CHAPTER 1

Apuleius: A Celebrity and His Image

> Don't you know that there is nothing a man would rather look at than his own form?
>
> —*Apuleius,* Apology

Apuleius is best known today for his racy novel, the *Golden Ass (Asinus Aureus)*, or *Metamorphoses* (both titles were current in antiquity); but he also gained celebrity and fortune in his own time as a Platonic philosopher and skillful rhetorician. He claimed to cultivate both philosophy and the nine Muses (*Fl.* 20.6), and the diversity of his writings is so great that one can almost believe him.[1]

Most of what we know about his life comes from Apuleius himself, particularly from comments in the *Florida* (excerpts from his epideictic orations) and the *Apology*, or *De Magia* (On Magic), in which he defends himself against a charge of practicing magic.[2] He was born in North Africa, probably in Madauros (modern Mdaourouch in Algeria), in the mid-120s AD. After his early education in Carthage, he spent several years studying in Athens, drinking deeply, as he says, of the cups of the Muses: "the cup of poetry, made with artifice, the clear cup of geometry, the sweet cup of music, the dry one of dialectic, and the one of which a person can never have enough—the nectarlike cup of all philosophy."[3] In this period he probably traveled elsewhere in the Greek east, almost surely to Samos and perhaps to Phrygia as well.[4] He then moved on to

[1] In addition to the *Golden Ass*, Apuleius' extant works include erotic poetry, forensic and epideictic oratory, and philosophical orations and treatises. For detailed accounts of his oeuvre, including fragmentary and lost works, see Hijmans, "Apuleius, Philosophus Platonicus," 398, 408–12; Harrison, *Apuleius,* 10–38. For the title of the novel, see n. 130 below. For Apuleius as a Platonist, see Gersh, *Middle Platonism and Neoplatonism* 1: 215–328.

[2] For Apuleius' biography, see especially Harrison, *Apuleius*, 1–10. I cite the *Apology* and *Florida* from the text of Vallette: *Apulée: Apologie, Florides*. For the *Apology,* see also Hunink, *Apuleius: Pro se de magia*. For the *Florida,* see La Rocca, *Il filosofo e la città*; Lee, *Apuleius' Florida*. For translations, see Harrison, ed., *Apuleius' Rhetorical Works*.

[3] "[Ego et alias creterras Athenis bibi:] poeticae commentam, geometriae limpidam, musicae dulcem, dialecticae austerulam, iam vero universae philosophiae inexplebilem scilicet <et> nectaream." *Fl.* 20.4.

[4] He reports having seen a statue of Bathyllus on Samos (*Fl.* 15.6) and a mountain in Phrygia that emitted poisonous gases (*Mun.* 327). For the latter, see Hijmans, "Apuleius,

Rome.[5] We find him back in North Africa in the mid-150s, and well into the best-known and most notorious event in his life: the marriage and subsequent charge of magic documented in the *Apology*.

According to the *Apology,* around 155 or 156 Apuleius came to the town of Oea (modern Tripoli) and married a wealthy widow named Pudentilla, the mother of Sicinius Pontianus, an old friend from his student days in Athens. He did so at his friend's request, to save her estate from the relatives of her late husband. The marriage did not sit well with Pudentilla's former in-laws, and in late 158 or early 159 Apuleius was brought to trial on a charge of magic. Specifically, it seems, he was accused of using magic to induce Pudentilla to fall in love with him. The charge was serious, since sorcery was potentially a capital offense.[6] Apuleius spoke in his own defense and with evident success, for a few years later he was giving orations in Carthage, where—by his own account, at least—he was a prominent and popular figure. We hear nothing of him after the late 160s.[7]

Apuleius was a quintessential product of his time, for both were bicultural, prosperous, nostalgic for the classical past, and enamored of display. The predominant cultural phenomenon of the age was the movement called the Second Sophistic, whose distinguishing feature was what we might describe as oratory for entertainment.[8] Its practitioners,

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Philosophus Platonicus," 429–30. On the basis of two inscriptions from the late second or early third century discovered at Petri, near Corinth, Kritzas has suggested that he might also have visited Corinth ("Δύο επιγράμματα από το Πετρί Νεμέας"; and see the discussion by Jennifer Tobin in *Bryn Mawr Classical Review* 97.5.10). The inscriptions celebrate a woman named Salvia, a Thessalian married to a Corinthian, and Kritzas speculates that Apuleius perhaps became acquainted with Salvia and her family on a visit to Corinth and used her name and history in describing the background of Lucius in the *Golden Ass*: Lucius was from Corinth (*Met*. 1.22.4; 2.12.3), and his mother, Salvia, was from Thessaly (*Met*. 2.2). But Salvia was not an unusual name, and the parallel between the historical and fictional Thessalian women may well be only a coincidence.

[5] *Fl*. 17.4. In an interesting and speculative discussion, Coarelli ("Apuleio a Ostia?") argues that Apuleius spent several years (ca. 145–52) in Rome and was the proprietor of the "House of Apuleius" in Ostia. The house is so called from the name "L. Apulei Marcelli" found on two water pipes near the house (p. 27 n. 2). See also Beck, "Apuleius the Novelist." Harrison calls the identification "interesting but ultimately unconvincing" (*Apuleius*, 1).

[6] See Bradley, "Law, Magic, and Culture," 207.

[7] But Harrison would date the *Metamorphoses* in the 170s (*Apuleius*, 250–51). Arguments have also been made for dating *De Mundo* and *De Platone* after 177; for discussion and earlier bibliography, see Lee, *Apuleius' Florida*, 9–11.

[8] See Sandy, *The Greek World of Apuleius,* and Anderson, *The Second Sophistic,* both with further bibliography. For "the cult of learning" and the craze for classical culture, see also Zanker, *The Mask of Socrates,* esp. 198–266.

the sophists, were—or aspired to be—celebrities. The more successful ones were highly paid, achieved fame well beyond their native cities, and attracted large numbers of followers. Sometimes they attained public office or positions of high status and influence.[9] Their activities included displaying and purveying classical (but primarily Greek) culture, self-promotion, and playing to the local pride of the cities and regions they spoke in. Above all, however, they professed an attachment to philosophy—or rather to their own brand of philosophy, which Apuleius defines as "a royal science devised to promote the art of speaking as much as the art of living."[10]

The sophistic movement grew out of the ancient educational system, which was largely based on rhetorical training. Many of the sophists were teachers of the rhetorical art, and many in their audiences had been brought up in it. Listeners who had spent their school days practicing rhetorical exercises enjoyed and savored virtuoso oratorical performances. They could recognize a speaker's techniques and tricks and many of his themes, and they could criticize the fine points of his strategy and delivery. But the sophists' orations were also entertaining and accessible enough to appeal to those with little education, who would have been in the vast majority in every audience.[11] The extent and success of the movement were fostered by the relative ease of travel throughout the Greco-Roman world and by the bilingualism—or at least biculturism—of its educated inhabitants. Sophists practiced their ostentatious art all over the empire; and although the cultural basis of the movement was Greek, it also had room for Hellenized Romans like Apuleius.[12]

The chief subject of every sophist was himself—or rather his ostensible self, the self that he wished his public to see. (I say "he" advisedly, for the sophists were all male.) The sophist's self-presentation extended to every aspect of his appearance: both on- and offstage he suited his clothes, coiffure, gestures, mannerisms, voice, and possessions to his role.[13]

[9] But rhetoric seems to have provided prominence and reputation rather than social mobility, since most sophists came from elite families; see Bowie, "The Importance of Sophists."

[10] "Disciplinam regalem tam ad bene dicendum quam ad bene vivendum repertam." *Fl.* 7.10.

[11] For the mixed nature of Apuleius' audience, see Bradley, "Apuleius and Carthage." Bradley points out that the theater in Carthage Apuleius describes in *Fl.* 18.3–5 had a capacity of about eleven thousand, of whom only a small portion would have been highly educated (19). See also Sandy, *The Greek World of Apuleius*, 83.

[12] For Apuleius as a sophist, see Sandy, *The Greek World of Apuleius*. For Apuleius as a Roman or Latin sophist, see Harrison, *Apuleius*.

[13] For the self-presentation of both philosophers and sophists, see Hahn, *Der Philosoph und die Gesellschaft,* 33–53. See also Gleason, *Making Men*; Zanker, *The Mask of Socrates*, 217–47.

He created the role, however, with words, in the first-person utterance of his orations.

This verbal image of the sophist is best seen as a special case of what happens when any writer uses the first person. By using the word *I* the author creates a persona, a mask or character whose identity, emotions, and experiences are presented as autobiographical, whether they are real or imaginary. Whatever its degree of reality, the first person invites us to elide the persona with the writer, to identify the mask with the man or woman behind it, or—to put it another way—to conflate the puppet with the person pulling the strings. The effect is necessarily increased when authors read or perform their own works before an audience, as they did so often in antiquity. When orators spoke in law courts or declaimed in theaters or poets gave readings to audiences large or small, they brought to life the characters of their own creation, making the "I," or "ego," of their scripts into credible likenesses of themselves.

Ancient writers fully exploited the persona—sometimes hiding behind it completely, sometimes lifting it for a moment to create a play between their real and fictional selves. Orators and politicians tended to stay in character, holding up to the world the self they had so carefully fashioned.[14] Poets were more willing both to acknowledge the existence of the mask and to advertise its distance from reality, as Catullus does in the notorious lines from poem 16.[15]

> Nam castum esse decet pium poetam
> ipsum, versiculos nihil necesse est,
> . . .
> vos, quod milia multa basiorum
> legistis, male me marem putastis?
> (Cat. 16.5–6, 12–13)

> It's fitting for the upright poet himself to be free of filth,
> but there's no need for his verses to be so.
> . . .
> Because you read about many thousands of kisses,
> Did you think I wasn't much of a man?

[14] For self-fashioning as a field of inquiry, see Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*. For Roman self-fashioning, see the following, all with earlier bibliography: Leach, "The Politics of Self-Presentation"; Gleason, *Making Men*; Dugan, "How to Make (and Break) a Cicero."

[15] Apuleius himself quotes Cat. 16.5–6 as a defense of his own erotic verses (*Apol.* 11.1–2). Catullus' words are less transparent than they appear. He does not say "My verses may be naughty, but I am chaste." Rather, by abandoning the first person and using the slippery *decet* ("it's fitting") instead of an indicative, he presents only a general statement of propriety that leaves his own character unrevealed. See Gaisser, *Catullus and His Renaissance Readers*, 210–11.

The sophists, like the poets, liked to play with the mask. They did so ostentatiously, in full view of their audience, for their personae were—quite literally—their stock in trade, the material of their celebrity. Apuleius, sophist par excellence, teases his public with two principal personae: the "I" of his orations and philosophical works and the "I" of his novel the *Golden Ass*. Like Catullus and other poets, he sometimes takes off his mask (or pretends to), hinting that the persona he has displayed might not be his "real" self; but he can also replace one mask with another, confusing and blurring the identities he has placed before us.

This chapter is concerned with Apuleius and his fortunes in antiquity, especially with the creation and development of his "image"—a term that I will be using in all of its possible senses, including the one we have in mind when we talk about the carefully constructed image of a public figure or a commercial product. We will consider how Apuleius professes to see himself, the image or persona he presents to his public, and the images (both literary and artistic) made of him by others.

Creating an Image

Like his fellow sophists, Apuleius presented his image chiefly through his orations. We see his constructed self most extensively in the *Apology* and *Florida*, but it also peeks out tantalizingly from time to time in the *Golden Ass*.

The *Apology* presents itself as the speech that Apuleius actually delivered before the court, but it seems likely that he revised and perhaps even rewrote it after the fact. This point is controversial, but the speech in its present form would be a risky defense: it shows too much detailed knowledge of magic and magical terminology, is too arrogant, and treats the charges too lightly.[16] It has been argued that the presiding judge, Claudius Maximus, was highly educated and philosophically minded, and thus could be relied on to be sympathetic to a fellow intellectual facing a trumped-up charge.[17] Nonetheless, there was still a chance that Apuleius' cleverness could backfire, and that even a sympathetic judge could find the levity he displays in the *Apology* offensive and impertinent enough to convict him. Matters would have been quite different,

[16] The point is well made by Gaide, "Apulée de Madaure." For the arguments on both sides with earlier bibliography, see Hijmans, "Apuleius Orator," 1715–19; Hunink, ed., *Apuleius of Madauros*, *Pro se de magia* 1:25–7.

[17] Bradley ("Law, Magic, and Culture," 215–19) emphasizes his affinities with Apuleius. But the serious Maximus described by Bradley, with his moral virtues and "qualities of consistency and balanced character" (216), seems to have little in common with the persona of Apuleius in the *Apology*.

however, after the trial and its successful conclusion. Then the triumphant Apuleius would have been free to indulge himself, rewriting his speech as a brilliant and wickedly funny pseudodefense.[18] If this assessment is correct, the persona that Apuleius presents in the *Apology* is one step removed from the one he revealed at his trial—a fiction of a fiction. At the same time, however, it is consistent with the persona he presents in the various excerpts from epideictic orations preserved in the *Florida*: self-absorbed, confident, intellectual, and constantly on display.

In both the *Florida* and the *Apology* we see Apuleius as a man who likes to talk about himself but does not do so carelessly or merely to impart autobiographical detail. Almost every word is designed to present him to his hearers (or perhaps readers, in the case of the *Apology*) in a particular, and highly flattering, light. Like a spotlight in a modern theater, the beam he directs on himself changes its color and intensity and direction, but it always shows the persona of Apuleius center stage—and from his best side. That does not mean, however, that it always shows him clearly, for Apuleius manipulates light and shadow so adroitly that sometimes we cannot be sure of what we have seen, or even of what we were supposed to see. These doubtful or ambiguous aspects of Apuleius' identity are important, for they are precisely the ones that posterity would find most intriguing. We shall consider them presently, but first let us look at the parts of his image that are clearly revealed.

The figure onstage is above all a philosopher, specifically "Apuleius the Platonic philosopher of Madauros," as he was known both in antiquity and to posterity.[19] But it is important to note that Apuleius uses the word *philosopher* with a special meaning, one he has given it himself.

[18] Cf. Gaide, "Apulée de Madaure," 231: "Apulée aura considérablement revu et augmenté son discours, pour se venger à fond de toutes les médisances dont il avait été l'objet, pour transformer insolemment son apologie en un *De Magia* qui est souvent un 'Pro Magia', et pour se faire applaudir."

[19] The second- or third-century base of a lost statue, almost certainly of Apuleius, is inscribed "to the Platonic philosopher"; see p. 13. The author of *Peri Hermeneias* treats the phrase as a synonym for Apuleius: "Licet autem eadem vi manente utramvis partem in plura verba protendere, ut si pro Apuleio dicas philosophum Platonicum Madaurensem, item pro disserendo dicas eum uti oratione" (*Peri Hermeneias* 267). (The work, although ascribed to Apuleius very early in the tradition, should probably not be attributed to him; for the arguments, see Hijmans, "Apuleius, Philosophus Platonicus," 408–11; Klibansky and Regen, *Die Handschriften,* 18–23.) Augustine calls him "Apuleius Afer Platonicus nobilis" (*Civ.* 8.12), "Apuleius Platonicus Madaurensis" (*Civ.* 8.14), and "philosophus Platonicus" (*Civ.* 8.19); see Hagendahl, *Augustine and the Latin Classics* 1:18–19.

The title also appears in the oldest manuscripts of both branches of the manuscript tradition. In the eleventh-century manuscript Florence, Biblioteca Laurenziana 68.2 (called F), the phrase "Apulei Platonici Madaurensis" appears in the explicit of the *Apology* (fols. 125v–126r). (The folio is illustrated in Pecere, "Esemplari con *subscriptiones* e tradizione dei testi latini," plates 3a–b.) In the early ninth-century manuscript Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale Albert Ier 10054–10056, "Apulei Platonici Madaurensis" appears in the incipit of

Like an artist making a self-portrait by looking into a mirror, he has redrawn the image of the philosopher to match his own features and activities. In this new usage it is not so much that Apuleius is described by the word *philosopher* as that the word *philosopher* is defined as "Apuleius."

This new philosopher is a celebrity. Crowds flock to his performances—in greater numbers than have ever assembled to hear a philosopher, as we learn in *Florida* 9. "Indeed, even my talent, however small," he says in *Florida* 17, "has long been so well known to the public for what it is that it requires no new commendation."[20] In *Florida* 9 he asserts that his extraordinary fame has created almost impossibly high expectations in his audience: "Who among you would forgive me a single solecism? Who would grant me one syllable barbarously pronounced? . . . And yet you pardon these things in others easily and very justly."[21] Naturally his works are equally famous. In the *Apology* he reminds the court of his celebrated speech praising the god Aesculapius and calls on his hearers to recite its opening lines. "Do you hear all the people supplying them?" he asks the judge. Someone in the audience even has a copy of the book, which Apuleius asks to have read out in evidence.[22]

But fame is not all he has to offer. Our philosopher claims other merits, which appear to their best advantage in comparison with the qualities of others—whether beasts, men, other philosophers, or even gods. Birdsong, for example, as he tells his audience in *Florida* 13, is limited in both time and repertoire, for each species sings a particular strain and only at a single time of day. "Philosophy did not bestow utterance like that on me. . . . Rather, the thought and utterance of the philosopher are continual—august to hear, useful to understand, and tuneful in every key."[23] In *Florida* 9 Apuleius compares himself in versatility to the old Athenian sophist Hippias. Hippias, he says, was famous for having made every item of his apparel—including not only his clothes and sandals but even his ring, oil bottle, and strigil. Apuleius, by contrast, boasts of versatility not as a craftsman but as a writer,

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De deo Socratis (fol. 2r), and "Apulei Platonici Philosophi Madaurensis" in the explicit (fol. 16v). See Munk Olsen, *L'Étude des auteurs classiques latins aux XI^e et XII^e siècles* 1:13; Klibansky and Regen, *Die Handschriften*, 60–62.

[20] "Nam et quantulumcumque ingenium meum iam pridem pro captu suo hominibus notius est, quam ut indigeat novae commendationis." *Fl.* 17.2.

[21] "Quis enim vestrum mihi unum soloecismum ignoverit? quis vel unam syllabam barbare pronuntiatam donaverit? . . . Quae tamen aliis facile et sane meritissimo ignoscitis." *Fl.* 9.7.

[22] "Audisne, Maxime, multos suggerentis? Immo, ecce etiam liber offertur." *Apol.* 55.12.

[23] "Non enim mihi philosophia id genus orationem largita est. . . . Sed enim philosophi ratio et oratio tempore iugis est et auditu venerabilis et intellectu utilis et modo omnicana." *Fl.* 13.1 and 3.

claiming to have composed not only poetry of every kind but also riddles, histories, orations, and dialogues—and all in both Greek and Latin (*Fl.* 9.15–29). In *Florida* 20 he claims to have surpassed even the great philosophers of the past in the variety if not in the quality of his compositions.[24]

In appearance, too, he compares himself with others, aligning physical beauty and philosophic sophistication on one side against ugliness and boorish ignorance on the other. In such matching of outer and inner qualities Apuleius is very much a man of his age, for although even Homer practiced the art of physiognomy (which we might define as believing that one *can* tell a book by its cover), the association of physical features with qualities of character reached its height as a full-blown pseudoscience under the Second Sophistic.[25]

In the *Apology* Apuleius uses the argument from physiognomy to overturn the prevailing picture of the philosopher and reshape it in his own image. He claims that his adversaries opened their case by describing him pejoratively as " 'a handsome philosopher' (and horror of horrors!) 'eloquent in both Greek and Latin.' "[26] A strange criticism, we might think. Their argument, however, was that his speaking ability and appearance identified him as a sophist and belied his claim to be a philosopher. Philosophy and oratory were traditionally deemed incompatible; and although the distinction between them in practice had largely broken down by this time, the "rhetoric of rivalry"[27] between the two callings remained. Sophists could and did profess philosophy, and philosophers orated; but they cultivated separate images—the philosopher as a bearded sage, the sophist as a smartly dressed dandy.[28] Apuleius' accusers had the traditional distinctions firmly in mind, evidently claiming that as a

[24] "Canit enim Empedocles carmina, Plato dialogos, Socrates hymnos, Epicharmus modos, Xenophon historias, Crates satiras: Apuleius vester haec omnia novemque Musas pari studio colit, maiore scilicet voluntate quam facultate." *Fl.* 20.5–6.

[25] For Homer's association of appearance and character, see especially *Il.* 2.211–64, where the ugliness of Thersites reflects his low social class and tendency to quarrel with his betters. For physiognomy in the Second Sophistic, see Evans, "The Study of Physiognomy in the Second Century A.D."; Gleason, *Making Men*, esp. 55–81. For Apuleius, see Opeku, "Physiognomy in Apuleius."

[26] " 'Accusamus apud te philosophum formonsum et tam Graece quam Latine' pro nefas! 'disertissimum.' " *Apol.* 4.1.

[27] The expression is Gleason's (*Making Men,* 131).

[28] See the important discussion of Hahn, *Der Philosoph und die Gesellschaft*, 46–53. For the sophist's appearance, see also Zanker, *The Mask of Socrates*, 243. Both Hahn (51) and Zanker (235) cite Philostratus' account of the philosopher Aristokles (*VS* 567), whose conversion to rhetoric as a follower of Herodes Atticus was accompanied by changes in his grooming, friends, and recreations. But Hahn places Apuleius, along with Favorinus and Maximus of Tyre, in a gray area of sophistic/philosophical polymathy and performance (53).

sophist (for that is the point of the word *eloquent*) Apuleius was ipso facto not a philosopher. Their argument about appearance is more interesting. The epithet "handsome philosopher" is intended as a contradiction in terms exposing Apuleius as a hypocrite. For in this period, as Zanker observes, "if a man wanted to be acknowledged publicly as a philosopher, . . . the one thing he could not appear was handsome."[29] Contemporary busts and statues of philosophers show them as men well past their first youth, wrinkled in thought, with careless or disordered hair and the distinguishing feature of the so-called philosopher's beard.[30] Literary accounts present the same picture.[31]

Apuleius responds to his opponents by trying, with transparent insincerity, to convince the court that he is *not* good-looking—long hours of study have worn him down, and his hair is a mess.[32] But his real argument lies elsewhere. He implicitly rejects the contemporary picture of the philosopher and refutes the charge of hypocrisy, using the physiognomical connection between appearance and character to make the phrase "handsome philosopher" not a contradiction in terms but rather a self-evident proposition. Both Pythagoras and Zeno were good-looking, he tells the court, and so were many other philosophers, "who enhanced the grace of their bodies with the integrity of their character."[33] By contrast, Apuleius' accuser Sicinius Aemilianus embodies the opposite qualities. According to Apuleius, he is an ignorant rustic—uncouth, wicked, and correspondingly hideous to look at, for he is as ugly as the tragic mask of Thyestes or the hideous boatman Charon.[34] He no doubt also had a

[29] Zanker, *The Mask of Socrates*, 235.

[30] For the description, see ibid., 217–47 and figs. 129, 133, 143. For the "philosopher's beard," see 220, 229.

[31] See Hahn, *Der Philosoph und die Gesellschaft*, 33–45.

[32] *Apol.* 4.10. Apuleius' protestations are intentionally unconvincing. I do not agree with Zanker's argument (*The Mask of Socrates*, 234) that he tried to present an unkempt or disheveled appearance in court. At *Apol.* 92.5 he casually describes himself as "iuvenem neque corpore neque animo neque fortuna paenitendum."

[33] "Itemque multos philosophos ab ore honestissimos memoriae prodi, qui gratiam corporis morum honestamentis ornaverint." *Apol.* 4.9. Most of the philosophers in Apuleius are good looking. The hunchback Cynic Crates of *Florida* 14 is a notable exception.

[34] *Rustic and uncouth*: "Agrestis quidem semper et barbarus" (*Apol.* 10.6). *Wicked*: "At ego non mirer, si boni consulis me de isto distortissimo vultu tuo dicere, de moribus tuis multo truculentioribus reticere" (*Apol.* 16.8). *Like Thyestes*: "Quamquam teterrimum os tuum minimum a Thyesta tragico demutet" (*Apol.* 16.7). Hunink (*Apuleius . . . de Magia*) observes ad loc.: "The ugly mask of the horrified Thyestes is a theatrical element with clearly negative associations; it is firmly put on Aemilianus' face." *Like Charon*: The nickname not only attacks Aemilianus' ugliness ("ob oris et animi diritatem"; *Apol.* 56.7) but insinuates that he is a murderer: "Neque enim diu est, cum te crebrae mortes propinquorum immeritis hereditatibus fulserunt, unde tibi potius quam ob istam teterrimam faciem Charon nomen est" (*Apol.* 23.7).

beard, if not a philosophical one, if the comparisons with Thyestes and Charon are anything to go by. The mask of Thyestes was probably bearded, and Apuleius could have counted on his audience to remember Vergil's famous description of Charon in *Aeneid* 6:

> . . . appallingly filthy he is, with a bush of unkempt
> White beard upon his chin, with eyes like jets of fire;
> And a dirty cloak draggles down, knotted about his shoulders.[35]

In *Florida* 3 Apuleius transposes the alliance of beauty and wisdom against ugliness and ignorance into the world of myth, using as his protagonists Apollo and Marsyas. He tells how the rustic Marsyas entered into a musical competition with Apollo: "a monster [contending] with a beautiful youth, a rustic personage with a learned one, an animal with a god."[36] Minerva and the Muses stood by, ostensibly as judges, but they had really come to mock Marsyas' lack of culture and punish his stupidity. Marsyas, unaware that he was an object of derision, began not by playing his flute (his sole talent) but by babbling foolishly like the barbarian he was. He first praised himself, as Apuleius says, "because his hair was pulled back and he had a ragged beard and shaggy chest, because his art was flute playing and he was lacking in wealth."[37] Then he went on to attack Apollo for the opposite qualities—for his beautiful long hair, fair beardless cheeks and smooth body, and for his manifold talents and opulent wealth. The Muses laughed at his accusations and left the defeated Marsyas flayed alive and with his naked flesh torn to pieces. The selection ends: "But Apollo was ashamed of such a paltry victory."[38]

The contest of Apollo and Marsyas is an unmistakable allusion to the dispute between Apuleius and his accusers in the *Apology*.[39] Neither the date nor the audience of *Florida* 3 is known, but the excerpts in the *Florida* whose dates and audiences can be determined all belong to the

[35] *Aen.* 6.299–301. The translation is by C. Day Lewis. Apuleius also compares Aemilianus to Mezentius, another bearded character from Vergil (*Apol.* 56.7; cf. *Aen.* 10.838).

[36] "Teter cum decoro, agrestis cum erudito, belua cum deo." *Fl.* 3.6.

[37] "Quod erat et coma relicinus et barba squalidus et pectore hirsutus et arte tibicen et fortuna egenus." *Fl.* 3.8. For the argument that Apuleius is applying the rules of physiognomy in his description of Marsyas, see Opeku, "Physiognomy in Apuleius," 472–73.

[38] "Enimvero Apollinem tam humilis victoriae puditum est." *Fl.* 3.14.

[39] Hunink calls the similarity between the two contests "a fascinating parallel" (*Apuleius . . . de Magia*, 21). The parallel was noted as early as 1820 in Bayle's *Dictionary*: "Au reste, il me semble (je n'ose néanmoins l'affirmer) qu'Apulée avait en vue son procès, lorsqu'il décrivit dans l'une de ses harangues celui d'Apollon et de Marsyas." *Dictionnaire historique et critique* (Paris, 1820), 2:212. For a different view, see La Rocca, *Il filosofo e la città*, 144–52, who also identifies Apollo with Apuleius but sees Marsyas as one of Apuleius' philosophical rivals.

period 160–69 and were delivered to the Carthaginians.[40] That is, they were delivered both several years after Apuleius' trial for magic and in the cultural capital of North Africa. *Florida* 3 no doubt has the same date and place. It refers, not very subtly, to the success of the *Apology*, for the story of Apollo and Marsyas as Apuleius presents it is a virtual allegory of his triumph over his boorish small-town opponents. Marsyas' ugliness and ignorance are like those of Apuleius' accusers, and his complaints of Apollo's beauty and talent certainly recall their accusation that Apuleius was "a handsome philosopher and eloquent in both Greek and Latin." Minerva and the Muses have their counterpart in the learned and distinguished judge Claudius Maximus, whom Apuleius compliments so often in the *Apology*. The parallels are clear enough, and Apuleius need not labor them. He does not spell out the likeness between himself and Apollo but leaves the audience to infer that he, like the god, was a little embarrassed by his easy victory.

In *Florida* 3, then, Apuleius is keeping his victory alive in the minds of his audience and making sure that they remember it in a particular way—as the virtually foreordained triumph of divine beauty and talent over subhuman barbarity. To put it another way, Apuleius is promoting and controlling his image. But an image is not always an intangible abstraction. Physical likenesses and portraits are equally important—both to keep a sophist's features in the public eye and to reflect them back to his own.

Self-Reflection

Apuleius treats this second purpose—that of seeing his own image—in a famous passage in the *Apology*. His enemies have charged that he possesses a mirror, no doubt both to accuse him of vanity and to hint that he has used it in nefarious magical practices, but primarily to suggest that the possession of a mirror, like being good-looking, is incompatible with philosophy.[41] This charge, like that of being a handsome philosopher, is phrased as an obvious oxymoron: "The philosopher has a mirror. The philosopher possesses a mirror."[42]

[40] For the dating, which is based on internal evidence in *Fl.* 9, 16, and 17, see Vallette, *Apulée: Apologie, Florides*, xxvi–xxviii; Hijmans, "Apuleius Orator," 1723–25. Harrison suggests that *Fl.* 16 might be dated as late as the early 170s (*Apuleius*, 116). *Fl.* 9, 16, 17, 18, and 20 are explicitly addressed to the Carthaginians.

[41] Mirrors were associated primarily with women, and their use by men was suspect; see McCarty, "The Shape of the Mirror," 167–168. For mirrors in magic, see Hunink, *Apuleius . . . de Magia*, 57–58.

[42] "Habet speculum philosophus, possidet speculum philosophus." *Apol.* 13.5.

Apuleius handily refutes the contradiction; indeed, to hear him tell it, every philosopher needs a mirror for both ethical and scientific purposes. But he directs most of his argument in a different direction, praising the power of the mirror to reflect the features of its owner, and comparing mirror images with likenesses presented by statues or paintings. "Don't you know that there is nothing a man would rather look at than his own form?"[43] he asks the court. Statues can certainly fulfill this function, and that is one reason that a city rewards a deserving man with a statue of himself to look at (*Apol.* 14.2). But for his own contemplation Apuleius prefers a mirror. The image in a mirror is portable and can be gazed at whenever one likes. The reflection has the color and motion and vitality lacking in artificial likenesses and shows a man exactly as he is at a given moment, reflecting every movement and change in expression. The image in a painting or statue, by contrast, is fixed in time and space and conveys but a single expression, so that from the moment of its completion it is unlike its subject.

Apuleius has no objection to statues—on the contrary.[44] But he does like to look into the mirror, not only for the immediacy and accuracy and availability of its image but because he creates and controls it. He can create or dissolve the image at will simply by bringing the mirror to his face or moving it away. He can change it with a smile or a frown or twist of the head. But his connection with it is even more intimate than we might expect. From his survey of scientific and philosophical explanations of the mirror we learn that a reflection may be a thin mask of atoms emanating from the subject's body and bounced back to his eyes from the mirror's surface, or perhaps a creation of the fiery effluence from his eyes as it mingles with air or light.[45] That is, in whatever explanation one chooses, a person's reflection is, quite literally, a part of himself.

Thus, the image in the mirror is doubly appealing, both for its symbiotic relation with its subject and because it is under his control to an extent inconceivable with other likenesses. (Only Alexander the Great, Apuleius observes, was able to ensure that his image came down to posterity as he wished. He did so by allowing only the three greatest artists of his age to portray him and deterring the others with the fear of death.)[46] But if artificial likenesses have the disadvantage of being

[43] "An tu ignoras nihil esse aspectabilius homini nato quam formam suam?" *Apol.* 14.2.

[44] *Pace* Lee Too, "Statues, Mirrors, Gods." Her argument is correctly dismissed by Hunink (*Apuleius . . . de Magia*, 59 n. 3).

[45] *Apol.* 15.11–15. See ad loc. Hunink, *Apuleius . . . de Magia,* and Butler and Owen, *Apulei Apologia.*

[46] *Fl.* 7.5–8. The story perhaps orginated in Plutarch (*Alex.* 4 and *Mor.* 335A–C); versions of it appear in Cicero, *Ep. fam.* 5.12.7, Horace, *Ep.* 2.1.239–41, and Pliny, *HN* 7.125. See Brink, *Horace on Poetry,* 247–48. But Apuleius is apparently the first to have Alexander threaten unauthorized portrait makers with death.

outside their subject's control, the mirror image has two fatal limitations of its own: it is impermanent, and only its subject can see it. The philosopher who wants to keep his face and fame before the public needs something more substantial and permanent. He wants statues, and preferably as many as possible.

Many statues and busts of philosophers survive from antiquity.[47] Cities erected statues to honor and lay claim to famous men; philosophers and sophists in turn sought and desired them. The practice was so common that philosophers had a standard form of giving thanks to the cities that erected statues in their honor, as Apuleius tells us (*Fl.* 16.29). The presence or absence or (heaven forbid!) the removal of a statue measured a sophist's current reputation as well as his chances of future fame or oblivion. In Hadrian's reign the famous sophist Favorinus made a passionate speech to the Corinthians when they took down his statue.[48] A generation later Apuleius delivered and published an oration lobbying for a statue in Oea over the objections of his detractors, who were no doubt still angry over his marriage and victory in the *Apology*. We have the story from Augustine; unfortunately the speech itself is no longer extant.[49]

Did Apuleius persuade the citizens of Oea? We will probably never know. But there is evidence that other statues were erected to him. A statue base found in Madauros (without the statue) is dedicated by his fellow citizens "To the Platonic Philosopher."[50] Although the name is lacking, Apuleius is the obvious candidate. In *Florida* 16 Apuleius thanks the citizens of Carthage for voting him one statue, hints that they should put up a second, and states that he had statues in other cities as well.[51]

[47] See Richter, *The Portraits of the Greeks* 3:282–89; Schefold, *Die Bildnisse der antiken Dichter, Redner und Denker*. But Zanker argues that many of the statues are portraits of laymen subscribing to "the cult of learning" who have had themselves depicted as philosophers (*The Mask of Socrates*, 210–66).

[48] Favorinus' statues were pulled down in both Corinth and Athens—perhaps because he had fallen out of favor with Hadrian. His speech to the Corinthians is discussed by Gleason, *Making Men*, 3–20.

[49] "An forte ista [i.e., the trappings of worldly success] ut philosophus voluntate contempsit, qui sacerdos provinciae pro magno fuit, ut munera ederet venatoresque vestiret et pro statua sibi apud Oeenses locanda, ex qua civitate habebat uxorem, adversus contradictionem quorundam civium litigaret? Quod posteros ne lateret, eiusdem litis orationem scriptam memoriae commendavit." Augustine, *Ep.* 138.19.

[50] "[Ph]ilosopho [Pl]atonico [Ma]daurenses cives ornament[o] suo. D(ecreto) d(ecurionum), p(ecunia) [p(ublica)]." Gsell, ed., *Inscriptions latines de l'Algerie* 1:2115. But this statue seems not to have been a lasting memorial, for the base was reused in the middle of the fourth century for a dedication to one of the sons of Constantine. Its reverse is inscribed "D(omino) n(ostro), divi C[ons]tanti[ni] Maxim[i fil(io)] . . ." (Gsell, 1:4010).

[51] See Lee, *Apuleius' Florida,* 145–48; *Fl.* 16.1 and 36–48 with Lee's commentary ad loc. It was not uncommon for a philosopher to have several statues in one city: there were at least seventeen statues of Herodes Atticus in Athens. See Richter, *The Portraits of the Greeks* 3:286.

One statue even found its way to Constantinople, for Christodorus, writing in the fifth century AD, tells us that there was a statue of Apuleius in the Baths of Zeuxippos.[52] Here is how he describes it: "And Apuleius was reverent as he considered the ineffable rites of the intellectual Latin Muse. He was a man whom the Italian Siren brought up to be an initiate of arcane wisdom."[53]

In keeping with good physiognomical principles, statues and other portraits were judged for their ability to convey their subject's inner nature and not merely his physical appearance. The images of Alexander the Great, Apuleius tells us, all revealed "the same fierce warrior's vigor, the same noble nature, the same youthful beauty, and the same attractive high forehead."[54] We can guess some of the qualities that Apuleius would have wanted posterity to see in his own statues: for example, beauty, eloquence, and, above all, philosophical wisdom. Christodorus adds another that he surely would have welcomed, for he characterizes the Apuleius in Constantinople as "an initiate of arcane wisdom." His language recalls Apuleius' claim in the *Apology* to have been initiated in several mystery cults; but it is also metaphorical, since literary education was frequently described as a "mystery," into which only the elect were "initiated."[55]

Role-Playing

So far we have been looking at Apuleius' persona as a handsome celebrity philosopher, a character that he has clearly revealed—or perhaps one should say unambiguously advertised. But there are also places where the picture is less clear, and where Apuleius has deliberately created doubt about who and what he is, raising and leaving open two separate but intersecting questions about his identity. First, is he a magician? Second, what is his relation to Lucius, the hero of the *Golden Ass*?

[52] For a good discussion, see Scarcia, *Latina Siren,* 13–18.

[53] καὶ νοερῆς ἄφθεγκτα Λατινίδος ὄργια Μούσης / ἄζετο παπταίνων ᾽Απολήϊος, ὄντινα μύστην / Αὐσονὶς ἀρρήτου σοφίης ἐθρέψατο Σειρήν. *Anth. Pal* 2.303–5.

[54] "Eo igitur omnium metu factum, solus Alexander ut ubique imaginum simillimus esset, utique omnibus statuis et tabulis et toreumatis idem vigor acerrimi bellatoris, idem ingenium maximi honoris, eadem forma viridis iuventae, eadem gratia relicinae frontis cerneretur." *Fl.* 7.8. See also Plutarch, who points out that merely duplicating physical features cannot produce a successful portrait. *De Alex. M. Fortuna aut Virtute Or.* 2.2.

[55] *Apol.* 55.8. For the metaphor of initiation, see Kaster, *Guardians of Language,* 16: "The literary culture was a mystery, of the Muses or the ancients: its acquisition was an initiation, by which 'the things not to be spoken' were revealed."

Let us begin with magic, the point where our two questions come together. In the *Apology* Apuleius opens his defense on the charge of magic with the question "How do you define 'magician'?"[56] He suggests a definition himself with a digression on the "magicians," or *magi*, of the Persians—priests who are so venerated that they are entrusted with the education of future kings. *Their* magic, if that is what he is accused of, is both pleasing to the gods and so highly prized that few are allowed to learn its secrets (*Apol.* 25.9–26.3). But perhaps, he suggests, his adversaries have in mind the common definition, that a magician is someone who through communication with the gods can accomplish whatever he wills by the mysterious power of his incantations. In that case, he professes amazement at his opponents' audacity, for surely anyone who believed that he had such superhuman powers would be afraid to accuse him (*Apol.* 26.6–9).

If both modern readers and Apuleius' real (or supposed) audience in the courtroom are confused by now, that is what he intends. He continues to blow smoke, and the fog grows thicker and thicker as he explains how he will defend himself:

> I won't deny any of the things they claim I have done, whether the charges are true or false, but I will proceed as if they were true, so that this great assembly, which has come to hear the case from near and far, can understand that neither a true charge nor a false allegation can be made against philosophers that they would not be prepared to defend even if they could deny it—such is their confidence in their innocence. First then, I will refute their arguments and prove that they have nothing to do with magic. Then, I will show—even assuming that I was the greatest magician in the world—that there has been neither cause nor opportunity for them to catch me in some act of black magic.[57]

Apuleius' language is deliberately murky and convoluted, but his line of defense is simple enough: he admits the various actions he has been charged with (such things as buying fish, having a slave with a tendency

[56] "Quae quidem omnis Aemiliano fuit in isto uno destinata, me magum esse, et ideo mihi libet quaerere ab eruditissimis eius advocatis quid sit magus." *Apol.* 25.8.

[57] "Atque ego omnia obiecta, seu vera seu falsa sunt, non negabo, sed perinde atque si facta sint fatebor, ut omnis ista multitudo, quae plurima undique ad audiendum convenit, aperte intellegat nihil in philosophos non modo vere dici, sed ne falso quidem posse confingi, quod non ex innocentiae fiducia, quamvis liceat negare, tamen potius habeant defendere. Primum igitur argumenta eorum convincam ac refutabo nihil ea ad magian pertinere; dein etsi maxime magus forem, tamen ostendam neque causam ullam neque occasionem fuisse, ut me in aliquo maleficio experirentur." *Apol.* 28.2–4.

to fainting spells, keeping secret objects under a linen cloth, and owning a black ebony statue of Mercury), argues that they are all related either to his activities as a scientific philosopher or to his practice of religious mysteries, and maintains that even if the objects in question did have magical uses, he is not necessarily a magician on that account.

In each case he teases his audience with his expert knowledge of magic—slyly dropping technical terminology, daring his adversaries to give away their own illicit knowledge by challenging him, and even uttering strings of words that sound like magical curses.[58] Then he backs away in a show of innocence. A single example will suffice: the case of the ebony statue that the prosecution described as a hideous skeleton made for the practice of magic.[59] Apuleius shows the court his beautiful little statuette, denies that it is anything but an object of religious devotion, and expatiates on its charms. But in fact the statue is of Mercury (Greek Hermes), the god of magic and escort of the dead to Hades. Although Apuleius does not openly acknowledge Mercury's connection with magic, he clearly confirms it in his attack on Aemilianus—a magical curse if ever there was one:

> In payment for this lie, Aemilianus, may this god [Mercury] who goes between the lords of heaven and hell bestow on you the hatred of both, and may he always send phantoms of the dead to meet you, and heap up before your eyes every ghost, spectre, spirit, fiend, all apparitions that walk by night, all dread dwellers in the tomb, all terrors of the sepulchre—although by age and character you are close enough to them already.[60]

Yet almost before these bloodcurdling words have sunk in, Apuleius takes off the mask of the magician and becomes the very picture of an innocent philosopher, piously claiming: "But we of the family of Plato

[58] See Hunink, *Apuleius . . . de Magia*, esp. 97–98, 145, 162–63 and *ad* 31.9, 35.6, 43.2, 44.9, 45.2, 54.2, 64.8. For Apuleius' "curses," see *Apol.* 38.7, 64.1–2, 90.6, and Hunink ad loc.

[59] *Apol.* 61–64.2. See Hunink, *Apuleius . . . de Magia*, ad loc.; Abt, *Die Apologie des Apuleius,* 296–303.

[60] "At tibi, Aemiliane, pro isto mendacio duit deus iste superum et inferum commeator utrorumque deorum malam gratiam semperque obvias species mortuorum, quicquid umbrarum est usquam, quicquid lemurum, quicquid manium, quicquid larvarum, oculis tuis oggerat, omnia noctium occursacula, omnia bustorum formidamina, omnia sepulcrorum terriculamenta, a quibus tamen aevo et merito haud longe abes." *Apol.* 64.1–2. For parallels with ancient curses, see Abt, *Die Apologie des Apuleius,* 303–6. For the formal and archaic language, see Hunink, *Apuleius . . . de Magia*, ad loc. My translation owes several turns of phrase to Butler's translation, *The Apology and Florida of Apuleius of Madaura*, 107–8.

know nothing except what is festive and joyful and majestic and pertains to the upper world and to the heavens."[61]

Magician? Philosopher? Or a bit of both? Apuleius satisfied the court of his innocence, but in the *Apology* he leaves a whiff of magic in the air, suggesting more than a passing acquaintance with the dark arts and adding a *frisson* of danger to his image. Perhaps that is all he intended, but the scent of sulphur was strong enough to convince later generations of his magical powers, especially when they considered the role of magic in the *Golden Ass*, whose hero and first-person narrator readers from late antiquity to the twentieth century almost universally identified in varying degrees with Apuleius himself.

The identification of Apuleius with his hero Lucius was largely a natural consequence of using a first-person narrator: the "I" of a novel, like the "I" of an oration or poem, invites an autobiographical reading. But Apuleius exploits this effect and plays with it, creating in Lucius a character whose features both differ from and resemble those of his own persona. The differences are great enough to prevent us from eliding Lucius with Apuleius; the resemblances are great enough to encourage the identification (and as we shall see presently, one detail positively requires it).

From the beginning of the novel Apuleius depicts a hero fundamentally different from himself. Lucius is a Greek from Corinth and a relation of the famous Plutarch,[62] whereas Apuleius is a Roman from North Africa. Lucius is credulous and foolish, both as a man and as an ass; Apuleius presents himself as a sophisticated man of the world. Lucius bungles his efforts at magic—or has them bungled for him, when Fotis gives him the wrong ointment (*Met.* 3.24). The Apuleius we see in the *Apology* may or may not be an actual magician; he could never be an incompetent one. But Lucius also resembles Apuleius.[63] Both men are peripatetic provincial intellectuals of good family. Both have an interest in magic. Both are eloquent orators in both Greek and Latin. Both have ties to Platonic philosophy: Apuleius is an avowed Platonist, and Lucius is related to Plutarch and Sextus, both Middle Platonic philosophers. Perhaps most important, both are initiated more than once into mystery cults, and Lucius' conversion to Isis is told so powerfully that it has often been taken to reflect Apuleius' own religious experience.[64]

[61] "Ceterum Platonica familia nihil novimus nisi festum et laetum et sollemne et superum et caeleste." *Apol.* 64.3.

[62] *Corinth*: *Met.* 1.22.4, 2.12.3. *Plutarch*: *Met.* 1.2.1. For the text of the *Metamorphoses,* I cite the text of Robertson: *Apulée: Les Métamorphoses*.

[63] See Harrison, *Apuleius*, 217–18.

[64] E.g., by Nock, *Conversion,* 138–55; Griffiths, in *Apuleius of Madauros: The Isis Book,* 3–7.

These resemblances in themselves, however, are not enough to identify Lucius with Apuleius. Lucius' experiences need not even be derived or adapted from those of Apuleius.[65] In the social and intellectual world of the second century, there must have been many young men not unlike Lucius—aspiring sophists at the beginning of their careers, traveling the world, dabbling in religion and philosophy (and perhaps magic), and eager for sexual and other adventures. If Apuleius had been such a youth, so were many others. It is important to remember, too, that ultimately the figure of Lucius has its origin in the lost Greek *Metamorphoses* by "Lucius of Patrae," from which the plots of both Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* and the *Onos* of Pseudo-Lucian were derived.[66]

To some extent, however, it is naive to seek Lucius' identity and relation to Apuleius. He is Apuleius' creature if not entirely his creation, a persona like that of the magician in the *Apology*, which the author may assume or set down at will. In the *Metamorphoses*, too, just as in the *Apology* and *Florida*, Apuleius' real aim is self-display.[67] The object is not to identify the "real Apuleius" (or the "real Lucius," for that matter) but to dazzle the reader by assuming multiple and contradictory personae.[68] Not only Lucius' transformation to an ass and eventual recovery of his human form, but also the changes and confusions in the identities of author, narrator, and other speakers, justify the title *Metamorphoses*.[69]

Apuleius draws attention to his impersonations in the *Metamorphoses* in two famous passages, strategically placed at the beginning and end of the novel. In each he presents the question of his own identity vis-à-vis that of his speaker as a conspicuous and unsolvable problem. In the first passage he gives us too few clues to arrive at an answer; in the second the clue leads to an impossible contradiction.

The proem (*Met*. 1.1) explicitly raises the question of the speaker's identity.[70] "Quis ille?" (Who is this?), the speaker asks, and then proceeds

[65] *Pace* Harrison, *Apuleius*, 218.

[66] See Mason, "Greek and Latin Versions of the Ass-Story," with earlier bibliography. Lucius of Patrae was probably the name of the first-person narrator of the Greek *Metamorphoses*, wrongly identified with the author by the ninth-century patriarch Photios (our only source for the work). See Mason, 1669–71; Winkler, *Auctor & Actor*, 255.

[67] Harrison reaches much the same conclusion: "The problem for a self-promoting sophistic intellectual in writing fictional narrative is that of how to keep the spotlight on himself when not talking about himself. . . . The . . . complex presentation of narrative voice . . . is precisely the kind of strategy which draws attention to the existence and virtuoso status of the work's author." *Apuleius*, 232–33.

[68] See especially van der Paardt, "The Unmasked 'I.'"

[69] Cf. Winkler, *Auctor & Actor*, 200: "The entire AA is a playful game of multiple identities."

[70] There is a large bibliography on the prologue. For a starting point, see Kahane and Laird, eds., *A Companion to the Prologue of Apuleius' Metamorphoses*.

to describe himself—unhelpfully—as a Greek of Attic, Corinthian, and Spartan stock who has learned Latin in Rome with great difficulty and begs pardon for any faults in the language with which he will tell his "Greekish tale" (*fabulam Graecanicam*). The description fits neither the North African Apuleius nor the Greek Lucius (whose Latin seems perfectly adequate for his career in the Roman law courts at the end of the novel).[71] Other answers have been proposed (the speaker is an actor outside the story, like the *prologus* in Plautine comedy, or perhaps even the book itself, etc.);[72] but in fact Apuleius has given us no way to decide. The unidentifiable speaker is another of Apuleius' personae, made deliberately mysterious and intriguing in order to announce and advertise the writer's protean powers at the opening of his novel. The important detail is the question itself ("quis ille?"): Apuleius is the speaker; what part is he playing now?

Near the end of the novel (*Met*. 11.27) Apuleius ostentatiously forces the reader to confront the problem of his relation to his hero.[73] The puzzle is laid out in a vision, which Lucius says was related to him by a priest of Osiris named Asinius Marcellus. (The name is significant, as he points out unnecessarily.)[74] Asinius says that Osiris himself had urged Lucius' initiation into his rites:

> For the previous night, while he was arranging garlands for the great god, he thought he heard from his mouth (with which he pronounces each one's destiny) that a man from Madauros was being sent to him, a very poor one. He should at once prepare his initiation rites for him; for by his providence the glory of learning was in store for the man and a great reward for himself.[75]

The subject of the prophecy must be our hero, the Greek Lucius, but as the "man from Madauros" he can be only Apuleius, the North African author. The paradox is a red herring wrapped up in indirect statement,

[71] *Met*. 11.28.6. The point is made by Harrison (*Apuleius*, 228).

[72] For the *prologus* answer, see Smith, "The Narrative Voice in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*," and the supporting arguments of Winkler, *Auctor & Actor,* 200–203. For the book answer, see Harrison, "The Speaking Book."

[73] For other, less conspicuous references to Apuleius at *Met* 2.12 and 4.32, see van der Paardt, "The Unmasked 'I,'" 105.

[74] "Reformationis meae <minime> alienum nomen." *Met*. 11.27.7. Since *minime* is a supplement by Robertson, the modern reader is left to decide whether the name Asinius is or is not appropriate to Lucius' reformation.

[75] "Nam sibi visus est quiete proxima, dum magno deo coronas *exaptaret*, de eius ore, quo singulorum fata dictat, audisse mitti sibi Madaurensem, sed admodum pauperem, cui statim sua sacra deberet ministrare; nam et illi studiorum gloriam et ipsi grande compendium sua comparari providentia." *Met*. 11. 27.9. (I print Hanson's text here. F reads "exaptat et," printed by both Helm and Robertson, who follow it with a lacuna.)

and it smells appropriately fishy.[76] Apuleius holds on to it just long enough to put on the mask of Lucius, or perhaps to let Lucius put on the mask of Apuleius, giving the reader a final reminder of his powers as an impersonator.[77]

Lasting Impressions

Apuleius' role-playing in the *Apology* and the *Golden Ass* superimposed the overlapping images of magician and alter ego of Lucius on his basic persona of philosopher and celebrity. It would be interesting to know how his public reacted to this complex and carefully constructed personality. Unfortunately, the sources are silent: Apuleius is not mentioned by name by any of his contemporaries or by anyone else until the beginning of the fourth century, nearly 150 years after his death.[78]

Nevertheless, there are some hints that his works were being read in North Africa in the late second and third centuries. A second-century papyrus seems to illustrate the story of Cupid and Psyche, and it has been argued that Tertullian and Arnobius may have been influenced by the philosophical works.[79] Moreover, according to the author of the *Historia Augusta*, Apuleius was also known to the African emperors Clodius Albinus (d. 197) and Septimius Severus (d. 211). In the *Life of Albinus* Severus attacks Albinus in a letter to the Roman senate; among his complaints is that Albinus is an enthusiastic reader of Apuleius. Severus says: "It was even more irritating that many of you thought that he deserved to be praised as a man of letters, when he was busying himself with old wives' nonsense and growing senile among literary trifles and the Carthaginian Milesian tales of his friend Apuleius."[80] But unfortunately

[76] Harrison (*Apuleius*, 231) points out "the extraordinarily ambiguous use of pronouns, possessive adjectives, and indirect speech" in the passage: "Here, if anywhere, is a context where identities might become confused and misinterpreted."

[77] See van der Paardt ("The Unmasked 'I,'" 106): "What does the author of an 'I'-novel do? He dons . . . a mask, he becomes someone else: Apuleius of Madauros becomes Lucius of Corinth! . . . [The great god Osiris performs] the last, definitive metamorphosis: he changes the narrator into what he used to be, the author!"

[78] Apuleius is first mentioned in Lactantius, *Div. inst.* 5.3.7. See the next section.

[79] The papyrus (PSI VIII 919) shows Psyche (with her lamp?) beside a reclining Cupid. It seems to have been a cartoon for a textile or fresco. See Coppolla, "PSI VIII.919," 85–87, plate 2; Bassi, "Amore e Psyche"; Cavallo et al., eds., *Scrivere libri e documenti nel mondo antico*, 2 (color plate), 231–32. For Tertullian and Arnobius, see Moreschini, *Apuleio e il Platonismo*, 219–40. (But Moreschini's parallels between Tertullian and Apuleius have been rejected by Barnes; see his *Tertullian,* 256–58).

[80] "Maior fuit dolor, quod illum pro litterato laudandum plerique duxistis, cum ille neniis quibusdam anilibus occupatus inter Milesias Punicas Apulei sui et ludicra litteraria consenesceret." *HA. Alb.* 12.12. (Albinus also seems to have written Milesian tales himself;

this gratifyingly circumstantial reference is inconclusive. Perhaps Albinus really was wasting his time with Apuleius' stories and was criticized for it by Severus, but there is no way to be sure that the story antedates the late fourth century, usually taken to be the time of composition of the *Historia Augusta*.

Even without firm *testimonia*, however, we can still infer that Apuleius did make an impression on his immediate posterity and that his efforts to create and manage his image had largely succeeded, for the persona that emerges in the fourth century bears a strong resemblance to the one we saw in the second—although with his features more sharply delineated, as if his second- and third-century audience had silently accepted, consolidated, and embellished the picture that he had presented to them. The late antique Apuleius is still a philosopher, still a celebrity in his native North Africa, and now unquestionably both a famous magician and the alter ego of Lucius. He has also acquired some new features while we weren't looking, for he is now a figure in both Christian and pagan polemic and Constantinian art. In these new theaters of operation he shares the stage with more important actors, appearing with Apollonius of Tyana in the former and Vergil in the latter.

The late-antique persona of Apuleius, however, is by no means consistent or stable, for it varies with the eye (and the purposes) of the beholder, and it changes over time. The dominant facets of his personality are always the magician and the philosopher, but in different proportions and with different emphases from one age to another. In the rest of this chapter we will consider the reception of Apuleius' image in three periods: the fourth century and first decade of the fifth (Lactantius to Jerome), the second and third decades of the fifth century (Augustine), and the early Middle Ages.

Divided Self?

In the period from Lactantius to Jerome, Apuleius is still both magician and philosopher, but with one interesting exception he is no longer both at once. We might almost say that for most of the century he has a split personality: he is a magician in Christian and pagan polemic and a philosopher in Constantinian art. Although he was being read (as subscriptions in our oldest manuscript of the *Apology*, *Metamorphoses*,

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see *HA Alb.* 11.8.) The term "Milesian tales," derived from the racy *Milesiaca* of Aristides of Miletus (ca. 100 BC), seems originally to have referred to short, obscene stories but was later used almost as a generic term for fiction. Apuleius describes the style of the *Golden Ass* as "sermone . . . Milesio" (*Met.* 1.1.1).

and *Florida* attest), it is important to note that no one who writes about him in this period either quotes him or shows a close familiarity with his works.[81] The situation is different, however, in the case of our two extant artistic representations. Neither can be taken as a portrait of the "real" Apuleius, but, as we shall see, each seems to be inspired by his writings.

Apuleius appears first as a magician. Our source is a fellow North African, the Christian apologist Lactantius, who mentions him briefly in his *Divine Institutes* somewhere between 305 and 313.[82] Lactantius, a sufferer in Diocletian's Great Persecution of the Christians, is arguing against the pagan Hierocles, who is usually identified as one of the prime movers of the persecution.[83] In his now lost polemical work *To the Christians,* Hierocles had claimed that Apollonius of Tyana performed wonders even greater than the miracles attributed to Christ.[84] Now Lactantius professes to be amazed that he had not named Apuleius as well: "It's a wonder that Hierocles overlooked Apuleius," he exclaims, "for people like to talk about *his* many marvels, too."[85]

Apollonius of Tyana, whom Hierocles had deemed so superior to Christ, was a first-century neo-Pythagorean and holy man famous as a wonder-worker.[86] His asceticism, wisdom, miraculous cures, and resurrection

[81] For the subscriptions in the archetype of the text of the *Apology*, *Metamorphoses*, and *Florida,* see chapter 2.

[82] The dates 304–312 are given by Barnes, "Porphyry *Against the Christians*: Date and the Attribution of Fragments," 439. In *Constantine and Eusebius*, 291 n. 96, Barnes fixes the date at 308–9. In a personal communication, Oliver Nicholson more conservatively dates the work between 305 and 313. For a modern translation, see Lactantius, *Divine Institutes,* trans. Bowen and Garnsey.

[83] We know too little about the life and movements of Lactantius (ca. 250–325). For convenient accounts, see Lactantius, *De Mortibus Persecutorum*, ed. Creed, xxv–xxix; Bowen and Garnsey, trans., in Lactantius, *Divine Institutes*, 1–6. He was teaching rhetoric in Nicomedia in Bithynia in 303 when the Great Persecution began (*Div. inst.* 5.2.2) and lost his position. He apparently left Nicomedia and wrote and published the first edition of the *Divinae institutiones* in the western part of the empire, either in Gaul or in his native Africa. (Barnes, in *Constantine and Eusebius,* 291 n. 96, argues for North Africa.) For Hierocles, see Barnes, "Sossianus Hierocles."

[84] Forrat believes that Hierocles wrote his tract while he was serving as *vicarius*, well before the beginning of the persecution in 303, implying a date sometime in the late 290s (Eusebius, *Contre Hiéroclès*, 11–20). Barnes dates the tract to around 303 ("Sossianus Hierocles").

[85] The section reads as follows (the italicized words are translated in the text): "Idem [i.e., Hierocles] cum facta eius [i.e., Christi] mirabilia destrueret nec tamen negaret, voluit ostendere 'Apollonium vel paria vel etiam maiora fecisse.' *Mirum quod Apuleium praetermisit, cuius solent multa et mira memorari*" *Div. inst.* 5.3.7.

[86] See Philostratus, *The Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, trans, Jones. For later accounts, see Speyer, "Zum Bild des Apollonius von Tyana"; Bowie, "Apollonius of Tyana"; Forrat, in Eusebius, *Contre Hiéroclès*, 29–55.

from the dead made him a natural rival to Christ in anti-Christian polemics. Perhaps best of all from the pagan point of view was the story that he had escaped the wrath of the emperor Domitian by disappearing into thin air, thus showing himself a better magician than Christ, whose encounter with Roman authority had ended so differently.[87] It is impossible to be sure when Apollonius made his first appearance in religious polemic. The difficulty arises because our only evidence for the pagan side comes from the refutations of Christian apologists, who were always partisan and sometimes had only indirect or hearsay access to the work of their pagan opponents. Perhaps Hierocles was the first to invoke Apollonius, as Eusebius claimed in his polemic *Against Hierocles* around 311–12.[88] Or perhaps the famous pagan apologist Porphyry had invoked him a few years earlier in his work *Against the Christians*.[89] The important point for us is that at the end of the third century Apollonius had the prestige and qualifications to be presented as a match for Christ and the apostles and that at least one pagan apologist (Hierocles) took advantage of the fact.

But Hierocles did not mention Apuleius, and it is likely that no one else did either until Lactantius invoked his name in the *Divine Institutes*. Apuleius' fame was no match for that of Apollonius, and he had no biographer like Philostratus to preserve his memory. But he was known in North Africa, and Lactantius brings him into the debate, invoking him not as a writer but as a personality and figure of the popular imagination. Perhaps Lactantius had read some of Apuleius' works (although we cannot be sure of it); but in the *Divine Institutes* he is clearly recalling North African tales and oral tradition. Apuleius himself

[87] Philostratus, *Vita Apoll.* 8.5. See also Lactantius, *Div. inst.* 5.3.9, and Eusebius, *Contra Hier.* 38, both evidently quoting Hierocles.

[88] *Contra Hier.* 1.2: "Only he [Hierocles], among all those who have ever written against us, has produced a formal contrast and comparison of Apollonius with our savior" (Jones, trans., *Eusebius's Reply to Hierocles*, in Philostratus, *Apollonius of Tyana*, 157). For the date, see Forrat, in Eusebius, *Contre Hiéroclès,* 25; Barnes argues for ca. 303 ("Sossianus Hierocles").

[89] Porphyry's work is dated between 270 and 303. For a date of ca. 271–72, see Croke, "The Era of Porphyry's Anti-Christian Polemic." Barnes favors a date of around or after 300: "Porphyry *Against the Christians*"; "Scholarship or Propaganda?" Fragments 4, 46, 60, and 63 of Porphyry mention Apollonius (fragments 4 and 46 also mention Apuleius); but all these fragments date from the late fourth or fifth century, and only fragment 4 is now considered authentic (see the discussion of Jerome later in this section). Fragments 60 and 63 belong to a group of texts from the fourth- or fifth-century apologist Makarius of Magnesia that most modern scholars consider wrongly attributed to Porphyry; see Barnes, "Porphyry *Against the Christians*," 428–30; Meredith, "Porphyry and Julian Against the Christians," 1126–28. Benoit relegates these fragments, as well as fragment 46 (from Augustine, *Ep.* 102.32; see below), to the general stock of anti-Christian polemics ("Le 'Contra Christianos' de Porphyre").

cannot have been Lactantius' source, since he claims no marvelous or supernatural accomplishments in any of his works.

After Lactantius the linking of Apuleius and Apollonius became a fixture in Christian polemic. Jerome, writing a hundred years later, at the beginning of the fifth century, again mentions the pair as magicians.[90] He is refuting Porphyry, who had evidently argued that Christian claims were based primarily on miracles and that the apostles worked their wonders for the sake of gain.

> Someone might say, "They did all this for money." For this is what Porphyry says: "The poor and uneducated men, since they had nothing, worked some wonders with magic arts. But it is no great thing to perform wonders. The magicians in Egypt also performed wonders against Moses. Apollonius performed wonders, and so did Apuleius: in fact, they performed boundless wonders." I grant you, Porphyry, that they performed wonders with their magic arts in order to get money from silly rich women whom they had seduced. For this is what you say.[91]

The passage is interesting on several counts: as a contribution to the fragments of Porphyry's lost *Against the Christians*, as an example of Jerome's polemical method, and as evidence for the late-antique knowledge of Apuleius.

Jerome's quotation of Porphyry (listed as fragment 4 of *Against the Christians*) begins with the words "The poor and uneducated men" and concludes three sentences later with the clause "in fact, they performed boundless wonders."[92] This is the only unquestionably authentic fragment of Porphyry that mentions Apollonius and Apuleius. The authenticity of the fragment as a whole, however, does not guarantee the authenticity of everything in it. Barnes claims that Jerome knew Porphyry only indirectly.[93] But it is just as likely that he was using or remembering

[90] For the date, see Jay, "Jérôme à Bethléem," 377–78.

[91] "Dicat aliquis: Hoc totum lucri causa fecerunt. Hoc enim dicit Porphyrius: Homines rusticani et pauperes, quoniam nihil habebant, magicis artibus operati sunt quaedam signa. Non est autem grande facere signa. Nam fecerunt signa et in Aegypto magi contra Moysen. Fecit et Apollonius, fecit et Apuleius: et infinita signa fecerunt. Concedo tibi, Porphyri, magicis artibus signa fecerunt, ut divitias acciperent a divitibus mulierculis, quas induxerant: hoc enim tu dicis" Jerome, *Tractatus de Psalmo lxxxi,* 225–32.

[92] "Homini rusticani et pauperes . . . infinita signa fecerunt." See Meredith, "Porphyry and Julian Against the Christians," 1130 n. 16. The standard edition of the fragments is still that of Harnack, "Porphyrius 'Gegen die Christen.'" Harnack (pp. 46–47) treats the words "divitias . . . induxerant" as a quotation, as if from Porphyry.

[93] Barnes, "Scholarship or Propaganda?" 54. Barnes also argues (53) that Porphyry's *Contra Christianos* was suppressed by Constantine and asserts: "It is extremely hard to find authors writing after 325 who report the contents of the work at first hand."

an interpolated text, for it would be surprising if some changes had not crept into it during the intervening century of religious polemic. Jerome was also capable of adding touches of his own if it suited his satirical purposes, as the name of Apuleius does here. With the reference to Apuleius' use of magic to achieve his mercenary marriage, Jerome manages not only to make a last-minute riposte to Porphyry's slur on the supposed venality of the apostles (and to trump it) but also to allude to the allegation made by Porphyry's detractors that he, too, had married a rich elderly widow for her money.[94]

It is important to note, however, that Jerome's citation of Apuleius as a magician is different in kind from that of Lactantius. Even if he is invoking only Apuleius' image, the image is at least one clearly related to his works and not merely a piece of apocryphal flotsam. Jerome knows about the *Apology* even if he has not read it—or at least he knows enough to be familiar with its charge that Apuleius won his rich wife by sorcery. If he also knows the fact that Apuleius claimed to be innocent, his satirical nature and polemical purposes are such that he happily overlooks it.

Apuleius appears as a philosopher very soon after he is first mentioned as a magician, in the early decades of the fourth century. The evidence this time is both artistic and literary, and the context is Constantinian. Apuleius has been identified on a painted ceiling in Trier, and he had a bronze statue in the Baths of Zeuxippos at Constantinople, as we have seen. In both cases Vergil is part of the program.

Trier was one of Constantine's capital cities. In the early fourth century it housed some of the imperial family, including the emperor's son Crispus, and perhaps Crispus' tutor Lactantius as well. The last point is unverifiable, since we do not know the date or locale of Lactantius' service.[95] It is tantalizing because of the suggestion that Lactantius might have had a part in determining the program of the ceiling, which probably belonged to a reception room in an imperial residence.[96]

The room was constructed after 315 and demolished in 326, when work began on the foundations of Trier Cathedral.[97] At that time the ceiling collapsed, and the pieces fell down more or less in place, a happy

[94] The story appears in a fragment of the *Theosophia* of Aristokritos (fifth century) quoted by Buresch, *Klaros,* 124. See Harnack, "Porphyry 'Gegen die Christen,'" 40–41 (Zeugnis xxvi b). Harnack (p. 4) argues that it is derived from Eusebius' work against Porphyry.

[95] Lactantius' service probably began before 317, when Crispus was appointed Caesar. See Creed, in Lactantius, *De mortibus persecutorum*, xxvii.

[96] Simon, *Die konstantinischen Deckengemälde in Trier*, 19.

[97] See Weber, *Constantinische Deckengemälde*; Simon, *Die konstantinischen Deckengemälde*.

circumstance that has permitted a nearly complete reconstruction (see plate 1).[98] The rectangular painting is divided into fifteen panels—three on the short sides and five on the long. Seven panels showing busts of male and female figures alternate checkerboard fashion with eight panels showing pairs of putti or Erotes with different attributes. The putti appear on each of the four corners, in the centers of the long sides and on either side of the central bust in the middle row. Three of the busts represent elderly men (apparently poets or philosophers); the other four seem to be either portraits or personified virtues. There are no inscriptions to identify the figures in any of the panels.

Several interpretations of the ceiling's program have been proposed, but the most convincing is that of Erika Simon, who has identified the three "philosophers" as Vergil, Apuleius, and Heraclitus, one of the "portraits" as Apollo, and the others as personified virtues associated with Constantine's wife, Fausta.[99] Simon dates the painting not long after 315 and reads its message as predominantly solar and imperial rather than overtly Christian (although she notes that the panels of putti around the central bust are arranged in a cruciform pattern).

The essential part of her argument for the present discussion is her identification of the elderly men on the two short sides as Vergil and Apuleius. Each is identified by the attributes of the putti juxtaposed with his portrait. The putti around the image of Vergil have attributes appropriate to the *Fourth Eclogue*, which prophesies a new golden age of Apollo: the horn of plenty; a standing vessel, perhaps for wine; and a whip and charioteer's cloak evoking Apollo, the charioteer of the sun.[100] The corresponding bust at the other end is marked as a philosopher by his cloak and beard. The paired figures above him are not the same putti as in the other panels, but rather Cupid and Psyche from the *Golden Ass* (see plate 2). The philosopher, therefore, can only be Apuleius (see plate 3). The panel of Cupid and Psyche illustrates a particular moment in the story, as Simon has deduced from the flat box or tray in Psyche's hand.[101] It is the object of her last labor: the box of beauty that she was to fetch from Proserpina in Hades and present—unopened—to Venus. But she violated the taboo. When she opened the box, she was immediately engulfed in a Stygian sleep, in which she would have remained if Cupid had not awakened her with a painless touch of his arrow (*Met.* 6.21.3). The panel shows Psyche and Cupid just after

[98] For color illustrations of the reconstructed ceiling, see Weber, *Constantinische Deckengemälde*, and Simon, *Die konstantinischen Deckengemälde*.

[99] Simon, *Die konstantinischen Deckengemälde*, 19–37.

[100] The images are also appropriate to the prophetic passages in the *Aeneid* anticipating the reign of Augustus. See Rodgers, "Constantine's Pagan Vision."

[101] Simon, *Die konstantinischen Deckengemälde*, 20–21.

her awakening and their joyous reunion. She is about to complete her task, after which she will be taken to Olympus and receive the gift of immortality.

Simon has seen that the image of Cupid and Psyche identifies the philosopher in the adjacent panel as Apuleius, but we can also turn the argument around to say that Apuleius' character as a philosopher is linked to Cupid and Psyche. We can infer both that the author of the ceiling's program has derived his conception of Apuleius as a philosopher from the novel and, conversely, that he sees the story of Cupid and Psyche as important and serious. The panel represents not merely the happy ending of a romance but an event of philosophical and religious significance. Its meaning is clear enough: Psyche ("Soul")—though undeserving, as her box reminds us—has been saved by Love and will soon achieve eternal happiness. This message, like Vergil's prophecy of a new golden age, is not necessarily Christian but still consistent with Christian ideas—a nice compromise for a Constantinian work so soon after the emperor's famous conversion in 312.

Psyche's presence on the ceiling in Trier, like her appearance on the second-century papyrus, is precious evidence of early interest in Apuleius' story. The image in Trier, however, is more informative, for its context and placement also allow us to infer the artist's interpretation and to see it as an important anticipation of later allegorical treatments, like those of Martianus Capella and Fulgentius to be examined in the next chapter.

About a decade or so after the painting in Trier, Apuleius appeared in another Constantinian installation. His statue was placed in a large collection of sculpture arrayed in the Baths of Zeuxippos in Constantinople for the dedication of the city in 330 AD.[102] Our source is the late fifth-century Byzantine poet Christodorus, who describes eighty-one statues in the baths.[103] Although Christodorus lists many Greek poets, historians, and philosophers in his ecphrasis, he names only two Roman writers: Apuleius and Vergil.[104] The program of the statues has not been satisfactorily explained, and perhaps Christodorus, writing 150 years after the fact, did not understand it himself. The points that matter for our purposes, however, are Apuleius' depiction as a philosopher and the fact that he and Vergil are the only Roman writers whose statues we

[102] For Christodorus' description of the statue, see p. 14. For the baths and their program, see, with earlier bibliography, Bassett, "*Historiae custos*" and *The Urban Image of Late Antique Constantinople*, 51–57, 160–85.

[103] Christodorus' ecphrasis as we have it is probably incomplete: it lacks both preface and conclusion, and it is conceivable that descriptions of some statues have dropped out. See Bassett, "*Historiae custos*," 495.

[104] Apuleius: *Anth. Pal* 2.303–5; Vergil: *Anth. Pal* 2.414–16.

know appeared in the collection. The singling out of Apuleius and Vergil, so soon after the installation of the ceiling in Trier, suggests that the designer of the program was associating them in a similar way, or at the very least that he was recalling their appearance in Trier. Christodorus himself, however, does not treat the two statues as a pair, and there is no evidence that they appeared next to each other.[105]

Apuleius makes his last appearance in the visual arts of antiquity at the end of the fourth century. This imaginary portrait, on a Roman contorniate, or circus medal, is the only surviving ancient image accompanied by an identifying inscription (see plate 4).[106] The contorniate shows Apuleius in profile as a beautiful beardless youth, wide-eyed, and with shoulder-length curls held neatly in place by a fillet. The depiction was surely inspired by passages in the *Florida* and *Apology*. The fillet alludes to the priesthood he mentions in *Florida* 16, while the artfully casual coiffure recalls both the beautiful long hair criticized by his opponents in the *Apology* and the flowing locks of his alter ego Apollo in *Florida* 3.[107] The portrait surely would have been more to Apuleius' taste than those in Trier and Constantinople, for it is one he might have commissioned himself: "Apuleius the Platonic philosopher as Apollo."

But of course Apuleius did not commission the portrait. The contorniate is a product of the complex social, intellectual, and religious world of late fourth-century Rome, and its iconography was selected by a fourth-century designer or patron to reflect contemporary interests. The image is by no means a generic portrait. It is not only unlike the previous representations of Apuleius that we know about (the bearded philosopher shown on the Trier ceiling and probably in his various statues as well), but also without parallel among the hundreds of real and imaginary portraits on the contorniates. No doubt one of the designer's motives for choosing Apuleius' verbal self-portait as his model in preference to the existing material representations and conventional philosopher portraits was that he knew Apuleius' text and wanted to advertise it. In the 390s Apuleius was of some interest in Rome, as we shall see in the next chapter. But he may have had something else in mind as

[105] The two descriptions are handled differently, and they are separated by over a hundred lines.

[106] There are two copies of the medal. See Alföldi, *Die Kontorniat-Medaillons* 1.1.32; 1.2: plate 37.12; 2: 101–2, 371, plate 214.12. See also Schefold, *Die Bildnisse*, 428–29.

[107] "Immo etiam docuit argumento suscepti sacerdotii summum mihi honorem Carthaginis adesse" *Fl.* 16.38. "Capillus ipse, quem isti aperto mendacio ad lenocinium decoris promissum dixere." *Apol.* 4.11 (and see Hunink, *Apuleius . . . de Magia* 2:22). "Crines eius praemulsis antiis et promulsis caproneis anteventuli et propenduli." *Fl.* 3.10.

well, for the likeness on the contorniate has a close parallel in an unexpected quarter—in fourth-century representations of Christ.

The iconography of Christ in this period is rich and complex, but the most important points for us are that the young, beardless Christ, like Apuleius, has Apollonian antecedents and that he is an otherworldly "intellectual wunderkind" (the phrase is Zanker's), who has aspects of both the philosopher and the wonder-worker.[108] Among the closest parallels to our Apuleius are a small statue of Christ in the Terme Museum in Rome dated around 380 and two figures of Christ (one in profile) on a column sarcophagus in the Vatican Museum dated around 370.[109] Both monuments show Christ holding a book roll. In both he appears with fine, youthful features, a tunic and pallium, and shoulder-length hair neatly covering his ears—just like Apuleius on the contorniate, except that Apuleius wears the fillet of a pagan priest.

The meaning and purpose of the contorniate will be explored more fully in the next chapter when we consider Apuleius' place in the world of late fourth-century Rome. For now it is sufficient to note that the portrait alludes both to the second-century text of Apuleius and to fourth-century Christian iconography, overlaying the image of "the Platonic philosopher as Apollo" with that of "the charismatic holy man and wonder-worker." The resulting multivalent picture of Apuleius finally reunites the personalities of philosopher and magician that had been separated throughout the fourth century.

"This Platonic Philosopher"

A much more complex and detailed picture of Apuleius appears in Augustine than in the literary or artistic works of his predecessors. Augustine's greater knowledge and greater interest are not surprising, for he

[108] See Zanker, *The Mask of Socrates,* 289–300 (for "intellectual wunderkind," see 299). See also Gerke, *Christus in der spätantiken Plastik*, 31–48; Dinkler, *Christus und Asklepios*, 35–37; Mathews, *The Clash of Gods,* 54–91.

[109] For the statuette (Rome, Museo Nazionale Romano 61565), see Zanker, *The Mask of Socrates,* 290–92, 390 n. 42, plate 157; Mathews, *The Clash of Gods,* 128–29; Gerke, *Christus in der spätantiken Plastik,* plates 56–59; Ensoli and La Rocca, *Aurea Roma,* 361–62. For the sarcophagus (Vatican S. Pietro I.677, formerly Lat. 174), see Deichmann, *Repertorium der christlich-antiken Sarkophage* 1.677 (pp. 274–77), plate 106; *The Vatican Collections,* 30–31; Gerke, 37–38, plates 53–54; Mathews, *The Clash of Gods*, fig. 68. The sarcophagus was much restored in the eighteenth century. See Bartoli, "Bartolomeo Cavaceppi," 36–45; see also the discussions and bibliographies in Koch, *Frühchristliche Sarkophage*, 320, 615; Deichmann, *Repertorium*; *The Vatican Collections*. For other parallels, see Deichmann, 1:45 (plate 15), 2:151 (plate 63), 2:152 (plate 64).

had much in common with Apuleius, including background, education, and youthful ambition. He was a fellow North African; he went to school in Apuleius' hometown, Madauros, and later studied and taught rhetoric at Carthage. In the period from about 412 to 427, we find him citing Apuleius as both a magician and a philosopher, taking for granted his identity with Lucius, revealing details of his career, and quoting and discussing his *De mundo* and *De deo Socratis*.[110]

Augustine differs from his literary predecessors in acknowledging both of Apuleius' personalities. He does not explicitly unite or integrate the magician and the philosopher (the two figures generally appear in separate contexts), but he implies a necessary relation between them, viewing Apuleius' magic as a corollary of his philosophy.[111] The link is Apuleius' work *De deo Socratis*, which sets out the Platonic conception of *daimones* as intermediaries between gods and mortals. For Augustine these *daimones* have no status as intermediaries. They are simply demons, evil spirits and purveyors of the magic arts, with which they delude and destroy their devotees. By professing to revere them, Apuleius is inevitably implicated in their supernatural activities. The connection between demons and magic, implied in Augustine's correspondence, becomes more important in the *City of God*, in which two books are devoted to refuting *De deo Socratis*.

Augustine pairs Apuleius with his fellow magician Apollonius three times in his correspondence, but he also refers to him as a magician without mentioning Apollonius in both the letters and the *City of God*.[112] In the letters the context is always the now familiar debate about Christian miracles and pagan magic. Unlike Lactantius and Jerome, however, Augustine is openly skeptical about Apuleius' powers and doubts that he could match the miracles related in scripture. In *Epistola* 102, probably written around 412,[113] Augustine responds to a pagan attack on the credibility of the story of Jonah and the whale. He implies that such a miracle would be too great for Apuleius and Apollonius and casts a slur in passing on the specious magic of demons:

> And yet if what has been written about Jonah were said to have been accomplished by Apuleius of Madauros or Apollonius of Tyana, whose

[110] See Hagendahl, *Augustine and the Latin Classics* 1:17–33, 2:680–89. See also O'Donnell, "Augustine's Classical Readings," 149–50. For discussion, see Moreschini, *Apuleio e il Platonismo*, 221–25, 240–54; Horsfall Scotti, "Apuleio tra magia e filosofia"; Hunink, "*Apuleius, qui nobis Afris Afer est Notior.*"

[111] But in *Ep*. 102.32 (see below) he seems to lump together philosophers and magicians.

[112] Apuleius and Apollonius: Augustine, *Ep*. 102.32, *Ep*. 136.1, *Ep*. 138.18. Apuleius alone: *Ep*. 137.13, *Ep*. 138.19, *Civ*. 8.19, *Civ*. 18.18.

[113] O'Donnell, "Augustine's Classical Readings," 149 n. 15.

> many wonders they boast of without any trustworthy authority (although demons do some things like the holy angels—not in truth but in appearance, not by wisdom but clearly by trickery)—if any such thing were told about these men, as I have said, whom they praise as magicians or philosophers, not derision but a cry of triumph would sound in their mouths.[114]

Augustine's skepticism continues in his famous correspondence of 412 with Marcellinus and Volusianus that led up to the *City of God*. In *Epistola* 137 to Volusianus, Augustine challenges the supporters of Apuleius and other magicians to consider whether their heroes, like the biblical prophets, had ever resurrected anyone from the dead.[115] In *Epistola* 136 Marcellinus asks Augustine to counter the arguments of pagans claiming that Apollonius, Apuleius, and other magicians had performed wonders greater than Christ's. The question is an old chestnut, Marcellinus admits, but he still hopes that Augustine will respond to it.[116] Although he considers the argument scarcely "worthy of derision," in *Epistola* 138 Augustine replies at length, again linking demons and magic in an aside.[117] In this letter he is particularly concerned with Apuleius, who, as he says, "as an African is better known to us Africans."[118] Quickly sketching Apuleius' biography, including his priesthood, marriage, lawsuit, and statue in Oea, Augustine notes that he in fact achieved little with all his magic powers, in spite of his excel-

[114] "Et tamen si hoc, quod de Iona scriptum est, Apuleius Madaurensis vel Apollonius Tyaneus fecisse diceretur, quorum multa mira nullo fideli auctore iactitant, quamvis et daemones nonnulla faciant angelis sanctis similia non veritate sed specie, non sapientia sed plane fallacia, tamen, si de istis, ut dixi, quos magos vel philosophos laudabiliter nominant, tale aliquid narraretur, non iam in buccis creparet risus, sed typhus." Augustine, *Ep*. 102.32. This passage is listed as fragment 46 of Porphyry's *Against the Christians*, but it does not mention Porphyry, and Benoit attributes the references to Apollonius and Apuleius to the general stock of anti-Christian polemic ("Le 'Contra Christianos' de Porphyre," 71).

[115] "Nam de magorum miraculis, utrum etiam mortuos suscitaverint, illi viderint, qui et Apuleium se contra magicarum artium crimina copiosissime defendentem conantur non accusando sed laudando convincere." Augustine, *Ep*. 137.13.

[116] "Quae quidem quaestio usque quaque detrita est et eorum super hac parte satis nota calliditas, qui dispensationem dominicae incarnationis infamant. Sed tamen etiam ego in hac parte, quia plurimis, quicquid rescripseris, profuturum esse confido, precator accesserim, ut ad ea vigilantius respondere digneris." [Augustine], *Ep*. 136.1.

[117] *Worthy of derision*: "Quis autem vel risu dignum putet, quod Apollonium et Apuleium ceterosque magicarum artium peritissimos conferre Christo vel etiam praeferre conantur?" Augustine, *Ep*. 138.18. *Demons and magic*: "Horum daemonum perversitatem atque fallaciam, per quos et magicae artes humanas mentes decipiunt." Ibid.

[118] "Apuleius enim, ut de illo potissimum loquamur, qui nobis Afris Afer est notior." Ibid. 138.19.

lent birth, education, and rhetorical skill: "In the matter of earthly success, that well-known magician was what he was able to be. From this it is clear that he was nothing more, not because he was unwilling but because he was unable."[119] He then delivers his knock-out punch: those who tell stories of Apuleius' magical powers are in fact contradicting their hero, for he emphatically denied being a magician.[120] The point is important to his argument, and he also makes it in another letter from the same correspondence.[121]

In the *City of God* Apuleius appears twice as a magician. Here Augustine is interested not in the debate about miracles and magic but in magic itself and Apuleius as its devotee.

In book 8 (composed around 415–17), one of his major purposes is to refute the demonology of *De deo Socratis*. Apuleius' denial of magic is again part of the argument, but now Augustine uses it differently: to point out what he judges to be both the hypocrisy and the inconsistency of Apuleius' position.[122] Since Augustine considers reverence for *daimones* tantamount to subscribing to magic, he regards Apuleius' denial as hypocritical (or at least fainthearted): by denying magic Apuleius renounced his faith. In *City of God* 8.19 Augustine contrasts his denial with the steadfastness of the Christian martyrs: "If he knew that these [magic arts], at least the ones that he was charged with, were divine and pious and consistent with the works of the divine powers, he ought not only to have confessed but to have professed them."[123] If he were punished for his belief by death, Augustine continues sarcastically, "the demons would pay his soul worthy recompense, since he did not fear to have his human life taken away for proclaiming their divine works."[124] Apuleius, however, was no martyr for his faith in demons; instead, we have the copious and eloquent defense of "this Platonic philosopher,"[125] as Augustine calls him, against the charge of magic. But Apuleius' denials

[119] "Quod ergo ad istam terrenam pertinet felicitatem, fuit magus ille, quod potuit. Unde apparet nihil eum amplius fuisse, non quia noluit, sed quia non potuit." Ibid.

[120] "Quamquam et adversus quosdam, qui ei magicarum artium crimen intenderant, eloquentissime se defendit. Unde miror laudatores eius, qui eum nescio qua fecisse miracula illis artibus praedicant, contra eius defensionem testes esse conari. Sed viderint, utrum ipsi verum perhibeant testimonium et ille falsam defensionem." Ibid.

[121] Ibid. 137.13. See n.115 above.

[122] See Horsfall Scotti, "Apuleio tra magia e filosofia," 307–10.

[123] "Quas [magicas artes] utique sibi obiectas si divinas et pias esse noverat et divinarum potestatum operibus congruas, non solum eas confiteri debuit, sed etiam profiteri." Augustine, *Civ*. 8.19.

[124] "Digna animae illius daemones dona rependerent, pro quorum divinis operibus praedicandis humanam vitam sibi adimi non timeret." Ibid.

[125] "Huius . . . philosophi Platonici." Ibid.

are not only self-serving. By his defense (which Augustine claims was based "on denying things that cannot be committed by an innocent man"),[126] Apuleius also revealed the flaw in the argument of *De deo Socratis*: since by condemning magic he also condemns the *daimones* who teach and promote it, how can he explain why they should be honored and esteemed?[127]

In *City of God* 18.18 (composed around 425) Augustine brings the connection between magic and demons into the discussion of metamorphosis. If such transformations ever took place, he argues, they would be mere illusions produced by the trickery of demons, who "change only in appearance things created by the true God so that they seem to be what they are not."[128] Apuleius is brought into the discussion, if not as a magician, at least as someone in touch with the magic arts, when Augustine relates his own acquaintance with present-day tales of metamorphosis. He says that he himself has heard (but does not believe) stories of men being transformed into animals and keeping their human reason, "just as Apuleius either declared or pretended happened to him in the books which he entitled the *Golden Ass*—that after taking a magical substance he became an ass, but with his mind remaining human."[129]

The passage is often quoted, since it is our earliest evidence for the title *Golden Ass*, which Augustine says was awarded by Apuleius himself.[130] But it is also the earliest evidence for the way in which the novel was understood by a specific, identifiable reader. Augustine clearly takes it as autobiography, whether real or fictitious; for although he denies the possibility of metamorphosis and doubts the sincerity of Apuleius' account, he assumes without question that Apuleius is claiming to relate his own experience—that he is, in fact, the Lucius of his novel. The assumption continued to be unquestioned for at least a thousand years, and the identity of Apuleius and Lucius was to play a major role in the interpretation of the *Golden Ass*. As we shall see, the identification was

[126] "Ea negando, quae non possunt ab innocente committi." Ibid.

[127] "At omnia miracula magorum, quos recte sentit esse damnandos, doctrinis fiunt et operibus daemonum, quos viderit cur censeat honorandos." Ibid.

[128] "Specie tenus, quae a vero Deo sunt creata commutant, ut videantur esse quod non sunt." Ibid. 18.18.

[129] "Sicut Apuleius in libris, quos asini aurei titulo inscripsit, sibi ipsi accidisse, ut accepto veneno humano animo permanente asinus fieret, aut indicavit aut finxit." Ibid.

[130] The title *Metamorphoses*, preserved in Florence, Biblioteca Laurenziana 68.2 (F), goes back at least to the end of the fourth century; see Pecere, "Esemplari con *subscriptiones*," 122–25. But the novel may have had a double title (*Metamorphoses* / *Asinus Aureus*); see Münstermann, *Apuleius,* 45–56; Harrison, *Apuleius*, 210 n. 1, with earlier references. For *Asinus Aureus* as an appropriate title, see Winkler, *Auctor & Actor*, 292–321; Bitel, "*Quis ille Asinus aureus?*"

so deeply ingrained that Renaissance scribes regularly awarded Apuleius the praenomen Lucius, and annotators generally called the novel's hero either Apuleius or Lucius Apuleius.[131] (There is no literary evidence for Apuleius' actual praenomen, and no praenomen appears in our oldest manuscripts, which call him Apuleius Madaurensis or Apuleius philosophus Platonicus or some combination of the two.)[132]

In Augustine's view Apuleius the magician is ineffective and incompetent because magic itself is no more than the deceptive trickery of demons; true marvels are brought about by piety and simple faith, not by magic.[133] But he has more respect for Apuleius the Platonic philosopher. Augustine praises the Platonists as supreme among pagan philosophers for their conception of god as the source of creation, truth, and felicity.[134] Apuleius, as a follower of the school—and one from Augustine's homeland, writing in Latin—enjoys a prominent place among them: "Among these [later Platonists], the Greeks Plotinus, Iamblichus, and Porphyry were renowned; but the African Apuleius was prominent as a famous Platonist in both languages—that is, in both Greek and Latin."[135]

But if Apuleius wins Augustine's praise for his Platonism, he also incurs his polemical criticism for the same reason. In Augustine's eyes the Platonists are guilty of a fundamental error: even though they entertain nearly Christian ideas about the supreme deity, they are nevertheless adherents of polytheism.[136] Apuleius' convenient exposition of the taxonomy of gods, *daimones*, and mortals in *De deo Socratis* gave Augustine the material on which to base his detailed point-by-point criticism of the Platonic view in books 8 and 9 of the *City of God*. He quotes Apuleius extensively and subjects his views to ruthless and biting polemic, reserving his greatest scorn for the Platonic conception of

[131] See p. 69 below.

[132] If Coarelli is right to identify the L. Apuleius Marcellus of Ostia with our Apuleius (see n. 5 above), we would have to say that Lucius actually was Apuleius' praenomen. But since the Renaissance scribes could have had no knowledge of the house at Ostia, we can be sure that they arrived at the praenomen from their autobiographical reading of the novel. For Apuleius' name in the oldest manuscripts, see n. 19 above.

[133] "Fiebant autem simplici fide atque fiducia pietatis, non incantationibus et carminibus nefariae curiositatis arte compositis, quam vel magian vel detestabiliore nomine goetian vel honorabiliore theurgian vocant." *Civ.* 10.9.

[134] "Isti Deo cognito reppererunt ubi esset et causa constitutae universitatis et lux percipiendae veritatis et fons bibendae felicitatis." *Civ.* 8.10.

[135] "Ex quibus sunt valde nobilitati Graeci Plotinus, Iamblichus, Porphyrius; in utraque autem lingua, id est et Graeca et Latina, Apuleius Afer extitit Platonicus nobilis." *Civ.* 8.12.

[136] "Sed hi omnes et ceteri eius modi et ipse Plato diis plurimis esse sacra facienda putaverunt." Ibid.

daimones as intermediaries between gods and mortals.[137] The Platonists maintain that the gods are too sublime to mingle with mortals.[138] Augustine replies that the demons are too evil and base to deserve either intercourse with gods or reverence from men. Moreover, he argues, the Platonic premise is wrong to begin with:[139] God in the person of Christ *does* mingle with mortals, and he is our only intermediary—divine in that he is equal to the father, and partaking in humanity in that he is like ourselves.[140]

Augustine pours scorn on Apuleius' demonology, but his long and detailed refutation indicates the importance he attributed to him. Apuleius figures prominently in the correspondence of 412 between Augustine in Hippo and Marcellinus and Volusianus in Carthage, and it seems quite possible that his works were being read and debated in Carthage by both Christians and pagans.[141] We can never be sure on this point, however, since the surviving correspondence treats Apuleius only in general terms and as a miracle-worker. But whether or not Marcellinus and Volusianus and their friends in Carthage had a manuscript of Apuleius, it is clear that Augustine in Hippo did, and that he studied it closely in preparation for writing the *City of God*.

His manuscript surely included *De deo Socratis*, which he quotes frequently and at length, and probably also *De mundo* (quoted once at some length in *City of God* 4.2). It is more difficult to be certain of the rest of its contents. Augustine knows the general outlines of the *Apology* (enough to make the obvious point, ignored by Jerome, that Apuleius denied being a magician), and he knows that Lucius was transformed into an ass in the *Metamorphoses*. But these are details that he could have easily picked up either as matters of general knowledge or from reading the two works in his youth; he did not need to possess a manuscript. He never mentions or cites *De Platone*, but it has been plausibly suggested that he used it "silently" in his treatment of Platonism in *City of God* 8.[142] He relates some biographical details not preserved in other

[137] See especially *Civ*. 8.20 and Hagendahl, *Augustine and the Latin Classics* 2:684 n. 3.

[138] "Nullus deus miscetur hominibus." Apuleius *DDS* 4.128 (translating Plato, *Symp*. 203A).

[139] "Non enim verum est, quod idem Platonicus ait Platonem dixisse: 'Nullus Deus miscetur homini.'" *Civ.* 9.16.

[140] "Hic est, sicut eum sancta scriptura praedicat, 'mediator Dei et hominum homo Christus Iesus,' de cuius et divinitate, qua patri est semper aequalis, et humanitate, qua nobis factus est similis, non hic locus est ut competenter pro nostra facultate dicamus." *Civ*. 9.17.

[141] See O'Donnell, "Augustine's Classical Readings," 149–50.

[142] Horsfall Scotti, "Apuleio tra magia e filosofia," 318–19 n. 96.

sources (*Epistola* 138), but it is not clear whether he found them in works now lost to us or whether they were known generally in North Africa. He also quotes in detail from the pseudo-Apuleian *Asclepius* (*City of God* 8.23–26).[143] This fourth-century work was transmitted with Apuleius' philosophical texts from an early period, which may or may not have been as early as the time of Augustine.[144] Augustine discusses it immediately after his refutation of Apuleius in *City of God* 8, but he clearly does not attribute it to Apuleius himself. Perhaps the *Asclepius* was included in his manuscript, but it seems just as likely that later readers, seeing it so closely linked with Apuleius in the *City of God*, incorporated it into their texts and brought it into the tradition. It appears immediately after *De deo Socratis* in the earliest witness to both the *Asclepius* and Apuleius' philosophical works, the ninth-century manuscript Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale Albert Ier 10054–10056.[145]

Apuleius was interesting to Augustine as a fellow North African and important to him as a Latin Platonist providing material for discussion and refutation in the *City of God*. But Augustine was even more important to Apuleius—at least to Apuleius the philosopher, for it was largely Augustine's interest that brought the philosophical works to the attention of later readers and secured their rich *fortuna* in northern Europe during the Middle Ages.[146] At this point, however, we must part company for a time with Apuleius the philosopher. After around 500 Apuleius' reception becomes two stories: the *fortuna* of the philosophical works (*De deo Socratis*, *De mundo*, *De dogmate Platonis*, and the rest) and the tale of the "literary" works (*Metamorphoses*, *Apology*, and *Florida*), which travel in quite different circles. It is the path of the latter that we will follow in the next chapter. First, however, we must see what happened to Apuleius the magician.

The Magician Vanishes

From Lactantius, Jerome, and Augustine it is clear that Apuleius' character as a magician was well established in late antiquity, and that

[143] See Hagendahl, *Augustine and the Latin Classics* 1:29–33, 2:687–89.

[144] For the date, see Horsfall Scotti, "Apuleio tra magia e filosofia," 313–15, with earlier bibliography.

[145] See Marshall in Reynolds, ed., *Texts and Transmission,* 16–18; Klibansky and Regen, *Die Handschriften*, 60–62; Munk Olsen, *L'Étude des auteurs classiques latins,* 13. We have no clues about the intermediate history of the *Asclepius;* according to Nock (*Corpus Hermeticum* 2:266), there are no testimonia to it between Augustine and the beginning of the twelfth century.

[146] Moreschini, *Apuleio e il Platonismo,* 254; Klibansky and Regen, *Die Handschriften,* 35–38.

stories of his feats were current in North Africa and perhaps elsewhere. But the details are elusive. Although Jerome refers to the charge from the *Apology* that Apuleius won his wife by sorcery, and Augustine recalls the magic transformation in the *Golden Ass*, none of the three Christian writers relates a single example of the popular stories he alludes to. The "many marvels" and "boundless wonders" that they say people (especially pagans) liked to talk about have entirely disappeared. Although we can scarcely blame the Christian apologists for not preserving them—after all, it was not their business to pass on tales of pagan magic—it would still be interesting to know exactly how Apuleius' carefully constructed persona was treated and transformed in oral tradition.

Apuleius' reputation as a magician survives into the Middle Ages, but the stories attached to his name are both late and anachronistic. The image that emerges from them is almost embarrassingly unimpressive. In the Latin west his powers are memorialized in a single example, a charm against nosebleeds preserved in the medical writings of Pseudo-Theodorus: "[You write] the following [in the sufferer's blood] on a sheet of paper and hold it up to his ear: 'Blood, Apuleius of Madaura commands you to stop your flow.' "[147]

More stories are told about him in Byzantium, where he always appears with either Apollonius of Tyana or Julian the Chaldaean or both at once. In the company of these more competent and famous magicians he is usually ineffective.

Apuleius' powers are essentially worthless in a story told in the *Quaestiones et Responsiones*, ascribed to the Byzantine theologian and saint, Anastasios of Sinai (d. after 700).[148] (The date and authorship of the work are uncertain, and some parts of it may be much later than the time of Anastasios.)[149] *Quaestio* 20 concerns magic: "As a consequence of what power do heretics and wicked men often prophesy and work marvels?"[150] The response provides several explanations, ending with the power of demons and the following story: "So too in the time of the emperor Domitian the magicians Julianus, Apollonius, and Apuleius performed wonders of different kinds, and one such performance

[147] "Item in chartas (sc. scribis) ad aurem ipsius Sanguis, imperat tibi Apuleius madaurensis, ut cursus tuus stet." *Additamenta Pseudo-Theodori ad Theodorum Priscianum* 276, 21–22. See also Önnerfors, "Magische Formeln," 207.

[148] For Anastasios, see Beck, *Kirche und theologische Literatur,* 442–47.

[149] Ibid., 444–45.

[150] 'Εκ ποίας δυνάμεως οί τὰ ἐναντία φρονοῦντες [καὶ πράττοντες] προφητεύουσι πολλάκις καὶ θαυματουργοῦσιν; Anastasios Sinaites, *Quaestiones et responsiones* (Patrologia Graeca 89: col. 517).

appears in the tales of our elders."[151] It seems that Domitian and the great men of his court had called upon the three magicians to save Rome from a terrible plague that was ravaging the city. Apuleius said that he would save a third of the city within fifteen days, and Apollonius promised to save a third within ten. Julian, however, "the best among them and much closer to the devil through this vanity,"[152] saved his third on the spot, as well as the thirds assigned to Apuleius and Apollonius. The story concludes with a list of various marvels performed by Apollonius with the help of demons. Apuleius is clearly the least important of the three magicians, for he is soon forgotten and all our attention is directed to Julian and Apollonius. The story may be an old one, as the author suggests, but if so, Apuleius is only a latecomer in it. The author does not know that the three magicians were not contemporaries (a fact that would have been obvious, at least in the West, as late as the fifth century). Apparently he does not know any stories about Apuleius' magic (if he did, we could expect to hear them, since he is so forthcoming with details about Julian and Apollonius). He does know of Apuleius' reputation as a magician, but that is perhaps all he knows. Apuleius is only a name, no doubt included to bring the number of contesting wonder-workers up to the canonical three.[153]

The eleventh-century polymath Michael Psellos pairs Apuleius with Julian in two stories. In one he characterizes Apuleius as grounded in mere matter and Julian as "more intelligent and godlike."[154] Accordingly, Apuleius' amulets and spells are unable to restrain the wild animals harassing Trajan's army, while Julian, unaided by either spells or amulets, gets rid of them altogether. In the other, Apuleius is more successful than usual.[155] He is a talented theurgist, able to bind and loose the chthonic gods with charms and spells, and he even forces one not to consort with his fellow theurgist Julian. But even here Apuleius seems less impressive than his colleague. Apuleius' power is a negative one that interferes with a single rival, while Julian creates a magic image that routs the entire Dacian army with thunderbolts.

[151] 'Ωσαύτως δὲ καὶ ὁ Ἰουλιανὸς, καὶ Ἀπολλώνιος, καὶ Ἀπολέϊος οἱ μάγοι, ἐπὶ Δομετιανοῦ τοῦ βασιλέως, διαφόρους φαντασίας εἰργάσαντο. ὧν μία ἐργασία τοιαύτη φαίνεται ἐν τοῖς τῶν ἀρχαιοτέρων ἀνδρῶν διηγήμασι. Ibid. (cols. 524–25).

[152] ὁ ἀκροθήνιος παρ' αὐτοὺς, καὶ πλεῖον ἐγγίων τῷ διαβόλῳ διὰ τῆς ματαιότητος. Ibid. (col. 525).

[153] Three is of course the usual number in folktales, but we might also remember the three rival philosophers (Apollonius, Euphrates the Stoic, and Dio Chrysostom) before Vespasian in Philostratus, *Vita Apoll.* 5.27–38.

[154] νοερώτερος καί θειότερος. Michael Psellos, *Scripta minora* 2:102.

[155] Michael Psellos, *Philosophica minora* 1.3, ll. 137–47.

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Like his fellow sophists, Apuleius was a performer as well as a writer. He worked hard to make himself interesting to his audience, creating what he hoped would be a distinctive and memorable image—not only with his words but also with his delivery and performance, and probably with his appearance and mannerisms as well. To a large extent his efforts were successful. The impressions he made on his contemporaries and immediate posterity have not survived, but they were evidently strong enough to preserve his memory—or rather the memory of the image he had so carefully created—to the time of Lactantius in the early fourth century and at least to the beginning of the fifth century, nearly 250 years after his death.

Apuleius' writings undoubtedly played a significant part in the preservation of his image as a philosopher. The designer of the Trier ceiling knew at least the story of Cupid and Psyche. The designer of the contorniate knew at least the *Apology* and some of the *Florida*. Augustine carefully studied *De deo Socratis* and had probably read the *Metamorphoses* and *Apology* in his youth. But stories about Apuleius the magician evidently circulated independently of his writings. A local legend seems to have grown up around him, created by his ambiguous manipulation of smoke and mirrors in the *Apology* and encouraged by his stories of magic in the *Metamorphoses* and perhaps even by his own behavior.

It is impossible to tell how long such stories circulated and whether any were ever written down. They no doubt gained some renewed interest during the religious controversies of the fourth century. (We know that Augustine's friends in Carthage were still being regaled with them by their pagan rivals as late as 412.) But with the end of pagan polemic, they were no longer useful; the oral tradition, perhaps not strong to begin with, was lost, and pagan writings were destroyed. Apuleius' image as a magician, however, lived on, preserved like a fly in amber by references in the Christian apologists and disembodied both from his writings and from the ancient tales of his marvels. Now only a name, "Apuleius the magician" became a useful "extra" for Byzantine writers to include in their anachronistic stories of Julian and Apollonius.