

M. ZIMMERMAN, *Apuleius Madaurensis Metamorphoses, Book X. Text, Introduction and Commentary*. Groningen, Egbert Forsten, 2000. Pp. 487. Hardback. € 70. ISBN 90 6980 128 0.

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Maaike Zimmerman apologizes with characteristic self-effacement at the very beginning of this commentary: “This book has been with me for many years” (p. 5). I must apologize in kind. I have carried this book around for too long in my ICAN bag and it is very heavy. However, in her case, the more one looks at the commentary with its thoughtful thoroughness, the question is really how one person ever managed to do so much.

Zimmerman’s Book 10 follows the format of the others in the *Groningen Commentaries on Apuleius* series with which all readers of *AN* must be familiar: after the Introduction and Text, the commentary repeats the Latin text one sentence at a time and offers “a working translation”. Then follows an exhaustive commentary covering every possible issue from textual variants to narratology. The commentary incorporates references to new and old work on Apuleius, and a lengthy bibliography of works cited appears at the end, as well as a bibliography of items that have appeared since 1995, to continue the bibliography since the last Groningen Commentary. There are three appendices (discussed below). At nearly 500 pages, this is the longest of the Groningen commentaries to date.

While this commentary looks very much like the others in the series, it is the first to be written by only one author. While there were obvious disadvantages for Zimmerman, the commentary does not seem to suffer, but rather achieves a unity of vision and continuity of discussion that would have been more difficult in a group. The book becomes not simply an analysis of anomalous words or cruces, a list of textual parallels or an explanation of little-known practices, etc. as commentaries so often are, but is itself (in addition to all those things) an essay on Book 10 and the important themes that recur within it. I confess that I had planned, for the purposes of this review, to read only a few parts of it and to use them as exemplary, but that I could not, allowing for exaggeration, stop reading it.

Book 10, as *Z.* points out *passim*, has received less attention than it deserves, since it is generally lumped together with the formless mass of later

books in which the world “becomes increasingly gloomy and oppressive” (pp. 440–41). Tatum, Schlam, Shumate and others argue (with variations) that the function of these books is to act as a counterpoint to the salvation of Book 11 by showing the evil of society (especially women) and the absence of moral or epistemological anchors without Isis. (Z. disagrees with that view however, seeing Lucius as not feeling revulsion and the world as one in which justice often wins.) However, Book 10 deserves separate consideration; in contrast to the shapeless string of adultery tales of Book 9, for example, this book offers a very tight chiasmic structure in which two lengthy inset tales of evil women and doctors (2–12; 23–28) mirror each other and alternate with a narrative of Lucius’ own life and, in particular, his real and projected mating with a (human) woman.¹ The longest tale, that of the *nouerca* (2–12), is highly literary and self-consciously allusive (as Z. shows at in detail in Appendix 1). The book also follows Lucius-ass’s partial integration into human society as his special talents are discovered by the cooks who care for him, and he begins to eat human food, communicate with humans through gesture, and mate with a wealthy *matrona*, thus exploring the dividing line between human and animal. Finally, Book 10 ends with the colorful and lascivious pantomime of the Judgment of Paris held in the theater at Corinth—often examined in its own right as evidence of the nature of ancient theatrical entertainment—from which Lucius, in fear, and possibly moral revulsion, flees. Thus, this transitional book is distinct from the other late books by its tight form, its diverse content, its literariness, and by the ambiguities in Lucius’ social, existential, and moral status.

Re-reading this book now with the help of Z.’s commentary, one comes to realize how much a good commentary enriches one’s reading, by supplying the sort of concrete social-historical information that one might otherwise pass over. So, for example, along with interesting speculations about whether Apuleius’ readers (Z. fundamentally agrees with Dowden 1994, that they are Roman) had an accurate picture of the legal situation in the provinces, Z. tells us the functions of magistrates in the Greek towns under Roman jurisdiction (e.g. pp. 131–33); she tells us, in relation to the false death of the young man at 10.12, that the dead wore beautiful shrouds and were wrapped so as to prevent the mouth from falling open; she teaches us that a *cursor* (10.5) was a slave specially trained as a kind of mail carrier, and that to own one is a sign of wealth; we learn that “in military jargon, an ex-

¹ See, in particular, Finkelppearl 1998 149–151.

tremely difficult piece of country is called *nouerca*” (p. 66); as part of an analysis of Lucius’ progression from animal to human food, Z. patiently explicates one of those impossible Apuleian catalogues of food: “...*ille porcorum, pullorum, piscium et cuiusce modi pulmentorum largissimas reliquias, hic panes, crustula, lucunculos, hamos, lacertulos et plura scitamenta mellita*” (10.13)—*hamus*, attested only here, is presumably a crescent-shaped pastry... . She teaches us about the luxuriousness of balsam stored in a tin jar (p. 274): tin mined in Britain was transported by Phoenicians who kept its origins mysteriously secret for commercial reasons and thus its mention contributes to a fairy-tale atmosphere of Oriental luxury. She comes up with a new interpretation of the word *ueternus* (10.9); rather than settling for the meaning “of long duration” favored by translators, she has found a passage in Plautus where it seems to mean “coma” (p. 159). Connoisseurs of ass-lore, as students of the ancient novel tend to be, we learn of the staggering amounts of baggage asses in Greece carry even today (p. 56) and of the excellent quality of Gallic mules, praised in Claud. *Carm. Min* 18: *De Mula-bus Gallicis* (p. 255). Much much more of this sort makes the commentary fascinating reading which brings the text to life in new ways.

Z. devotes particular attention in many parts of the commentary to issues of narratology and intertextuality. Her narrative methodology is that of Lintvelt, in contrast with the looser methodology employed by Winkler which many may associate with Apuleius studies. She follows mainly the Teubner text of Helm 1955, with a few variations, but often retains readings of F where Helm has regularized spelling. For example she argues for the form *fidi* genitive (p. 152); at 10.22, she opts for *passarem* over *passerem* (the *matrona*’s term of endearment for Lucius), arguing that the alternate spelling may already have been current in Apuleius’ time. In general, these readings raise intriguing linguistic questions which others may more knowledgeably judge.

As I mentioned above, however, the commentary also functions as a running analysis of various important issues in Book 10 and offers some interesting new interpretations of various themes and characters. We may begin with her reading of the longest of the tales, the Stepmother episode at 2–12. One of the problematic aspects of this episode is the way the entire story diverges from tragedy to romance. After a statement of the situation (a stepmother is in love with her stepson), the narrator announces that a tragedy is to follow: “*iam ergo, lector optime, scito te tragoediam, non fabulam*

legere et a socco ad coturnum ascendere,” 10.2, from which the “*optimus lector*” will understand the reference to a Phaedra tale. However, due to the intervention of a good and clever doctor, a sleeping potion is substituted for the poison intended for the stepson and the long tale ends with the “rebirth” of a son presumed dead, and the reconciliation of the father and the other son. In short, the story is not a tragedy in the traditional sense, but becomes a romance. As Z. reminds us, some critics have seen the narrator’s announcement as deliberately “misleading”, while others, such as Walsh, have felt that the author “hardly knew where his story was headed”.

Z. suggests, in the course of her notes and in the appendices and introduction, that we should think in a more positive way about the tale’s change of direction by applying Nimis’ theories of the “prosaics” of the novel: “the narrative is not necessarily an ‘act of structuring towards the ending’, but rather a more tentative, experimental movement, feeling its way towards an end that is not yet fully realized”.² The literary allusions that appear so densely in this episode provoke in the reader “inferential walks” and tentative hypotheses about how the story will progress.³ Z. emphasizes the way that “the activity of the reader is enlisted precisely in this way” (p. 418).

In the course of Appendix I and extensively in the notes, Z. provides an exhaustive survey of the possible literary and extra-literary sources of the story, including some less often invoked: mime, declamation, and the story of Antiochus and Stratonike—all of which may cause the reader to form hypotheses about the outcome of the story. (She pays less attention than might be warranted to Ovid *Ep.* 4 and, in my opinion, to Dido.) She notes, however, that the actors behave inconsistently with their literary models: “again and again, this leads to reversals in the story, in which the actors move farther and farther from their ‘models’” (p. 431). Most notably, the good *medicus*, in saying “*non patiar*” at 10.11, himself disallows the traditional trajectory of the story: “By himself he opposes with all his might the course the story threatens to take” (p. 175). At the conclusion of her discussion in the notes, Z. points to the absence of an evaluation or summary of the tale or any explanation for its change in direction and concludes that “it is up to the reader to supply an overall interpretation and a reviewed evaluation” (p. 193), and in the conclusion to Appendix I, she states that the author Apuleius may not have known how it would end.

² Nimis 1999, 217f. quoted in Z. p. 418.

³ Nimis 1994, 403, quoting Umberto Eco, quoted on Z. p. 418.

Thus, Z. in a sense combines the interpretation that views the narrator's pronouncement as deliberately misleading (the allusions take one along false paths) with one that sees Apuleius as not knowing where the story is going. She folds the dense intertext into her analysis, making it part of the process of interpretation, bringing to the forefront the reader's role as interpreter.

What I find best here is that Z. probes very deeply into the way that generic expectations are defeated and that the direction of the intertexts is not followed. Echoes of earlier literature are included in order to create possible trajectories for the story, but may well be false leads. Z. looks more closely at each allusion than anyone else has before. (Frequently she critiques my work on allusion quite rightly, via strategically placed and understated use of the word "however.") However, for me, several aspects of this approach are problematic. Most of all, while "prosaics" offers an attractive alternative model of composition, in this case its methods would signal a troubling lack of authorial control. It is one thing for an author to include apparently irrelevant information and other "voices" which could have been a part of a different draft or abandoned direction, and quite another to inform the reader directly that the story is a tragedy when it is not. Those who see the "iam ergo..." as misleading at least are assuming a sophisticated author who creates games around misreading and plays with our systems of judgment, and their reading is part of an overall interpretation of Apuleius which puts misleading, misreading and tricks of the narrator in the foreground. The *prosaics* approach assumes an Apuleius who lets his characters get away from him and does not go back and revise. It is my sense that we should read the problematic declaration that we will be reading a "tragoedia" and ascending to the *cothurnus* less in terms of the tale's ending and more in terms of its elevated and literary nature. Not all tragedies actually end tragically.

Another curious aspect of this reading, though perhaps mainly a matter of rhetoric and expression, is the way that characters are said themselves to change the direction of the story. The example of the *medicus* who transforms the tale from a tragedy to a romance or mime has been mentioned above. Z. also argues that because the *iuuenis* is, at 10.4, "probe litteratus" he is therefore conscious of his role as a Hippolytus; on the basis of his book knowledge, he deliberately acts differently in the attempt to avoid Hippolytus' mistakes. In Appendix 3, Z. depicts a phenomenon in which the actors step out of their parts as defined by generic conventions, and that finally the ass flees from the theater, "no longer prepared to play the part expected of

him” (p. 444). Given the close attention to narrative levels and Lintveltian distinctions between concepts like “concrete author/abstract author”, and the absence of qualifying language in the circumstances at hand, it is somewhat difficult to know in exactly what sense *Z.* means that the *characters* oppose the course of the story rather than that *e.g.* the author creates characters who act in ways the reader might not have predicted.

I am also intrigued by her criticism of the *iuuenis* (cf. later on the wealthy Thiasus) who, to others except O. Tappi, has seemed an exemplary youth. *Z.* states that “the black-and-white view of this fictive narrator is, however, weakened by the abstract author because of the subtle signals of criticism of the *iuuenis*’ behaviour that can be found in the text” (p. 106), referring to his clumsiness and half-hearted behavior which does not fail to avert disaster.

Another prominent feature of the discussion of this scene is *Z.*’s exploration of the influence of mime. Others, as *Z.* mentions, have seen mime as a source for episodes elsewhere in the *Metamorphoses* (Winkler 1985, Fick 1991, Andreassi 1997), and it is reasonable to expect, given the general nature of the text, that subliterate genres have had some part in creating it. As her point of departure she uses Wiemken, Steinmetz and others who attempt to reconstruct the original mime (p. 425), and she cites as a background *P. Ox.* 413, the “Mime of the Poisoner,” in which a slave fails to respond to the advances of a married woman, with consequences similar to those in Apuleius. *Z.* rightly draws attention to the fact that the stepmother attempting to poison her stepson is not a feature of the Phaedra tragedies, but that another, qualitatively different narrative has intruded itself in the middle of the tale. “It is conceivable that Apuleius interspersed his ‘Phaedra’ with obvious mime-reminiscences for the very purpose of showing his contemporaneous audience how a tragic Phaedra could degenerate into a common, evil poisoner” (425). At a couple of points in the commentary, she draws attention to a description of gesture (pp. 87; 143), which could be an indication that Apuleius was depicting live dramatic performance.

The problem with this theory—one which has much to recommend it—is that it is nearly impossible to prove, and is more often asserted than supported. For example, the trial scene at 10.7f. is said to be “a frequent motif in the Greek novel and mime” (p. 136 and *cf.* p. 425), the poison-mixing stepmother is called “widespread in mime” (p. 107), and the vividness of the narration as the wrong son drinks the potion (10.5) is used as support for its

possible origins in mime. Z. is surely right to argue that other influences beyond Seneca and Euripides are at work here, and to argue that mime is probably at work in the *Met.*, but there simply does not seem to be enough to work with. Stepmothers and poisoning occur in many genres of Latin literature, including satire which might be worth investigating further as a source. It also seems odd to make so much of so little in this episode, but to say much less about possible mime influence in the parallel story at 10.23–28.

The next section of book 10, chapters 13–18 concerns the cook-brothers and Lucius' new master, Thiasus, who stages lavish entertainments and treats his donkey as a *conuiuia*. Lucius' fame as a clever donkey who can perform tricks leads to his liaison with the wealthy *matrona* (19–22). Here, Z.'s focus in the narrative of her notes is on “the human being within the ass/the animal within the human being” (and see Intro 2.3). She largely agrees here with those, such as Shumate, who read in this section not only the (tenuous) progression of Lucius into human society, but, as a complement, the degeneration of humans into an animalesque state.

Here it seems to me that, given the attention devoted to literary models and backgrounds in this commentary, more could be done with traditions of comedy, satire, animal fable, and perhaps the social conditions of the *convivium*. Z. mentions the *scurrula* (p. 235) and the *parasitus* (p. 237), but the discussion is not extensive. This scene seems to me to evoke satirically all sorts of associations with the serious Roman rites of community involving proper wine-drinking, witty conversation and brotherhood (*cf.* forthcoming work of Habinek). Dining satires also are probably in the background here, as well as the less literary motifs found in fable in which animals behave like humans. Z. does mention repeatedly the evolving nature of the human/animal divide throughout the notes, but more could be done. Thus, while the notes devote close attention to literary and non-literary sources, I would have preferred greater attention to questions of which sources were of primary importance in each particular scene (*cf.* methodologies of Conte, Hinds).

She also introduces interesting observations on the character of Thiasus. Although his most apparent trait may be his affectionate relationship with his remarkable donkey, Z. extracts sinister undertones: “Thiasus is consistently characterized as the sybaritic millionaire who does as he pleases and expects others to indulge his whims” (pp. 252–53). She connects his name with Dionysian cult, and describes him as a Silenus figure since he rides on an ass (p. 254). Lucius' apparent good fortune at this moment is illusory: as soon as

254). Lucius' apparent good fortune at this moment is illusory: as soon as the whim strikes Thiasus to have his *conuiuia* perform in the arena with a condemned woman and risk being mauled by beasts, Lucius becomes no more than an animal to him (p. 258).

For the *matrona*, too, Z. has some critical words. She notes that the emphasis on the purity of the *matrona*'s feelings, absent in the corresponding sections of the *Onos*, has caused some critics to see the scene as an important step in Lucius' humanization and progression toward Isis.⁴ Z. objects that "There is irony at the level of the abstract author: the naïve narrator describes the woman's kisses as *pura atque sincera*, but immediately afterwards he quotes, in direct discourse, some truly banal formulas used by the woman" (p. 277). She views the naïve Lucius as completely taken in by the *matrona*, in contrast to the reader who sees through such phrases as "*sine te iam uiuere nequeo*" as empty words. While Z. has good reason to argue that this scene does not represent an important step toward Isis, it seems nonetheless unfair to the *matrona* to dismiss her words as insincere merely because they are banal. Are these not the words people use in such circumstances when they are in fact most sincere? Z. adds also to the character of the *matrona* the suggestion that she is surrounded by *Eastern* splendor, exemplified in the eunuchs and her Tyrian purple. As she has already presented extensive documentation of the decadence of Corinth, it would be interesting to pursue the question of how easternness complements or differs from the Corinthian decadence. (Altogether, her reassessments of the *iuuenis*, Thiasus, and the *matrona* are well worth further thought, though possibly in part over-readings of the text.)

Appendix 2 provides a text, translation, and very welcome distillation of the approaches to and scholarship on the *spurcum additamentum* which appears in the margin of some manuscripts (not including F) at 10.21. While there are still some who would defend the authenticity of the obscene passage (cf. Pennisi 1970; Pizzica 1981; Winkler 1985, 193), Z. follows Mariotti's conclusions based on detailed linguistic analysis, that the *additamentum* was composed in the eleventh century at Monte Cassino in a period and place where there was intense interest in Apuleius.

It remains to discuss the final scene of the book: the pantomime in the theater, Lucius' indignant outburst against corrupt judgments, his flight, and the question of whether Lucius seems to have developed morally and spiritu-

⁴ For example, Shumate 1996, 126.

ally in Book 10. On this last point, Z. is insistent, rightly I think, that Lucius' flight is motivated by fear rather than revulsion. "The narrator's text contains no suggestion that the flight of the main character of the *Met.* is an attempt to turn his back on a depraved world, as the secondary [sic] literature often claims" (p. 408). She points out that the narrator at 10.34 gives a clear list of motives for the ass's flight. Although they include "*pudor*", the overwhelming emotion is fear. It is significant that Lucius enjoys animal food for the first time at 10.29 and eagerly watches the spectacle, all of which argues strongly against a reading which sees Lucius as re-crossing a borderline between human and animal (pp. 360, 412).

In this connection, I must question her dismissal of the erotic overtones of the scene in which Venus' dance culminates in the eruption of saffron out of hidden pipes in the artificial Mt. Ida, after which the mountain is swallowed up in a chasm in the earth.⁵ It seems to me that, in this highly erotic scene, with Venus dancing lasciviously and the condemned woman waiting to mate with Lucius, we are entitled to see practices like the spewing of saffron from pipes—which *is*, it is true, a well attested feature of the ancient theater—in light of the surrounding atmosphere. That they are attested elsewhere does not mean that Apuleius cannot imbue the practices with sexual innuendo in this scene. The fact that Lucius does not see and condemn this sexual depravity and instead focusses on the corruption of judges fits well with Z.'s reading of Lucius as an ass who has not progressed beyond his animal state.

In her commentary on Lucius' strange outburst against judges (10.33), Z. brings out the connection to Cynic diatribe and downplays the importance of the reference to Socrates for the larger interpretation of the *Met.* while acknowledging that the auctorial narrator is one of those philosophers who "*iurent in ipsius nomen*". "It is impossible to build a serious Platonic interpretation of the *Met.* on this kind of passage" (p. 400)—a refreshing point of view given both the whimsical nature of the outburst and the tendency of some scholars to milk Platonic references for more than they are worth.

The sentence which follows and concludes the outburst, imagining that the reader will exclaim: "*ecce nunc patiemur philosophantem nobis asinum!*" (10.33) has received much attention because of the apparent slippage between the narrating and experiencing "I". The reader imagines that an ass is narrating. Z. points out that other passages in the *Met.* play with the fiction

⁵ Finkelpearl 1991.

of a narrating ass, *e.g.* in the Tale of Cupid and Psyche at 6.25 when Lucius laments that he does not have a pen and tablets to write down such a beautiful tale. She also cites Warren Smith who argues that “*asinum*” should be taken in a transferred meaning as “fool” (p. 401). However, she also cites an interesting parallel in Lucian *Gall.* 20f. where a rooster philosophizes, opening up various unexplored paths into the role of animal fable in the *Met.*. One has the sense that more could have been said at this point in the commentary about this curious passage, particularly about narratology, but perhaps this is asking more of a commentary than is reasonable. If, in fact, the bulk of this review treats the commentary as if it were more like a narrative essay on Book 10 than a sentence by sentence, word by word definitive commentary, this is strong testimony to the persistence of Z.’s incorporation of these larger issues, and if this reviewer disagrees with some of the perspectives on such overarching themes, it should not be understood as serious criticism of the commentary as a vehicle for vastly enriching the reader’s experience of Book 10.

The book, while beautifully bound and printed, is not without typographical errors, sometimes apparently the result of proofreading by someone whose first language is not English (*e.g.* Boek, p. 15; consumption p. 22; kontekst p. 202; de *Met.* p. 225). In addition, there are a few places in the commentary where one might expect fuller discussion; for example, the words “*at ego*” at 10.13 (p. 196) receive a comment on the use of subject pronouns, but no mention of the opening words of the Prologue (likewise “*prosapia*” at 10.18, p. 250). The word “*fabula*”, especially when it is used at 10.2, receives very little attention, though cross-references are provided to earlier *GCA* volumes. At the same time, the commentary is also full of much more information and many more ideas than can be adequately addressed in a review.

We all must feel extreme gratitude toward the authors of these detailed commentaries along with a sense of frustration that there do not exist any texts to use in the classroom. One can only hope that the Groningen commentaries are in part a first step toward creating a series that is *less* detailed, like Ruebel’s new Book I, though Groningen need not be the origin of texts so different in nature. Meanwhile, this commentary will be a source of immense interest, pleasure, and help to scholars of Apuleius.

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