

Apuleius, the *Onos*, and Rome

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Most scholarship on the pseudo-Lucianic *Onos* has focused on the question of its wholeness, its relationship to its presumed Greek source, its authorship (Lucian or not?) and the interpretation of the passage of Photios (*Bibl.* 129) which seems to provide guidance, but may actually cause yet more complication. Most scholarship on Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* and the *Onos* has focused on the interrelationship among the three texts; as Apuleius probably did not model his *Metamorphoses* on the *Onos*, but on the lost original, his work has often been employed in a reconstruction of the lost longer Greek version, especially in regard to the question of the length of that text and the number of inserted tales.¹ Often, too, the basic insecurity of Latinists over the derivative nature of Latin literature is assuaged by an uncomplimentary comparison of the *Onos* with Apuleius' infinitely more complex text.

This paper examines the way that Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* uses the Greek source as a springboard for thinking about Rome's domination of its provinces and about the complex cultural identity of its protagonist, working from a text which has a surprising amount to say about Rome's hegemony. These are issues prominent in literature of the second century A.D., particularly imperial Greek literature, as recent work on this period has shown.² However, issues of identity and the stance toward Rome are complicated when the author is adapting a Greek text into Latin and writing from North Africa.

I do not propose to add anything to the technical question of the relationship among the three ass-tales alluded to above. For the purposes of this paper, there are a few points that must be taken for granted, though even these are disputable: in order to say anything at all about Apuleius' use of

¹ For a thorough discussion see Mason 1994 and discussion with references in Schlam and Finkelpearl 2000. Also see Zimmerman 2002.

² See especially Swain 1996, Goldhill 2001, Whitmarsh 2001.

the Greek source, we have to assume that what appears in the *Onos* was in the version that Apuleius saw, whether he saw the longer Greek *Metamorphoseis*, as is generally assumed, or whether he was reading the *Onos*. In other words, even though Photios apparently thought the two Greek versions were different in tone, I will be assuming that the *Onos* did not add material. Second, I am operating on the belief that the ending in the *Onos* corresponds to the ending in the longer version, even though Carl Schlam and others have posited a religious conclusion to the lost original, more along the lines of the conclusions to other Greek novels.³ Perhaps I should add that I also believe that the ending of Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* is the final ending to that book as well, so that the *Onos*/original Greek *Ass* and Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* have quite distinctive endings.⁴ Finally, I will be avoiding altogether the question of Lucianic authorship.

The *Onos*, in spite of, or perhaps hand in hand with its inelegant prose style, uneven structure and crude sexuality is direct and brutal in its exposure of the power structures which Rome imposes on her provinces and the arrogance and inhuman treatment of provincials by the Roman army. In one of the few essays that takes the *Onos* seriously as literature, Edith Hall argues that the original Greek *Metamorphoseis* 'may well have been the most subversive ancient novel ever written,'⁵ noting especially the mechanism by which the reader is given a 'double vision' of society through the eyes of an aristocrat temporarily transformed into a slave. Particularly significant for the current discussion is her attention to the way that this double vision 'produces a deeply ambivalent perspective on the Greek provinces' relationships with the Roman imperial administration.'⁶ While the 'ideal' Greek romances are set 'nostalgically' in the pre-Roman Greek past, effacing Rome, the *Onos* takes place in the early second century in Achaea under Roman rule. The hero and his brother 'who both have stereotypically Roman names,' are from Patras, a city which had been given privileged status by Augustus and had long held particularly strong allegiance to Rome. 'The choice of this city for the hero's provenance marks him out as a privileged member of the hyper-elite, descended from and especially loyal to and beloved by the Romans.'⁷

³ Schlam 1992, 24–25.

⁴ Van Mal-Maeder 1997 argues that Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* may also have had a comic ending, a twelfth book in which Lucius revisits his family and the matron with whom he had an affair while an ass.

⁵ Hall 1995, 57; see also Alvares' essay in this volume.

⁶ Hall 1995, 51.

⁷ Hall 1995, 51. She implicitly distinguishes Patras from Corinth, Lucius' ancestral home, but see further below.

Hall notes a number of instances in which the text signals a failure of the Roman imperial administration: the Greek robbers defeat the ‘Romophile’ citizens of Patras; Lukios, seeking the kind of protection that a Roman elite customarily would, is unable to call on the aid of the Roman emperor because, in the attempt to do so, he can’t say ‘Oh Caesar’ but only brays (*Onos* 16); the Roman regiments are in direct conflict with the poor and the market gardener is treated arrogantly by the Roman soldier who speaks Latin to the Greek-speaker (*Onos* 44). The presentation of these incidents would have been enjoyable to a provincial Greek audience. Hall also brings particular attention to the class issues of the text: the erasure of the slave-free boundary and the interesting focus on nudity as an image of unmasking and clothing as a means of creating an elite. The *Onos* does ultimately portray an elite restored and maintaining its power, but not before it has been exposed.⁸

Hall’s arguments about the subversiveness of the text are of several sorts: that Lukios of Patras is essentially a Roman who is mocked by the Greek text,⁹ that the story unmasks the elite, that the ass is given a double vision by

⁸ Simon Swain more briefly makes many of these same points, as support for his argument that the erasure of Rome through a historical setting antedating Rome’s hegemony is a crucial element in the Greek novels’ idealization of the past which is meant as a setting within which to explore elite identity. In the *Onos*, writes Swain, ‘The present-day setting is an intrinsic part of the (im-)moral colouring of the text, whose humour is concerned with anything but the normative values which the elite of our period held dear (Swain 1996, 113). It is worth noting that more recently Catherine Connors and Sandra Schwartz have explored the hidden presence of Rome in Chariton – so the picture of the Greek novel altogether effacing Rome has changed a bit. Rome is present by its absence and by the implicit contrast between Greece in the days of its freedom and its present diminished state (Connors 2002 and forthcoming; Schwartz 2003).

⁹ Whether Lukios of Patras is as entirely Roman as Hall argues is also open to debate. Some decades ago, P.G. Walsh and B.E. Perry engaged in a heated exchange about the question of Lukios’ identity. Perry (*Ancient Romances* 220f.) had argued, as Hall does, that Lucius and Gaius are stereotypically Roman names and points out that it is surprising that this text alone of the ancient romances presents a Roman hero, but Walsh 1968, 264–5 objects that the NT shows how widespread these names were among Greeks. Walsh argues that Lukios is Greek, but with Roman citizenship. Perry 1968, 97–101 angrily points out a number of flaws in Walsh’s points, especially that some of his arguments are based on Apuleius and that it is dangerous to make any conclusions about the original Greek *Metamorphoseis* based on Apuleius. He also notes that Walsh distorts by saying that Lukios ‘boasts’ of the *tria nomina*, whereas he states them quite routinely, not trying to show off his Roman citizenship, but just stating his name. Mason 1994, 1681 concludes: ‘Lucius is a Roman citizen, but obviously Greek in culture; whether he is an ethnic Greek who has acquired Roman citizenship or a Hellenized Roman.’ If Lukios is not a Roman by blood and is ‘Greek in culture,’ Hall’s arguments are weakened somewhat, but still hold, inasmuch as Lukios as an elite has close connections with the Roman governor and other Roman elites, as the text itself emphasizes.

his identity as both elite youth and low ass, and finally that the dramatic situations in the text expose the cruelty (and occasional failure) of Roman imperial administration and its occupying armies. She persistently argues throughout her essay that Apuleius has omitted one or another of the subversive elements presented in the Greek text, but it is worth looking back at Apuleius more closely to see to what extent he adopts the subversive stance of the *Onos*. Apuleius' Lucius is, at least to begin with, an ethnic Greek rather than a Roman, and the audience of Apuleius' work is not primarily Greek, but Apuleius, too, mentions Rome – indeed begins and ends with Rome – and maintains an awareness in the fictional setting of the presence of Rome as ruling power.¹⁰ Apuleius, too, provides the protagonist with 'double vision' being, on the one hand, a youth from the highest levels of Greek society, and, on the other, the equivalent of a slave, as the work especially of William Fitzgerald and Keith Bradley has shown.¹¹ The way that the ending of the *Onos* revolves around Lukios' re-establishment of his privileged position via an appeal to the Roman governor's shared social status is, as Hall notes, 'abjured by Apuleius,' and yet what Apuleius substitutes is politically subversive in its own way as well.¹²

As a sample, discussion below explores more closely two passages from the *Onos* which Apuleius has adopted and elaborated. In *Onos* 16 just after his transformation and abduction by robbers, Lukios tries to call on Caesar, but he can only bray:

ἐπεὶ δὲ πολλάκις ᾿Ω Καῖσαρ ἀναβοῆσαι ἐπεθύμουν, οὐδὲν ἄλλο ἢ ὠγκώμην, καὶ τὸ μὲν ὦ μέγιστον καὶ εὐφρονότατον ἐβόων, τὸ δὲ Καῖσαρ οὐκ ἐπηκολούθει.

I often wanted to shout out 'Oh Caesar;' but could only bray, and though I could shout the 'Oh' loud and clear, the 'Caesar' wouldn't follow.

Graverini and others have pointed to the not very polite comedy of transforming Caesar's name into the braying of an ass, while Hall more specifically views the attempts as the 'Roman citizen's dependence on the imperial machine,' here subverted.¹³ We might note also that the invocation is unsuccessful and the robbers run free under ineffective imperial rule. In

¹⁰ See especially Millar 1981, 66 and passim.

¹¹ Fitzgerald 2000; Bradley 2000; Finkelpearl 2003.

¹² Hall 1995, 55.

¹³ Graverini 2002; Hall 1995, 52.

Apuleius, the episode is similar, but an ambiguous reference to language and nationality appears:¹⁴

inter ipsas turbelas Graecorum genuino sermone nomen augustum Caesaris invocare temptavi (3.29);

I tried amidst those crowds of Greeks to invoke the august name of Caesar in my native tongue (Hanson).

I tried to call on the august name of Caesar in my native Greek (Walsh).

At first it looks as if Apuleius has marked the incident as Greek versus Roman even more clearly than ‘pseudo-Lucian’ by emphasizing the Greekness of the crowds in contrast with the name of Caesar. Yet, it is unclear whether *Graecorum* should be construed with *turbelas* or with *sermone*, and whether Lucius’ *genuinus sermo* is Greek (since he identifies himself as a native Greek in the prologue and elsewhere) or Latin (since the narrative is being written in Latin by someone who earns his money speaking Latin artfully in the forum; Robertson adds *Romanorum* after *Graecorum* to clarify the modifiers, with the crowds being Greek but the language Latin). Further, it is likely that Lucius in part intends *genuinus sermo* to refer to human language, the kind of language he was born speaking, rather than asinine braying – i.e. ‘I tried to invoke Caesar in human language but could only bray.’¹⁵ The marked ambiguity in the assignment of national identity – or identity in general – when raising the specter of Roman authority via a passage in the *Onos* calls attention to the Latin-speaking identity of the author, and to the ambiguous identity of Lucius.

In *Onos* 44–45, Lukios’ owner encounters a soldier who addresses him ‘in the language of the Italians’ which the gardener does not understand. Because of his non-response, the soldier strikes him, but the gardener manages to trip him and beats him with his hand, foot, and a stone. Of this passage and more directly Apuleius’ version, J.N. Adams comments, ‘The soldier asserts his Roman identity and military authority by inflicting momentarily the language of imperial power on the peasant’.¹⁶ It seems to me significant that it is via the Greek *Metamorphoseis* that Apuleius has most vividly evoked the oppressiveness of Roman military authority. That

¹⁴ It is, of course, quite possible that the longer version of the Greek text pointed out the Greekness of the crowds and, in Hall’s interpretation of the nationality of Lukios, that he was trying to speak Latin, his own native tongue, but we have no way of verifying what is lost.

¹⁵ See Keulen 1997, 206–207 n.20; Finkelpearl 2006, 215.

¹⁶ Adams 2003, 199.

Apuleius' version at 9.39–42 is longer and more vivid and includes a conciliatory appeal by the gardener to the soldier need mean nothing but that the *Onos* is an epitome; but it could mean that Apuleius has expanded upon the Greek source's criticisms of brutal Roman authority. Both texts clearly invite the listener to participate gleefully in the near-murder of the Roman legionary as the gardener beats him with, in the Greek, feet, fists and a rock, and in the Latin, fists, elbow, *teeth*, and a rock and in both neutralizes the soldier's threats by depriving him of his sword. While Apuleius here seems mainly to want to outdo the source in exactly the same spirit (e.g. two proverbs at the very end rather than one), he has here again complicated the linguistic issues – making the best of the necessity of depicting the Roman soldier's 'Greek' in Latin. Apuleius shows the soldier's native 'Latin' via a relatively complex subjunctive indirect question: *superbo atque arroganti sermone percontatur quorsum duceret asinum*, and his rudimentary 'Greek' via an incorrect use of *ubi* for *quo* in blunt direct speech – in Latin of course: *Ubi, inquit, ducis asinum istum?* Though again we can know nothing of the original Greek *Metamorphoseis*, Apuleius has perhaps added the epithets *superbo atque arroganti* to the description of the soldier's speech.

Thus, these two passages in Apuleius which most vividly portray a critical view of Roman *imperium* are both from the Greek source, but are both problematized by the Latin text's reminder of its *vocis immutatio*. Gianpiero Rosati's article on cultural identity in the *Metamorphoses* emphasizes the many ways in which Apuleius moves away from the Greek points of reference in the Greek source, toward Rome. Rome is not necessarily the real point from which Apuleius wrote the book, but is the fictional space in which he wrote. Like the major works of Vergil and Ovid, the book moves toward Rome and toward reality, away from myth. Rosati argues that the book's best readers are those who can recognize the physical points of reference in the city which come up *passim*, hence a Roman. Latin is the mark of Apuleius' cultural allegiance.¹⁷ Rosati does not, however, give much attention to the African elements of Lucius' (or Apuleius') identity. One might use the examples above to argue that indeed Apuleius brings up linguistic differentiation and clearly marks the Latin identity of the author when adapting these passages from the source. At the same time, what is shared between them is a common understanding of the plight of those living under Rome, a friendly rivalry between source and adaptation to determine which can better demonstrate the Roman soldier's cruelty and the gardener's well-placed blows.

¹⁷ Rosati 2003.

Apuleius has adopted, expressed, and perhaps even expanded the *Onos*' positioning with regard to Rome, but his tale ends differently, not only because of Lucius' spiritual conversion, but, unlike Lukios, the still-Greek Lucius ends his journey in the real-life Rome and looks back on his travels in Latin. This difference is, of course, unavoidably connected with Apuleius' own identity as *Latin* author, though his writing in Latin is by no means something to take for granted, given his Greek linguistic abilities as announced in the *Florida* and the Hellenizing of authors like Favorinus who should have been writing in Latin. As Pater says in *Marius the Epicurean*: 'And then, in an age when people, from the emperor Aurelius downwards, prided themselves, unwisely, on writing in Greek, he [Apuleius] had written for Latin people in their own tongue; though still, in truth, with all the care of one writing a learned language.'¹⁸

We need to consider the fact that the author of the work is now writing a story of a Greek under Rome, but from the Roman west and in Latin.¹⁹ Apuleius does not, *pace* Hall, erase 'pseudo-Lucian's' stance *vis à vis* Rome, and the cultural position of the Romanized Greek under Rome. Apuleius is constantly conscious of his source and has replicated its subversions, but has altered and complicated the issues of cultural identity as someone with a foot in the Greek culture of the second century, but seeing things through the filter of the Romano-African.

Why does Apuleius choose to move the climactic moment of anamorphosis to Corinth and to change Lucius' origins from Patras to Corinth (though his ancestry is more complicated than that)? Hall's implication is that Patras is a particularly Roman colony, with particular allegiance to Rome, making the hero more probably Roman. However, the history of the two cities does not seem to support this kind of distinction. Corinth was re-founded in 44 B.C. by Julius Caesar after its catastrophic destruction in 146 B.C. out of freedmen, veterans and the urban poor, and was thoroughly Hellenized by the second century, but was the provincial capital, with strong ties

¹⁸ Pater 1896, 50.

¹⁹ If we think for a moment about the name 'Lucius' in this context, we must notice that 'Lucius' in Apuleius is a Latinization of 'Lukios' which was originally a Hellenizing of 'Lucius.' In Apuleius, then, the Greek hero has a Latin name just as he had in pseudo-Lucian, but it appears naturalized in the context of a novel in Latin despite the fact that the hero is Greek. The status of Greek under the Roman empire *from the west* is complicated here in a way that may be seen as paradeigmatic of many of the cultural issues in the text as a whole.

to Rome.²⁰ The destruction of Corinth symbolized for many Greeks the moment that they had lost their freedom.²¹ Patras was founded by Augustus in 14 A.D. out of veterans and the indigenous population (making it perhaps less Roman than Corinth, if anything), and had suffered losses and abuses prior to Augustus' foundation. Both areas were regarded as potential trouble spots.²² Apuleius' decision to move his Lucius' ancestry and anamorphosis to Corinth probably has less to do with the relationship of the two cities to Rome (for Apuleius seems to be following 'pseudo-Lucian' in the general tenor of the relationship of these cities to Rome: Greek cities brutally destroyed and then recolonized by the Romans, re-hellenized by the Greeks) than with the resonances of these cities for the Roman or for the Romano-African reader. Luca Graverini discusses at length the associations of Corinth for both Romans and Greeks: 'a Roman could use the symbol of Corinth to celebrate the greatness of his people and the vengeance of Aeneas' descendants over the destroyers of Troy. A Greek could use it to lament his loss of freedom.'²³ Corinth therefore becomes a powerful symbol of cultural identity.

Graverini also cites passages in which Cicero and later Florus connect the destruction of Corinth with that of Carthage, destroyed in the same year.²⁴ Apuleius is thus able obliquely to introduce the Roman destruction of old Carthage, a city whose new incarnation is Apuleius' own adopted home.²⁵ The change from Patrai/Thessalonika to Corinth thus maintains the tension exploited in the *Onos* between Rome and one of its Greek provinces, but evokes even more powerfully the Roman destruction of Greece and obliquely that of Carthage.

While Lukios settled back comfortably into the Romanized Greek culture of Patras via the arena at Thessalonika, Lucius' journey ultimately takes him to a different point from where he began: Rome. How easily Lucius assimilates to his new home is a matter of debate. Catherine Connors, pursuing Hall's arguments, sees Lukios as an example of a Roman gleefully mocked by a Greek audience and who remains in Roman-dominated Patras,

²⁰ Alcock 1993, 133, 168, 169. In fact it is remarkable how closely tied the two provincial cities are in much of Alcock's discussion.

²¹ Pausanias 7.16–17.

²² Alcock 1993, 143.

²³ Graverini 2002, 65.

²⁴ Cicero *ND* 3.91; Florus *Epit.* 1.32.1

²⁵ See Florida 20. Richard Miles in *Rome the Cosmopolis* 133–34 argues that the identification of old with new Carthage was deliberately maintained by the Roman provincial administration.

while Lucius, as Greek turned Roman, makes a successful transition to life in Rome:

In the *Onos*, Lucius' [=Lukios'] Roman connections are something to be mocked and humiliated for, and in the end, as his same old self, he beats a quick retreat to Patras. By contrast, Apuleius' Lucius and Psyche achieve new Roman connections as a reward for their suffering. They each move to a new and better life....Apuleius' picture of Rome as a place which can welcome newcomers affirms the transformational potential of the Roman empire in a positive way which is quite different from the glimpses of empire and spectacles offered in the Greek novels.²⁶

Similarly, Jean Alvares points out in his essay in this volume that to a large degree Lucius' progress in the novel has consisted in a process of assimilation. To borrow Greg Woolf's terminology, Lucius is engaged in 'becoming Roman'²⁷ – learning Latin with difficulty and becoming a successful pleader in the forum. Certainly, compared with the *Onos* Apuleius presents a scenario in which it is possible for a foreign provincial to become Roman. Yet, Lucius has always had a complex identity, as Yun Lee Too, among others, has shown.²⁸ His triple Greekness of the prologue – Corinth-Athens-Sparta – gives him a homeland that is impossible in its regional variety²⁹ and conflicts with his avowed descent from the Thessalian (as he says) Plutarch who is really from Chaeronea. He is also enigmatically called Madauran (11.27), and adopts as well an Egyptian identity in appearance along with his Roman language; he is human and yet exhibits considerable animal consciousness for much of the book.³⁰ While Alvares argues for a fairly successful assimi-

²⁶ Connors forthcoming. I do not do justice to the complexity of the full argument of her piece, in which she points out numerous ways that Rome permeates the *Metamorphoses*.

²⁷ Woolf 1998.

²⁸ Too 2001. Also Rosati 2003 who covers much of the same ground without referring to Too's piece.

²⁹ Cf. Rosati 2003, 272. Rosati in general points out the ways that the persona of the prologue seems to be a mix, culturally, of Lucius and Apuleius, that different elements fit or fail to fit one or the other.

³⁰ 'Milesian' remains an additional literary-geographical marker whose geographical significance seems largely to have been lost. At 4.32, Apuleius plays again with the ambiguities in his story being told about Greeks in Latin when he (via Lucius via the old woman) says: *sed Apollo, quamquam Graecus et Ionicus, propter Milesiae conditorem sic Latina sorte respondit*. Here Milesian, which should correspond to Apollo's Ionian

lation on Lucius' part, I read his status as more 'outsider' than this. The Isis cult, though established in the age of Sulla (11.30) and hence Roman or Romanized, is presented as clearly exotic.³¹ The rites are described in great detail as if unfamiliar to the reader, or at least sufficiently strange to merit close observation. In 11.11, for example, Lucius describes a part of the apparatus: *cista secretorum capax penitus celans operta magnificae religionis* (a basket containing secret attributes, concealing hidden objects of magnificent sanctity). Words like *novitas*, or *mirus* (11.11) are sprinkled throughout the book. The Egyptian language is presented as unreadable (11.11, 11.16; 11.22), the gods unfamiliarly theriomorphic (11.11). Lucius secludes himself within the precincts of the priestly Isiac community in Rome, but emerges deliberately and happily displaying the alien appearance of his shaved head. Lucius lives contentedly in Rome, not because he has become culturally altogether Roman, but because he has found a community outside of standard cultural categories; one can worship Isis in Rome or Greece or Egypt and have kinship with fellow Isis-worshippers.

Further, it is worth noting the limits of Lucius' assimilation. His Latin, which he speaks as a *rudis locutor*, is *exoticus ac forensis* (1.1), words whose meaning is disputed – does *forensis* mean 'foreign' from *foris* as a Latinate version of *exoticus* or 'of the forum'? – but which characterize what is in fact rather exotic Latin as the Latin of a newcomer.³² Nor is he altogether happily successful:

quae nunc incunctanter gloriosa in foro redderem patrocina, nec extimescerem malevolorum disseminationes, quas studiorum meorum laboriosa doctrina ibidem exciebat. (11.30)

identity, is allied with the Latin author, much as Septimius Severus could later refer to Apuleius' *Milesia Punica* (*Vita Clod. Alb.* 12.12).

³¹ Obviously, the question of whether Isis and her cult are fully accepted and whether they are even seen as 'Roman' is a large question and an important one, but what is important for reading this part of the *Metamorphoses* is not whether, in historical terms, the Isis cult was well-established in Rome and had many temples and worshippers and was part of the official landscape of Rome, but whether, in literary and cultural terms, she and her cult are exoticized. The mystique and the military and economic realities of Egypt are played out in many different ways in Latin literature. Beard-North-Price comment in speculation over whether the cult was made official in the reign of Caligula: 'Certainly after his reign comments on the cult's status are ambiguous: some authors claim the goddess as 'Roman,' others stress her foreign exoticism' (250).

³² See Rosati 2003 on *forensis*. In the discussion above, however, I am making Lucius the referent of the the prologue, whereas Rosati sees the situation as much more complicated, the speaker being Lucius, Apuleius, and the book.

[Osiris appeared] bidding me unhesitatingly to continue as now to win fame in the courts as an advocate and not fear the slanders of detractors which my industrious pursuit of legal studies had aroused in Rome.

It is only because of Osiris' guidance that Lucius is able to disregard the envy and slander of his ill-wishers – rivals in the courts perhaps who resent the intrusion of an eloquent immigrant who worked hard to master another tongue?

To return to the question of Apuleius' adaptation of the *Onos*/Greek *Met.* and the relation of both texts to Rome, it is time to think about Apuleius' own status as provincial of a different sort under Rome. Keith Bradley has recently explored Apuleius' relation to Carthage as it explicates the context of the *Florida*. Says Bradley: '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 in the *Florida* were by definition signs of a cultural fluidity that can be historically recovered and that Apuleius himself embodied.'³³ Bradley further sees Apuleius' speeches as active transmitters of *Romanitas* to the provincial population of Punic Carthage. While Bradley has perhaps gone further than anyone yet in his emphasis on the Punic background of Apuleius, he seems to resist any application of this background to Apuleius' fiction. It is of course dangerous to indulge in biographical criticism, and yet what is at stake is something more like the cultural context in which Apuleius adapted his Greek source's relationship to Rome – a Rome very much alive for provincials in another part of the world who are one portion of the intended audience of the novel. Luca Graverini, in addition to exploring the complex resonances of Corinth, also ventures bravely into a consideration of the African audience and African resonances of the novel and suggests that an African audience might find in the problematic 'Madaurensis' an invitation to sympathize with an African character-author, thus opening a way for an interpretation of the novel as well in its Carthaginian context.³⁴

Apuleius retains the *Onos*' very negative reflections on Roman *imperium*, but inserts reminders of the difference in culture, especially via linguistic markers: Latin is the language of the occupying army and yet also 'our' language. Apuleius also changes the conclusion to the tale, not only transforming a comic tale into a saga of conversion – whether serious or

³³ Bradley 2005, 3.

³⁴ Graverini 2002, 69.

mocked³⁵ – but also bringing his Greek hero to Rome and making him learn Latin. The retention of negative elements would seem to indicate that other Romano-Africans could relate vividly to the treatment of provincials and the operations of provincial administration which *mutatis mutandis* they had experienced (or perhaps Apuleius felt the need or desire to convey this picture to the Romans themselves!). The changed ending is not less subversive, but rather paints another kind of picture, not an entirely optimistic one, of the experience of the foreigner at Rome.

For further thought: Gerald Sandy and Stephen Harrison have written extensively in different ways about Apuleius' interconnection with the Second Sophistic, with Sandy largely introducing the reader to key figures among little-known Greeks contemporary with Apuleius, and Harrison arguing for a more rhetorical Apuleius, fond of sophistic display not only in his overtly rhetorical works, the *Florida* and *Apology*, but also in the *Metamorphoses* and philosophical works. New work on the Greek Second Sophistic, however, has concentrated on the concerns of Greeks writing 'under Rome' or in the context of the Roman Empire more than on the sophists' love of rhetorical display and learning. On the one hand, sophists are seen as displaying a degree of resistance to Roman rule, condescending in subtle ways to the intellectually inferior Romans while invoking their great tradition of learning, and on the other to be 'performing' Greekness in a world where Greekness has ceased to be as consistently a matter of ethnic identity.³⁶

What are the implications of placing Apuleius in the context of the Second Sophistic in light of the new kinds of questions being asked about the positioning of these authors in relation to Rome? In what ways do he and other provincial Latin writers problematize and re-define Roman identity? How do Roman intellectuals – or politicians – respond to writers of the Greek Second Sophistic who invoke their Greek heritage in the face of Roman power? The Arch of Hadrian with its proclamation on one side: 'This is the Athens of Theseus' and on the other: 'This is the Athens of Hadrian and not of Theseus' is a beginning. The complicated relations between Gellius and Favorinus also offer glimpses of a Roman rebuttal.

Apuleius and his countrymen, like second century Greeks, live 'under Rome,' but their primary official language (after Punic) is of course Latin, placing them in a rather different place *vis à vis* Rome, which I believe is

³⁵ I agree with Connors' (forthcoming) approach here – it is not crucial to decide one way or another when we are considering the question of conversion locale.

³⁶ See for different treatments and emphases: Swain 1996, Goldhill 2001, Whitmarsh 2001.

reflected in the overlapping and yet diverging relationship to Rome in the *Onos* and Apuleius' *Met*. I find it hard *not* to connect Apuleius' own hybrid identity and his experience living in and 'negotiating' three cultures with the way he has altered his Greek source and created a thoroughly hybridized and shifting central character. Bringing us to Rome, but leaving us with the vision of an incompletely assimilated foreigner, both embracing Rome and Latin and yet representing vividly the problematic features of Roman rule in the provinces, Apuleius re-defines the politico-cultural aspects of the Second Sophistic to match the perspective of a Romano-African.

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