Θεραπναίης ὑακίνθου.
Εἴ ποτε δινεύων φρενοτερπέα κύκλον ὀπωπῆς 135
ὀφθαλμοὺς ἐλέλιζεν, ὅλη σελάγιζε Σελήνη
φέγγει μαρμαίροντι· καὶ εἴ ποτε βόστρυχα σείσας
αὐχένα γυμνὸν ἔθηκεν, ἐφαίνετο Φωσφόρος ἀστήρ.
Χεῖλεα σιγήσαιμι· τὸ δὲ στόμα, πορθμὸν Ἑρώτων,
Πειθὼ ναιετάουσα χεῖρι μελιηδέα φωνήν. 140
Καὶ Χάριτες μεθέπουσιν ὅλον δέμας· ἄκρα δὲ χειρῶν
αἰδέομαι κρίνειν, ἵνα μὴ γάλα λευκὸν ἐλέγξω.

I have seen his rosefinger hand, I have seen his glance distilling sweet honey; the cheeks of his lovebegetting face are red as roses; his feet go twinkling, ruddybrown in the middle, and changing colour at the ends into shining snow; his arms are lilywhite. I will pass the hair, or I may provoke Phoibos by blaming the hue of his Therapnaian iris. Whenever he moved his full eyes with their heart-gladdening glance, there was the full moon shining with sparkling light; when he shook his hair and bared his neck, there appeared the morning star! I would not speak of his lips; but Persuasion dwells in his mouth, the ferry of the Loves, and pours out honey-sweet speech. Aye, the Graces manage his whole body: hands and fingers I shrink to judge, or I may find fault with the whiteness of milk.

Whereas the narrator's voice in the *Argonautica* had described features of Jason that Medea brings to her mind's eye, it is Peisinoe's speech here that brings to life Cadmus' desirability through her own eyes. By mentioning individual physical features of the young man, Peisinoe focuses on his physique, starting from his hand, sight, cheeks, feet, and arms; she passes over his locks and moves to his glance, bare neck, and mouth, where Peitho – who is here associated with love (πορθμὸν ἐρώτων, 4.139) and speech (μελιηδέα φωνήν, 4.140)–dwells, and concludes with a mention of his white hands and fingers (4.128–42).³⁷

This juxtaposition of Apollonius' narrative of Medea's growing love for Jason with Aphrodite's persuasive speech that makes Harmonia desire Cadmus thus draws attention to the force of persuasion in the *Dionysiaca* and to Nonnus' use of rhetorical techniques in direct speech that is so characteristic in this epic. And as Hopkinson has put it, "it is possible to see the poet not only as a continuator of the classical epic tradition, but also as a product of his time".³⁸

2 The Goddess Peitho in *Dionysiaca* 3 and *Dionysiaca* 48

Let us now examine the role of Peitho herself in the progression of the narrative by beginning with her interaction with Cadmus in *Dionysiaca* 3. As we saw earlier, Cadmus, on his way to Harmonia's house, is met by Peitho (3.84 θαλαμηπόλος ... Πειθῶ), who is disguised as a labouring woman (3.86 οἷα γυνή ταλαεργός) carrying a jug filled with water. She covers Cadmus in mist and leads him through the city to the palace, *Dion.* 3.83–9, 93–7:

ἐρχομένωι δὲ
ἐς δόμον Ἀρμονίης θαλαμηπόλος ἦντετο Πειθῶ
νητῆς εἶδος ἔχουσα, καὶ ἀχθοφόρου διὰ κόλπου,

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³⁷ As the anonymous referee points out, the enumeration of Cadmus' features brings to mind the technique of the *blason poétique*, which will flourish in later European literature; for a recent discussion of (to mention one example) Spenser's *blason* in Book II of *The Faerie Queene* with two further examples from the Italian tradition see, e.g., Wilson-Okamura 2009, 48–52 (I am grateful to Dr T. Demetriou for referring me to this article). Peisinoe's portrait of Cadmus contains numerous elements applied to women in the ancient novels, with this transposition pointing to Cadmus' feminisation: see Frangoulis 2006, 45–50 and Hadjittofi 2009, 93–108.

³⁸ Hopkinson 1994b, 6–7.

οἷα γυνὴ ταλαεργὸς ἀφυσσαμένη πόμα πηγῆς,
 ἀργυρέην εὐκυκλον ἐκούφισε κάλπιν ἀγοστῶι,
 ἄγγελος ἐσσομένων, ὅτι νυμφίον ἡθάδι θεσμῶι
 ζωογόνοις πρὸ γάμοιο καθικμαίνουσι λοετροῖς.
 (...)

Καὶ ἀκροτάτων ἀπὸ ταρσῶν
 κυανέηι νεφέλῃι κεκαλυμμένον ἄχρι καρήνου
 Κάδμον ἀσημάντοιο δι' ἄστεος ἤγαγε Πειθῶ
 ξεινοδόκου βασιλῆος ἐρευνητῆρα μελάθρου,
 πομπὸς ὁδοῦ Παφίης ὑπὸ νεύμασιν.

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As he was going towards Harmonia's house, he was met by Peitho, Lady of the bride-chamber. She had the form of a mortal woman, and like a household drudge, she carried a weight pressed against her bosom by her arm, a rounded silver jug which she had filled with drink from the spring: a presage of things to come, since they drench the bridegroom by time-honoured custom with life-giving water in the bath before the marriage. (...) Peitho covered Cadmos with a dark mist from heels to head, and led him through the unseeing city in search of the king's hospitable hall, guiding his way by the Paphian's command.

The model for this scene has long been identified with the encounter between Odysseus and Athena in *Odyssey* 7, where the goddess pours thick mist around Odysseus, so that no Phaeacian can question him, and appears before him as a young girl carrying a jug, *Od.* 7.14–20:³⁹

ἀμφὶ δ' Ἀθήνη
 πολλὴν ἥερα χεῦε φίλα φρονέουσ' Ὀδυσῆι,
 μή τις Φαιήκων μεγαθύμων ἀντιβολήσας
 κερτομέοι τ' ἐπέεσσι καὶ ἐξερέοιθ' ὅτις εἴη.
 ἀλλ' ὅτε δὴ ἄρ' ἔμελλε πόλιν δύσεσθαι ἑραννήν,
 ἔνθα οἱ ἀντεβόλησε θεὰ γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη
 παρθενικῇ εἰκυῖα νεήνιδι κάλπιν ἐχούσῃ.

[A]nd Athene, with kindly purpose, poured about him a thick mist, that no one of the great-hearted Phaeacians, meeting him, should challenge him, and ask him who he was. But when he was about to enter the lovely city, then the goddess, flashing-eyed Athene, met him in the guise of a young maiden carrying a pitcher.⁴⁰

³⁹ Chuvin 1976, 138: "Le thème vient d' η 14–15; cf. Ap. Rh. 3.211–12; Virg. *Aen.* 1.411". See Hadjittofi 2010, 72–5 and 85 for an exploration of Aeneas' meeting with Venus in *Aeneid* 1 as an intertext for the present scene.

⁴⁰ Translation by A. T. Murray – E. G. Dimock (Loeb).

Three departures in Nonnus' adaptation of this model are of particular interest here. First, Peitho's use of the mist is left unexplained; unlike *Odyssey* 7, where the mist surrounding Odysseus is intended to protect him from the Phaeacians, nothing in Nonnus' narrative suggests that the people of Samothrace could or would be hostile towards Cadmus,⁴¹ and there is no indication as to when the mist is dissolved.⁴² Secondly, Peitho's jug is explicitly introduced as a sign of future events, for the narrator explains that it is customary to drench the bridegroom with water before his wedding (*Dion.* 3.88–90). Thirdly, whereas the Odyssean model included an extensive exchange between Athena and Odysseus, with the goddess also explaining Arete's genealogy to the Ithacan hero (*Od.* 7.48–77), in Nonnus' narrative there is no verbal interaction between Peitho and Cadmus, but it is the narrator who relates Emathion's genealogy (*Dion.* 3.186–219) and reports Electra's question on her guest's identity (3.243–4). Even as Peitho takes leave from Cadmus and disappears in the sky, it is through a gesture that she points him to the right direction, 3.124–30:⁴³

Ἄλλ' ὅτε οἱ στείχοντι λεωφόρα κύκλα κελεύθου
 τηλεφανῆς βασιλῆος ἐφαίνετο πανδόκος αὐλή 125
 κίοσιν ὑψωθεῖσα, τανυσσαμένη τότε Κάδμωι
 δάκτυλον ἀντιτύποιο νοήμονα μάρτυρα φωνῆς
 σιγαλέωι κήρυκι δόμον σημῆνατο Πειθῶ
 ποικίλον ἀστράπτοντα· καὶ αἰθέρα δύσατο δαίμων
 ἄλλοφανῆς πετρόεντι διαιθύσσουσα πεδίλῳ. 130

Cadmos walked along the winding highroad; and when the king's allhospitable court came into view, far-seen upon its lofty pillars, Peitho pointed a finger to indicate the corresponding words in her mind, and by this voiceless herald showed the house of shining artistry: then the divinity in another shape rose into the sky, shooting through it with winged shoe.

With Peitho's silence is contrasted the crow's verbosity, as the bird reproaches Cadmus for his tardiness in meeting his future bride (*Dion.* 3.103–22). As we saw earlier, Nonnus' primary model here is Apollonius' crow, which reproaches

41 Chuvin 1976, 138: "Samothrace, île des mystères, est accueillante (3, 96, 125), contrairement à la cité des Phéaciens (η 31ss.): la nuée protectrice n'est qu'un souvenir littéraire dont il ne sera plus question". Cf. also D'Ippolito 1964, 199–200.

42 Contrast *Od.* 7.143 καὶ τότε δὴ ῥ' αὐτοῖο πάλιν χύτο θέσφατος ἄηρ and Apollonius' imitation of the Odyssean model, 3.210–4 τοῖσι δὲ νισσομένοις Ἥρη φίλα μητιόωσα / ἥερα πουλὸν ἐφῆκε δι' ἄστεος, ὄφρα λάθοιεν / Κόλχων μυρίον ἔθνος ἐς Αἰήτιο κiónτες. / ὥκα δ' ὅτ' ἐκ πεδίοιο πόλιν καὶ δώμαθ' ἵκοντο / Αἰήτω, τότε δ' αὖτις ἀπεσκέδασεν νέφος Ἥρη.

43 Cf. Miguélez Caverio 2009a, 260 (with n. 39) for "the pointing finger" as "a gesture of deixis and command". Peitho's sudden departure recalls that of Athena leaving Pylos before Nestor and Telemachus, *Od.* 3.371–2 ἀπέβη γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη / φήνηι εἰδομένη.

the seer Mopsus, who is accompanying Jason on his way to meet Medea (Apoll. Rhod. 3.927–38); according to the crow, Mopsus cannot grasp what even children know (Apoll. Rhod. 3.932–3 ὃς οὐδ' ὅσα παῖδες ἴσασιν / οἶδε νόωι φράσσασθαι “who has not the sense to conceive in his mind even as much as children know”), namely, that a girl will not talk to a man about love before strangers.⁴⁴ Whereas Mopsus understands and acts accordingly (Apoll. Rhod. 3.938 f.), there is no indication in Nonnus’ corresponding scene that Cadmus actually hears or comprehends the crow’s message, and it is only after Peitho has pointed to the palace that the narrator offers Cadmus’ reaction to its impressive façade (*Dion.* 3.131 f.). In this respect, Peitho’s appearance, the mist and her final gesture all have an immediate effect on the progression of the narrative towards the fulfilment of Zeus’ promise to reward Cadmus with Harmonia, as the goddess guides Cadmus to the right place without allowing any distractions to hinder him on the way.

Peitho’s role here takes a particularly interesting dimension when seen in conjunction with her other important intervention on the human plane in Aura’s rape in *Dion.* 48.590–600.⁴⁵ After the virgin huntress Aura mocks Artemis, boasting that her own body, unlike that of the goddess, attests to her intact virginity, Artemis seeks retribution from Nemesis, who punishes Aura by making her lose her virginity. Eros shoots Dionysus with his arrow and the love-mad god strikes the earth with his thyrsus to pour out a stream of wine. Eros casts mist upon Aura’s eyes (48.591), so that she cannot see any other source of water to quench her thirst, and only when she reaches Dionysus’ deceitful spring does Peitho remove the cloud (48.595), inviting the huntress to drink from the spring and receive her husband in her embrace (48.597–8).⁴⁶ Aura drinks from the fountain; heavy with wine, she falls asleep on the ground and Dionysus rapes her in her sleep. Aura subsequently gives birth to twins and kills one of them, while Dionysus saves the other (Iacchos), who is honoured like a god together with Zagreus and Dionysus:

⁴⁴ Another important model for Nonnus’ crow is Call. *Hec. fr.* 74.3–28 Hollis: note especially *Dion.* 3.101 νωθρὸς ὀδίτης “sluggish traveller”, which Nonnus borrows from Call. *Hec. fr.* 68 Hollis (see Hollis 1976, 142–3 and Gigli 1980, 114–5) and *Hec. fr.* 74.9 Hollis ὡς Θρῳαὶ τὴν γρῆϋν ἐπιπνεῖουσι κορώνην (*Hec. fr.* 74.9 Hollis) ~ Apoll. Rhod. 3.937 ἐπιπνεῖουσιν Ἑρωτες ~ *Dion.* 3.121 ἀλλὰ με Κύπρις ἐπέπνεεν. Nonnus’ crow (like that of Callimachus) refers to herself simply as a “mouthpiece”.

⁴⁵ Cf. Schmiel 1993, 470: “[t]he story of Aura was ... planned as the climax of the ‘Dionysiac’”.

⁴⁶ Aura herself had mentioned Peitho upon waking up from a prophetic dream that had foreshadowed the loss of her virginity: *Dion.* 48.299–300.

Κεῖθι δὲ διψώουσα μεσημβριάς ἔτρεχεν Αὔρη·
 ἀμφὶ δέ οἱ βλεφάροισιν Ἔρως κατέχευεν ὀμίχλην,
 μή ποτε διψώουσα Διὸς χύσιν ἢ τινα πηγὴν
 ἢ ῥόον ἀθρήσειεν ὀρεσσιχύτου ποταμοῖο.
 Ἄλλ' ὅτε Βακχείην ἀπατήλιον ἔδρακε πηγὴν,
 δὴ τότε οἱ βλεφάρων σκίονεν νέφος ἤλασε Πειθῶ,
 τοῖον ἔπος βοόωσα γάμου πρωτάγγελον Αὔρη·
 “Παρθενική, μόλε δεῦρο, τελεσσιγάμοιο δὲ πηγῆς
 εἰς στόμα δέξο ῥέεθρα, καὶ εἰς σέο κόλπον ἀκοίτην”.
 Κούρη δ' ἄσμενος εἶδε· παραπροχυθεῖσα δὲ πηγῇ
 χεῖλσιν οἰγομένοισιν ἀνήφυσεν ἱκμάδα Βάκχου.

And there came running thirsty at midday Aura herself; and Eros cast a mist over her eyelids, so that she could never find raindrops from Zeus, or some fountain, or the stream of a river pouring from the hills. But when she saw the deceitful fountain of Bacchos, Peitho dispersed the shadowy cloud from her eyelids, and called out to Aura like a herald of her marriage: “Maiden, come this way! Take into your lips the stream of this nuptial fountain, and into your bosom a lover”. Gladly the maiden saw it, and throwing herself down before the fountain drew in the liquid of Bacchos with open lips.

Noteworthy correspondences emerge between Peitho's direct interventions in the human plane at the beginning and end of the *Dionysiaca*: whereas she had previously covered Cadmus in a dark cloud (*Dion.* 3.94 κυανέην νεφέλην)⁴⁷ and led him to Emathion's palace, she now removes the cloud (*Dion.* 48.595 σκίονεν νέφος) from Aura's eyes so that the huntress can see Dionysus' deceptive fountain.⁴⁸ Whereas Peitho had remained silent in her interaction with Cadmus with the presence of her jug foreshadowing the future course of events, here she speaks two lines that disclose what will happen. But although the narrator mentions that Aura saw (48.599 κούρη δ' ἄσμενος εἶδε), there is no indication that she heard, and the huntress proceeds to drink from the fountain.⁴⁹ Vian suggests that Aura does not hear Peitho's warning because Peitho's supernatural cry may be inaudible to a mortal,⁵⁰ and he points out that Aura's rape, unlike that of Nicaea in the parallel episode in *Dionysiaca*

⁴⁷ Peitho is clearly the agent of this action, although this is not explicitly stated in *Dion.* 3.93–5 (cited above).

⁴⁸ Cf. Vian 2003, 184–5 on *Dion.* 48.591 and Schulze 1966, 374 n. 3.

⁴⁹ Vian 2003, 52 n. 2 (“l'emploi absolu d'εἶδε est remarquable”) and 185; see the discussion in Krafft 1975, 120 n. 67 (*contra* Schulze 1966, 370, who argues that *Dion.* 48.590–8 may be a later addition).

⁵⁰ Vian 2003, 52.

16, is altogether characterised by silence,⁵¹ which he attributes to the fact that from Dionysus' union with Aura Iacchos will be born.⁵²

Peitho's active intervention thus frames the Dionysiac saga, and although she does not engage directly with the mortals on the human plane, for she is either silent (as with Cadmus) or inaudible (as with Aura), she nevertheless has an instrumental role in moving the plot forward at two critical moments in this epic that draw attention to Dionysus' genealogy, namely the marriage of Cadmus and Harmonia, which instigates the line of Dionysus, and the birth of Dionysus' own son Iacchos.

The episode of Cadmus and Harmonia in *Dionysiaca* 3–4 thus draws attention to different modes of persuasion – both rhetorical tropes in extended speech and the intervention of the goddess Peitho herself – that highlight the instrumental role of *peitho* in the narrative of the *Dionysiaca*, as Nonnus adapts earlier epic models within his contemporary context. Peitho's subtle, brief, yet crucial appearances near the beginning and at the very end of the epic do not go unnoticed, and through her association with eloquence and seduction the goddess embodies two salient features of the *Dionysiaca*, its rhetorical virtuosity and erotic colouring.

⁵¹ Vian 2003, 58.

⁵² Vian 2003, 57–8.

Jane Lightfoot

Oracles in the *Dionysiaca*

Nonnus loves to foreshadow the future. The *Dionysiaca* are full of anticipations and prefigurations of all kinds,¹ of which divine signs and oracles are one particular, very prominent, form. I began with the following questions: how, where, and why does Nonnus use oracles?² Who mediates the oracles, and to whom? Where in the narrative are oracles given? What kind of information about the future is disclosed? What effects are thereby achieved? And is Nonnus content (with due allowance for rhetorical elaboration) to reproduce the conventions he has inherited from earlier literature in regard to the representation of oracles, or is there anything characteristically Late Antique, or indeed individual and idiosyncratic, about oracles in the *Dionysiaca*? But these basic questions inevitably suggest others. My enquiry could, for instance, develop into a narratological study of prolepsis in the *Dionysiaca* – surely a *desideratum*, in any case. Or, to clarify what is distinctive in each poem, it might compare the *Dionysiaca* with the *Paraphrasis* – in which case, rather than concentrating specifically on oracles, it would open out into a study of inspiration and its presentation. The main burden of this essay concerns oracles in the *Dionysiaca*, throughout the poem as a whole and in its set-piece scenes of oracular consultation. But I will also have something to say about these broader questions, that is, anticipation as a narrative technique, and the comparison and contrast between Nonnus' two surviving poems and how they treat disclosure of the future.

1 Fate and its Disclosure

I begin with some general remarks on prolepsis in the *Dionysiaca*. While my main purpose is to provide a context for the presentation of oracles in particular, the subject is one that demands more systematic treatment. Such a study would aim to characterise the poet's attitude to futurity – what events are considered *worth* anticipating, and what is the effect of such anticipations? –

¹ By anticipation I mean a prolepsis, where the narrator (usually the primary narrator, but occasionally an internal character) draws to the attention of his addressee (usually the reader, occasionally to an internal character), what is going to happen at a future point. By prefiguration, I mean that a future event is foreshadowed by some corresponding earlier happening.

² For an earlier approach to this question, Ruiz Pérez 2002 (I thank the author for supplying me with a copy).