

## The Jewelled Castle of the Dragon

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### ABSTRACT

*Five analogue narratives – from Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses* (‘Cupid and Psyche’, ii AD), Philostratus’ *Apollonius* (c. AD 220), Callimachus and *Chrysorrhoe* (early xiv AD), Konrad’s *Saga* (xiv AD) and the Theodore Tiron *Miracle Story* (xiv AD) – prove to be underpinned by an ideal story-type along the following lines. A dragon lives in a golden, jewelled castle, almost impossible of access. It is surrounded by and infested by lesser serpents. Within it he has a special raised platform, and he is served in it by automatic air-powered trays, tables and vessels. He conceives a desire for human girl, steals her and keeps her captive. The castle is penetrated by her lover-to-be, who kills the dragon and saves her, whereupon the marvellous castle melts away. The theme of erotic desire travels with the story-type. Further support is provided for the long-held suspicion that the *Cupid and Psyche* tale builds upon a pre-existing traditional dragon narrative.*

### KEYWORDS

*dragon, serpents, castle, jewels, story-type, Eros*

### Introduction

This primary purpose of this paper is to establish the existence of a traditional story-type I name ‘the jewelled castle of the dragon’, this by the usual method of the collation and comparison of analogue narratives and their constituent motifs. The narratives considered are found in five texts and three languages, drawn from across twelve centuries: Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses* or *Golden Ass* (Latin novel, late ii AD), Philostratus’ *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* (Greek biography, c. AD 220), *Callimachus and Chrysorrhoe* (Byzantine romance, early xiv AD), *Konrad’s Saga* (Norse chivalric saga, xiv AD) and *The Theodore Tiron Miracle Story* (Greek hagiography, xiv AD). The analogues exhibiting a fuller and richer set of the story-type’s constituent motifs (Apuleius, *Callimachus*, *Konrad*) are given consideration first; the order of exposition is also, as it happens, roughly chronological, except in the case of our final text, that of Philostratus. One of the chief benefits in identifying a traditional story-type is the light that the individual analogue texts are thereby enabled to shed upon each other, and it is a particular joy when, in what feels like an inversion of the usual historical process, more recent texts can be pressed to illumine more ancient ones. And so it proves here, with the medieval suite of tales permitting a new appreciation – a secondary purpose of the paper – of aspects of those of Apuleius and Philostratus.

### 1. Cupid and Psyche

Apuleius’ expansive tale of Cupid and Psyche forms the central boss of his (late ii AD) Latin novel *Metamorphoses*. It may be summarised as follows.<sup>1</sup> Psyche is the youngest of three

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<sup>1</sup> Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 4.28-6.24. For the folkloric background of the Cupid and Psyche tale, which was first identified by Jacob Grimm himself (1846:xi), see above all Friedländer 1921, Swahn 1955, Megas 1971, Wright 1971, Mantero 1973, Hoevens 1979, Hansen 2002:100-14 (“the most fairytale-like of all ancient stories”, 106), Felton 2013, Plantade 2023 (of this newly released volume I have so far been able to see no more than its promising

princesses in an anonymous city. The goddess Venus becomes envious of her beauty, and the worship it attracts, and commands her son Cupid to take revenge on her by making her fall in love with the lowest and most disgusting man in the world. However, he decides instead to take her for himself. When Psyche's father, the king, enquires of Apollo's oracle about her marriage prospects, the god gives him a shocking response: he must abandon her on a lofty crag, where she will become the bride of cruel and viperous creature. Accordingly, Psyche is led out to the crag in a wedding-cum-funeral. From here Zephyr, the West Wind, billowing her dress out into a parachute, carries her down to a beautiful valley below, with dewy grass and a crystal (*vitreo*) spring and stream. In the midst of this she finds a divine palace constructed of citron-wood and ivory. It is supported by golden columns, its golden walls are decorated with silver reliefs and its floors with gemstone mosaics. These furnishings create their own brilliant light even in rooms closed to the sun. The palace is filled with treasures, including a bath – presumably an installation rather than a mere tub – of which Psyche makes use.<sup>2</sup> She finds dinner set out on a semi-circular platform, one that seemingly appears beside her out of nowhere (*visoque statim proximo semirotondo suggestu*). Upon reclining she is served fine food and drink from trays that are carried to her by no more than wafts of air (*spiritu quodam impulsa*). Her servants are invisible (and insubstantial): she can only hear their voices, their choral song, and the sound of their invisible lyre. Cupid comes to her at night, but only in the darkness of the bedroom: she is never permitted to see her husband, of whose identity she knows nothing. She conceives a child. Pressured by Psyche, Cupid permits her sisters to visit her, again with the agency of Zephyr. But they become envious at the luxury in which she lives and suggest to her that her unseen husband is a serpent that will in due course eat her together with her child. They urge her to slay him as he sleeps, using a knife and an oil lamp. She is initially swayed, but when she sees his true form in the light of lamp, she falls ever more in love with him. However, she accidentally spills some of its hot oil on him, whereupon he flees from her at once – to his mother Venus' house, to recover from the scalding, as we subsequently learn. Psyche now wanders across the world in search of her lost husband. Her sisters, now they know his identity, are even more envious and attempt to offer themselves to him as replacement brides, by throwing themselves off the crag for Zephyr to catch up, but both are left to fall to their deaths. In an attempt to ingratiate herself with Venus, Psyche permits the goddess to impose a series of impossible tasks on her. In one of the tasks she is helped by friendly ants, whilst Jupiter's own eagle helps her collect some water from the river Styx, guarded by dragons. Eventually she is reunited with Cupid,

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contents pages). Cf. also Sax 1998:76-9 and, for folklore in the *Metamorphoses* more generally, Scobie 1983. Neither of the two most important commentaries on the Cupid and Psyche tale, those of Kenney 1990 and (the massive) Zimmerman 2004, takes much interest in the folkloric background to it. Whilst Kenney (17-18) does concede folkloric influence, in common with many of those that like to celebrate the individual creative genius of literary authors, he is dismissive of its significance. Worse still, in a prime example of the cynical scepticism with which folklorists often have to contend, Fehling 1977 insisted that Apuleius' Cupid and Psyche episode was itself the origin-point of the relevant folkloric story-types, as opposed to being our earliest extant instantiation of them.

<sup>2</sup> With a trajectory the opposite of this article's, Brodersen 1998 compares the palace described to an all-too-real Roman villa (cf. Cupane 1978 and 2015, comparing the descriptions of the fantastical castles of the Byzantine romances with actual historical buildings, including the imperial palace at Constantinople). More persuasively, to my mind, Mantero 1973:52-65, whilst conceding its folkloric significance, contextualises the description of Cupid's palace against other Classical descriptions of wondrous palaces and gardens, divine and other.

now healed from his burn. Jupiter makes Psyche immortal by giving her a drink of ambrosia. Their wedding is celebrated, and Psyche at last gives birth to the couple's child, Pleasure (Voluptas).

Cupid is no serpent, but serpent imagery is repeatedly applied to him. Apollo's oracle describes him in the following terms:

King, set out the girl on the crag of a lofty mountain, decked out in the finery of a funereal wedding-chamber. Do not hope for a son-in-law of mortal stock, but for a cruel, wild and viperous evil thing [*saevum atque ferum vipereumque malum*], which, flying through the air on wings, harries all things and brings down individuals with flame and iron [i.e., the burning love induced by Cupid's arrows]. Jupiter himself, though the terror of the other powers, trembles before it and the Stygian streams and darkneses shudder at it.

Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 4.33

Apollo evidently intends the viperousness here as no more than a metaphor for the savagery of love.<sup>3</sup> However, we presume from context that the king and Psyche's sisters read it literally. That Psyche's sisters have taken the viper metaphor seriously, or at any rate have taken inspiration from it, is implied by the subsequent episode, in which, rendered envious of Psyche's luxurious life by 'the Furies breathing viperous venom' (*Furiae anhelantes vipereum virus*),<sup>4</sup> they speak to her in the following terms:

We have made a sure discovery. Sharing in your grief and misfortune as we do, we cannot conceal it from you: what secretly sleeps with you by night is a monstrous snake that slithers with coils of many knots [*immanem colubrum multinodis voluminibus serpentem*], its neck drenched in blood and toxic venom, its maw deeply agape. You must remember now the Pythian prophecy, which declared that you were destined for marriage to a murderous beast. Many settlers, local hunters and neighbours have observed him returning from feeding in the evening and swimming in the waters of the nearby river. They all declare that he won't continue fattening you up [*saginaturum*] with pleasant and indulgent food for long, but that as soon as your womb has grown to its fullest extent and brought your pregnancy to completion, he will devour you, endowed as you are with plumper fruit. This is the decision you have to take in these circumstances: whether you wish to see things as we your sisters do, who are worried for your dear safety, shun death and live with us safe from danger; or you wish to be buried in the guts of the cruellest beast. If it is the loneliness of this country place, the voices aside, or the disgusting and perilous congress of this secret sex or the embraces of this venom-laden serpent [*venenati serpentis*] that please you, at any rate we, your dutiful sisters, will have done our bit.

Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 5.17-18

The use of the epithet "Pythian" here in referring to Apollo's oracle salutes a further serpent in the oracle's previous owner, Python.<sup>5</sup> The sisters proceed to advise Psyche to kill her husband as he sleeps in bed with her, making ready an oil lamp and a knife. In expounding

<sup>3</sup> Kenney 1990 *ad loc.* finds literary resonances, citing Sappho's description of Eros (Cupid) as a "creeping thing" (*orpeton*, fr. 130 L-P / Voigt; cf. Wright 1971:274); the Latin passages he also adduces are less compelling.

<sup>4</sup> Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 5.12.

<sup>5</sup> As appreciated by Kenney 1990 *ad loc.*

their plan, they refer to him “dragging his furrowing step” (*sulcatum trahens gressum*) and call him a “toxic serpent” (*noxii serpentis*).<sup>6</sup>

This serpent imagery is almost certainly not arbitrary, but has been drawn from the group of folkloric story-types that already thrive in the background to this narrative, as has long been recognised.<sup>7</sup> Let us reproduce some story-types of particular interest here from the Uther’s standard catalogue of classifications of international folktale types (henceforth ATU):<sup>8</sup>

**ATU 425a: *The Animal as Bridegroom*.** A girl marries a part-animal bridegroom (a snake or a crayfish, or even a pumpkin!). She looks at him during the night to see his animal nature, but accidentally burns him with wax in the process and he goes away. After a difficult quest or difficult tasks, which she performs with the aid of helpers, she finds her bridegroom again and is reunited with him. [Range: effectively universal.]

**ATU 425m: *The Snake as Bridegroom*.** A snake (dragon) steals a bathing girl’s clothes and promises to give them back only when she agrees to marry him. He takes her off to his splendid castle, where she gives birth to two children. He allows her to visit her parents if she completes certain impossible tasks, but she is able to complete them with the help of an old woman’s advice. She is allowed to visit them for three days, but must swear not to tell them about her husband. But her children betray to her family the formula by which the serpent can be summoned, and her brothers kill him. When she returns to her husband’s home and finds him gone and indications of his death, she curses her children and turns them into trees. [Range: chiefly east European, with some representation in Asia and Africa.]

**ATU 433b: *King Lindorm*.** (A tale type with a number of variants, in which) a snake or dragon (or another animal) is transformed into a man or prince when a woman marries him. Sometimes the snake performs impossible tasks to get the hand of a princess. Sometimes every woman the snake marries is killed on her wedding night. A courageous young woman puts on seven shirts and challenges the snake to shed a skin for every shirt she takes off. When he is completely naked, she whips him and bathes him in milk and he is transformed into a young man. Or a young woman marries a snake who transforms into a handsome young man by doffing his skin. She retains him in this form by burning the skin. [Range: effectively universal; ATU declare the earliest European version to be that of the *Asinarius* of c. AD 1200.]

**ATU 444\*: *Enchanted Prince Disenchanted*.** A prince is transformed into an animal (a dragon is included in many variants here). He is disenchanted by a woman that helps him. [Range: chiefly European.]

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<sup>6</sup> Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 5.20.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Friedländer 1921, Swahn 1955: 374 (cf. 26, 228), Merkelbach 1962:11, Wright 1971 esp. 274-5, Mantero 1973 esp. 43-52, Hoevels 1979:25, 41-43, 75-6, Hansen 2002:111, Felton 2013.

<sup>8</sup> Several of the entries in Thompson’s folk-literature motif-index are also pertinent: *MI* B656.1 (Marriage to python in human form); B604.1 (Marriage to snake); B605 (Marriage to dragon); B613.1 (Snake paramour); B622.1 (Serpent as wooer); B646.1 (Marriage to person in snake form); B646.1.1 (Marriage to person in form of five-headed snake); B656.2 (Marriage to serpent in human form).

Some of the ATU 433b analogues collected and supplied in English translations at D. L. Ashliman's "Folktexts" website under the heading "Snake and Serpent Husbands" map well onto the Cupid and Psyche tale in that they combine a first episode in which a woman marries a serpent or serpentine creature, and thereby transforms him into a handsome prince, with a second episode in which the couple become separated by the malign intervention of others, and must struggle to be reunited.<sup>9</sup> So it is with the tales of "Muchie-Lal" (India; in this case the creature is man-devouring fish); "The Snake Prince" (India); "The Caterpillar Boy" (India); "King Lindorm" (Denmark); and "The Silk Spinster" (Germany). In "The Serpent" (Italy, derived from Basile's 1634-6 *Pentameron*), a prince transformed into a serpent wins the hand of princess Grannonia, daughter of the king of Starza-Longa, by transforming his (the king's) castle into gold, silver and ivory, his garden walls into gold and the fruit on his trees into gems. On his wedding night he sloughs his skin and reveals himself to be a beautiful man. The king observes this and burns the skin, whereupon the man turns into a dove and flies out through the glass of a window, wounding himself in the process. Eventually, with the help of a fox, Grannonia tracks her husband down (now in human form again), cures his wounds and resumes her life with him.<sup>10</sup> In some of the other tales too the motif of the splendid castle appears again, e.g., in "The Snake and the Little Girl" (Bornholm, Denmark), where the snake-husband has a diamond castle, his mother a silver one and his father a golden one.<sup>11</sup>

For reasons that will become apparent, let me note once more the serpents Psyche encounters as she attempts to take some water from the Styx in fulfilment of one of the labours imposed on her by Venus:

On the right side and the left there crawl forth from the hollows in the rock – lo! – cruel serpents [*dracones*], extending their necks to full length, their eyes constrained to unblinking vigilance, their pupils perpetually opened in vision.

Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 6.14

When Jupiter's eagle then fetches the water for her, it does so by picking its way between the "jaws of cruel teeth and the three-furrowed flickerings [i.e. the tongues] of the serpents [*dracones*]." <sup>12</sup>

## 2. Callimachus and Chrysorrhoe

I now leap forward over a millennium. The extant, full version of the Byzantine romance *Callimachus and Chrysorrhoe*, an anonymous poem of 2607 lines, is found in a xvi AD Leiden MS,<sup>13</sup> but it evidently belongs to a long and fairly open tradition, because Manuel Philes, writing in the early xiv AD, gives us a plot-summary of a closely similar, but by no

<sup>9</sup> D. L. Ashliman, "Folktexts", <https://sites.pitt.edu/~dash/snake.html>.

<sup>10</sup> Basile 1634-6 Day 2, Tale 5. One might well expect a learned Italian to have Apuleius in mind in telling this story – but, again, we have to account for the restoration of the serpent to its starring role.

<sup>11</sup> The tale is derived from Grundtvig 1861:15-17.

<sup>12</sup> Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 6.15; a few words on this passage at Scobie 1977:342.

<sup>13</sup> For the text see Pichard 1956 (with French trans.) and Cupane 1995:45-213 (with Italian trans.); for an English translation see Betts 1995:33-93. For further discussion see in particular the suite of helpful articles by Fonseca, 2015, 2017, 2020a, 2020b, and Ogden 2021:279-95 (from the last of which the summary supplied here is partially extracted; Fonseca 2015 at least deserved citation there).

means identical, poem recently composed by Andronikos Palaiologos, the cousin of the Byzantine emperor.<sup>14</sup>

The first third of the poem, and the former of its two principal sections, may be summarised as follows.<sup>15</sup> A king decides to bestow his kingdom upon whichever of his three sons, of whom Callimachus is the youngest, makes the greatest achievement. All three go out into the world together with the army he has given them. Eventually they come across a great mountain, which takes them three months to climb. On the summit, higher than the birds, they find a plateau with a charming meadow, including a crystalline (*krystallōdēs*) river and a carpet of roses and lilies and other flowers. From this they proceed to the beautiful Castle of the Dragon (*Drakōn*), the *drakontokastron*, which will become known as the Golden Castle, *Chrysokastron*, after its owner has been slain.<sup>16</sup> Its outer walls are made of gold inset with gems and pearls, but it is surrounded by terrible, unsleeping dragons (*drakontes*): a *würmegarte*.<sup>17</sup> Callimachus borrows a magic ring from his eldest brother, and this allows him, upon taking it into his mouth, to grow wings and fly over the heads of the guardian monsters and the castle wall. But it is also indicated that he plants his spear in a raised mound adjacent to the wall at this point, as if intending to vault over it.<sup>18</sup> In this inner garden there is a marvellous bathhouse lined with gold, gems, pearls and steam-proof mirrors. It contains a golden tree with gemstone fruits, and a golden human head from which its rosewater flows. It is heated by an automatic furnace.<sup>19</sup> In the castle itself he finds tables laden with food and drink in vessels of gold and gemstone. The Dragon's chamber itself is again made of gold and pearls, and painted with images of Cronus, Zeus, Ares, Aphrodite, Athena, the Graces

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<sup>14</sup> Manuel Philes, *Epigram on a Book of Romance by the Emperor's Cousin*; discussion at Knös 1962, with the text of the epigram reproduced at pp. 280-4; cf. also Pichard 1956:xvi-xxiii. For dating, see further Pichard 1956:2, Agapitos 1990:257, Beaton 1996:104, Goldwyn and Nilsson 2018:xiv, Cupane 2018:48.

<sup>15</sup> *Callimachus and Chrysorrhoe* ll. 1-693.

<sup>16</sup> For the terms see *Callimachus and Chrysorrhoe* ll.176, 805 etc. For exposition of the *Drakōn*'s serpentine form, see Ogden 2021:287-92. Agapitos 1991:282-97 refers to him as a "giant", whilst Beaton 1996:148-9 refers to him as an "ogre", both misleadingly, albeit for intelligible reasons. These terms are better reserved to translate the term *drakos*, with which the *Drakōn* is compared at l. 492. We may note that the castle's automated accoutrements are particularly well suited to the use of an occupant without hands.

<sup>17</sup> We may briefly compare two MHG texts. At Ulrich von Zatzikhoven's *Lanzelet*, l. 5048 (c. AD 1195-1200), the castle in which the wicked Valerin has imprisoned Guinevere (as Chrysorrhoe is imprisoned here) is said to be surrounded by a forest of serpents, a "worm-garden" (*würmegarte*). At Heinrich von dem Türlin's *Diu Crône*, ll. 12772-12802, 13380-13513, 13643-13655 (c. AD 1220s), the sorcerer Gansguoter maintains a brother-pair of fiery lindworm-form dragons (*lintraken*) in the valley adjacent to his revolving castle, the valley also being infested by a host of toads and snakes. For the Dragon's castle in *Callimachus*, see Agapitos 1991:282-97. For the motif of the castle more generally as motif in the Greek romance tradition see Cupane 1978, Fonseca 2019; according to Betts 1995:xxiv it is distinctively post-Frankish (i.e. post-Fourth Crusade).

<sup>18</sup> Fonseca 2020b:246-50 reads the narration here (ll. 259-73), jejune to the point of obscurity, to indicate rather that Callimachus makes a last-minute decision not to use the powers of the ring and merely leaps instead, relying on his own mettle (he compares Achilles' leap over the Trojan wall in the lesser romance, *The [Byzantine] Achilleid*, 1071-4). I am not sure that he is right, but if he is, then the comparability of this detail with that of Konrad's leaping over a serpent to get into his own jewelled castle in our next text is all the sharper.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Agapitos 1990.

and – an image to which the author gives special and repeated attention – Eros (“Eros sat enthroned there, in painted form, the inflamer of people’s insides, the enslaver of hard hearts, but he was unable to kindle the dragon’s heart, he was unable to soften his hard mind”). In this chamber he finds Chysorrhoe, suspended naked from the ceiling by her hair. She is a princess the Dragon has seized, after destroying her family and her city, and cutting off the latter’s water supply, a river flowing down from his mountain, in the course of his campaign to secure her hand. As the Dragon is heard approaching, she warns Callimachus to hide quickly. Upon arrival, he takes up a willow branch and whips her with it: his aim is to persuade her to consent to marry him: he is too chivalrous to contemplate rape. The daily punishment completed, he places a golden footstool under her feet, allowing just about to stand on it, and feeds her a morsel of bread and a sip of water from an emerald cup before removing the stool and letting her hang again. The Dragon then sits on a raised bed of precious stones, calls out and one of the tables delivers its meal to him of its own accord. After his meal, the Dragon, satisfied and drunk, goes to sleep on the bed, whereupon Chysorrhoe calls Callimachus out from his hiding place and has him chop the Dragon in two with its own sword. He liberates her and tells her that she has been kept safe for him by the image of Eros; they exchange oaths of love with each other, and, we are told, Eros stands as guarantor of them. They embark upon a blissful life together in the castle they have now inherited, making the most of its bath. The remainder of the poem consists of a separate adventure in which Chysorrhoe is abducted from the castle by a wicked king with the help of a witch and a phantom dragon, before they eventually resume their life together in it and live happily ever after.

The motival links between this narrative and that of the Psyche narrative are, I trust, plain and uncontroversial; they are laid out in the accompanying [Table 1](#). The great matters aside, I will just add two glosses here. First, in relation to the first two motifs, the access to the realm of the mysterious castle in each case is by means of a high place from which one passes directly into a meadow with crystalline water; in the Psyche tale, in distinction from the *Callimachus* tale, that direct transition is made by a vertical drop. Secondly, the motif of the youngest of three siblings: Psyche has two older sisters, whilst Callimachus has two older brothers. It might be felt that this motif is applied rather differently in the two narratives, and to figures in different roles: in Psyche’s case the elder sisters play a vital role in the plot, whereas the function of Callimachus’ brothers is merely to throw the degree of his bravery into relief (he alone has the courage to enter the castle, etc.).<sup>20</sup> However, there is a sense in which the roles of Psyche and Callimachus are semi-aligned: whereas Psyche corresponds in part to Chysorrhoe as the (pseudo-)dragon’s captive ingenue love-interest, she also corresponds to Callimachus himself as the focal human penetrator of the castle and the protagonist of her story.

And so to the great matters. Surely, there is a relationship between these two (partial) narratives, but what is the nature of that relationship? The obvious solution to reach for is that the original creators of the *Callimachus* tale, whoever and whenever they were, took inspiration from Apuleius (or a Greek Vorlage), but made two far-reaching interventions in the material they took over.<sup>21</sup> First, they took the oracle’s hints about the dragonish nature of

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<sup>20</sup> However, the brothers do intervene more directly in the plot of the remainder of the poem, being instrumental in reviving Callimachus from the provisional death to which the wicked king’s witch has subjected him (ll. 1327-1482).

<sup>21</sup> For arguments that Apuleius had a Greek Vorlage for the Cupid and Psyche episode (which of course does not appear in the Lucianic *Onos*), see Megas 1971, Hansen 2002:111. Fulgentius, *Mitologiae* 3.6 tells that Apuleius’ tale of Cupid and Psyche was also to be found in one Aristophontes of Athens’ *Dysarestia*, of which we know nothing.

the castle's owner and sisters' calumnies suggesting it very seriously, and on that basis chose to usurp Cupid's role with a wicked dragon, plain and simple. Secondly, they paid tribute to the Cupid they had sacked from his starring role by reintegrating him into his own castle as a fresco, and giving him a walk-on cameo in the tale at a key moment. This supposition is indirectly supported by the association of Eros with splendid castles in the other two significant Byzantine romances to survive.<sup>22</sup> In *Velthandros and Chrysantza* (late xiii AD) Eros himself is (still, we might say) the occupant of a castle of gold, jewels and frescoes, its battlements decorated with (NB) dragon-heads – an *Erōtokastron* to set beside *Callimachus' Drakontokastron*; it is here that Velthandros chooses his destined love Chrysantza in a beauty contest.<sup>23</sup> And in *Livistros and Rhodamne* (also late xiii AD), Livistros is taken in a dream to the Dominion of Eros (*Erōtokratia*) by a band of armed Erotes, where Eros-proper compels him to fall in love with Rhodamne, the daughter of Chrysos (“Gold”), the king of the city of Argyrokastron (“Silver-castle”).<sup>24</sup>

I don't believe there are any decisive arguments against this position, but I find it difficult to embrace without further qualification, for three reasons. First, the serpentine imagery does not, I feel, leap out of the Cupid and Psyche story in its full extent quite as strikingly as I have made it appear to do in the above review, in which I have drawn particular attention to it. The dragonisation of the Cupid figure would not have been an obvious thing to do on the basis of the Apuleian narrative alone. Secondly, as we have already indicated, the Cupid and Psyche narrative itself aligns strongly with folkloric story-types of serpent-grooms that we should, by default, take to be of a particular antiquity. The principle of Occam's razor then militates against the there-and-back-again hypothesis that our tradition began with a dragon-bridegroom, then replaced him with Cupid, and then replaced Cupid in turn with a second dragon-bridegroom; the razor suggests rather that Cupid should be seen as an interloper in the long dragon-bridegroom tradition. Thirdly, the relevant part of the *Callimachus* narrative is by no means unique, and there are other analogues for it from the medieval age – analogues wholly free of Cupid – and there may well even be a partial but credible serpent-focused analogue for it even from antiquity.

### 3. Konrad

Of prime importance here is the Norse *Konrad's Saga*, a *riddarasaga* or chivalric romance of the xiv AD.<sup>25</sup> In this the hero, who seeks the hand of Princess Matthildr of Constantinople, is told by the emperor that he can have it if he first retrieves a certain precious green gemstone for him; the willing Matthildr advises him of the perilous route and the techniques he will need. He travels first by ship to the islands of Ethiopia; thenceforth he makes his way through lands inhabited only by lions and then by terrible elephants, and eventually arrives at his destination, described as the furthest part of the inhabited world. Across a river and a bridge

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<sup>22</sup> For the role of Eros in the Byzantine romances generally see Cupane 1973/1974, 2016, Christoforatu, 2011, Agapitos 2013.

<sup>23</sup> *Velthandros and Chrysantza* ll.240-739. For the text see Cupane 1995:215-305; for a translation, see Betts 1995:5-30.

<sup>24</sup> *Livistros and Rhodamne* (alpha recension) esp. ll. 204-627, 1003-1265. For the text see Agapitos 2006; for a translation, Agapitos 2021; summaries of the romance's convoluted plot are provided at Agapitos 2013:392-4 and 2021:12-14.

<sup>25</sup> *Konráðs saga Keisarasonar* §§9-10. At §11 we encounter the belated and stray speculation that the serpents must have taken the castle over from an original group of human occupants. For the text see Zitzelsberger 1988, and for a translation Zitzelsberger 1980. For discussion, including a summary from which much of the one provided here is drawn, see Ogden 2021:310-12, 346-7.

is a plain of golden gravel and giant heather, perforated by gorges and holes, and from this plain rises a mysterious, multi-coloured castle built from gold, silver, tin, glass and precious stones. The castle is infested with serpents, but they are all in a trance-like sleep, because Konrad has advisedly timed his arrival to coincide with Whit Sunday (otherwise, the implication is, they are ever-vigilant). As he enters the outer gate, he must vault over a massive serpent blocking the path with his spear, and do the same again to get over the further pair of serpents that guard the inner gate. The path from the inner gate to the central hall is also lined with serpents, and as he progresses down it, he sees serpents occupying the tops of the castle's towers above and hanging from its windows. The hall within is piled high with gold and bejewelled treasures, and crammed with yet more serpents. Amongst the treasures is a jewelled table that appears to float in the air.<sup>26</sup> At the end of it the great dais is occupied by the largest serpent of them all, which extends from one side of the hall to the other. On its head it sports both a Classical crest, specifically a "crest of dread" (resembling Fafnir's helm of dread...)<sup>27</sup> and, appropriately, a crown: he is the king of the other serpents. Before the dais two small serpents, one white as snow, the other red as blood, play a game of catch with the all-important green gemstone, catching it in their snouts and never letting it touch the floor. These are the only two serpents not in the state of a trance-like sleep. Konrad intercepts the green gem with his sword before the white serpent can catch it, and puts in his pouch. The serpent glowers at him before winding its way into the ground. Konrad now prises another precious stone out of the floating table. When he has done so the white serpent returns with a white gemstone, and resumes the game of catch with this. This time Konrad catches the gem before the red serpent can do so. That serpent too glowers at him before winding its way into the ground. When Konrad has prised a second gem from the table, the red serpent returns with a red gemstone and resumes the game of catch with this one. Konrad takes this one too, and they both now glower at him and wind into the earth together. As they do so, they create a sort of earthquake, so that everything in the hall, including the sleeping serpents, is upheaved. Konrad grabs some more treasure, including a magical golden goblet that, *inter alia*, fills itself with drink,<sup>28</sup> and makes his way back across the unstable floor, supporting himself with his spear. He hears crashing and hissing behind him, but, following Matthildr's advice, he does not look behind him until he has made his way back to the outer gate, vaulting over the serpents on the path again. When he does then look at the scene behind, he sees that all the gold is gone, and all that is left are blackened ruins beneath clouds of dust and steam.

Again, the alignment of this tale's constituent motifs with the paradigm we are building is self-evident, and there is no need to provide specific exposition for each of them; our Table will do. But what is the relationship between this tale and *Callimachus*? Chronologically, it probably falls after the earliest attestation of the latter (early xiv AD), which need not of course be its point of origin in any sense, and before the full manuscript account of it. There is some debate as to the extent to which Norse sagas may be influenced by Byzantine romances (the famous Varangian guards constituting the obvious conduit), and this one does rather seem to stake a claim to Byzantine influence in making Constantinople its focus. Nonetheless, one scholar at least had denied any line of Byzantine influence

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<sup>26</sup> Cf. *Velthandros and Chrysantza* ll. 451-3: the floating walls of the bedroom in the *Erotokastron*.

<sup>27</sup> *Poetic Edda*, *Reginsmal* and *Fafnismal*.

<sup>28</sup> The goblet's various magical properties are subsequently described at *Konráðs saga Keisarasonar* §11: it will accept no poison drink; if four different liquids are poured into it, it will keep them separate in four quarters; if empty, it will supply its own drink; but it will withhold drink if its user is drunk.

whatsoever for the Konrad saga.<sup>29</sup> So, it is unclear whether the relationship between the Konrad tale and the *Callimachus* tale is a tight one or a remote one. In the latter case, we must assume a broad international diffusion of tales of this type in the later medieval period – but that is not unimaginable.<sup>30</sup> Now, there is no trace of Eros in the Konrad tale (although the ultimate mission is one of love). Is it easier to believe that its creator (or the creator of the relevant Vorlage) has taken something like the *Callimachus* tale and subtracted the easily subtractable motif of Eros (hardly intelligible in a Norse context anyway) from it? Or is it easier to believe that the creator is working in a simpler, venerable tradition in which jewelled castles are presided over by dragons, plain and simple?

#### 4. Theodore

We may briefly note another partial analogue here, in Greek again, and also of the xiv AD or before. This is found in the brief *Miracle and Story of the Saint and Glorious Great-Martyr Theodore Tiron, Concerning his Mother being Taken Captive by the Dragon*.<sup>31</sup> This tells how the city of King Samuel (location not further determinable) depends upon a weak spring emanating from a cave that is home to a three-headed Dragon.<sup>32</sup> When the king accidentally forgets to supply the Dragon with his accustomed offerings, the Dragon revokes access to the spring, and his people are deprived of water (cf. the *Callimachus* dragon's cutting off of the river that flows down from his mountain). In despair, the mother of St Theodore, a warrior-saint like St George, approaches the spring with her horse and a water jar. The spring is located in a region “terrible and fearful, with holes and clefts and entrances and exits for unnumbered reptiles.” The Dragon notices that she is “a girl [*korē*] lovely in her youthfulness, shapely to look at and completely beautiful” and accordingly snatches her up carries her inside the cave, securing the door behind. Theodore, alerted to what has happened by the loose horse, arms himself and heads off to the cave to fight the Dragon the next morning:

Theodore penetrated to the inner cave and to the lair of the Dragon, and he found there his mother in the form of a girl sitting on a stool and twelve snakes in a circle around her and an abominable asp lay before her. An old-man dragon [*gerōn drakōn* –

<sup>29</sup> Amory 1984 esp. 515-16.

<sup>30</sup> For the notion of a vigorous Mediterranean *koine* of literary motifs and story-types in the Middle Ages, within which Constantinople constituted an important node, see Cupane and Krönung 2016:1-17, esp. 4: “A distinctive feature of such ‘Mediterranean’ works is the peculiar form of transmission and dissemination, insofar as they constitute, as it were, text ‘networks’, producing entangled versions of the same basic stories with a marked tendency to proliferation and flexibility.” Mirabile 2021 would extend such a *koine* to embrace the Germanic regions too. Cf. also Beaton 1996:32.

<sup>31</sup> The earliest MS to preserve this text, *Θαῦμα καὶ διήγησις τοῦ ἁγίου καὶ ἐνδόξου μεγαλομάρτυρος τοῦ Θεοδώρου Τήρωνος περὶ τῆς μητρὸς αὐτοῦ τῆς αἰχμαλωτισθείσης ὑπὸ τοῦ δράκοντος*, is *Codex Vindobonensis historicus graecus* 126, of xiv AD. For the text, see AASS Nov. iv pp. 46-8; for discussion, from which much of the summary supplied here is extracted, see Ogden 2021:264, 288-95.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. the three-headed dragon that tries to seize General Doukas' daughter at *Digenis Akritis* (Grottaferrata version) 6.42–80 (the Grottaferrata, deriving from c. AD 1300, is the earliest extant manuscript of the poem, but it reflects a world largely of the ninth and tenth centuries AD, and so this period is presumed to have been that of its principal composition). For text and translation, see Jeffreys 1998. Discussion at Ogden 2021:278-9.

not to be confused with the Dragon-proper, but there is evidently some cack-handed dittography here] was sitting on a golden throne and other reptiles too, great and small, were guarding the girl. Theodore was terrified at the sight of them. Seeing his mother's beauty again, he wanted to embrace her.

*Miracle and Story of the Saint and Glorious Great-Martyr Theodore Tiron, etc.*

Theodore slays all the snakes with his sword and proceeds to embrace his mother, whereupon the Dragon-proper returns. He brings with him two little boys and three deerskins so that they can sit with the girl-woman and be company for her. On seeing the devastation of his community, he becomes angry and blows upon them all with furnace-like blasts from his mouth. Theodore kills the Dragon with his sword, but in death he winds himself up and blocks the door so that they cannot escape. After seven days, at God's behest, the angel Gabriel breaks the weak spring open into a now torrential flood of water, which blasts away the Dragon's carcass, and Theodore sails out of the cave with his mother and the boys, returning to the city.

The correspondences with our other analogues are only partial, but they are noteworthy. The Dragon's cave is hardly a jewelled castle, but it is apparently vast, if Theodore can end up sailing out of it, and, whilst no other treasures are mentioned, it does at least contain a golden throne, on which the Dragon-proper's alter ego, the old-man dragon, sits.<sup>33</sup> The spring's origin within the cave itself also aligns it with the castles in some of the texts we have already referred to. A shining river emanates from the castle of Eros in *Velthandros and Chrysantza* (its ultimate source a sapphire statue within the castle),<sup>34</sup> whilst the liquid with which Konrad's self-filling magical goblet supplies itself seems to emanate from an image of a castle within its bowl.<sup>35</sup>

As the parent of an already experienced and grizzled soldier, Theodore's mother seems an unlikely analogue for the captive ingenues Psyche and Chrysorrhoe, and yet it is precisely as a desirable young girl (*korē*) that she is cast, with both the Dragon and even her son seemingly responding to her desirability. It is strikingly apparent that this narrative has been hastily reworked from a Vorlage in which hero and heroine were destined lovers, like Callimachus and Chrysorrhoe, rather than mother and son. Like the dragon castle of *Callimachus*, the cave is surrounded by serpents, and like the dragon castle of *Konrad*, it is surrounded by serpent-holes and infested with serpents within, who seem to form themselves into a tripartite hierarchical pyramid. And, in the end, the edifice is reduced to ruins, as is Konrad's castle. But once again there is no explicit role for Eros here, despite the lust that the Dragon and seemingly her own son feel for Theodore's mother.

## 5. Apollonius of Tyana

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<sup>33</sup> The golden throne may also constitute a significant raised element, akin to the platform on which Psyche eats, the bed of Chysorrhoe's dragon and the dais of Konrad's crowned dragon, since it appears to be the only significant fixture within the cave, if Theodore's mother must sit on a stool (cf. Chrysorrhoe's footstool?) and the Dragon must bring deerskins for the captive humans to sit on.

<sup>34</sup> *Velthandros and Chrysantza* ll. 253-61, 369-81. Cf. the golden human head from which rosewater flows in the *Callimachus* narrative.

<sup>35</sup> *Konráðs saga Keisarasonar* §11.

Finally, Philostratus' famous tale of Apollonius of Tyana's encounter with a *lamia* or *empousa* in Corinth (c. AD 220).<sup>36</sup> One of his pupils, the handsome and athletic 25-year-old Lycian Menippus, is walking down the road to the port of Cenchreae when an apparition (*phasma*) of a beautiful, rich Phoenician woman appears before him, clings to his hand and professes that she has long desired him (*eran*). In due course she seduces him, since he is in any case susceptible to sex (*ta erōtica*), singing to him and giving him wine like none he has tasted before. The perceptive sage Apollonius, however, can see what is afoot. He warns Menippus that it is a snake (*ophis*) that he is warming on his bosom (NB this is meant literally: the phrase is not metaphorical, as it could be in English, and *lamias* are well attested elsewhere as being possessed of a serpentine element, just as was the Mesopotamian demoness Lamashtu, from which they ultimately derived, before them). Menippus takes no notice, but at the wedding, soon arranged, Apollonius returns to the attack. At the drinking party subsequent to the ceremony, he asks Menippus about the source of the silver and the gold and all the other finery with which the drinking room (*andrōn*) has been decorated.<sup>37</sup> Menippus tells him it is his bride's:

“Do you know about the gardens of Tantalus,” said Apollonius, “which exist and do not exist at the same time?”

“Yes, we know about them from Homer,” they replied, “for we have yet to go down to Hades.”<sup>38</sup>

“You must believe this paraphernalia [*kosmos*] too to be such, for it is not substantial, but merely appears to be. So that you may accept what I say, the good bride is one of the *empousas*, which many consider to be *lamias* and bogies. These female creatures fall in love [*erōsi*], and they crave for sex [*erōsi*], but most of all for human flesh, and they use sex to ensnare the men upon whom they wish to feed.”

Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius* 4.25

The woman jeers at Apollonius, ordering him out, but then “the golden cups and the pretended silver were shown to be made of air [*anemiaios*], everything flew from sight, and the wine-pourers and the cooks and all the servants disappeared after their unmasking by Apollonius.” Apollonius proceeds to subject the weeping apparition (*phasma*) to a form of exorcism in which she is compelled to confess what she is (and therefore, presumably, sent off), and that she has been feeding Menippus fat (*piainein*) with pleasures as a prelude to eating his body. For it is her practice to feed upon beautiful young bodies, since their blood is pure.<sup>39</sup>

Here again there are only a few points of connection with the other analogues, but they do seem compelling. A serpent occupant of a fantastical edifice decked out with gold and silver attempts an erotic connection with a human. The edifice contains magical golden

<sup>36</sup> Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius* 4.25. Felton 2013 makes the important link between the figures of Apuleius' Cupid and Philostratus' *lamia*. Whilst not drawing particular attention to the correspondences between the details of their marvellous homes or air-powered automatic serving equipment, which are key to the present piece, she does note that the two figures share plentiful supplies of servants (233).

<sup>37</sup> ὁ δὲ ἄργυρος καὶ ὁ χρυσὸς καὶ τὰ λοιπά, οἷς ὁ ἀνδρῶν κεκόσμηται.

<sup>38</sup> Homer, *Odyssey* 11.582–92.

<sup>39</sup> For discussion of this *lamia* episode, the importance of *lamias*' serpentine elements and her roots in Lamashtu, see Ogden 2021:73–81, with the scholarship cited there. Note the theme of fattening with luxury food (*piainein hēdonais*), also found in the Cupid and Psyche episode (*blandis alimoniarum obsequiis... saginaturum*); cf. Zimmerman 2004:240.

cups and silver serving vessels (we presume) that consist of air, just as Cupid's palace contained food-trays that wafted on the air, and Konrad's dragons' castle contained a table that floated on air (or appeared to do so). And in the end the magical edifice melts away, just as, 1,100 years later, Konrad's castle turned to black dust and the cave of Theodore's dragon was swept away by a torrent. So, at this early stage, just about 40 years after Apuleius wrote, we have a version of the story-type already with a genuinely serpentine monster at its core. And yet, it is striking that this brief narrative incorporates words cognate with *erōs* no less than four times, and has both Menippus and the *lamia* afflicted by erotic desire. Striking, but it is hard to believe that the incorporation of *erōs* in this way is contrived as a specific allusion to Cupid and Psyche.

### Conclusion

Taking all these narratives together, I would guess at an ultimate ideal story-type along the following lines. A dragon lives in a golden, jewelled castle (or castle-like edifice) in a remote place, almost impossible of access. The castle is surrounded by and infested by lesser serpents. Within it he has a special raised platform for himself, and he is served in it by automatic air-powered trays, tables and vessels. He conceives a desire for a human girl, steals her and keeps her captive in the castle. The castle is penetrated by her lover-to-be, who kills the dragon and saves the girl, whereupon the marvellous castle melts away. I would also suggest that the theme of erotic desire travelled with the story-type.

In the way of these things, none of our analogues matches the ideal in all details, but the *Callimachus* tale comes closest: the original author of it gives us a version of a story-type well known to him (and well known for over a millennium), with a dragon properly at its core, but merely preserves the marvellous castle from destruction for the loving couple to enjoy. It is possible, given the particular degree of convergence with the Cupid and Psyche tale, that the *Callimachus* author has been inspired to incorporate Eros' prominent cameo in his tale in allusion to it and in tribute to it. But it is also conceivable that he is not working directly with the Apuleius tale at all, and that both authors separately chose to develop in their own way the theme of *erōs* that tended to run with the story-type, as the Philostratus tale suggests.

Let us say more about the Cupid and Psyche tale with which we started, now that, I trust, we have further strengthened the case for an underlying dragon. My attention is drawn by the briefly articulated motif of the guardian dragons encountered by Psyche at the Styx in the course of her trials, in which I find a similarity with the guardian dragons that surround the castle in the *Callimachus* narrative. Now, if the creator of the *Callimachus* narrative could rearticulate the roles of Cupid and the imaginary dragon of the Psyche narrative to the extent adumbrated above, then I suppose it is conceivable that he could have transplanted the motif of the guardian dragons from the Styx to the great Dragon's castle too, where he might have felt they fitted well. However, if we feel that the guardian dragons suit their role at the castle much better, and belong best in their *würmegarte*, then we may rather think that Apuleius has himself inherited a narrative with lesser dragons serving as guardians at the palace, but displaced this enticing motif to a different part of his tale: if the owner of his palace was not himself a dragon after all, and basically benign, then why should he need dragon guards?<sup>40</sup>

Finally, two points bearing on the history of the evolution of the western dragon and its story-world. First, in his literal reading of Apollo's oracle, we may well imagine that

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<sup>40</sup> Scobie 1978:53 sees the detail of the dragon guards here as constituting a thematic link back to the main body of the Cupid tale (and also, outside the Cupid tale, to the dragon that manifests itself in the form of an old man at *Metamorphoses* 8.19-21); cf. Zimmerman 2004:472.

Psyche's father integrates into his mental picture of the viperous bridegroom it announces the other features of Cupid to which it refers, both actual and metaphorical again. Accordingly, we may assume that he envisages a winged dragon that roams the skies in its indiscriminate marauding against the creatures of the earth, which it attacks with the fire it breathes, or projects from its eyes,<sup>41</sup> and that it possesses teeth or perhaps a hide resembling iron.<sup>42</sup> If this does indeed indicate a conceptualisation of a marauding dragon as a winged entity, then it is striking and unique at this point. Although the ancient world had long had the idea of winged snakes in various contexts (the flying snakes of Arabia; the flying snakes of India; the winged snakes that draw the chariots of Demeter/Triptolemus and of Medea),<sup>43</sup> the notion that a marauding dragon should be winged does not emerge until the fourth century AD (e.g., in the writings of Jerome and Augustine),<sup>44</sup> primarily as a result of the merging of dragons and winged demons in Christian thought<sup>45</sup> -- which is unlikely to be having an impact here, though that is not a complete impossibility.<sup>46</sup>

Secondly, it is noteworthy that the abandoning of princess Psyche on a crag to a monster the king believes to be viperous brings us closer in some ways to the treasured central vignette of ATU 300 ("The Dragon-slayer") and that of the St George story, in which a virgin girl is pinned out for the consumption of a marauding dragon, than anything else in Classical antiquity: our closest analogue narratives for this vignette from the Classical world otherwise either substitute the dragon with a sea monster (Hesione and Andromeda) or substitute the girl with a boy (Cleostratus and Alcyoneus): [Table 2](#).<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> It is a surprising fact that we more often hear of ancient dragons projecting fire from their eyes than from their mouths: see the discussion and sources listed at Ogden 2021:39. NB *MI* B765.14.1 ("Serpent reduces man to a heap of ashes by its fiery gaze").

<sup>42</sup> For the Classical notion that the bodies of serpents could be metallic or contain metal, see Ogden 2013:177-8 (the key case is Cadmus' Dragon of Ares). Later on, the Dragon of the Rocks faced by St Philip has an iron crest (as it seems, though the text is corrupt): *Acts of Philip* 11.5 (A) (mid iv AD; for text see Amsler et al. 1999; for a translation, Bovon and Matthews 2012 and [partial] Ogden 2013:207-20). Margaret of Antioch's dragon has iron teeth: *Passio S. Margaritae virginis et martyris* 12-14, p. 192 Mombritius (pp. 204-7 Clayton and Magennis) (ix AD). Normal dragons would not have boasted talons, "iron" or otherwise, at this stage, but we may note that Statius' *lamia* boasts talons of iron (*Thebaid* 1.611), these associated with the humanoid part of her body.

<sup>43</sup> Arabia: Herodotus 2.75-6 and 3.107-9. India: Megasthenes, *FGrH / BNJ* 715 fr. 21a, 21c. Demeter/Triptolemus: *LIMC* Triptolemos 138 (c.380 BC); cf. 39, 44, 48a etc. Medea: *LIMC* Medeia 39, 46, 51, 53, 55, 57, 58, 62, 63 etc. Discussion and further references at Ogden 2021:105-10. Cf. *MI* B558.7 ("winged serpents pull chariot through sky").

<sup>44</sup> Jerome, *Commentary on Isaiah* 13:21-2, *PL* xxiv, 163; Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram* 3.9.131, *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 148.9 on v. 7. Discussion and further references at Ogden 2021:116-20.

<sup>45</sup> E.g. *Acts of Philip* 11.2-8 (A) (late iv AD). Discussion and further references at Ogden 2021:113-16.

<sup>46</sup> The impact of early Christian dragon-culture on the pagan literature of Apuleius' age can at any rate be demonstrated in the case of the *drakōn*-tale fashioned by Apuleius' contemporary Lucian at *Philopseudes* 11-13. Discussion and further references at Ogden 2021:260-76.

<sup>47</sup> Apuleius *Metamorphoses* 4.33-4. The parallelism between Psyche's exposure on the mountain for her monster unknown and Andromeda's and Hesione's exposure on their cliffs for their sea monsters is widely recognised: e.g., Merkelbach 1962:11, Grimal 1963:15,

**Abbreviations**

<i>AASS</i>	<i>Acta Sanctorum</i> 1643–1940.
<i>ATU</i>	Uther 2004.
<i>BNJ</i>	Worthington 2007-.
<i>FGrH</i>	Jacoby 1923–
<i>LIMC</i>	Kahil <i>et al.</i> 1981–99.
<i>MI</i>	Thompson 1955–8.
<i>PL</i>	Migne 1884–1904.

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Mantero 1973:49-52, Hoevels 1979:45, Kenney 1990:130-1, Zimmerman 2004:86, Felton 2013:230.

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**Table 1: Schematic comparison of motifs in analogues of the “Jewelled Castle of the Dragon” story-type**

	<i>Apuleius, Cupid and Psyche</i> (later ii AD)	<i>Callimachus and Chryssorrhoe</i> (xvi AD, based on a Vorlage of early xiv AD or before)	<i>Konrad's Saga §10</i> (xiv AD)	Theodore Tyron (xiv AD or before)	Philostratus, <i>Apollonius</i> (early iii AD)
<b>Inaccessibility of the place</b>	Accessible only from a high crag with the aid of Zephyr	Atop a mountain higher than the birds	At the edge of the inhabited world, on a plain surrounded by gorges	--	The drinking-hall is hallucinatory
<b>Meadow surrounding the edifice (with water-source, which the dragon can cut off)</b>	Valley of dewy grass, crystal ( <i>vitreo</i> ) spring and stream	Outside the castle wall, a meadow of roses and lilies, a crystalline river; inside it, a fragrant garden of ripe fruits; the Dragon cuts off the river, which serves the city of Chryssorrhoe's father, in an attempt to secure her hand	A plain of golden gravel and giant heather	A vital stream issues forth from cave and serves the city of King Samuel; the Dragon cuts it off in revenge for missing offerings	--
<b>Edifice type</b>	Palace ( <i>domus regia</i> )	Castle	Castle	(Vast) cave	Hallucinatory drinking-hall
<b>Edifice constructed from / decorated with / packed with precious substances</b>	Palace constructed from citron-wood and ivory. It has gold columns, gold walls decorated with silver reliefs, floors decorated with gemstone mosaics, and is filled with treasures.	Castle constructed from gold, pearls, gemstones, etc., inside and out	Castle constructed from gold, silver, tin, glass and precious stones	Cave contains a golden throne	Drinking-hall decorated with silver and gold
<b>Edifice surrounded by lesser serpents and their holes</b>	(Deferred motif? - dragons guard the waters of the Styx)	Host of unsleeping dragons surrounds the castle	The castle is surrounded by gorges and holes in the earth, and by a host of serpents in trance-like sleep (because it is Whit Sunday)	Cave surrounded by serpent-holes	--
<b>Within the edifice, a tripartite hierachisation of serpent occupants</b>	--	--	The crowned dragon; 2 ball-playing underlings; the broader host	Dragon-proper; asp and old-man dragon; 12 lesser snakes	--
<b>Raised element within the edifice</b>	Palace contains semi-circular platform on which Psyche dines	Dragon killed on his raised bed	The great serpent extends across a dais	The golden throne (?)	--
<b>Bath in the edifice</b>	Palace includes bath	Castle includes magical automatic bath house	--	--	--
<b>Initial access to the edifice by means of flight / leap</b>	Psyche is carried from the crag to the valley through the air by Zephyr (to leap from the crag without Zephyr means death)	Callimachus flies over the surrounding serpents and the wall by taking a magic ring into his mouth and growing wings – but also after fixing his spear in the ground.	Konrad vaults over two sets of serpents, with the aid of spear	--	--
<b>Automatic, air-powered trays, tables, vessels, etc. for serving food and drink</b>	Food-trays carried on <i>wafts of air</i> ( <i>spiritu quodam impulsa</i> ); invisible, intangible (?) servants	Automatic table comes when summoned; also, the bath has an automatic furnace	A jewelled table appears to float in the air; a magical goblet fills itself with drink	--	Hallucinatory servants; hallucinatory gold cups and silver are <i>made of air</i>
<b>Dragon owner of the edifice</b>	Cupid misleadingly represented as a serpent by oracle and Psyche's sisters	The Dragon	The great, crowned dragon (we presume)	Three-headed dragon	<i>Lamia / empusa</i> , is a snake ( <i>ophis</i> )
<b>The captive individual</b>	Ingenue Psyche	Ingenue Chryssorrhoe; uses footstool	--	Theodore's mother (oddly presented as a romantic heroine); sits on stool	(Menippus is erotically ensnared)

<b>The liberating hero</b>	--	Callimachus	Konrad	Theodore	Apollonius
<b>The youngest of three siblings</b>	Psyche, with two elder sisters	Callimachus, with two elder brothers		--	--
<b>Eros</b>	Eros is the true owner of the palace	A painting of Eros presides over the Dragon's chamber and scene of the action; he preserves Chysorrhoe for Callimachus and guarantees their oaths of love	(Konrad's mission is to secure the hand of the princess he loves)	(Projection of Theodore's mother as a romantic heroine)	Both Menippus and the <i>lamia</i> are devoted to <i>erōs</i> : <i>eraō</i> , <i>erōtica</i>
<b>Final destruction of the edifice</b>	--	--	The castle and its gold dissolve into blackened ruins	The cave is destroyed by a torrent	Apollonius makes the hallucinatory gold and silver melt away

**Table 2: The vignette of the girl menaced by a marauding dragon**

	<b>Heracles, Hesione and the Ketos of Troy</b>	<b>Perseus, Hesione and the Ketos of Ethiopia / Joppa</b>	<b>Menestratus, Cleostratus and the Dragon of Thespieae</b>	<b>Eurybatus, Alcyoneus and the Lamia-Sybaris</b>	<b>Cupid (as serpent) and Psyche</b>
<b>Devouring monster</b>	Sea monster	Sea monster	Dragon	Dragon	Dragon
<b>Victim in distress</b>	Damsel	Damsel	Youth	Youth	Damsel