

At *Daphnis and Chloe* 1.25.2 Daphnis describes the effects of his first kiss from Chloe: δάκνει τὸ φίλημα τὴν καρδίαν καὶ ὥσπερ τὸ νέον μέλι μαίνεσθαι ποιεῖ. Earlier commentators on the passage were all content with referring to one or more of the ancient testimonia for a “maddening honey” from the Pontic region and leaving it at that. Morgan (2004, *ad loc.*) is the first scholar to my knowledge to deviate from this practice, arguing that “D[aphnis] does not mean that honey literally causes insanity, but that its sweetness, stronger before the honey goes stale, is tormentingly addictive, like the poisoned pleasure of a kiss.” I find both approaches unsatisfactory and believe that the infinitive μαίνεσθαι has been transmitted incorrectly. The combination of the famous maddening honey and the well-worn trope of love as a source of madness has prevented anyone from looking more deeply into the context of the passage, but I believe a solution is easy and well-supported.

I will begin with a survey of the ancient evidence for maddening honey (Xenophon *Anab.* 4.8.20; Pliny *NH* 21.77; etc.) and the modern medical literature (Lampe *JAMA* [1988]; Biberoglu et al. *JAMA* [1988]; Dilber et al. *Turk J Med Sci* [2002]; Von Malottki et al. *Dtsch Med Wochenschr* [1996]; etc.) to support Morgan’s contention that the Pontic honey is irrelevant. But I also hope to show that Morgan’s interpretation is nothing more than special pleading and lacks any parallel (figurative or not) in other ancient sources, despite the widespread cliché of love as a maddening agent. Love maddens. Honey does not, even new honey.

Longus is, on the other hand, quite clear about what Chloe’s kiss does to Daphnis and this accords well with the evidence provided by the Greek medical writers for the medicinal effects of honey. An exploration of these medical treatises combined with a close reading of the description of summer leads me to conclude that we should read not μαίνεσθαι, but (θερ)μαίνεσθαι.

I will conclude with some remarks on the other appearances of honey in Longus and in Greek erotic literature more generally and the place of learned and scientific knowledge in the works of the Greek novelists, and I will suggest possible sources for Longus’ conjunction of heat, honey and love.