

Apuleius and Carthage

KEITH BRADLEY
University of Notre Dame

After his trial at Sabratha in 158/159 Apuleius of Madauros appears to have settled in the city of Carthage. There, chiefly it seems in the decade of the 160s, he delivered a series of public speeches which now are known from a collection of twenty-three highly coloured extracts preserved under the title of *Florida*. My purpose in this essay is to examine this collection, or rather the original speeches the collection represents, in its historical North African and especially Carthaginian context in an effort to promote understanding of the singularity of Apuleius as a figure in the Latin literary tradition.¹

Critics and commentators conventionally regard Apuleius the Latin author, especially the author of the *Metamorphoses*, as a link in a literary chain that extends in a more or less straight, undeviating line from the early third century BC to the Antonine age and beyond, a tendency that has the effect of obscuring in my view a true distinctiveness that derives from the particular historical conditions that moulded and formed Apuleius and against which his life and activities as a cultural figure can be assessed. Elementary statements of the ‘facts’ of Apuleius’ life are of course commonly provided in scholarly studies, and a sensitivity to a North African milieu can sometimes display itself in them. But what these facts mean is a question that seems

¹ On the dating of the *Florida*, see Hunink 2001: 18; cf. Harrison 2000: 7–8. The text followed throughout is that of Vallette 1971, and the translations quoted are those of Hilton 2001. For Apuleius’ trial, see with references Bradley 1997. I assume that the extracts concerned represent speeches of a type actually made by Apuleius in his own voice, some of which (at least) were recorded at the time of delivery by stenographers; see *Flor.* 9.13 (reading ‘exceptum’ [Vallette]; contrast Hunink 2001: 109–110; cf. Hunink 2001a, 321–324, ‘excerptum’) with Hilton 2001: 125–127; cf. Fantham 1996: 259–262. For valuable comments on earlier drafts of the essay I am indebted to Jonathan Edmondson, Elaine Fantham, Susan Treggiari, and Maaïke Zimmerman. *AN*’s anonymous referees provided helpful observations.

hardly ever to be raised comprehensively, and often no more than a minimal connection is made with the discussions and analyses of Apuleius' writings offered. Historical material beyond the elementary, moreover, is often overlooked.²

Apuleius was born in Madauros about 125 and was educated as a child in Carthage. Both cities belonged to a region of the Roman Empire in which the language of governance was Latin, and in which many other aspects of Roman culture, not least architectural aspects, were on display. After his childhood education in Carthage, Apuleius travelled widely throughout the Mediterranean and spent several years of his early adulthood studying in Athens and Rome. By the time of his trial in Sabratha when he was in his early thirties, he had become a man of wide philosophical and literary learning—what Greeks called *paideia* but what Apuleius in his Latinate idiom termed *doctrina*—as the *Apology*, the published version of the speech of defence he gave at his trial makes clear. Before the proconsul Claudius Maximus, Apuleius accounted for the accusations brought against him by giving rational explanations of his behaviour that on several occasions allowed him to quote from, paraphrase, or refer to works of the Plato he regarded as his master (the *Symposium*, *Timaeus*, *Parmenides*, and *Phaedrus* among others), and he introduced at will any number of allusions to purely literary authors from Homer to Hadrian.³

The *doctrina* with which the years of travel and study had filled Apuleius is as evident in the *Florida* as it is in the *Apology*, and there is no doubt that Apuleius came to know the Latin literary tradition thoroughly. The conclusion that he should thus be regarded as a mainstream figure in the Latin liter-

² Conventionally: see, solely *exempli gratia*, Dickey 2002, surveying a range of Latin authors from Plautus to Apuleius and duly acknowledging the importance of the development of the Latin language over time for its subject, but neglecting place, the subject of concern here, as a variable which might have value for explaining how Apuleius and other authors expressed themselves and how their works might be understood. Scholarly studies: see for instance Sandy 1997, Harrison 2000, Hunink 2001; cf. from a literary point of view, on Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, Winkler 1985, Schlam 1992, Shumate 1996, Krabbe 2003; contrast Finkelpearl 1998: 131–144, maintaining that a North African tradition may have influenced Apuleius' presentation of Charite in the *Metamorphoses*. I acknowledge a certain preference for the approach to understanding literary texts evident in Gallagher and Greenblatt 2000 and Greenblatt 2004.

³ For the outline of Apuleius' biography, see Sandy 1997: 1–41; Harrison 2000: 1–10; and for intriguing speculation on Apuleius in Rome and Italy in particular, see Coarelli 1989. On *doctrina* in the *Apology*, see Bradley 1997. Miles 2003: 134 on *paideia* misses the distinction.

ary tradition is easily comprehensible. This view becomes all the more persuasive, moreover, when the influence of the Second Sophistic is introduced, that feature of imperial Greek history so difficult to define but which is perhaps most easily understood through its practitioners: itinerant Greek orators whose habit it was to give speeches in the cities of the High Roman Empire, often *ex tempore*, demonstrating their erudition on the one hand and attempting to recapture the purity of classical Attic diction on the other. They were the purveyors of epideictic who people the pages of Philostratus' *Lives of the Sophists*. Apuleius does not appear in Philostratus' work, notably, but his quotation of ancient Roman poets in the *Apology* and the *Florida* is one illustration, it is said, of a widespread contemporary taste for archaism that, in part, allows him to be styled a Latin sophist.⁴

An alternative view will be offered here. To the effect that when considered in their socio-cultural setting rather than in philological isolation, the extracts of speeches that comprise the *Florida* and the *doctrina* they display allow a step to be taken towards understanding Apuleius as a product, and symbol, of the complex and competing historical forces at work in North Africa of the Antonine age. In concentrating as I do here on the Carthage of the *Florida* I shall maintain that Apuleius was first and foremost a Romano-African engaged in and with a local culture in constant flux, and that the speeches represented by the *Florida* were by definition signs of a cultural fluidity that can be historically recovered and that Apuleius himself embodied.

It is the recovery of this context, especially the recovery of the details of place, that I consider all-important. In the historical record of the cities of Roman Africa Roman and Latinate forms naturally predominate. But there were other elements that need to be taken into account as well when evaluating Apuleius and his works (the *Apology* and *Florida* especially). To give one simple example: anyone in the second century who visited the great theatre in Lepcis Magna could see that its sponsor, Annobal Tapapius Rufus, son of Himilcho Tapapius, had been commemorated in the Augustan era with a Latin inscription of a typical sort—except that the inscription was not typical at all because it was incised bilingually in Punic as well as Latin and could still be read by Punic speakers in the second century. It stands to this

⁴ Mainstream: Harrison 2000: 2. On Apuleius and the Latin tradition see Finkelppearl 1998. Difficult to define: Anderson 1990. Archaism: e.g. Harrison 2000: 87–88, 123; cf. Sandy 1997: 174; Hunink 2001: 16–17, 62.

day as a permanent reminder that the culture of Roman Tripolitania in the Antonine age, as that of Roman Africa at large, was not precisely that of the metropolis.⁵

The excerpts that make up the *Florida* vary in length from a few words to several pages in modern printed editions. They also vary in subject-matter, from learned, pithy anecdotes through descriptions of wondrous sights and places to celebrations of the representatives in North Africa of Roman imperial rule. What unity they possess comes from their ‘florid’ sparkle, that is all. To illustrate their character, I describe and make brief comment on three examples.

First, in the fifty lines or so of *Florida* 7, Apuleius invokes the majestic figure of Alexander and explains that because the king wanted his painted and sculpted images to be rendered as faithfully as possible, he once ordained that only the three most celebrated artists of his day, Polycletus, Apelles and Pyrgoteles, might portray him. The anecdote is turned to a pointed end when Apuleius expresses the wish that philosophy could likewise be controlled by royal edict, so that it would be practised only by the learned few and not the pretentious many. The true image of philosophy was not to be debased.⁶

The meaning of the extract is not altogether obvious. It has plausibly been said to have topical significance and to indicate a round in an ongoing contest between Apuleius and certain rivals to eloquence and learning. Two points, however, seem reasonably clear. First, although Alexander was a subject of interest to Greek sophists of the Antonine age, Apuleius’ anecdote is indebted to a passage composed a century or so earlier by the Elder Pliny in his *Natural History* (7.125). In recounting the story therefore Apuleius did not necessarily associate himself with sophistic tradition. Secondly, in his remarks on philosophy (*sapientia*), Apuleius makes a claim for pursuing with it both the art of fine speaking (*bene dicendum*) and the art of living well (*bene uiuendum*). The three are bound inextricably together. His claim in other words is to be able to instruct his audience in the pursuit of the good life. That capacity depends on his erudition, as represented by the story about Alexander, and on his consummate public speaking, as represented by his

⁵ Inscription: *IPT* 24; *IRT* 322; cf. 321, 323.

⁶ The story is well-known from other sources, for which see Stewart 1993: 360–362 (cf. 28, 38). Polycletus is a variant for Lysippus; cf. Hunink 2001: 96–97.

spoken words. He is the educator of those who hear him, an exemplar of intellectual and moral authority.⁷

In the thirty-five lines of *Florida* 12, secondly, Apuleius offers a brilliant description of a brilliant bird, the Indian parrot, carefully dwelling on the bird's green plumage, the scarlet ring around its neck, and its ability to use its hard beak as a kind of anchor when landing from flight. He also tells how the bird can be taught to speak if young and of the right kind—parrots are not all the same, some have more toes than others—but he points out that the parrot can only say what it has been trained to say, no matter that it sounds like a human being. If therefore the parrot knows only how to curse, it will curse incessantly unless its tongue is cut out or unless the bird is returned to the forest from which it came.

The point of the extract is again difficult to determine. Commentators suggest here too the topical idea of an assault on oratorical competitors, or else hypothesize a prelude to remarks on the subject of education. They observe also that Greek sophists of the imperial age conventionally took the parrot as a subject for speech-making: Dio Chrysostom produced a now lost encomium of the parrot according to Philostratus (*VS* 1.7), and Aelian described the bird in his *De natura animalium* (13.18–19). In the end, therefore, Apuleius seems to do no more than produce a Latin version of a hackneyed sophistic theme. At first reading perhaps the extract might be thought to refer to a relatively rare sight and with its careful description be meant to impress a North African audience with first-hand knowledge of the exotic Apuleius had gained from his eastern travels. (Justin Martyr's contemporary reflections on Indian exoticism in the *Dialogue with Trypho* might provide a parallel.) But that tempting impression is dispelled by the discovery that again much of Apuleius' text depends on Pliny's *Natural History* (10.117), which in turn also means that here too an exclusive sophistic hold on the parrot, or Apuleius, is improbable.⁸

Thirdly, in *Florida* 15 Apuleius describes the island of Samos, its size, location and economy, paints a verbal picture of a statue to be seen there at

⁷ Plausibly: Harrison 2000: 104; cf. Hunink 2001: 94. Elder Pliny: cf. Harrison 2000: 104, proposing also a connection with a passage in Horace (*Ep.* 2.1.239–241); cf. Hunink 2001: 96. Educator: Opeku 1993 (unconvincingly) suggests that Apuleius was a formal teacher.

⁸ Commentators: Harrison 2000: 112; Hunink 2001: 127–128. Improbable: two Latin poems perhaps to take into account are *Ov. Am.* 2.6 and *Stat. Silv.* 2.4, on which see respectively Myers 1990 and Van Dam 1984: 336–337.

the temple of Hera, and finally concentrates on the intellectual biography of its most celebrated son, the first philosopher Pythagoras. The details given of Pythagoras' life are not unique—comparable content appears for instance in Diogenes Laertius (8.1–50)—but they communicate a sense of mysterious association with distant lands and peoples few in Apuleius' audience might be expected to have known directly. Among Pythagoras' teachers, he says, had been the Brahmans of India, who had taught him almost everything he knew: 'what mantras there are for the mind, what yogas for the body, how many parts to the soul, how many stages of life; and what tortures or rewards (according to what they deserve) await the spirits of the dead.' The priests of Egypt had taught him 'about the amazing powers invoked in their rituals, the wonderful properties of numbers, and the most ingenious geometrical theorems.' The Chaldaeans had taught him about astrology and its impact on human life. And a contribution had also been made by the *magi*, particularly Zoroaster, who is described as 'the high priest of all divine mysteries.'

Apuleius' purpose in this case was clearly to demonstrate his knowledge of the wider Mediterranean world and to illustrate the intellectual, if largely legendary, pedigree of Pythagoras. An interest in philosophical lives, moreover, and artistic description, might again be attributed to contemporary sophistic influence. In a manner which perhaps aroused some local suspicion, however, by connecting himself with the founder of all philosophy in the statement that his master Plato had 'Pythagorized,' Apuleius the *philosophus* in a sense associated himself here with the mysteries surrounding Pythagoras, the clandestine mysteries of the Persian *magi* included (*Flor.* 15.26): 'magi' after all was an ambiguous term, conjuring up images not simply of teachers of Persian wisdom but more immediately, as Apuleius knew better than most, of cheap tricksters, quacks and charlatans who played on and catered to the gullibility of the masses. In Carthage of the 160s some may have recollected that it was to Egypt, the land of magic *par excellence*, that Apuleius was travelling when he broke his journey at Oea in Tripolitania and shortly afterwards married the widow Pudentilla.¹⁰

It is clear from these examples that the contents of the *Florida* can sometimes be traced to earlier literary sources and that Apuleius' presentations sometimes align him, though not incontestably or exclusively, with contem-

¹⁰ Legendary: MacMullen 1966: 96–99. Interest: Harrison 2000: 115. Ambiguous term: MacMullen 1966: 109–127. Oea: on Apuleius as a troubling presence there, see Bradley 2000a.

porary Greek sophists. This is the obviously valuable product of literary archaeology. To concentrate on literary archaeology alone, however, leaves other sources of knowledge untapped. Consider for instance *Florida* 6, where Apuleius, again drawing on the exotic, expatiates on the marvels of far distant India and tells of mutually deadly battles between giant snakes and elephants (*Flor.* 6.4–5): ‘for the snakes get them in their slippery coils and bind them, so that when the elephants cannot free their legs, or in any way break out of the scaly fetters of the tenacious serpents, they must seek revenge through the collapse of their own mass, and crush their holders with their whole bodies.’ Once more in a confection that might at first raise thoughts about autopsy there turns out to be another huge debt to the Elder Pliny, who in the *Natural History* (8.32–34) included a passage on contests between elephants and monster snakes very similar to that of Apuleius. Is it enough, however, to observe the direct linguistic correlation between the two texts without noticing at the same time that contests of this kind could be portrayed in African ornamental mosaics that Apuleius might have seen for himself, as an example now in the Carthage Museum enticingly suggests, and asking how influential such images might have been when Apuleius produced his speech? The item in question shows, it is said, ‘an enormous python coiled around the body of a huge elephant, biting it on the belly,’ while ‘the acute suffering of the pachyderm, who is rapidly losing blood, is conveyed by the painful expression shown on the animal’s face as well as by the convulsions of its body.’ Why, it might be asked, should material items of this type, from a particular place, not be considered of some significance for understanding an author from the same region?¹¹

Specificity of place in the *Florida* is suggested in a number of ways. First there is the overshadowing presence of the proconsul of Africa, the immediate human symbol in Carthage of Roman law and order who arrived in the city each spring to begin his year of office, and who might expect when he departed to receive a sympathetic expression of provincial gratitude for his beneficent rule. Apuleius (*Flor.* 9; 17) gives the names of two individuals whose virtues he himself extolled in encomiastic speeches at the conclusion of their terms: Sex. Cocceius Severianus Honorinus (*cos. suff.* 147, *procos.* 162/163) and Servius Cornelius Scipio Salvidienus Orfitus (*cos.*

¹¹ Example: Blanchard-Lemée, Ennaïffer, Slim and Slim 1996: 212, fig. 157 (description: 208, 291); the mosaic is from the early fourth century but this does not affect the general question raised.

ord. 149, *procos.* 163/164). These grand personages were towering, even intimidating figures—Marius Priscus will not have been forgotten—highly visible as they rendered judgements from their tribunals in legal and administrative disputes not only in Carthage but through the medium of the all-important assize tour throughout the province. Apuleius clearly alludes (*Flor.* 9.37) to their duties, which could take them to such cities as Utica, Thysdrus, Hadrumentum, Sabratha, Theveste and Hippo. When travelling, they could rely on a cohort of troops in the main centre to keep the peace.¹²

Then there are civic and provincial institutions. First, the local form of government, with magistrates and decurions, patterned on that of the Roman Republic—the Carthaginian senate voting among other matters on the disposition of honorific statues to men of eminence like Apuleius. Secondly, the cult of the emperor, for which priests had to be designated. Thirdly, the provincial assembly of civic delegates from across Africa Proconsularis. Apuleius' speeches contain references to all these items, the effect of which is to communicate a sense of a close bond between metropolis and colony. This tie was reinforced in the real, everyday life of Carthage by the collection and transportation to the chief city of the proverbially rich harvests of grain its hinterland supplied, an operation of mammoth scale that consumed vast numbers of men and their labour, especially that of the *saccarii*, who packed the grain into sacks and loaded them one by one onto the transport vessels bound for Italy.¹³

Evidence of this kind helps focus attention on Apuleius' original speeches as acts performed in an identifiable and recoverable location, and one, moreover, which had a perceptibly Roman aspect. The lead given by *Florida* 18 in this respect is especially compelling. This speech-extract is the record of an address to the people of Carthage in which Apuleius, characteristically presenting himself as a *philosophus* as he had in the *Apology* (*Flor.*

¹² Year of office: see *Flor.* 9.39 for sensitivity to the short duration of the proconsulship, the beginning of which is disputed but probably fell in the middle of April (Clarke 1972: 1053 n. 3; Lane Fox 1987: 487) rather than July (Lepelley 1994). Intimidating: *Flor.* 9.36. Marius Priscus: *Plin. Ep.* 2.11, 3.9, 6.29. Tribunals: *Flor.* 9.11–12. Such cities: Lepelley 1994 collects the evidence; on the assize system in general, see Burton 1975. Cohort: Bérard 1991, present in Carthage since the Flavians.

¹³ Institutions: *Flor.* 16.35, 40, 41, 44, 45, 46 (cf. 18.8); 16.43, 45; 16.38 (taken as the provincial priesthood: Fishwick 1987: III 2: 195–197; cf. Hunink 2001: 168); 18.15 (cf. 16.1, the senate or more likely the provincial assembly: Rives 1994: 283; Hunink 2001: 155, 169; Hilton 2001: 158 n.79; cf. Fishwick 1987: I 257–258). In general, see Debbasch 1953. Operation: Rickman 1980.

18.1), told stories about Pythagoras and Thales and announced the singing of a hymn he had composed in Greek and Latin to Aesculapius complete with introductory dialogue. What is important for present purposes is that the text shows where the speech was delivered:

Moreover, in an auditorium of this kind, what ought to be looked at is not the marbling of the paving, nor the flooring of the proscenium, nor the pillaring of the stage, nor the eminence of the roof, nor the brilliance of the panelled ceiling, nor the expanse of the seating, nor the fact that here at times the mime hallucinates, the comedian prates, the tragedian debates, the rope-walker moves into jeopardy, the juggler engages in thievery, the pantomime deals in dactylogy, and all the other players show their tricks to the people. But these things aside, nothing else ought to be looked at more closely than the enthusiasm of the audience and the vocalism of the speaker (*Flor.* 18.3–5).

The ‘auditorium of this kind’ is the theatre of Carthage, in whose restored remains artistic performances are still given today, a compact, even comfortable physical structure about which much is known and in which Apuleius’ original performance can be firmly situated. The theatre was in place by the middle of the second century, and was constructed to a Vitruvian design. It may well have been very new when Apuleius spoke there. It was located in the northeastern section of the city and was built into a hillside above the remains of a Punic burial ground. It had a seating capacity of about 11,000 and was a richly decorated structure, just one of the two known North African theatres to have had a complete, Proconnesian, marble facade. At the top of the steeply graded *cavea* there was probably a colonnaded portico of green marble, while the orchestra, about 35 metres in diameter, was paved with white marble. The *proscenium* was decorated with frescoes, and the *scaenae frons* probably had a three-storey colonnade above a podium. Various architectural elements within the theatre suggest the work of masons from Asia Minor, while the freestanding sculptures still extant imply when the theatre was in its original form a lavish number of statues to civic benefactors, members of the imperial family, and the gods of the traditional Greco-Roman pantheon. Apuleius’ hymn might suggest that a statue of Aesculapius should be included. The main point, however, is that Apuleius’ verbal description of a magnificent public building is consistent with the

archaeological record and allows the precise location in which his speech was given to be visualised. It becomes possible consequently to understand some of the circumstances of the original performance, and even perhaps to grasp something of the event itself.¹⁴

The reference to the theatre of Carthage opens up a rather different world from that in which the search for textual parallels and antecedents is all-important. Together with other references to public buildings, a senate house (*Flor.* 16.35; 18.8) and library (*Flor.* 18.8), it draws attention to the physical appearance of Carthage as a whole in the 160s, and to other results of archaeological excavation and reconstruction.

Carthage was in the later second century a spectacular example of Roman imperial expansion, immense in size and an impressive testament to Roman urban planning. Its centre lay on the summit of the Byrsa, the acropolis of the old Punic city, from where the city fell away into four quarters, each of which contained a number of city blocks of equal dimensions linked by spacious thoroughfares. The design had been implemented under Caesar and especially Augustus when Carthage was refounded as a Roman colony a century or so after its destruction at the close of the Punic Wars. The symmetry of the plan reflected a profound knowledge of the traditions of Roman urban development and was interrupted only to the north-west, perhaps out of concern for the divisions of land made or proposed in the wake of the much earlier Gracchan colonial scheme. It had begun its new life with an infusion of 3,000 settlers who joined local Africans to form a population of some 30,000, a number which by the early third century was to increase substantially. In Apuleius' day the long struggle against Rome for control of the western Mediterranean that had once preoccupied the city was ancient history, and few can have been concerned that Carthage had once been laid under a Roman curse.¹⁵

¹⁴ I depend heavily in this paragraph on Ros 1996. For the possibility of an earlier Augustan theatre, acknowledged by Ros, see Rakob 2000: 75 (but not proven by *Virg. Aen.* 1.427–429). The Carthaginian theatre receives no attention from Sandy 1997: 10, Harrison 2000: 122–125, or Hunink 2001:180–183, though Hunink (2001:183) notes that Apuleius' references to a roof and ceiling concern features within, not over, the theatre; his suggestion that the Carthaginian Odeum might be the site of the speech overlooks the point that this was a third-century structure.

¹⁵ Carthage: Lancel 1979; Wightman 1980; Gros 1990; Deneauve 1990; cf. Mattingly and Hitchner 1995: 182–183. Population: Lézine 1962; Duncan-Jones 1974: 67 n.3, 260 n.4.

The Byrsa was a particularly spectacular feature. At the time of the colonial foundation the Romans had levelled the hilltop to create a massive, steeply elevated platform some 30,000 square metres in size on which were placed a cluster of quintessentially Roman buildings: a vast, dominating colonnaded forum, a grand judicial basilica, and two great temples, one most likely a Capitulum, the other perhaps intended for the imperial cult. The Roman character of the complex could hardly be doubted. But this was not all. Anyone surveying the city in the later second century would have been struck by two other monumental Roman features apart from the theatre: a circus in the southwestern corner and an amphitheatre to the west. The former went through various stages of development and exactly how it looked in Apuleius' day is uncertain. But from the beginning the circus was a huge structure, with room to seat between 60,000 and 75,000 spectators, and eventually it was second in size only to the Circus Maximus in Rome. The amphitheatre in its grandest form had a facade of fifty or more arches rising in six tiers, its arcades decorated with statues, while inside three banks of seats reached up to a crowning colonnade, allowing accommodation of about 30,000 people. If Carthage was not yet in the 160s the second ranking city in the empire it could claim to be at the century's end, it was well on its way.¹⁶

It is clear, and obvious, from the archaeology of Carthage that the appearance of the Roman colony changed considerably from the time of the refoundation through the third century as public buildings were redeveloped or added anew. Notably in the reign of Antoninus Pius an extensive building programme was undertaken after a fire destroyed the forum—the emperor is said to have provided the funds—that included the construction of a new basilica on the Byrsa; and at about the same time on the water's edge below the colossal Antonine Baths were begun—a complex larger than any other in the West outside Rome which was not completed until the time of Marcus and Lucius. The renovation of old and the building of new structures that were all predictable architectural constituents of a provincial Roman city imply a consciousness on the part of Carthage's inhabitants, Apuleius included, that the Roman character of their city was always evolving, that it

¹⁶ Circus: Humphrey 1986: 296–306; Norman 1988. Amphitheatre: Lachaux 1968: 55–58; Golvin 1988: I 122–123, 199–200; Bomgardner 1989; 1993: 380–381. Claim: cf. Herodian 7.6.1. Note that the library mentioned by Apuleius is not securely identified in the archaeological record, but the connection with pre-Roman collections of books made by Sandy 1997: 18 on the basis of Plin. *HN* 18.22 surely needs to be amended.

was by no means fixed or final. And the physical development of the Roman landscape was in fact symbolic of the extension of Roman idioms and ideology at large on a site where a century and a half earlier Rome had forcibly and uncompromisingly imposed itself from without. A Roman temple in a conquered land after all could easily be acknowledged by men at the core of empire as a sign of distant Roman dominance. But if the public monuments of Carthage make clear that Rome's colonial presence was always asserting and reasserting itself, the monuments were not architectural expressions of Roman power alone. They were also sites for human activity and interaction. As such the amphitheatre and circus are of special interest.¹⁷

At some point in the 130s a display of gladiatorial and wild beast fighting (the animals were African panthers) was put on in the amphitheatre that lasted for four days. The donor of the games was Q. Voltedius Optatus Aurelianus, a successful Carthaginian of equestrian rank, a local politician and priest who financed the games in return for his tenure of the resplendent office of *duumvir quinquennalis*. The cost was extraordinary, more than HS200,000, one of the highest such outlays on record. But if exceptional in extravagance the event was conventional. Gladiators regularly fought in the Carthaginian amphitheatre, and here too convicted criminals from the lower classes, and those intransigent dissidents the Christians styled 'martyrs', were exposed to wild animals as a legitimate form of execution. Men like Voltedius decorated their houses with mosaics that graphically memorialised the grisly contests as tokens of their wealth, status, and civic generosity.¹⁸

To another Carthaginian, the Christian Tertullian (*Spect.* 19), the amphitheatre was a centre of cruelty and savagery where both criminals and the innocent might be sacrificed to the public appetite for human blood—a place where a man scarcely able in normal circumstances to look at a body dead from natural causes revelled in the sight of a corpse bloodied and mangled, where he urged the gladiator to kill as soon as opportunity allowed, and called for the victim's body to be revealed to detailed scrutiny. Tertullian tried to convince his Christian audience, a generation after Apuleius, of the idolatrous nature of the amphitheatre's activities. But those activities were

¹⁷ Building programme: Gros 1990; Deneauve 1990. Emperor: *HA Pius* 9.2; Pausan. 8.43.4; *Vict. Caes.* 16.12. On the intrusive character of the Augustan foundation, see Rakob 2000. Domination: *Tac. Ann.* 14.31.

¹⁸ Q. Voltedius: *ILS* 9406=*IL Afr.* 390, with Bassignano 1974: 117–118; Duncan-Jones 1974: 67–68, 104. Christians: for some examples, cf. Bradley 2003. Mosaics: Dunbabin 1978: 65–87.

far too deeply embedded in local culture to be shaken by one man's tirades. They were 'our games,' as Apuleius himself—a regular visitor to them, one might imagine—said in a significantly proprietary phrase (*Flor.* 4.4, 'munera nostra'). So too with the circus, which also aroused Tertullian's scorn (*Spect.* 16; 20–21). This was likewise a place of insane frenzy, which when spectators lost all trace of reason converted the crowd assembled there into a mob—or else it was a place of rank corruption where a man usually the model of decorum could be seen exposing himself without compunction. Tertullian believed that the prime cause of such depravity was a blind addiction to the races and the gambling that accompanied them, a passion that destroyed all social conventions. Once more, however, as the vivid scenes of charioteering in ornamental mosaics unmistakably show, circus activities were not affected by Christian strictures of the kind he propagated.¹⁹

The degree of popular interest in the circus and amphitheatre is well illustrated by the *defixiones* with which Carthaginians sought, in secret, to inflict harm on their favourite competitors' rivals. In their desire to induce calamity, men and women summoned divine and magical powers of all descriptions against gladiators and charioteers in language that was as violent and horrific as the contests themselves: 'Bind their hands, take away their victory, their exit, their sight, so that they are unable to see their rival charioteers, but rather snatch them up from their chariots and twist them to the ground so that they fall, dragged all over the hippodrome, especially at the turning points, with damage to their body.' The gods are to cause the charioteers' horses any number of misfortunes to this end. A terracotta plaque in Vienna shows a circus scene in which a four-horse chariot has crashed, close to the turning point as it happens, with its driver falling as an attendant tries to control one of the panicking horses and a second figure holds his head in dismay. The sight was doubtless common in Carthage, and how often connected to the summoning of chthonic deities with names now impossible to pronounce is an intriguing question. Carthaginian enthusiasm for the games

¹⁹ Proprietary phrase: a clear statement of identification with Carthage and Carthaginians (cf. *Flor.* 6.1, 'nobis') and rather more than 'a reference to contemporaneous Roman culture' (Hunink 2000: 82); for the strict meaning of *munera* as gladiatorial contests, see Edmondson 1996. Gambling: Hopkins 1983: 25–26; Toner 1995: 92–94. Mosaics: Dunbabin 1978: 88–108.

might be detected in the imposing magnificence of statues of charioteers that still fortuitously come to light.²⁰

To those who lived in their presence the Carthaginian circus and amphitheatre disclosed an extreme competitiveness that was a hallmark of Roman culture. Like trials before a provincial governor or elections for decurial office, their entertainments were by definition contests in which there was victory for some and defeat for others but no middle ground or compromise. It was the contestants of course who experienced success or failure most immediately. But spectators were closely implicated, attaching themselves to teams of charioteers or individual gladiatorial stars on whom they staked their hopes of profit (the arena saw as much gambling as the circus) and meeting with elation or disappointment as the gods dictated. People flocked to see the contests. They were a symbol of how success was achieved in Roman life, and of how all resources possible had to be deployed in its pursuit, the clandestine and the other worldly included.

The gods of magic Carthaginians summoned for the games were variously of Egyptian, Greek, Jewish, and other origins. For all the evidence therefore of Rome's physical and ideological presence in second-century Carthage, the *defixiones* point to another aspect of contemporary life, the city's cultural heterogeneity. For Carthage was not a replica of Rome, no matter how cosmopolitan Rome itself might be, but a city with an entirely distinctive character in which North African influences were as prominent as those of the capital. These influences are obscured in the historical record by the disproportionate survival of Latinate elements and forms, and this is the essential reason why Apuleius can be so easily claimed for an undifferentiated Latin literary tradition. There are at least two ways, however, in which the importance of these influences can be understood and the imbalance of evidence redressed. They suggest again that Carthage was a city subject to constant cultural change and adaptation.

First, Carthaginian religious life in the second century was highly complex and variegated. The gods of Rome were everywhere of course, brought by the first colonists and still preeminent in the life of the civic community

²⁰ *Defixiones*: DT 213–261, 303; Jordan 1985: 184–185; 1988; 1996; and see especially Mura 1994 (26 of 60 Carthaginian examples dealing with charioteers, gladiators and *uenatores*); cf. Heintz 1998. Quotation: DT 237=Gager 1992 no. 9. Terracotta plaque: Vogel 1969: 156 with figure 11. Statues: see Norman and Haeckl 1993: 238–242, with figures 2a–c, for a statue of early third-century date found in 1981.

in Apuleius' day. Apart from the Capitoline triad and the deified emperors who were accommodated on the Byrsa, other Roman deities were simultaneously afforded their due: Ceres (hardly a surprise in view of Carthage's role in supplying Rome with grain), the Magna Mater, Aesculapius, Liber Pater, and many more. Yet these were imported gods, it should be kept in mind, and beneath the cult they received there were sometimes Punic forms which remained important. The two most notable deities in the Carthaginian pantheon were Caelestis and Saturn, each of whom despite a Latinate name was associated with a Punic deity long dominant in local life before the establishment of the Roman colony, Caelestis with Tanit and Saturn with Baal Hammon. The Punic population did not quickly abandon its traditional ways of conceptualising and venerating them. In the case of Tanit especially there is strong circumstantial evidence that worship remained largely the same over a long period of time despite the introduction of the name of Caelestis, and as late as Augustine's day (*CD* 2.26; cf. 2.4) her sanctuary in the city was still attracting droves of devotees, men and women alike, who assembled to observe and relish before the statue of the virgin goddess rites that combined prayers with theatrical depictions of sexually explicit acts. The puritanical Augustine found the rituals shocking. But the cult was still full of vigour, and generations of Carthaginians before him had presumably found its practices normal and enjoyable. Apuleius himself can be expected to have known Tanit's Carthaginian sanctuary—the goddess of the lofty citadel notably has a cameo in the *Metamorphoses* (6.4)—and when he labelled himself a follower of Aesculapius and a worshipper of all the gods of Carthage (*Flor.* 18.36), he may well have thought in terms of Eshmoun and other Punic divinities as much as of their Roman counterparts. The point is that the introduction to Carthage of Roman gods was an act signifying change to which a response on the part of the Punic population had to be made. And a Punic inscription honouring Baal from a man whose fragmentary name was inscribed in Latin is a convenient illustration of one kind of response, evidence of how to local Carthaginians the Punic gods retained their own identities even as Roman culture established itself. The cultural flow, moreover, was not necessarily all in one direction. The suggestion has been made that certain Roman gods began in the second century to assume African aspects as an increasingly africanised ruling élite conflated local religious traditions with those of the first settlers' gods. Thus the cult of Ceres may have been

affected by that of the African Cereres, whose priests were men of substance, and the cult of Aesculapius perhaps by that of Eshmoun.²¹

Secondly, when the contents of the *Florida* are studied in isolation it is easy to lose sight of the fact that throughout the whole of Apuleius' lifetime and well into late antiquity the first language of much of the population of Africa Proconsularis was Punic, not Latin. Sporadic literary items, such as Apuleius' remark in the *Apology* (98.8) that his stepson Sicinius Pudens spoke only Punic and knew no Latin at all, are indication enough. Especially significant, however, is the evidence of bilingual Punic and Latin funerary and honorific inscriptions which reflect the continuing use of Punic as a living language under the Principate and continuous interaction between Punic and Latin. At first Punic and Latin idioms and formulae existed side by side, but as Roman influence gradually exerted itself Punic imitation of Latin formulae and syntactic interference became more evident, together with borrowing rather than translating of Roman official terminology. Similarly, Africans gradually came to replace Punic with Roman forms of their names (Annobal Tapapius Rufus, the builder of the theatre at Lepcis, is an obvious early example), though the originals remain recognisable enough. In addition, some 300 different Libyan names that survived the impact of both Punic and Roman influence appear in the Latin inscriptions of Roman Africa and add further to the overall cultural mix. What emerges linguistically therefore is that Carthage was part of a region characterised by cultural fluidity in which Roman forms, inserted wedge-like by an intrusive power, uninterruptedly and often perhaps imperceptibly interacted and reacted with pre-existing local forms to produce an ever-changing cultural tapestry.²²

The appearance and growth of Roman cultural forms in conquered regions of the Mediterranean world have long been regarded by historians as

²¹ Religious life: in general, Rives 1995 with Lassère 1996. Caelestis and Saturn: Lancel 1995: 431–436. Sanctuary of Tanit: the archaeology of the sanctuary of Tanit at Carthage shows a close correlation between original Punic and later Roman forms of worship, from which it has been inferred that there was little change over time in the manner in which the local goddess was celebrated and conceptualised by most Carthaginians, despite the use of the Latin name; see Hurst 1999; cf. Rives 1995: 168, postulating revival of the cult of Caelestis rather than continuity; Ben Abdallah and Ennobl 1998. On Caelestis generally, Halsberghe 1984; Bullo 1994. Inscription: Leglay 1961: 15 no.4. Suggestion: Rives 1995: 153–169. On the priests of the Cereres, see Gascou 1987.

²² Indication enough: for this and what follows, see Adams 2003: 200–201, 207–209, 213–245 (cf. Lancel 1995: 436–438: Punic surviving well beyond the sixth century), with Mililar 1968, a fundamental study. Libyan names: Frézouls 1989.

elements of a unidirectional process known as Romanisation. The superiority of Roman over indigenous cultural forms has been taken for granted, and nothing but a welcoming acceptance of Roman civilisation on the part of those on whom it was imposed, their collaborating leaders in particular, traditionally assumed. In a post-colonial generation, however, as evidence of cultural blending and local survivals has become better understood, this conventional mode of thought has given way to models of historical development in which concepts of accommodation, acculturation, adaptation, assimilation, negotiation, and resistance have become common currency, so that the very idea of ‘Romanisation’ has become a subject of intense contemporary debate. Here a fixed theoretical position is unnecessary. All that needs to be done is to affirm the simple point, seen now from several perspectives, that Roman Carthage in the second century was a community whose cultural identity was far from one-dimensional or static. But this in my view is a crucial point for understanding the speeches Apuleius delivered there.²³

Whether Apuleius’ speeches were all given in Carthage is beyond knowledge. There is no evidence that Apuleius left the province after his trial, but other African cities may have heard him speak. Carthage, however, was the certain site of several performances if not most, and it was a city that claimed his special devotion, drawing on one occasion an accolade that still carries a dramatic charge: ‘Carthage, the respected teacher of our province; Carthage, the heavenly Muse of Africa; Carthage, the inspiration of those who wear the toga’ (*Flor.* 20.10). When addressing his listeners there, Apuleius consistently styled himself a *philosophus* (*Flor.* 16.25, 29; 18.1) not a *sophista*, which is a term he reserved for the sophists of classical Greece. Quotations from a plethora of poets decorated his delivery. The words of Accius, Lucilius, Plautus and particularly Virgil are still in evidence, not always accurately reproduced—perhaps because of imperfect memory at the time of recital or even faulty work on the part of the stenographers who took down what Apuleius said—but in evidence nonetheless. Apuleius’ speeches, however, were not lengthy discourses on complex philosophical topics, but as the earlier summaries suggest exhibitions of an accessible and lightly offered learning which sometimes had a moralistic flavour, the learning

²³ For access to the debates on Romanisation, see Benabou 1976, Millet 1990, Woolf 1998, MacMullen 2000, Scott and Webster 2003, Mattingly 2004.

(*doctrina*) frequently taking the form of extended anecdotes about eminent individuals from Greek history and myth.²⁴

The list of subjects covered, some sensational, others amusing, all absorbing, includes Hyagnis the father and teacher of Marsyas and the latter's horrific contest with Apollo (*Flor.* 3); the piper Antigenidas, who was distressed that the musicians who worked for undertakers were also called pipers (*Flor.* 4); Hippias the sophist, who appeared at the Olympic games in elegant clothes he had made himself (*Flor.* 9); Crates the Cynic, who abandoned material wealth but still attracted the beautiful Hipparche in marriage (*Flor.* 14); the comic poet Philemon, who like Apuleius himself on one occasion was interrupted in recital by a shower of rain (*Flor.* 16); the sophist Protagoras, who once found himself outwitted by his pupil Euathlus (*Flor.* 18); the discoverer of scientific wonders Thales of Miletus (*Flor.* 18); and the doctor Asclepiades of Prusa, who was remembered for having brought back to life a man apparently dead (*Flor.* 19). It is easy to see in these anecdotes the author of the *uariae fabulae* of the *Metamorphoses* (1.1): with their bravura effects and contrivances, the speeches were a form of lively entertainment intended to capture and captivate Apuleius' audience. And once captivated the audience's members might dwell on various thoughtful themes (or moral lessons) the speeches expressed: the paradox that in assessing character hearing is more important than seeing (*Flor.* 2); the notion that foolish arrogance can be cruelly punished (*Flor.* 3); the importance of social responsibility (*Flor.* 6, even if the morally inadequate, like unsuccessful farmers, are compelled to steal from those more fortunate [*Flor.* 11]); the importance of pursuing the golden mean (*Flor.* 15), of remembering that good fortune is no guarantee of unbridled contentment (*Flor.* 18), that elevated rank is no protection against the misfortune of ravaging disease (*Flor.* 23). The audience might also cast around as it listened to the speaker to glance at portraits of the individuals about whom they were hearing, or at least recollect images with which they were familiar. Marsyas was a popular sculptural subject, Apollo was everywhere, and so too portraits of Greek philosophers. The learned orator might introduce Orpheus and Arion through a quotation from Virgil (*Flor.* 17.15), but his listeners were more likely to know the 'tamer of savage beasts' and the 'charmer of tender-hearted mon-

²⁴ Certain site: Hunink 2001: 18. Quotations: *Flor.* 2.3 (Plautus), 3.3 (Virgil), 10.1 (Accius), 11.2 (Virgil), 16.33 (Virgil), 17.15 (Virgil), 18.6 (Plautus), 21.4 (Lucilius).

sters' through representations in the decorative arts by which they were surrounded. Learning from books was not the sole source of knowledge.²⁵

Who, or what, was Apuleius' audience? The question is not often asked or pursued in detail. It is an attractive assumption of course that the parade of Apuleian *doctrina* was meant for members of the Carthaginian élite who were as well educated as Apuleius and shared his high-minded tastes, and certainly there were occasions when he addressed dignitaries such as proconsuls, other Roman senators, and the 'principes Africae uiri' (local magistrate or members of the provincial *concilium*?). Their type can be recognised in the epitaphs of men from the cities of Roman Africa who were remembered for having dedicated themselves to literature and eloquence—figures such as Q. Julius Felix from Cirta, the equestrian Julius Rusticianus from Calama, and C. Cornelius Fortunatianus from Sicca, all three of whom died young but who were firm devotees of *studia* nonetheless. There was also the orator C. Julius Proculus, who was celebrated at Mactar for bringing the delights of learning (*studia*) to public audiences clad in his toga, and M. Dalmatius Urbanus, commemorated at Sitifis for his fine speaking and knowledge of literature and the liberal arts, in both Latin and Greek. One supremely gifted individual from Thibilis, not unlike Apuleius himself, was an accomplished declaimer with a talent for the extemporaneous and equally the author of philosophical dialogues, epistles, pastorals and eclogues. P. Flavius Pomponianus, *clarissimus vir*, was said to have added, significantly, a Roman shine or polish ('Romano nitori') to his Attic eloquence. When Apuleius spoke to a full audience in the theatre, however, such people can have made up only a fraction of the possible 11,000 present—the 'immensity of the audience' as he once rhetorically put it (*Flor.* 18.2)—and even if allowance is made for the families of dignitaries and visitors from other cities, it seems inescapable that many of those who made up his audience must always have been the relatively uneducated if not illiterate laity of Carthage, humble men and women who were probably in the first instance mainly Punic speakers. The seating conventions of the Roman theatre naturally required the presence of a cross-section of society.²⁶

²⁵ Marsyas: Rawson 1987. Apollo and Marsyas in a mosaic from El Djem in the Bardo Museum: Blanchard-Lemée, Ennaïfer, Slim and Slim 1996: 230; fig. 171; cf. Dunbabin 1978: 147, 258; Rawson 1987: 37, 121–122. Philosophers: Zanker 1995. The potential value of art as a source of narrative description in Apuleius' writing is worth noting.

²⁶ Question: not considered by Harrison 2000. Hunink 2001: 13, 14 can speak of the 'city elite in Carthage' and 'a much wider audience' without providing detail or noticing the

Traces of this broader audience are detectable in the *Florida*. Its members may have included for instance craftsmen to whom allusions to ‘the file and the rule’ and the ‘products of the lathe’ (*Flor.* 9.8) meant something, those perhaps who used the shuttle, awl, file and lathe to make clothes and sell them in their shops (*Flor.* 9.25–27). (The craftsmen were residents perhaps of an area of Carthage that has been identified archaeologically as an artisans’ quarter.) The members may have included peasants who laboured in unproductive fields (*Flor.* 11), or more successful cultivators and farmworkers skilled in viticulture, tree-grafting, panning for gold, breaking horses, taming bulls, shearing and pasturing sheep and goats (*Flor.* 6.8). They may have included lowly travellers who had to interrupt their pressing journeys with social obligations when encountering men of greater estate (*Flor.* 21), ships’ helmsmen (*Flor.* 23), proconsuls’ heralds (*Flor.* 9.6), sculptors (*Flor.* 16.46), porters and shopkeepers (*Flor.* 7.13), even those who sold the toiletries of the bath in the marketplace (*Flor.* 9.26). As with the lowly figures in Apuleius’ portrait of provincial society in the *Metamorphoses*, the social types Apuleius introduced in his speeches were surely drawn from real life and were not figures of mere rhetorical flourish. They are the sort of people who can again, I suggest, be seen in the mosaics of Roman North Africa: agricultural workers ploughing fields with their oxen, sowing seed, harvesting grain, beating olive trees and gathering their crops or collecting grapes and trampling out the vintage; day-labourers, goatherds milking goats and shepherds shepherding and stabling their flocks at the end of the day; shipowners and shippers transporting African grain to Rome, fishers with their nets, traps and lines, the men who raised horses for the circus, and the personal servants in the households of the elite (many surely slaves): the maidservants who assisted their grand mistresses in the toilette and the valets who accompanied their masters when they travelled or pursued the hunt.²⁷

inconsistency. Sandy 1997: 86 repeatedly refers to a ‘mass audience’ as if the term were unproblematical. Epitaphs (I take the findspots as places of residence for the sake of argument): *CIL* 8.7432, 5367, 15987 (= *ILS* 7742a, b), 646, 8500 (= *ILS* 7761), 5530 (=18864), 2391 (=17910); cf. Zerbinì 1994. Uneducated: cf. Kermodè 2004: 76 on the audience of Shakespeare’s Globe: of the 3000 likely to be attending ‘it is a safe bet that 2,700 were not scholars.’

²⁷ Artisans’ quarter: Rakob 2000: 78. *Metamorphoses*: Bradley 2000b. Mosaics: Blanchard-Lemée, Ennaifer, Slim and Slim 1996: 45 (figs. 20, 21, 199), 57 (figs. 29a, 29b, 90), 122–123 (figs. 81, 82), 128 (figs. 81, 94), 162–163 (fig. 116), 170 (fig. 121), 173 (fig.

Apuleius' audience must in other words have comprised to a large extent the working population of Carthage and its environs, even perhaps at times the *saccarii*, and his speeches have to be regarded as a form of mass popular entertainment comparable to that provided by the other performers he situates in the theatre with the *philosophus*: the mime and the pantomime, the tight-rope walker and the juggler, the comic actor and the tragedian (*Flor.* 18.4). The philosopher, the mime, the tightrope-walker, and the comic actor were indeed natural companions (*Flor.* 5.2). With all their rhetorical sparkle, Apuleius' speeches offered another Roman alternative to the attractions of the circus and the amphitheatre, and an equally competitive if not quite so violent alternative at that: for Apuleius certainly had rivals and detractors at Carthage—he points to them (*Flor.* 9.1)—who together fought for the prize of the populace's favour which eventually translated itself into acclaim of the type that produced a public statue for the orator and so immortalised him. No mean competitor, it seems, Apuleius was awarded several such statues, at Oea, Carthage, and his birthplace Madauros. His rivalries, however, should be seen not so much in a sophistic context but as part of a broader ethos of competitiveness that took many forms in Roman Carthage.²⁸

When seen, moreover, as dramatic acts performed before a large and diverse audience in a culturally differentiated setting, Apuleius' speeches can be understood not only as vehicles of entertainment but as active transmitters of metropolitan literary culture to a provincial population under constant exposure to new forms of Roman influence. Like the monumental buildings that periodically altered the physical landscape, the speeches were agents of historical change, elements of the process of cultural admixture and interaction that typified Carthaginian life, as evident in the interrelationships between the local pantheon and the gods of Rome and between the Punic and Latin languages. They can be seen, that is to say, as dynamic manifestations of how *Romanitas* made itself felt in Punic Carthage, and as markers of a society that was always having to respond to the arrival in its midst of what

125), 177, 178–179 (fig. 132); cf. Dunbabin 1978: 109–130 on the degrees of realism portrayed; the variations of date in mosaic production should be noted but do not affect my general point.

²⁸ Comparable: cf. the rough parallel from Shakespeare's day: 'One must remember that the Elizabethan taste for plays was of a piece with a love for other public entertainments such as fencing, bear-baiting, and cock-fighting' (Kermode 2004: 110). Rivals: on the degree to which sophistic rivalry is evident in the *Florida*, see, speculatively, Sandy 1997: 164–169; Harrison 2000: 106. Statues: Hilton: 2001: 158 n. 80, 162 n. 93.

was in essence the intrusive and the alien. The issue was still alive a generation later when Tertullian composed the *De pallio*.²⁹

On this view, Apuleius the speechmaker becomes in his own person a symbol of historical change. In the first instance of course he was not an alien intruder but a Romano-African who left and then returned to the region of his birth having acquired, as noted earlier, the learning of the élite from many years of study in distant places. He assimilated and came to identify with the dominant intellectual tradition—to enter the ‘aristocracy of the intellect’ in one telling phrase—and subsequently disseminated his learning in the land from which he had sprung. But the expectation could not necessarily have been high that a man from Madauros would come to play this role.³⁰

Madauros is worth attention. For to imagine the young Apuleius in his place of birth is to compel awareness of the cultural as well as geographical distance he travelled in making himself a man of Greek and Latin letters, and it makes the ‘transmissive’ quality of the speeches represented by the *Florida* easier to grasp.

Madauros was situated on the southern limit of the grain belt that ran south and west of Carthage in the high plateau country where Africa Proconsularis shaded into Numidia, a town well shielded from the sea. The closest port, Hippo Regius, lay some 95 kilometres to the north-west, and Carthage was roughly 250 kilometres to the northeast. Madauros had become a Roman colony under the Flavians, when veteran troops were settled on a site whose history went back at least to the age of Syphax, its official name being Colonia Flavia Augusta Veteranorum Madaurensium. It was one of many new foundations of the late first century intended to mark the advance of Roman power in North Africa further and further to the west. Physically the colony was organised in conventional Roman style, with a grid pattern of streets focusing on a forum almost square in disposition. The forum itself was surrounded by the standard signs of Roman urban design and the tokens of a community’s reputation—porticoes, basilicas, sanctuaries and mausolea. There was also a council chamber for the governing body of decurions, and by the time of the Severans public baths and a theatre, too, the latter the gift of the civic benefactor M. Gabinius Sabinus. Sooner or later there must have

²⁹ Tertullian: cf. Bradley 2000a: 215.

³⁰ Quotation: Syme 1984: 1324.

been educational facilities at Madauros as well: Augustine spent part of his early life there studying grammar and rhetoric.³¹

The Latin inscriptions of Madauros allow an impression to form of the Roman ethos that prevailed in the town in Apuleius' time—an ethos that was superficially the same as that which prevailed in innumerable other Roman towns of the western empire. They confirm, for example, that Madauros was governed by decurions and *duumviri*, and that local citizens used the *tria nomina* of Roman citizens everywhere, many bearing names like that of M. Cornelius Victorinus, a man who held the chief magistracy of Madauros on two occasions and who was publicly honoured by a grateful population for once having relieved a shortage of grain. They show that individuals commemorated family members at the time of their death in customary Roman fashion, recording the exact life-span of the deceased with suitable expressions of family feeling and loss; that citizens made dedications to such members of the Roman pantheon as Jupiter, Juno and Minerva, Mars, Mercury and Venus; and that religious cult was led by a profusion of men who bore the standard Roman titles of *sacerdos* and *flamen*. The inscriptions indicate, too, that over time the status and wealth of some families increased to such a degree that their members styled themselves equestrians and claimed thereby a place among the imperial élite. Others perhaps even aspired to senatorial status, seeking the support of those in the capital who served as the town's patrons to further their individual ambitions.³²

Apuleius came from a wealthy family, within Madauran society probably an extraordinarily wealthy family. At his death his father left an estate of HS2 million, which was enough to provide Apuleius and his brother with the minimum census requirement for entry to the Roman senate. His father, as might be surmised, belonged to the decurial order and held public offices, including that of *duumvir*. He might well have anticipated that his sons would one day promote the family fortunes in the political society of Rome

³¹ Madauros: Gsell and Joly 1922; Sherwin-White 1944: 9–10; PECS s.v. 'Madauros'; Février 1982: 325, 340–341, 394 fig. B.8; Gascou 1982: 163. M. Gabinius Sabinus: *ILA* 2121–2127. Hunink 2001: 84 believes that 'members of the Roman elite were suspicious of the theatre', but this did not prevent men like Gabinius from building. Augustine: *Conf.* 2.3.5; *Ep.* 17.2.

³² Inscriptions: *ILA* 2056, 2070, 2130, 2131, 2145, 2207, 2240, *AE* 1922 no. 16; cf. Bassignano 1974: 273–284. M. Cornelius Victorinus: *ILA* 2145. To judge from Augustine's vivid recollection of two statues of Mars in the forum (*Conf.* 2.3.5; cf. *Ep.* 17.2), the presence of the Roman gods was still much in evidence at a late date.

itself, for the pattern had long been established that the descendants of provincial settlers should in time enter the ranks of Rome's governing class. The town of Cirta, not far away to the west, had already provided consuls well before the end of the first century.³³

There was much of Rome in Madauros, therefore, for the young Apuleius to absorb. But there were equally other aspects of Madauran life which could not be missed. First, Madauros was a very small community. It occupied only twenty hectares or so of land, and although connected to other communities did not lie on a major road and was not a major commercial centre. Its public buildings were all comparatively small—some of the most impressive, the theatre for instance, did not even exist when Apuleius was born—and its population can never have been very large: the theatre had a seating capacity of just 1200. Secondly, the colony had been imposed on a frontier region that had vibrant traditions of its own which, as at Carthage, never fully disappeared. Many of its citizens had names as apparently Roman as that of C. Apuleius Rogatus (conceivably a relative), but there were also those such as L. Julius Zabo, Manilius Aris, and Mizguar son of Baric, men of African descent who apparently had no wish at all to conceal their local origins even as they acquired the trappings of Roman life. Men such as Rogatus, moreover, were not necessarily the descendants of Italian settlers as might at first be thought: some of Madauros' first settlers were Africans, and as studies of nomenclature indicate large numbers of Madauran Roman citizens, men with *nomina* taken from emperors or senators who had served in Africa, were citizens of native descent. It has been suggested in fact that almost three quarters (71%) of Madauros' attested civic magistrates came from families of African origin. It should not be surprising, therefore, that again as at Carthage Punic was a language heard as much as or more than Latin in Madauros. The presence of Libyan speakers has also to be observed. Further, if Roman gods were worshipped in the town, so too were those of (apparent) local extraction, Damio and Lilleus; and as elsewhere in North Africa the cult of Liber Pater, the civilising god of life and death, light and darkness, involved Hellenistic Dionysiac mystery elements that were built on the foundation of the ancient cult of Punic Shadrapa.³⁴

³³ Apuleius' family: *Apol.* 23.1, 24.9. Cirta: Syme 1988: 286, 472.

³⁴ On the surface area of Madauros see the references in n. 31; cf. Duncan-Jones 1974: 265 n. 4. Connected: Sherwin-White 1944: 9–10. Seating capacity: Gsell and Joly 1922; Lachaux 1968: 88–90. C. Apuleius Rogatus: *ILA* 2276/2277. L. Julius Zabo: *ILA* 2547.

Madauros had been established as part of a Roman strategy to control the Musulamii, a nomadic tribe which brought distress to Rome on several occasions in the first century, notably in the reign of Tiberius. The strategy was successful. The nomads were surrounded by new foundations and subsequently policed by Roman troops. But the conjunction of cultures that Roman penetration created could not be lost on those who populated the Roman enclaves. At his trial Apuleius informed Claudius Maximus (*Apol.* 24.1) that his birthplace lay on the borders of Numidia and Gaetulia, and that he had once described himself in a speech as half-Numidian and half-Gaetulian, vocabulary which implies that he was well aware of how his *patria* had come into being: ‘Gaetulian’ was a generic nomadic designation that included the Musulamii. He could seem to take pride in the fact that Madauros had once been ruled by African kings, Massinissa as well as Syphax, men whose names conjured up a romantic picture of a remote past when African power had been an equal match for that of Rome. Yet he also observed (*Apol.* 24.3) that compared to his character a man’s place of birth was of no importance—a platitude certainly but one perhaps betraying consciousness of what were in reality obscure origins, and hinting at a social scar that could never be completely removed. From the very heart of the imperial court M. Cornelius Fronto had similarly written that he was ‘a Libyan of the Libyan nomads’ (*Ep. Graec.* 1.5). Madauros in the second century, it appears, was little more than a backwater in which Roman and native mingled closely together.³⁵

Apuleius’ African origins serve as a reminder of the tribally based social organisation that was still very much in evidence in the North Africa of his era, and of the military efforts Rome constantly had to make to subdue and restrain indigenous peoples. The contrast between the unsettled and dangerous world of the frontier zone and the world of sophisticated knowledge visible in the *Florida* is sharp. But the two worlds cannot be kept apart, and that is the essential point I want to make. The speeches which are now read as the *Florida* were in themselves historical events intimately tied to other historical developments in the North African setting in which they were de-

Manilius Aris: *ILA* 2601. Mizguar: *ILA* 2624. Suggested: Thompson 1969. Lilleus: *ILA* 2053 (or Lilleo?); Damio: *ILA* 2036 (both names are followed by the element ‘Aug.’). Liber Pater: Jalloul Boussada 1991.

³⁵ Strategy: Syme 1979: 218–230; Gascou 1972: 32–33. Platitude: Hunink 1997: II 83, though note Swain 1996: 46, 299 for Lucian’s genuine sensitivity to his ‘barbarian’ origins.

livered, and it is in this specificity of place and in the dimensions of place—geographical, physical, material, linguistic, religious, ethnic, social, economic and political—that their author's singularity begins to emerge. Apuleius was the product of a culturally complex environment who came in his maturity to add to the process of historical change in North Africa by transmitting in his own person elements of a dominant philosophical and literary idiom to a local African population. Entertaining and instructing Carthaginian crowds with easily digestible portions of *doctrina*, and displaying an enthusiasm for metropolitan *studia* reminiscent of the Younger Pliny a generation earlier, he contributed through his speeches, rather unpredictably, to the ever evolving process by which the seeds of *Romanitas* were sown and nurtured on foreign soil—the *Romanitas* which was the inevitable consequence of colonial settlement, which subsequently provided the springboard for Apuleius' own intellectual metamorphosis, and with which in his adulthood he came to identify. It is here that distinctiveness may be found, and reason established, to regard Apuleius as something more than a link in a literary chain. *Mutatis mutandis*, other authors and works might be found similarly subject to historical and cultural differentiation.

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