

Dionysophanes' Atypical Role

The prominence of Daphnis' father, Dionysophanes, in Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe* is unique in the surviving corpus of the ideal Greek novels. In three of the four novels the heroine's father is a major character, particularly at the end of the novel, and in the fourth both the hero's and heroine's parents have arguably equal roles. Dionysophanes, however, has a far greater presence than Chloe's father, and is in fact a dominant character throughout Book 4, which constitutes a full quarter of the novel. This upending of the typical formula reflects Daphnis' own abnormal dominance, as he largely functions as the primary character in a genre that tends to depict the heroine as the main protagonist and establish the hero in the socially powerful but narratively less prominent role of primary viewer and audience of the heroine.

In the earliest Greek ideal novel the heroine is marked as the primary protagonist in a number of ways. Her supernatural beauty drives the plot in a way that the hero's exceptional but more mundane beauty does not, her name was likely the only one in the original title (Tilg 2010), and her father, Hermocrates of Syracuse, is both a more important historical figure and has a larger role in the final scenes of the novel. The imbalance between the narrative importance of the hero and heroine is not quite so large again until the last extant novel, Heliodorus' *Aethiopica*, in which the hero seems largely swept along by the power of the heroine's destiny to the climactic confrontation with her father in the final book. However in Achilles Tatius' *Leucippe and Clitophon* the narrator is the hero, whose passion for his beloved frames her as extraordinary, and once again her father rather than his is present for the climax of the novel. Xenophon's *Ephesiaca* treats the two protagonists with a striking equality (Konstan

1994), and all their parents are dead before the end of the novel, but it is a significant step from the *Ephesiaca*'s equal treatment to *Daphnis and Chloe*'s preference for the hero and his father.

In *Daphnis and Chloe* the foster parents of the two protagonists are given roughly equal emphasis, with perhaps some of the typical preference for the heroine's when Chloe's parents are involved in the scene of Daphnis visiting her house in the winter. However when the plotline of recognition by the protagonists' birth parents begins, Daphnis' parents (and in particular his father Dionysophanes) are the ones who take the primary role usually given to the heroine's parents. Dionysophanes is first mentioned at the end of Book 3 as the master whose permission will be necessary to marry, and then emerges as one of the primary characters throughout Book 4. Chloe's father Megacles appears at the end of Book 4 for a far shorter recognition scene. This reversal of the norm reflects the balance between the narrative prominence of Daphnis and Chloe themselves throughout the novel, which is fairly equal towards the beginning, but as the novel moves forward Chloe fades into the constrained role of an adult Greek woman leaving Daphnis as the more publicly visible main protagonist (Winkler 1990, Zeitlin 1990). This unusual balance between the main characters either causes the choice of Dionysophanes over Megacles for the primary familial reunion scene, or the two phenomena spring from the same source. The rarity of the hero's father starring in this major type scene of the genre must draw our attention to how abnormal Daphnis' prominence over Chloe is.

Dionysophanes' importance in the final book of *Daphnis and Chloe* is not surprising within the male-dominated corpus of extant texts from the Greco-Roman world, but is strikingly rare within the genre of the ideal novel and thus deserves careful consideration. Most of this novel's departure from ideal novel norms are due to Longus' heavy incorporation of the

pastoral mode, but Book 4 is the book with the least influence from pastoral and the most from ideal novel. Further study is needed to elucidate the causes of this unusual plot structure.

Bibliography

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