

Apuleius Madaurensis Metamorphoses Book I: Text, Introduction and Commentary. Edited by W.H. KEULEN. Groningen Commentaries on Apuleius. Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 2007. Pp. 569. Cloth, €125.00. ISBN 978-90-6980-154-4.

Wytse Keulen's commentary on the first book of Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* is an impressive example of careful, painstaking and thoughtful research. It is the latest volume to appear in the *Groningen Commentaries on Apuleius* series and is in line with the fine quality of the previous publications. The contents include a preface, introduction, note to the text, the Latin text of Book I, commentary, two appendices, bibliography and indices (*index rerum*, *index nominum et verborum*, and *index locorum*). The "note to the text" explains that, like previous volumes of the *Groningen Commentaries*, this volume uses the third edition of Helm's 1931 text, which was reprinted with *Addenda* and *Corrigenda* in 1955. In his commentary, Keulen (hereafter K.) adds capitals at the beginning of sentences, uses Robertson's paragraph numbers, and varies from Helm's text at 34 points (listed on pp. 50-1).

The work consists of four major sections. The Introduction covers a wide variety of topics (not listed as presented by Keulen): the programmatic nature of Book I; the structure of the novel (spatio-temporal, overall, framing tale, inner tale); a plot summary; *Onos*; rhetorical program of the novel; rhetoric, genre, contemporary literary education; the narrator; landscape, language, and literature; Lucius' *urbanitas*; fictional content; *fabula Graecanica*; "trash" in Antonine literature (*Milesiae*, *quisquillae*, *nugamenta*); "Fiktive Mündlichkeit"; satire; hospitality (inns, use and misuse); storytellers (*πολυπράγμων* and *λογοποιός*); symposiastic banter and religious storytelling; murder; "sexual exhaustion" and "wet rituals"; and a scrutiny of Lucius as aristocratic hero and flattering parasite. The Latin text of Book I, which is nine pages long, follows. The thorough, 405-page commentary explicates almost every question, complexity or issue that arises in the text.

If one were to quibble with the Introduction, one might object that while Keulen writes that it is "meant as a guide for the reader, to help her/him place the text and the commentary in a wider interpretative context" (p. 3), the entries are at times too concise, at times confusing, and leave the reader wanting more. For example, in section "1.3 Book 1 and the *Onos*," K. notes that the "correspondences between Apuleius and the *Onos* begin in ch. 2, where the opening of Lucius' narrative is roughly equivalent to the first chapter of the Greek epitome" (p. 7). The thread of the Greek text is picked up

CJ ONLINE BOOK REVIEW

again in 21–26 and the sections “more or less correspond with *Onos* 2–3.” Relying heavily on H. Van Thiel’s 1971–1972 *Der Eselroman* (pp. 63–7), K. observes that both texts have a “strong atmosphere of comedy” in them. But in the commentary section scant reference is made to the *Onos* again for those passages in *Metamorphoses* 21–24. Perhaps K. thinks that the work of Van Thiel and others is sufficient in the comparison between the Latin and Greek texts. Or it may be that he is so focused and methodologically centered on trying to cover every challenging word or phrase that he loses sight of the some of the content in his Introduction. This is not so much a criticism, however, as proof of the meticulous detail with which K. covers Book I. More commentaries should take a similar approach.

The commentary itself can only be said to be remarkable. I spent weeks pouring through every section of the commentary and found nothing that appeared unusual or incorrect. For each section K. supplies the Latin text in question, an English translation and background information, and then offers an in-depth clarification of the passage using a myriad of old and new scholarship. All in all, this is an admirable piece of work.

As for the two appendices (“The figure of the *ianitor*,” and “The repulsive sounds of a stinking old cynic: *rancidus* [1, 26, 6 (24, 13)]”), in the former, K. shows how “the performance of the *ianitor* serves the aims of the text to entertain through sudden reversals ... it elucidates his role as a comic figure by comparison with literary antecedents and parallels” (p. 468). The *ianitor* is a figure from the comic stage, inverts roles and crosses boundaries, serves as a figure of transition, should not be relied upon for authority, and is the instrument of fortune. In the second appendix, K. studies the literal and figurative connotations of the adjective *rancidus* (physically, stylistically and as part of satire).

This is a terrific book. The bibliography is up-to-date and includes most, if not all, relevant scholarship at the time of print. The text will have more appeal more to the graduate student than the undergraduate, but it will serve the *Metamorphoses* researcher tremendously.

EDMUND P. CUEVA
University of Houston-Downtown