

Claudio Moreschini, *Apuleius and the Metamorphoses of Platonism*. Turnhout:

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This is a mighty book, and greatly to be welcomed. Claudio Moreschini has been for many years concerned to do justice to the achievements of Apuleius, and has published an accumulation of at least twelve substantial contributions on this subject to date. The present work is in the nature of a definitive summing-up of his position—though we hope it will not be his last word! It is indeed almost an encyclopedia of Apuleian studies, as he reviews and criticises the positions of all his predecessors and contemporaries—such figures as Barra, Helm, Hijmans, Hunink, Regen, Reitzenstein, Sandy, Tatum, Walsh, and Winkler are evaluated, duly praised, and found wanting in various respects. I myself come out pretty well on the whole, but am scolded (p. 25) for describing Apuleius ‘in a reductive manner’ as a rhetorician rather than a philosopher. To that I would plead guilty, though I don’t feel that Apuleius is any the worse for it. It is just that, like Cicero, he is not a ‘professional’ philosopher—nor is he pretending to be (except perhaps in the *Apologia*, where he is concerned to prove that he is not a magician, and describes himself as ‘philosophus Platonicus’!).

The work is divided into eight substantial chapters, with an introduction and a conclusion. Chapter 1, ‘Popular Philosophy and Platonism: The *Apology* and the *Florida*’, provides an excellent discussion of Apuleius in his rhetorical mode, with special attention to his use of Platonic philosophy in that capacity, including his ‘sanitizing’ of the magical practices that he is being accused of in his trial at Oea.

In chapter 2, ‘The *Metamorphoses*: The Novel of a Platonic Philosopher’, he is equally concerned to emphasise the philosophical elements and background of Apuleius’ novel, as against the more purely ‘narratological’ treatments given to it by a series of modern commentators, such as Perry, Sandy, Winkler, Tatum et al. I find this most persuasive, my only demurral being that I noted no reference to the fact (if it is still accepted as a fact; I may be out of date here) that Apuleius borrowed his plot from a previous novel, *The Ass*, by a certain Lucius of Patras (of which we have a spin-off included among the works of Lucian). This would really support Moreschini’s position, it seems to me, in that Apuleius would be not inventing this story, but rather borrowing an existing plot for his own Platonizing purposes.

The case is somewhat different for the embedded story of Cupid and Psyche, to which a separate chapter (3) is devoted, and of which he discusses in turn

the symbolic, folkloric, religious, and literary interpretations, and then seeks, with considerable success, to reconcile them under the umbrella of Platonism.

In chapter 4, he turns to an examination of the *De Deo Socratis*, and provides a comprehensive study of Apuleius' theory of daemons, and the personal daemon in particular, against the background of Middle Platonic theories in general, and in particular those of Plutarch, while emphasising that the *De Deo* is a thoroughly rhetorical work, fitting well into the category of public lectures in the Second Sophistic period.

This leads him, in chapter 5 ('Rhetoric and Philosophy in Apuleius' Times'), to embark on a general survey of the employment of philosophical themes by such figures as Fronto, Aulus Gellius, Aelianus, Aelius Aristides and others, though without making any specific connections with Apuleius himself. Gellius is the person most likely to have known him, but no specific links are forthcoming. The chapter is most useful, however, in establishing a background.

In chapters 6-8, which may be regarded as the philosophical core of the book (pp. 187-334), Moreschini turns to, first (ch. 6), an account of all the philosophical works attributed to Apuleius. On this he has much of interest to say. On the matter of chronology, while recognising that all conclusions must be hypothetical, he takes the *Apologia* to be an early work, the *De Deo Socratis* middling, and the *De Platone* late—though he dismisses the 'son' Faustinus, to whom the second book is dedicated, as a literary fiction, with what seems to me unnecessary scepticism. The *De Mundo* he accepts as genuine, but not the *De Interpretatione*, to which he devotes a penetrating and most useful discussion (it is more likely to be a fourth-century production).

Chapter 7 is devoted to Apuleius' treatment of the 'physical' part of Platonism, in Book I of the *De Platone*, covering such questions as God, Matter, the Ideas, the Cosmic Soul and cosmogony, the creation of the world, providence and fate, time, and the human soul. In all cases, Moreschini compares the position of Apuleius most usefully with other Middle Platonic sources, notably Alcinous' *Didaskalikos*, Plutarch and Atticus, and Calcidius, as well as doxographic and Christian sources. The section on God is by far the longest (pp. 219-49), as it involves the topic of the supreme god as well as secondary deities.

Chapter 8 provides a similar survey of Apuleius' ethical doctrines, dealing with such topics as primary and secondary goods, man and *oikeiosis*, virtue as a mean, virtues and vices, goods and ends, the perfect sage, likeness to God, and 'following God'. There is also a brief intervention concerning rhetoric from a philosophical point of view, answering to Apuleius' treatment of it in II 8-9.