

STAVROS FRANGOULIDIS, “*Witches, Isis and Narrative. Approaches to Magic in Apuleius’ Metamorphoses*”

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### *1. Approach and raison d’être\**

Any scholar who has the ambition to write a new book on Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses* (hereafter: *Met.*) today encounters specific challenges, which oblige him or her to make a clear choice. I will mention what I consider as three main challenges. First: there already exist good general monographs on Apuleius’ novel that combine elucidation of origin, thematic structure and narrative technique with useful overviews of the various interpretations that have been presented through the years.<sup>1</sup> Among them, in my view, the late Carl Schlam’s *The Metamorphoses of Apuleius: On Making an Ass of One-self* (1992) remains unchallenged as a guide both for those who are not yet ‘initiated’ in the mysteries of Apuleius’ narrative and for those who are more familiar with the *Met.*, and who will continue to consult this delightful book with profit for its judicious and sound interpretations, rich discussions of themes and motifs, and reliable references to previous scholarship. Schlam’s book is also ideal for use in class. Given this situation, a first challenge for any new monograph on the *Met.* is to demonstrate clearly its *raison d’être*.

A second challenge is the continuous flow of scholarly publications that appear on this Latin novel. While reading Frangoulidis’ (hereafter F.) book, it occurred to me that almost nine years after Schlam’s and Finkelpearl’s invaluable review of scholarship on the *Met.* between 1970 and 1998 (*Lustrum* 42, 2000), a new review of Apuleian scholarship that would cover the period from 1998 until today would be very useful. This is a desideratum

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\* The book’s manner of presentation of the material and of Apuleian studies have made it necessary for me to write a longer-than-usual review, as I believe that this longer review is able to represent in a clear and constructive way my assessment of the weaknesses and the positive aspects of the volume.

<sup>1</sup> E.g. Tatum 1979; James 1987; Schlam 1992; Finkelpearl 1998; Graverini 2007. The last title has not been acknowledged in Frangoulidis’ book.

that a new general monograph on Apuleius could also fulfil, to a certain extent, though it ideally should move beyond a mere overview and synthesis and develop a fresh interpretation of the text.

A third challenge is to take position in the highly debated issue of Book Eleven, which has led to various, conflicting interpretations, since some scholars view the novel's ending as satirical parody of a religious fanatic, and others as a serious account of an Isiac convert's redemption after his fall, caused by a fatal enslavement to false pleasures and curiosity for unhealthy magic.<sup>2</sup> Connected to this last challenge is the lack of a recent fully-fledged philological commentary that offers a detailed analysis of textual and literary aspects of the Isis Book, gives an overview of the various interpretations, and offers the reader historical background information about the cult of Isis and Osiris, on which many important studies have appeared during the last decades.<sup>3</sup>

F. has set himself the Herculean task of writing a new monograph on Apuleius, which appears as an effort to meet all those challenges, and expresses the ambition to be innovative at the same time. This volume claims to be the first in-depth study of the *Met.* as a whole to examine the main plot and the embedded tales from the perspective of the different attitudes toward magic adopted by Lucius and other characters; this comparative approach is, for F., "a key to unveiling important and as yet unnoticed aspects of the rich and complex literary texture of Apuleius' narrative" (p. 8). Moreover, F. claims to break new ground by examining the narrative structure of the *Met.* against the background of the typical plot-line of the Greek ideal romance. Thirdly, F. wants this volume to be a study of the Isis book as well (a claim also clearly suggested by the title), as he promises to offer a new reading of the novel's final book (as a "second *Met.*"), resulting from the 'contextualised approach' adopted throughout this study.

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<sup>2</sup> A very good introduction to the various interpretations of the Isis book that have been proposed through the years, in connection with the history of the literary interpretation of the *Met.* as a whole, is offered by Stephen Harrison in the Introduction of Harrison (ed.) 1999, especially pp. xxxii-xxxix.

<sup>3</sup> More than thirty years have now passed since the publication of Gwyn Griffith's commentary on *Met.* Book 11, and there is clear need of a new commentary that combines detailed textual and literary analysis in the tradition of the *Groningen Commentaries on Apuleius* with an updated discussion of scholarship on Isiac cult. This is the topic of my current research project. An important contribution to Apuleius' Isis Book that lucidly discusses the interpretative issues surrounding Lucius' 'conversion' within the context of history of religion and of archaeological studies is Egelhaaf-Gaiser 2000 (not considered by F.).

As F. acknowledges on pp. xi-xii, he has benefited from various forms of feedback given by a considerable number of colleagues and students; many of the names mentioned there reappear in the footnotes throughout the book.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, the project behind the book was evidently connected to teaching, as F. acknowledges the comments and the encouragement offered to him by students, who participated in courses on Apuleius taught by F. at the University of Crete.

Scattered throughout this relatively short book I found a number of original and interesting points, such as the comparison of the episode of the woman sentenced to copulation with the ass in Book 10 with a second century papyrus written in Demotic Egyptian that mentions a dream scenario of intercourse between a woman and an ass; this is interpreted as signifying punishment for grave offence (p. 160). I also liked the idea behind the Appendix, suggesting an interesting metaphorical association in Book 11 between Lucius' Isiac initiation after multifarious hardships and the launching of the ship at the Ploiaphesia festival, marking the beginning of spring.<sup>5</sup> F. makes good points about Lucius becoming a fully integrated member of the Isiac community with social status and important duties, as viewed in contrast to his earlier withdrawal from civic and religious life (the Risus Festival in Hypata) as a follower and victim of magic (pp. 11-12; 202). On p. 98, F. rightly observes that the majority of the witches' victims in Hypata (read: Hypata and Larissa), including Lucius, are strangers, coming from outside this cruel community – F. points to the association between 'mockery and magic' in the tale of Thelyphron and the episode of the Risus Festival; consequently, they are ignorant of the powers of witchcraft.

F. also offers useful footnotes that discuss recent secondary literature, not only on the *Met.* (my 'second challenge'), but also on topics that are relevant to the *Met.* and have not been adduced in Apuleian studies so far. For example, on p. 154 with n. 290 I found original material on donkeys and their position in the equine hierarchy, or on their function as an index of attitudes toward class and gender. On p. 193 n. 375 there is an informative note on aspects of *hieros gamos* in Lucius' initiation into Isis' priesthood, with useful references. On p. 86 n. 178 there is a helpful overview of recent

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<sup>4</sup> According to F., earlier versions of Chapters 9 and 3 were presented at RICAN conferences, and an abridged version of Chapter 8 was presented at the conference on "Narratology and Interpretation. The Content of the Form in Ancient Texts", held at the Aristotelian University of Thessaloniki in 2007. Chapter 6 is an elaborated version of a paper presented by F. at ICAN 2008 in Lisbon.

<sup>5</sup> However, I have some criticism regarding the way in which this association is discussed (see below, §5).

studies on the Telyphron tale, and on p. 114 n. 220 I found good references on legal aspects of the relationship between Cupid and Psyche.<sup>6</sup>

However, what I found problematic in the Introduction of the book is that F. does not state, in my view, from the outset in a clear, straightforward, and readable way what his book is exactly about, and how his approach relates to and differs from previous scholarship. There is definitely a choice and an approach behind this book (to which I will respond in more detail below), but F.'s rhetoric does not make it easy for the reader to detect it. Moreover, I found that this choice is not matched by the ambitious title and subtitle. As F. more or less admits on p. 6,<sup>7</sup> readers will find little information about the Apuleian witches themselves and not too much about Isis – yet, they will find a lot about narrative, since the bulk of this book consists of intratextual comparisons, which serve to illustrate F.'s interpretation of the *Met.* as a carefully designed unity. I found the subtitle equally misleading, for this book is not about approaches to witchcraft *per se*, as F. rightly explains in the Introduction.<sup>8</sup>

Is this the reason why F. does not discuss at all in this book on witchcraft Apuleius' own connection with magic (*pace* the *Apology*)? Then again, he does mention Apuleius' priesthood (*Flor.* 18) on p. 45 n. 111 (see also p. 83 n. 176)<sup>9</sup>; there is a lemma 'extratextual author' in the General Index, and the title of the third chapter explicitly mentions "the Author"! But if this book is mainly about structural and thematic relationships, as F. indicates on p. 5, and not about magic as an extratextual phenomenon, why open a book – whose title begins with "Witches" – with a discussion of recent secondary literature on magic? Why does the index contain a lemma '*materia magica*', for which there is only one reference (p. 3)?<sup>10</sup> I found this very confusing

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<sup>6</sup> Although I missed references to Keulen 1997, Osgood 2006, and Papaioannou 1998 here (for the last study cf. p. 111 n. 117).

<sup>7</sup> "... my approach differs ... in that it is not primarily concerned with the witches, witchcraft, or Isis *per se*, but rather with how the various characters react to all forms of magic".

<sup>8</sup> F. approaches magic "not as something extractable from the *Metamorphoses*, but as something integral to the work's overall conception and detailed narrative structure" (p. 6).

<sup>9</sup> F. presents it as a certain fact that Apuleius was a priest of Aesculapius, which is a disputed topic; I missed references to the important recent commentary on the *Florida* by Adolfo La Rocca (2005) and to the well-known article by Rives (1994).

<sup>10</sup> Similarly, the Index refers to Jo Ann Shelton, who is only mentioned in the beginning of the Introduction (p. 2 and 3). Why, for example, does the Index lack useful lemmata like 'knowledge' or 'Isis', important themes that recur throughout the book? Why are well-known Apuleian scholars like Danielle van Mal-Maeder and Stelios Panayotakis, both

and misleading. Moreover, unfortunately, F. sometimes overlooks witches and witchcraft where they are clearly present in the text.<sup>11</sup>

## 2. *Outline of the approach and summary of the chapters*

F. (pp. 6-8) divides his approach into three clearly defined targets, which can be read as a synthesis of F.'s argument throughout the book:

**A.** F. intends to make structural and thematic comparisons between Lucius and other characters regarding the consequences arising from contact with magic. F. makes the good observation that variety in forms of punishment reflects aspects of multiformity in the work, which makes the narrative paradigmatic of the misfortunes resulting from contact with magic. Viewed against this background, Lucius' fortune is much better than the misfortunes suffered by secondary characters (e.g. Socrates, Aristomenes, Thelyphron): all of them come into contact with 'evil magic'; only Lucius comes into contact with Isis at the end of the novel, the goddess of positive magic in the world. F. here already hints at the explanation he offers in the book for this difference in fate between Lucius and secondary characters: whereas other characters are directly involved with witches, Lucius is only indirectly involved with witches, for "the beautiful witch-slave girl Photis" is not a real witch. This leaves the prospect of salvation through Isis open (see e.g. pp. 85; 106-107).

**B.** F. proposes to read the connection between Lucius' affair with Photis and his relation with Isis in terms of opposition instead of continuation. Photis practises catastrophic magic (and, by extension, so do all other witches in book 1-10), whereas Isis practises true, benevolent magic. Lucius' relation with Photis is characterised by sexuality; Lucius' relation with Isis by sexual abstinence. Lucius' curiosity for magic, for which he uses Photis, is foolishness; through Isis Lucius replaces foolishness with true knowledge and wisdom. These oppositions bring out the special status of Book 11 as a 'second *Met.*'. The last point is legitimate and original, but raises new questions, to which I will return in §4 and §5 below.

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repeatedly quoted by F., not mentioned in the Index, which consists to a great extent of names of scholars? All in all, the Index of F.'s book is far from helpful.

<sup>11</sup> For example, on p. 15 n. 42 F. notes "In this tale, the only figures comparable to witches are Psyche's jealous sisters." However, Psyche herself is explicitly compared to a witch (cf. 6,16 *malefica*) owing to her power to achieve impossible tasks.

C. F.'s third target is to situate the narrative of the *Met.* in relation to the genre of the Greek ideal novel.<sup>12</sup> F. employs this relation to argue for a tripartite structure in the *Met.*, which corresponds to the symmetrical plot of the Greek novel (couple falls in love – separation and adventures – couple is happily reunited): the first section of the *Met.* (Book 1-3) narrates embedded tales about magic with implicit warnings, which Lucius refuses to heed; it narrates Lucius' erotic encounter with Photis as a means to get access to magic, and his ensuing metamorphosis into an ass. The second section (Book 4-10) relates Lucius' misadventures. The third section (Book 11) recounts his encounter with Isis, which takes place instead of Lucius' reunion with Photis. On several occasions in F.'s book (e.g. p. 59 f.; 127 f.; 193; 215), F. points out that Lucius' union with Isis bears the characteristics of a (holy) marriage, which corresponds to those ideal novels which happily end with marriage.

These three targets present in a condensed form F.'s approach to the *Met.* Rather than asking provoking questions, F. seems to provide a set of clear-cut answers from the outset, to which he returns again and again to corroborate his intratextual readings.<sup>13</sup> Some of F.'s comparisons are indeed original, although, in my view, they do not always lead to substantial insights. An interesting contrast, for example, is raised on pp. 50-52, where F. parallels the encounter between Lucius and Photis in the kitchen (2,7-10) with Socrates' and Meroe's encounter in the inn (1,7): F. argues that, whereas Photis warns Lucius about the dangers of magic and *eros*, Meroe never warns Socrates about her dangerous powers. In the first case, F. argues, Lucius is the one who takes the initiative (his *curiositas*); in the second case, it is the witch who takes on the 'active role', and Socrates is just a passive victim. Not everyone will agree: Meroe told Socrates extensively about her dangerous powers (1,9-10), and Socrates must obviously have been curious about this *anus admodum scitula* (1,7), although he does not intentionally seek contact with magic like Lucius does, as F. correctly points out. In my view, an essential difference not pointed out by F. is that Socrates heeds Meroe's warnings (he tries to flee, in vain), whereas Lucius does not heed Photis' warnings.

<sup>12</sup> Although there is a separate chapter dedicated to this topic (9: Transforming the genre), F. introduces it here also as a general point adopted in the book.

<sup>13</sup> On pp. 46-48, for example, F. restates his central point that Lucius' fate is less dire than that of other characters involved with magic (Aristomenes, Socrates, Thelyphron, the miller), since Lucius is involved not with a witch (he stays away from Pamphile) but with her apprentice. This point is again stated on p. 67, this time as a 'conclusion'. It is a good point, but its repetition throughout the book creates irritation.

At the end of the Introduction, F. presents a summary of the content of the individual chapters (pp. 8-12), which to some extent consists of paraphrases of the narrative itself. In the following, I will give my own summary of each of the chapters, including the Appendix.

In the first chapter, 'Pseudo-Lucian's *Onos* versus Apuleius' *Met.*' (pp. 13-45), F. uses the well-known divergences between the *Onos* and the *Met.* as a background for introducing his viewpoints on the *Met.* in this book, taking the absence of the inserted tales and the Isis book in the Greek Ass story as a starting point to emphasise Apuleius' addition of religious and philosophical elements, and to demonstrate the thematic and structural significance of the tales in the novel as a whole.

In the second chapter, 'Lucius versus Socrates and Aristomenes' (pp. 46-68), F. begins the intratextual comparisons that form the core of his book, comparing in particular Lucius and Socrates (see also above), viewing the one as "the living substitute" for the other. Socrates coincidentally meets a witch and dies; Lucius obstinately seeks contact with magic and lives. Socrates sleeps with a witch and meets death; Lucius does not sleep with the witch but with her apprentice Photis and therefore in the end meets salvation.

In the third chapter, 'Lucius and Milo's Tales of Diophanes and Asinius' Prophecy: Internal Readers and the Author' (pp. 69-84), more intratextual comparisons follow, which intend to demonstrate that Lucius fails to interpret the implicit warning in the Diophanes tale correctly, and therefore is fully responsible for his metamorphosis. Then, F. takes a comparison between the prophecies of Diophanes and Asinius Marcellus as a starting point for a discussion of the much-debated identification of Lucius with the extratextual author Apuleius.

In chapter four, 'Lucius versus Thelyphron' (pp. 85-107), F. again emphasises that Lucius fails to learn anything from warning tales, and that Lucius' fate is comparatively better than Thelyphron's, because he is only temporarily disfigured. The explanation already sounds familiar: Thelyphron meets a real witch, whereas Lucius becomes involved with Photis, who is not a real witch.

In chapter five, 'The Tale of Cupid and Psyche as a Mythic Reflection of the Novel' (pp. 108-129), F. intends to elaborate on the well-known fact that the longest inset tale of the *Met.* reflects Lucius' larger story by tracing detailed intratextual correspondences, comparing, for example, Psyche's exposure on the rock with Lucius' arrival at Milo's house (p. 111). The chapter concludes with a comparison between the marriage of Cupid and Psyche and Lucius' symbolic union with Isis.

In the sixth chapter, ‘‘War’ in Magic and Lovemaking’ (pp. 130-152), F. argues that the shared war imagery in the wineskins episode and Lucius’ love scenes with Photis points to deeper mirroring connections between those passages. For example, F. observes ‘‘points of contact’’ (p. 134) between Lucius’ sword in the wineskins episode and his erect phallus in the lovemaking-scene, which is compared to a bow. The chapter traces the elegiac origins of this imagery, and concludes with an appendix on ‘War’ in the Tale of Cupid and Psyche.

In the seventh chapter, ‘Lucius’ Metamorphosis into an Ass as a Narrative Device’ (pp. 153-174), F. discusses metaphorical and proverbial associations of asses in antiquity, pointing out the narrative advantages Apuleius gained when choosing this particular metamorphosis. Moreover, it draws again attention to an important contrast F. observes between the *Onos* as an ‘erotic’ (Milesian) narrative and the *Met.* as a ‘paradigmatic’ narrative (cf. the first chapter).

In chapter eight, ‘Rewriting *Metamorphoses* 1-10: the Isis Book’, there is again a strongly intratextual approach, focusing on the parallels and contrasts between Lucius’ encounter with magic through Photis and his final encounter with Isis, where ‘‘the path to true knowledge and wisdom, originally aimed at through contact with magic, is finally revealed’’.

In chapter nine, ‘Transforming the Genre: Apuleius’ *Met.*’, F. offers a reading of the plot against the background of the idealistic Greek novels (see also Introduction, p. 8), arguing that Apuleius changes the idealistic plot into a quasi-ideal one.<sup>14</sup>

Finally, in the Appendix ‘Lucius’ Metamorphic change and Entrance into a New Life as a Metaphorical Representation of the Sailing of Isis’ Ship’, F. suggests a metaphorical association between the Ploiaphesia Festival and Lucius’ adventures and hardships in Books 1-10 in terms of a sea journey in stormy weather, which ends through his initiation into Isis’ cult in Book 11; against this background, the launching of Isis’ ship at the Spring Festival is metaphorically reflected in Lucius’ new phase in life as an Isiac initiate.

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<sup>14</sup> This is a revised version of an article that appeared in: M. Paschalis et al. (eds.), *The Greek and the Roman Novel: Parallel Readings*. Ancient Narrative Supplementum 8, Groningen 2007, 193-203.

### 3. *References to earlier and recent scholarship*

Often I was disappointed by the way in which F. acknowledges or does not acknowledge previous scholarship on important aspects (*status quaestionis*), nor did I always appreciate the manner in which he represents views of individual scholars, including some of those mentioned in his Acknowledgements. Some references to scholars are incomplete, others are inaccurate or distorted.<sup>15</sup> This weakness becomes prominent, since F.'s focus throughout the book seems to be to respond to, argue against, or lavish praise on (the word 'excellent' is very frequent) authors of secondary literature, rather than to give a detailed, critical, and philological interpretation of the text. This lack of anchoring his observations on a scrupulous independent reading of the *Met.* leads generally to a degree of capriciousness in argument and criticism, and particularly to inconsistencies or errors regarding details in the *Met.*, to which I will return in the sections below.

In general terms, I missed an adequate account of the *status quaestionis* and the history of interpretations of the *Met.* Its absence is felt especially in the Introduction, where F. contrasts his argument in favour of a thematic and structural unity to previous interpretations that follow similar lines, but leave, as F. claims, important matters unexplored. F. certainly does mention a number of studies, with which he contrasts his own approach; yet what I miss is an accurate, balanced overview of the history of interpretations of the *Met.* (see above, notes 1 and 2), which would have put F.'s claim to originality into better perspective, and which would have given a more reliable in-

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<sup>15</sup> This footnote merely presents a selection. On p. 81, Julia Gaisser is quoted verbatim without a reference to year of appearance or page numbers (it should be 2008, 20). On p. 22 n. 62, F. refers to *GCA* 2007, 444, where a comparison is made between two passages in which an Apuleian character is unlucky in business on the marketplace of Hypata (1,5: Aristomenes; 1,25: Lucius). F. says that in this introductory note the comparison is not developed, but he omits the relevant reference to the earlier passage in the commentary (*GCA* 2007, 156 f.), where this comparison is discussed in more detail, including the significant foreshadowing of Lucius' bad fortune (see the lemma on 1,5 *sinistro pede*). On p. 57 n. 135, F. quotes Panayotakis 1998 as follows: "For a rationalistic interpretation of the scene and the double dream of Aristomenes and Socrates, see Panayotakis (1998a)." This reference suggests that Panayotakis himself offers a rationalistic interpretation, whereas in fact he discusses the implicit and explicit presence in the text of various conflicting interpretations of one particular scene, a rationalistic (medical) interpretation on the one hand (Socrates and Aristomenes had a nightmare caused by drinking too much wine) and a supernatural one (witches do exist and come to inns during the night to take revenge upon ex-lovers).

roduction to the *Met.* for those who are not familiar with this field of studies, especially students.

For example, on p. 5, F. seems to say that Schmeling and Montiglio (2006) were the first to advance the argument of a thematically unified novel.<sup>16</sup> However, the study that is generally considered by Apuleian scholars as *grundlegend* for this approach is Antonie Wlosok's famous article from 1969, 'Zur Einheit der *Metamorphosen* des Apuleius'. On p. 4, F. mentions only the English translation of Wlosok's article that appeared in Harrison (ed.) 1999, instead of the original.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, the tortuous sentence "Antonie Wlosok attempts to shed light on the philosophical and religious reasons that led the author to write what he views as a propaganda piece for the Isis religion"<sup>18</sup> does no justice to Wlosok's contribution to the interpretation of the *Met.* as a unity, with its important discussion of *curiositas* as a unifying theme, which reveals significant connections between Lucius and other characters, most importantly Psyche. F.'s acknowledgement of Wlosok's importance is unfortunately relegated to footnotes on p. 44 (n. 106), p. 115 (n. 222) and 116 (n. 226).

Moreover, the importance of Wlosok's article and of similar approaches (e.g. the fine unpublished commentary on Book 11 by Christine Harrauer) is to be seen in terms of a critical and necessary reaction, on the one hand, to more gratuitous interpretations of the *Met.* as merely an entertaining and loosely organised collection of stories, as advanced by Perry, and, on the other hand, to exclusively mystical-allegorical readings of the ancient novels including Apuleius's (Merkelbach). That Lucius fails to learn from the cautionary or paradigmatic tales and from other warnings (Byrrhena) throughout the *Met.* until Book 11, a central point frequently repeated by F., has been discussed extensively by other scholars;<sup>19</sup> unfortunately, F. smuggles away

<sup>16</sup> Similarly, on p. 81 n. 171 F. quotes Montiglio 2007 for the topic of Lucius' kinship with Plutarch, instead of referring to Walsh 1988. On p. 63 n. 143, F. quotes Montiglio 2007, 97 for the literary nature of the connection between Thessaly and Plutarch; here, I missed a reference to the relevant discussion in Laird 1993, 160.

<sup>17</sup> By contrast, F. quotes James Tatum's "The Tales in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*" (1969) and Warren Smith's "The narrative voice in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*" (1972) in their original form, although these important studies were also reprinted in Harrison's 1999 volume (157-194 and 195-216).

<sup>18</sup> It is not clear to me to whom "he" refers in the phrase "what he views as a propaganda piece". If it refers to Professor Wlosok, it should be corrected to "she".

<sup>19</sup> On p. 223 n. 443, F. suggests that Byrrhena prefigures Isis; a similar observation was already made by James 1987, 241 f, who discusses Byrrhena as an ambivalent figure with predictive powers and Isiac connotations (e.g. through the associations between Diana and Isis).

James Tatum's fundamental article "The Tales in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*" (1969) into a footnote (p. 14 n. 41). On p. 8, F. claims to have written "the first comprehensive study to focus on the multifarious attitudes characters display towards magic and the divine". On p. 7, for example, he draws a parallel between Lucius and Psyche in their common eagerness to penetrate into mysterious, concealed identities. I missed there, however, references to earlier scholarship that discusses similarities between Lucius and Psyche in general (e.g. James 1987, 128 f.; Tatum 1979, 51 ff.), and in particular their 'forbidden curiosity' (Schlam 1992, 97 f.).<sup>20</sup>

In addition to '*curiositas*' as a unifying theme, there is extensive literature on other themes and motifs in the *Met.*, such as *fortuna/Fortuna*, that would have been worth mentioning (cf. the notion of 'thematic pressure').<sup>21</sup> Moreover, F.'s book would have benefited from more references to the multi-layered significance of *uoluptas/Voluptas*,<sup>22</sup> on which see especially Schlam 1992 (e.g. pp. 98, 119). On p. 215, in a chapter that compares the *Met.* to the Greek idealistic novel, F. correctly notes the 'everlasting joy' of the married couple Cupid and Psyche in comparison with Lucius' mystic joy as an Isiac, but he omits a reference to the birth of the child *Voluptas* (*Met.* 6,24) as an important parallel to Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe*, in which the narrative of the reunited couple equally ends with the birth of a child, whose name is appropriate to the character of the novel.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>20</sup> On p. 117 n. 227, F. refers to Tatum's (1969, 227) comparison of Psyche and Lucius in that they both disregard warnings.

<sup>21</sup> See *GCA* 2000, Introduction, 2.4.1 *Fortuna* with further references. See also *GCA* 2000, 18 f. on 'thematic pressure', with further literature on unifying themes and motifs in the *Met.*

<sup>22</sup> In F.'s book, I found only one reference to this theme on p. 128 in the context of a comparison between Cupid's and Psyche's marriage (they have a child called *Voluptas*) and Lucius' 'celibate' marriage with Isis (the joy felt by Lucius as *mystes* of Isis); cf. also p. 215. This could have been enriched with a reference to *GCA* 2004, 553 on 6,24 *Voluptatem*, observing that the abstract *Voluptas* received some cult at Rome, along with Cupid, and referring to Kenney's interesting link with Lucretius' famous characterization (1,1) of Venus as Epicurean *uoluptas*. These parallels are very significant, considering the fact that *Voluptas* in Apuleius' tale is Venus' granddaughter, and Apuleius echoes Lucretian descriptions of Venus in particular in the Isis Book (11,5 *adsum ... rerum naturae parens*), in which Isis is more than once explicitly compared with Venus. See also *GCA* 2004, 57 on *Met.* 4,30. Cf. below, n. 36.

<sup>23</sup> See *GCA* 2004, 552.

In Chapter 7, where F. claims that “the considerable narrative advantages gained by Apuleius in choosing this specific metamorphosis in the novel have been overlooked” (p. 154),<sup>24</sup> F. himself overlooks Van Thiel 1971-1972, who offers a wealth of material on the proverbial associations of asses. In his discussions of the Pythias episode (e.g. pp. 20-23), F. omits a reference to Derchain-Hubaux 1958. In Chapter 8, F. discusses the important contrast between ‘initiation into magic’ and ‘initiation into mysteries’ (on p. 175 and 190-196), but I missed references to the seminal article by Victor Schmidt (1982), ‘Die Einweihung in die falschen Mysterien’; nor did I find the relevant ‘initiatory’ passages from the *Met.* quoted in the text.<sup>25</sup> Regarding the connections with the Greek novel (Chapter 9), I missed a reference to Bernd Effe’s well-known article (1976) ‘Der misglückte Selbstmord des Aristomenes (Apuleius *Met.* 1,14-17)’, which deals with Apuleius’ techniques of parodying the Greek novel. As regards the archaeological and religious background of the Isis Book, important studies such as Wittmann 1938, Witt 1971, and Egelhaaf-Gaiser 2000 are missing.<sup>26</sup>

In his discussions of symbolic associations of light in the *Met.* (e.g. p. 220), F. omits references to relevant studies, such as the recent article by Costas Panayotakis (2001). On p. 50 n. 123 and 118 n. 231, F. mentions the well-known etymological explanation of the name Photis with the Greek word for light (φῶς), without referring to any scholarly discussions of this significant connection (see *GCA* 2001, 138). I prefer here the discussion in Panayotakis 2001, who, among other things, illuminates the connection between Psyche and Lucius through the light of the lamp, and points to the associations of the lamp with magic in the *Met.* (1,12; 2,11; 3,21) and in the *Apology* (42). Panayotakis also points to Photis’ symbolic name in this context (p. 583 n. 27), and interestingly contrasts the light embodied by Isis with the inferior quality of the lamp of magic and with the light of everlasting knowledge implied by Photis’ name. On p. 220, F. explains the association

<sup>24</sup> I missed in F.’s discussion of “asinine features in Lucius as a human” (pp. 154-160) a reference to his curious ears (cf. 1,20 *meis auribus peruecto*, with *GCA* 2007, 370).

<sup>25</sup> Cf. 3,15 *patere ... oro, prius fores cubiculi diligenter obcludam, ne sermonis elapsi profana petulantia committam grande flagitium; 11,23 quaeras forsitan satis anxie, studiose lector, quid deinde dictum, quid factum. Dicerem si dicere liceret, cognosceres si liceret audire. Sed parem noxam contraherent et aures et lingua, ista impiae loquacitatis, illae temerariae curiositatis.* Cf. also 1,8 *At ille digitum a pollice proximum ori suo admouens et in stuporem attonitus ‘tace, tace’ inquit et circumspiciens tutamenta sermonis: ‘parce’, inquit, ‘in feminam diuinam, nequam tibi lingua intemperante noxam contrahas.’*

<sup>26</sup> F. refers to a commentary on Pausanias in modern Greek (Papachatzis 1976), which will not be available to many readers.

of light with divine epiphany at the outset of Book 11 with the fact that there is a sanctuary at the harbour of Cenchreae. Yet epiphanies do also take place where there is no sanctuary nearby; more importantly, the relation of light with a divine epiphany is a recurrent topic in the *Met.*: cf. 5,22, where Psyche contemplates the radiating splendour of Cupid's divine face.<sup>27</sup>

Sometimes F. just states his view on a subject, on which there is a larger discussion, without acknowledging this discussion. For example, on several pages (e.g. p. 125; 145; 177 f.), F. suggests that Lucius already experiences a kind of inner change before his encounter with Isis, supposing that his conscience did not allow him to copulate with the murderess in the Corinthian amphitheatre, a 'change of mind' which led to his escape to the beach of Cenchreae.<sup>28</sup> In this interpretation, F. concurs with other scholars who read into Lucius' attitude at the end of Book 10 a kind of moral enlightenment, as if Lucius has finally learned from his ordeals, e.g. Gianotti 1986 (not mentioned by F.),<sup>29</sup> and, more recently, Mathis 2008. However, Lucius did not have any problems with his conscience: his *pudor* concerned only the public element of the copulating act; as regards the murderess, he only feared *contagium*, 'contagion'. Therefore, I cannot find any signs in the text which show that the ritual that will lead to Lucius' transformation has been foreshadowed by his refusal to copulate with the condemned murderess (as argued by F. on p. 178). What scholars did trace is the 'thematic pressure' of the notion of *salus* in the *Met.*: in 10,35 Lucius is concerned about his *salus* – in this context, this primarily means his very survival, for he is obviously afraid of being mullied by wild beasts.<sup>30</sup> Yet, in retrospect, readers may see a deeper meaning in this *salus*, because of the *salus* that Isis brings Lucius in Book 11.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>27</sup> See *GCA* 2004, 276 f. on the associations with epiphany and initiation there.

<sup>28</sup> E.g. p. 125 "something has at last changed within him"; p. 177 "cannot in conscience entertain the idea of copulating with a condemned woman in public".

<sup>29</sup> For a convincing refutation see *GCA* 2000, 412 on 10,35 *meis cogitationibus liberum tribuebatur arbitrium*.

<sup>30</sup> See *GCA* 2000, 411. By contrast, F. argues that "his hasty exit from the arena and his arrival at the port may be interpreted as an indication of his desire for *salus*", quoting Mathis 2008, 213 ("he realizes the extent to which his passions have enslaved him and seeks quite literally to regain his humanity through the goddess Isis"). This is, however, not supported by the text: Lucius escapes, and thus saves himself from impending danger, but *salus* is brought to him by Isis, not sought by him as a result of inner moral enlightenment.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. 11,1 *spem salutis*; 11,25 *salutarem porrigas dexteram*.

#### 4. *Book 11 and the Unity of the Met.: Opposition versus Continuation*

Throughout the book, F. presents his view of the *Met.* as an artful whole, in which Book 11 has a special position as a ‘rewriting’ of the preceding 10 Books (a ‘second *Met.*’). In the Introduction and elsewhere, F. seems especially focused on stating his position against the scholars who similarly argue for a thematic and structural unity in the *Met.*, but interpret the Isis Book in terms of continuation rather than opposition with regard to the earlier books (van Mal-Maeder 1997; Schmeling and Montiglio 2006), or present satirical readings of the novel’s last book (Harrison 2000-2001; Murgatroyd 2004).<sup>32</sup> In my view, F. tends both to oversimplify the opposition between those arguing for ‘continuation’ and those for ‘contrast’, and to give an inaccurate account of the arguments of other scholars, such as Maaïke Zimmerman (2006) on the presence of Roman satire in the *Met.* As opposed to what F. wants us to believe (p. 5), by no means has Zimmerman expressed any agreement with Harrison’s thesis that Lucius’ conversion is a satire of Aelius Aristides’ self-presentation as a religious figure in the *Sacred Tales*: she only refers to Harrison’s article to give a particular example of a satirical reading of the *Met.* (which, by the way, is controversial), without stating any explicit or implicit agreement. Moreover, she nowhere suggests that satire “progressively becomes more prominent until it reaches its culmination in the Isis-Book”.

In his references to scholarship that discusses parallels and contrasts between Book 11 and earlier books, F. does not mention important studies,<sup>33</sup> such as the fine article by Klaus Alpers (1980), who compares Photis and Isis in terms of both parallels and contrasts, in particular through their shared connections to the iconography of Aphrodite/Venus. Alpers points out that both Photis and Isis allude to a tradition of visual representations (sculpture) of Aphrodite from Paphos through their Venus-like appearance, emerging

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<sup>32</sup> See especially pp. 4-5; also pp. 7-8: “My line of argument thus runs contrary to recent scholarly views that read Lucius’ transformation, through Isis and his subsequent triple initiation as an Isiac, as a continuation of his metamorphosis from man to ass in Book 3, written in a critical and satirical way. In other words, I examine the narrative from Lucius’ point of view.”

<sup>33</sup> In his discussion of the Isiac priest Zatchlas (p. 99 n. 194), F. does not mention anything about interpretations of Zatchlas as a dubious figure, which may also present the Isiac priests in Book 11 in a less ideal light; see Stramaglia 1990, reprinted in Pecere-Stramaglia-Graverini 2003, 61-111. Neither the article nor the volume is mentioned by F.

from the waves of the sea.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, Alpers (1980, 201 n. 21) refers to another possible visual link between Photis and Isis, viz. the way in which Photis wears her garment tied up under her breasts in *Met.* 2,7.<sup>35</sup> Alpers observes in these significant parallels no continuation but a conscious contrast between a negative (Photis) and a positive Venus (Isis) in the *Met.*, which underlines the special character of Book 11 as a Book of ‘redemption’, and thus Alpers’ position is quite close to F.’s.

F. is not very consistent in his approach of the connections between Photis and Isis (see also below); there seems to be more consistency in his tendency to argue against van Mal-Maeder 1997 (e.g. on pp. 4 f.; 177 f.; 187). For example, on p. 4, F. says that van Mal-Maeder offers “a number of clearly outlined parallels” between Photis and Isis, without specifying any of them. The reader has to wait for more details until p. 177 f. n. 358, where F. plays down the striking parallels between Photis’ and Isis’ hair discussed by van Mal-Maeder (see also Alpers) as a “remote connection”. F. here criticises van Mal-Maeder (1997, 94) for her comparisons of Isis and Photis, calling them “not so appropriate, if one considers that Isis here appears in the place reserved for Pamphile in the earlier books; Photis is Pamphile’s apprentice and not a fully-fledged witch.” Yet, on p. 209, F. again argues that Lucius in book 11 turns to Photis’ “positive counterpart Isis”.

### 5. *Photis, Isis, and Venus: maritime and nautical imagery*

In his endeavour to construct clear-cut contrasts between Book 11 and the preceding 10 books, F. tends to downplay or ignore important aspects of continuation and rich ambivalence in the Apuleian text, especially regarding the links between Photis and Isis and their shared associations with Venus and Aphrodite, and the multiple allusions to maritime and nautical imagery in the *Met.* that intersect with these links and associations.

As has been observed above, for example, central to the interrelatedness between Photis, Isis and Venus in the *Met.* is the many-layered underlying

<sup>34</sup> Apuleius explicitly compares Isis with Aphrodite from Paphos in 11,5 *Paphiam Venerem*. For the visual parallels between Photis and Isis (hair) cf. especially *Met.* 2,9 and 11,3. See Alpers 1980, 201 f. for the connections with visual representations of Isis (“Korkenzieherlockenfrisur”). For Photis compared to Venus rising from the waves cf. *Met.* 2,17 *in speciem Veneris quae marinos fluctus subit* (Isis: 11,3). See below, note 45.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. 2,7 *linea tunica ... amicta et russea fasceola praenitente altiuscule sub ipsas papillas succinctula*.

theme of *uoluptas*.<sup>36</sup> F. tends to oversimplify the contrasts he observes between Isis and the earlier witches (including Photis) by downplaying any element of sensuality and by overstating aspects of celibacy and abstinence. Is Lucius' pleasure while beholding Isis' statue really purely spiritual, as F. maintains on p. 146?<sup>37</sup> This denies the important visual parallelism between Photis and Isis discussed above, particularly the sensuality inherent in the descriptions of their hair.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, it denies the significant associations of Isis with sexuality and procreation that are referred to in the text. More to the point is Schlam 1992, 118: "This does not mean that the goddess frowns on sexual union per se. Among the aspects under which the Ass invokes the Queen of Heaven is caelestis Venus, who in the first beginnings of things united with the diversity of sexes by the creation of Love and, with the propagation of the human race by endless offspring, is now worshipped in the shrine of Paphos surrounded by the sea."

On p. 153, F. claims to have "traced the imagery of peace and stillness in Lucius' contact with Isis" in the preceding chapter on war imagery. Yet F.'s argument would indeed have benefited from a detailed treatment of an imagery of peace and stillness, which I could not trace in his discussion. On p. 130 ff., where the discussion of martial imagery is introduced, and where F. again states his position against those who argue for thematic continuation in Book 11 (Schmeling-Montiglio), I missed references to important elements of continuation between Photis and Isis (a fine discussion of all these significant unifying connections can be found in Christine Harrauer's commentary, pp. x, 36, 102):

- A. the significant association between the *militia amoris* with Photis and the *militia Isidis* in Book 11,<sup>39</sup>
- B. the *seruitium amoris* regarding Photis in connection with the *seruitium Isidis*;<sup>40</sup>
- C. the *naugium Veneris* with Photis (cf. 2,11) as related to the *naugium Isidis* in Book 11.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>36</sup> See above, n. 22.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. *Met.* 11,24 *inexplicabili uoluptate simulacri diuini perfruebar*.

<sup>38</sup> See *GCA* 2001, 21 f., noting that the sensuality in Photis' hair recurs in Isis' hair, and pointing out that the adverb *sensim* occurs in both descriptions.

<sup>39</sup> This element is mentioned much later by F., on p. 146, where he emphasises the contrast, for Isis' *militia* is "explicitly non-violent". But in my view it is far-fetched to say that the image of *sancta militia* (11,15) is an image of "peace and stillness".

<sup>40</sup> Mentioned by F. on p. 146 n. 277.

<sup>41</sup> This connection is briefly mentioned by F. on p. 190 n. 373.

A rewarding addition in support of F.'s argument would have been a discussion of the 'Sea of Love' imagery that can be traced throughout the *Met.*<sup>42</sup> Treatment of this imagery could be used to make various possible connections with themes and images treated by F., such as the *amatoria militia*, since both fields of imagery uncover rich intertextual layers (especially elegiac) on the one hand, and may serve to highlight contrasts and parallels between Photis and Isis on the other hand. Along these lines, the erotic *nauigium Veneris* of Photis and Lucius (2,11) has its pendant in the *nauigium Isidis* in more than one way: Isis is the goddess of navigation, but also the divinity who makes the sea calm after the storm (and thus ready for navigation), as she has powers over both winds and sea.<sup>43</sup> Through the imagery of the 'Sea of Love', we can trace a vivid symbolic contrast between the tossing waves of erotic love and the tranquil, serene sea of Isis, goddess of a higher, spiritual love.

The symbolic meaning of the tossed waves for emotional turmoil caused by erotic passion becomes visible, for example, in Psyche: cf. 5,21 *aestu pelagi simile maerendo fluctuat*; 5,23 *saucia mente fluctuat*.<sup>44</sup> The symbolic associations of the tossed sea in the *Met.* have been discussed by Nethercut 1968, who reads them as an expression of the 'tortured anxiety of mankind' (p. 112); see also the commentary of Harrauer (pp. 35-36; 98-99), who interprets Isis' calming of the sea in terms of a triumph/victory of the higher, heavenly Venus (Isis) over the lower, earthly Venus. Against the background of this marine imagery, which we find on both metaphorical and concrete levels in the Apuleian text, the iconographic connections between Photis and Isis are highly significant as well, since both have visual associations with a Venus emerging from the waves.<sup>45</sup>

The interplay between the metaphorical and the concrete is also visible in a related field of imagery, revolving around the theme of bad, stormy weather – throughout the *Met.*, this imagery is used in connection with the

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<sup>42</sup> For a comprehensive treatment of this imagery see Murgatroyd 1995 (not considered by F.).

<sup>43</sup> Cf. 11,5 *maris salubria flamina*; 11,5 *sedatis hibernis tempestatibus et lenitis maris procellosis fluctibus*; 11,7 *magnoque procellarum sedato fragore ac turbido fluctuum tumore posito mare quietas adluuies temperabat*; 11,25 *tuo nutu spirant flamina*.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. also 10,2 *illam fluctuare tantum uaporibus febrium*, with GCA 2000, 76 ad loc., referring to Svennung 1945 f. for the rich tradition of nautical metaphors in Greek and Latin literature.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. 2,17 *in speciem Veneris quae marinos fluctus subit*, which is paralleled by Isis' appearance in 11,3 (see GCA 2001, 261). See above, note 34.

protagonists' misfortunes, and has strongly nautical connotations. Relevant discussions of such imagery can be found, for instance, in *GCA* 2000, 100 on *Met.* 10,4 *procellam Fortunae*, pointing to the significant connections with Isis' power to calm down the storms – both real storms and the storms in Lucius' life – by comparing 11,15 *maximis actus procellis* and 11,25 *uitae procellis*. Schlam 1992, 65 offers a useful discussion of the language of storm, wind, and violent sea to characterise the toils inflicted by Fortune (on p. 146, Schlam quotes e.g. 6,5 *fortunae naufragio*; 8,31 *fortunae turbine*, and 10,13 *talibus fatorum fluctibus uolutabar*). On p. 180 f., where F. rightly draws attention to the symbolic meaning in 11,7 of the fine weather coming after the winter storms (“the fine conditions represent the end of Lucius' trials”), he refers to some other instances of (concrete) bad weather in the *Met.*, such as the reference to rough weather in the episode of Pamphile's reading of the lamp (2,11), and the gusty wind during Lucius' encounter with the wineskins (2,32).<sup>46</sup>

In combination, such fields of imagery can be rewardingly contextualised with nautical imagery in the *Met.* in general, behind which lies a rich metaphorical tradition of representing human life as a sea journey, a tradition to which F. pays attention in his Appendix (especially on pp. 224-229). Here, F. rightly points out the significant link between the nautical imagery in the *Met.* and the comparison between Lucius' adventures to Odysseus' travelling over sea (p. 225).<sup>47</sup> Not everyone, however, will go as far as F. in stating that the metaphorical connection between Lucius' adventures and a sea journey should be viewed in terms of a direct identification of Lucius with a ship.<sup>48</sup> In my view, the passage from Euripides' *Troades* (98-104) adduced by F. (p. 228 f.) in support of this direct association refers to the well-known image of the 'ship of life', not to a direct, one-to-one association

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<sup>46</sup> I am very skeptical, however, of the intratextual use to which F. puts those passages, as he suggests that the rough weather referred to in the Pamphile episode (2,11) may foreshadow the misfortunes of the false prophet Diophanes (2,13-14), and that the gusty wind in 2,32 may anticipate Lucius' ensuing ridicule during the Risus Festival (3,1-12). See also the next section, 'Comparisons and Contrasts'.

<sup>47</sup> The famous passage in which Lucius compares his adventures with Odysseus' lengthy travelling is *Met.* 9,13.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. p. 227 “implicit in Mithras' representation of Lucius' adventures as a sea journey in rough weather, is the metaphorical association of Lucius with a ship that has reached the place of his salvation.” p. 232 “Implicit in this association is the representation of Lucius as a new ship, which is rendered all the more vivid through the figurative association between human life and ships firmly established in literature.”

between the person and the ship.<sup>49</sup> As in Aeschylus, *Suppl.* 469-471, quoted by F. on p. 229 n. 459, the metaphor can be perfectly understood as being *on* the ship of life.

I liked the analogy proposed by F. on p. 231 between the prospect of lucrative commerce embodied by Isis' ship and Lucius' new phase in life with a lucrative career as a lawyer. Another possible parallel not mentioned by F. is the fact that the ship of Isis is *rudis*, 'new', 'without seafaring experience' (cf. Harrauer: 'noch nicht meererprobt'), which points to an interesting parallel with Lucius, who is an *aduena* as an Isiac initiate, and also in Rome, where the new phase of the journey of his life will begin (cf. the Prologue, where the speaker calls himself a *rudis locutor*).

However, not all intratextual arguments that are adduced by F. in support of a specific association between the ship at the Ploiaphesia festival and Lucius are convincing. On p. 229, F. misreads the text in stating that "the flowers adorning the ship (11,16: *carina ... florebat*) may evoke the wreath of roses which the priests give (11,13 *coronam*)". There is no mention of flowers at all, as 'the entire hull bloomed with highly polished, pale citron-wood' (*omnis ... prorsus carina citro limpido perpolita florebat*). On p. 230, the comparison between the high mast on the ship and Lucius' upright position after having been changed back into a human fails to convince – there are no verbal or thematic parallels between the passages that invite any specific comparison (F. would have had a stronger case if, e.g., the mast was raised up from a horizontal into a vertical position). The phrase *erecta officia* (11,13) of Lucius' hands contains a fine Apuleian ambivalence, for it refers both to the human hands, which Lucius is now able to stretch out, and to the erect nature of human posture in general – in my view, it does not refer to "rising above evil magic".

### 6. Comparisons and contrasts

F. offers many intratextual comparisons, some of which are original, but not all convincing. I liked the comparison between Thelyphron the guard and the homonymous dead husband as the widow's 'rejected mates' (p. 89 f.; see also p. 96; 100 n. 95; 101 n. 198) and as 'competitors in being dead' (p. 91). The comparison is interesting, because there are substantial similarities that obviously add to the wit of the narrative. It is a pity that F. did not develop

<sup>49</sup> Biehl's commentary ad loc. refers to Lesky 1947 for the „maritimen Bildvorstellung mit Bezug auf das Menschenleben insgesamt“.

these parallelisms any further for reasons of space, as he acknowledges on p. 87. I also liked the contrast between Lucius' transformation into the hypersexual, hypermasculine ass and Thelyphron's disfigurement into an earless and nose-less and a-masculine state, with allusions to castration and effeminacy (underlined by his speaking name).

However, I found many comparisons and contrasts unfounded or far-fetched,<sup>50</sup> such as the comparison between Apollo's oracle (4,33) and De-meas' letter (1,21), or between the wind Zephyr (4,35) and the old tavern keeper (1,21), founded on the point that they both bring the protagonist to their destination (p. 111). A contrast between Cupid's palace and Milo's house that I personally would prefer to see emphasised is the fact that Cupid's palace has no bolts and bars (the *narratrix* is justifiably astonished about this),<sup>51</sup> whereas Milo's house is carefully bolted (but is attacked by robbers all the same). Another link unmentioned by F. is that both Milo's house (1,21) and Cupid's palace are described by an *anus*, an old woman – both are subject of an '*anilis fabula*'.

In other cases, F.'s mechanic approach of imposing fixed sets of parallels and contrasts on the text leads to loss of focus on the text itself, resulting in strained comparisons or slips. On p. 28, for example, F. compares Socrates and Thelyphron, suggesting that they are both travelling to Thessaly to watch the Olympic Games. Yet only Thelyphron is explicitly said to be travelling to see the Olympic Games; in the case of Socrates, there is merely a reference to *spectacula*.<sup>52</sup> Both end up in Larissa as a result of their deviation from their original goal (Socrates wished to travel to Macedonia for business purposes). What is more, the story of both Socrates and Thelyphron is situated in Larissa, not in Hypata (1,7; 2,21); thus, F.'s concluding observation (p. 29) of this paragraph that the "treatment of Thelyphron and Lucius by the Hypatans make the town appear as a savage community with disregard for strangers" is only correct regarding Thelyphron's treatment as narrator by the guests at Byrrhena's dinner party.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> F. often uses phrases like "passage x is set in remarkable contrast to passage y", whereas in my view it is F. himself who constructs the oppositions and contrasts.

<sup>51</sup> See Zimmerman/van Mal-Maeder 1998, 85 f., who point out that Cupid's palace must appear as "a kind of 'Land of Cockagne'" to the old woman telling the tale, as she is the housekeeper of a band of robbers.

<sup>52</sup> A related slip occurs on p. 88 n. 181, where Thelyphron is said to recall Aristomenes (?), "whose worst misfortune takes place on the way to watch a gladiatorial spectacle near Larissa".

<sup>53</sup> In a similar way, F. suggests on p. 87 that both Lucius and Thelyphron meet an old man on the forum of Larissa, whereas Lucius meets Byrrhena and the old bystander (*Met.* 2,2)

F. sometimes constructs oppositions and contrasts where there are none in the text. On pp. 179-180, F. opposes 2,32-3,1 (falling asleep with feelings of pride – waking up in fear) to 10,35-11,1 (falling asleep tired and afraid – waking up confident and full of hope). However, Lucius in 11,1 does not wake up confident, but in sudden fright: *experrectus pauore subito*. There is no mention of hope or confidence, though Lucius arises ‘happily and eagerly’ (*laetus et alacer*). Yet his face is covered with tears (*lacrimoso uultu*). Also, after Isis’ epiphany, Lucius again wakes up in fear, covered with sweat, and experiencing conflicting emotions (11,7, a passage not mentioned by F.): *pauore et gaudio ac dein sudore nimio permixtus*.<sup>54</sup> In a similar way, Lucius is not merely ‘full of joy’ at his initiations (p. 211), as opposed to his former sorrows (cf. 11,19 *pristinis aerumnis et praesentibus gaudiis*). In 11,29, Lucius becomes very worried when he is compelled to undergo yet another initiation (*nec leui cura sollicitus, sed oppido suspensus animi mecum ipse cogitationes exercitius agebam*), and even doubts the reliability of the priests (*et hercules iam de fide quoque eorum opinari coeptam sequius*).<sup>55</sup>

On the other hand, I sometimes missed comparisons where they would have fitted the context of F.’s discussions, such as the parallel between Lucius’ receiving the piece of linen cloth to cover himself (11,14) and Aristomenes’ giving Socrates one of his garments to cover him (1,7); or the parallel between Lucius, Thelyphron, and Aristomenes in the element of the ‘escape’ or ‘flight’ from the unbearable situation of their narrative.<sup>56</sup>

Sometimes F. focuses too much on contrasts without noticing interesting parallels; on pp. 179-181, for example, the descriptions of Hypata (2,1) and of Cenchreae (11,7) are merely compared in terms of contrast: Hypata has an aura of deception and magic, underlining the opposition between appearance and being; the landscape of Cenchreae, by contrast, is radiating genuine joy at the end of the winter. However, an interesting parallel between the two descriptions can be observed in the theme of metamorphosis, which is not

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in Hypata. Moreover, since this old bystander does not play any role that is comparable with the old man in the Thelyphron tale – which F. acknowledges – what is the point of this comparison?

<sup>54</sup> See also p. 59, where F. prefers to emphasise the difference between Aristomenes’ fear experienced at the mysteries at the inn and Lucius’ wonder and joy as Isis’ initiate. However, there is a significant verbal reminiscence between Aristomenes’ anxiety in 1,13 (*sudore frigido ... perfluo*) and Lucius’ anxiety in 11,7 (quoted above).

<sup>55</sup> Similarly, 11,15 *sume iam uultum laetiozem* suggests that Lucius is not looking very happy.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. 1,19 *aufugi*; 2,30 *euado*; 10,35 *peruado*; see Hofmann 1993, 136 f.

only visualised in Hypata, where the trees surrounding the city walls appear to Lucius as humans with leaves (human transformed into non-human), but also in Cenchreae, where the trees are more implicitly represented in a ‘human’ way as regards their movements and sounds (non-human transformed into human).<sup>57</sup> Interestingly, a metamorphosis in terms of ‘non-human transformed into human’ is implicitly present in the whole of the description of Cenchreae, as the joy of all animals, plants and houses is described by Lucius in terms of personification (11,7 *gestire mihi cuncta uidebantur*). Hence, this parallelism between Cenchreae and Hypata would perfectly fit F.’s approach of Book 11 as a ‘second *Met.*’.

Sometimes the *comparanda* on which F. bases his comparison of a set of passages are just too vague to lead to any substantial insights.<sup>58</sup> On p. 177, for example, the comparison between Lucius’ arrival at the harbour of Cenchreae (characterised by moonlight) and his arrival at Milo’s home in 2,32 (characterised by darkness) is based on a quite arbitrary choice, since there are several arrivals at Milo’s home, such as in 1,22 (the first real arrival) and in 3,10 (Milo takes Lucius home after the Risus Festival). Also, in 3,12 there is a return to Milo’s house from the baths. They are all arrivals at the place where Lucius will be initiated into magic, but none of them has any specific relation to this initiation that is made explicit in the text. The most direct connection between the arrival in 2,32 and magic is the wineskin-incident, which later turns out to be an act of Pamphile’s magic. Yet, there are no verbal reminiscences that justify a specific comparison between 2,32 and 11,1, and therefore I cannot see any reason why “the night-time encounter with Isis evokes the earlier wineskin episode” (p. 179).

The link mentioned on p. 100 (both Photis and the dead husband in the Thelyphron tale mention an extramarital affair) is not more than a pseudo-link, since adultery tales are an essential substratum of the *Met.* For the same reason, I seriously doubt whether the shared war *imagery* between the wineskin episode and the lovemaking scene with Lucius and Photis points to any *structural or thematic connection* between those episodes (Chapter 6). Connections between magic and sex have been elucidated extensively by other scholars (cf. pp. 130 f.); war imagery, as F. also shows, occurs in so many

<sup>57</sup> Cf. 11,7 *arbores ... clementi motu brachiorum dulces strepitus obsibilabant*. For the personification, Gwyn Griffiths ad loc. compares Petron. 120 *uirgulta loquuntur*.

<sup>58</sup> The titles of subsections sometimes serve to indicate the vagueness of the points of comparison, e.g. in Chapter 4: ‘Contact with Magic’; ‘Consequences’; ‘Revelation of Events’; ‘Playing with Expectations’; ‘Misfortunes – Restoration / Prolongation of Misfortunes’.

different contexts, that in my view it hardly serves to reinforce this particular and obvious connection.

On p. 193, F. observes a ‘distant equivalent’ between the magical anointment in 3,23 and the bathing in seawater in the context of the initiation into Isis’ rites. However, neither in 11,22 nor in 11,23 bathing in seawater is mentioned. The purificatory sprinkling (11,23 *purissime circumrorans abluit*) and the baths (*balneas*) do not imply bathing in seawater, which in fact occurs at the outset of Book 11 (11,1 *purificandi studio marino lauacro trado, septiesque summerso fluctibus capite*; cf. also 11,7 *marino rore respersus*).

On p. 200, F. observes a contrast between Lucius’ affluence as Isis’ initiate and his poverty as Meroe’s victim at Hypata (1,7). However, Lucius never was Meroe’s victim; this was Socrates in the first embedded tale, narrated by Aristomenes. Moreover, it is too simple to say that “financial affluence ... is directly associated to the cult of Isis, whereas poverty is linked to Hypata and practises of magic”. First, Lucius is emphatically reduced to poverty in Book 11 through the expensive initiations; initiation is even explicitly associated with entrusting oneself to poverty (cf. 11,27 *admodum pauperem*; 11,28 *sumptuum tenuitate; duritia paupertatis; pauperiei ... committere*). Second, Hypata, the town of magic, is a prosperous town with very wealthy citizens, such as Pamphile’s husband Milo and Lucius’ aunt Byrrhena, and, moreover, a town of flourishing trade (e.g. cheese and fish).

I was also disappointed by the numerous references to the opposition between Lucius’ foolishness in Book 1-10 in contrast with the ‘true knowledge’ he gains through Isis in Book 11 (p. 11; 42; 173 f. with n. 348; 187 with n. 366; 199; 211). For his view that Lucius acquires true knowledge and wisdom through initiation into the rites of Isis, F. cites no specific passages from the text that corroborate this observation; instead, he repeatedly refers to an abstract of a paper held at ICAN 2008 in Lisbon by Lauren Donovan, a reference which not all readers of this book will find very helpful.

As I have observed above, F.’s comparative approach of the text is rather focused on providing clear-cut answers than posing questions; moreover, his answers tend to become dogmas, sometimes producing forced parallels and contrasts. We find an example of this on p. 21 f., where F. tries to enforce the well-known observation that Lucius does not heed implicit (inserted tales) and explicit (Byrrhena in 2,5-6) warnings as a principle upon the figure of Pythias, whom he thus transforms into a positive, Byrrhena-like figure, who tries to protect Lucius from deception. Putting aside previous studies that view Pythias as an uncanny, irrational or satirical figure, F. presents

Lucius' former schoolmate as an unequivocally positive figure, since instead of getting involved with magic, he succeeded in making a career as an aedile in Hypata (!). Then, F. adds the very original but in my view ludicrous suggestion that again Lucius does not realise that somebody – in this case his 'old friend' – tries to protect him from danger, because Pythias' intervention "may have saved him from food poisoning" (p. 22). Lucius' obviously justified complaint that he has lost both his money and his supper (1,25) thus becomes in F.'s eyes a "sign of naivety and inability to read between the lines". However, as a matter of fact, Pythias views the fish as rotten (it is likely that Pythias as a market-inspector wishes to underscore the poor quality of the fish, because they are too expensive), whereas Lucius perceives them as tasty (but expensive). But if Pythias is indeed a Byrrhena-like figure who uncovers unseen truths, as F. argues (see also p. 27), why not connect his 'significant name' with the famous Pythian oracle?<sup>59</sup>

### 7. Conclusion

Although I found some valuable observations and references in this book, I have to put question marks at the repeated claims made by F. regarding the originality and depth of his contributions. The author appears to overstate his case throughout his book and in more than one way. I did not find in this book the "in-depth" and "systematic" look claimed by F. (e.g. p. 5-6) at the way in which the various Apuleian characters react to all forms of magic, nor did I find "important and yet unnoticed aspects of the rich and complex literary texture of Apuleius' narrative" (p. 8).<sup>60</sup> What I did find, besides long and frequent paraphrases of the narrative, was a number of intratextual observations about differences and contrasts between selected passages from the *Met.* These interpretations are almost dogmatically repeated throughout the book and form the core of F.'s argument. In my view, *Some Intratextual Readings of Apuleius' Metamorphoses* would have been a more appropriate

<sup>59</sup> For an effort to link Pythias' name to the Delphic priestess see Krabbe 2003, 14-15.

<sup>60</sup> On p. 109, at the outset of Chapter 5, F. states: "In my analysis of the tale I follow the methodology employed by Maaik Zimmerman et al. in their discussion of intertextual layers, which I put to use in investigating the structural and thematic relationships, similarities and contrasts between the inner tale and its contextual frame." There seems to be confusion here between two different things, the rich intertextual layers in the tale (epic, lyric, tragedy, elegy, comedy) on the one hand and the connecting elements between inner tale and frame (structural and thematic relationships) on the other. How can one approach be 'put to use' for investigating the other?

and honest title for this book, since it is not really about witches or magic, as F. himself admits (see above, section 1), or even about Isis. Moreover, I have objections to many of the intratextual comparisons offered in this book; I included in this review merely a selection of my criticism.

In connection with the criticism of the book's title, I also found the titles of the individual chapters potentially misleading; they give the wrong impression that this is a new general monograph on Apuleius' *Met.* on the scale of Schlam's *On Making an Ass of Himself* (cf. the first 'challenge' mentioned at the outset of this review), which offers an adequate introduction to the relevant topics concerning the origin, composition, and interpretation of the *Met.*; e.g. Chapter 1: "The *Onos* versus Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*"; or Chapter 7: "Lucius' Metamorphosis into an Ass as a Narrative Device". In Chapter 1, for example, it turns out that F.'s goal is not to introduce readers in the complex and important topic of the relation between the *Met.* and the Greek *Vorlage* (F. even doubts whether the Greek work was earlier, cf. p. 8 "possibly predating his own"), but to exploit the well-known divergences between the Greek and the Latin ass story as a starting point for F.'s discussion of the paradigmatic nature of the inset tales and the Isis Book.

Inherent to this book is a certain struggle to come to grips with what it is exactly about, and readers are likely to experience the same struggle (this reviewer certainly did). There is a choice and a focus behind it, to an extent, but I found the rhetoric that presents this choice altogether misleading, suggesting that this book meets more challenges than it actually does. In spite of some good remarks and observations which point to promising lines of research (for example in the Appendix), but which also could have been published in a few articles, this book disappoints, among other things,<sup>61</sup> in its lack of references to recent and less recent scholarship, and especially in its lack of focus on the Apuleian text itself. Through its shortcomings, F.'s book draws the attention to important desiderata in Apuleian studies that remain to be fulfilled, such as an updated and complete review of scholarship on the *Met.*, and a new, detailed study of the Isis Book that does justice to the rich and ambivalent nature of the Apuleian narrative.

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<sup>61</sup> In this review, I did not go into aspects of organisation (e.g. overlong footnotes and quotations of passages).

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