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This contribution to Apuleian studies is the seventh commentary in the series *Groningen Commentaries on Apuleius* (GCA) produced by the Groningen working group. The group and Egbert Forsten have provided yet another handsomely produced book which is replete with detail. Each chapter is preceded by a one-line summary. An English translation follows the Latin sentence.

The method of the editors is clearly explained in the Introduction (1–14). Reference to Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse* (English trans., 1980) on p. 4 of the Introduction indicates to all that study of narrative strategies is substantively the approach of the editors. The questions that this method prompts — for example, how the tale is focalized through the old woman who narrates it to Charite, and the problematic position of Lucius the narrator of the *Metamorphoses* who is not Apuleius except for a little moment in Book 11 — form the background to this reading of *Cupid and Psyche*. Apart from this the editors do not favour one interpretative approach over another. The introductory pages are tied to the commentary that follows. Readers looking forward to extended reviews of areas such as the reception of *Cupid and Psyche* in later literature, the Platonic interpretation of the story, or anything at all on Freudian and Jungian interpretations of the tale will not find it because this work unapologetically professes to offer ‘a close scrutiny of the text’ (3, n. 8). This indeed is what the 518 pages of commentary deliver both in their philological exactitude and in their allegiance to the narratological theory of Genette. It may seem odd that a mere sixteen or so pages of Latin text as printed here can generate such riches but that is Apuleius. It is correctly noted that *Cupid and Psyche* is a *mise-en-abyme*, a miniature replica of the whole novel where Psyche’s situation mirrors Lucius’. Though this is uncontroversial it is wise and is a simple springboard from which to launch a commentary *desultoriae scientiae stilo*.

Just how proficient and clear the commentary is can be observed in the notes to the oracle of Apollo which Psyche’s unfortunate father consults in Book 4 for example. The commentary has to advert not only to the poetic composition and metre of the oracle but also to the joke of the Latin-speaking oracle, the Milesian *conditor* (*quis ille?*), and then to an interesting discussion on the inherent narratological problem. The scholars are (as is ever the case with scholars) undecided on the actual narrator meant here but the editors cleave judiciously to their method of close reading and refer us to up-to-date scholarship. Elsewhere, as to be expected, there is much on narrative speed, focalization and ekphrasis, an abundance which a close scrutiny of the text rewards (for example on 5.6 (107, 28–9) and on 5.23 (121, 9)). There might be more said in the commentary on the links between the embedded tale and the rest of the *Metamorphoses* and for example on the motif of *curiositas*.

There is a useful plot summary in the Introduction and a rejection of Schlam’s divisions, though much else of what he says regarding reading the tale as literature rather than folk tale is happily embraced. There are interesting directions intuited on the idea of *katabasis*. The editors offer their own analysis of the structure of the tale that places the *katabasis* of Psyche right in the centre of the *Metamorphoses* as a whole.

The commentary aims to provide the user with the tools to appreciate the ‘playful reading’ they advocate. Apuleius’ rich vocabulary and language with ‘word play’ and general sophistic virtuosity invite such an approach. But for Apuleius, being labelled a sophist would have been no different to being labelled a Platonic philosopher. This is his description of himself. Admittedly, if one believes he is a sophist, one will be disinclined to believe that he is a philosopher, especially if he announces that fact himself. However, if one believes he is a sophist, one might also appreciate the ambiguity in his direction in the Preface of the novel to pay attention and be delighted. The latter part of this injunction has always been the spur to interpretation of the text as light-hearted play. However it is play to some purpose because, as a philosopher dedicated to Plato, Apuleius uses myth to explain much of his teaching: *lector intende*. His teaching centres on that at which he is most expert — discourse. On *Plato and his Doctrine* and *On the God of Socrates* illustrate Apuleius’ preoccupation with discourse in a philosophical theoretical way maintaining the existence of two types of discourse: one useful for contemplating the highest good, the second a science of flattery useful for entertaining (for example: DDS 124; 126–7, DP 194; 200; 230–1).

*Cupid and Psyche* is practical illustration of his ideas regarding the play of discourse, and the use of discourse too as a — not necessarily the — method of reaching truth. Love and the soul, matters of the highest philosophical import in Plato's *Symposium* and *Phaedrus*, are treated of in a *bella fabula* narrated by a donkey focalized through a drunken old woman. While it is perfectly acceptable and even necessary to treat of *Cupid and Psyche* as a *bella fabula*, the enjoyment of the reader will surely not be lessened by reading it as a *fabula* written to a serious purpose. The editors rightly point out that you will look in vain for a 'close allegorical correspondence' between Plato's myth of the soul and Apuleius' literary creation (282). The impossibility of the donkey looking for a pen to write the story down illustrates the difficulty of using discourse such as the one used in the written story now just read as an instrument for philosophical inquiry. The fact remains that for Apuleius this instrument is all we have with which to seek the truth in a sublunar world. Apuleius sweetens probably more than the rim of his draught of philosophy with the honeyed 'wordplay' in the *Metamorphoses*. This is why the commentary is successful in its emphasis on close reading, though it still persists in placing the Platonic/philosophic approach in total opposition to the 'playful' approach. There is no reason why the two approaches must be mutually exclusive. The commentary does acknowledge where a Platonic interpretation is possible for example on Cupid as a *daimon* (286).

Psyche's trials in Book 6 are acutely observed. References offered range from archaisms in the language of Pan to intertexts from Plautus and New Comedy to features of style ekphrasis mainly, and make this section of the commentary a treasure trove. The Venus ekphrasis where she is described as an epic goddess ascending to heaven — not like the comic figure of the last chapters of Book 5 — or scratching her ear angrily as she contemplates Psyche are commented upon not only by adding interesting parallels but also with sensitivity to the text as literature. The editors justify their promise of close reading too in respect of Psyche's *katabasis* (6.17–20) and the chapters preceding and following where the descent and all its epic and comic intertexts among many other things are admirably studied.

This commentary is a most valuable and erudite addition to Apuleian scholarship. The plain neutral style of the whole declares it to be the product of many hands while the closely-packed information displays the power of many minds. The Latin text is Helm's Teubner (1931) with a page and a half of variations noted before the start of the commentary proper. The chapter numbers are supplemented with the paragraph numbers of Robertson's Budé (1956) in brackets: 5, 22 (120, 2–7). Though it looks cumbersome this makes for the required exactness. The Bibliography is split usefully into several sections, Sections III 'Commentaries on the *Metamorphoses*, mentioned in our commentary' and V 'Apuleian Studies from GCA 2000 onward' being especially welcome. An Index Verborum, an Index Rerum along, with an extensive, and, as far as checked, accurate Index Locorum complete this indispensable commentary.

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G. JENSSON, *THE RECOLLECTIONS OF ENCOLPIUS: THE SATYRICA OF PETRONIUS AS MILESIAN FICTION* (Ancient Narrative Supplementum 2). Groningen: Barkhuis, 2004. Pp. xii + 327. ISBN 90-807390-8-1. €65.00.

One approaches any book that mentions 'road novel', 'Cynic popular philosophy', and 'Milesian fiction' on the dust-jacket with some trepidation. The purpose of the book is to base an interpretation of the *Satyrica* on the oft-mocked authority of Encolpius who is identified by Jenson as the speaker of his own 'recollections'. The process is fraught with difficulties not least the fragmentary nature of the text. J. sees himself as being engaged in assembling the fragments like a jigsaw puzzle, and it emerges that it is more than fragments he is assembling, for his thesis is that the *Satyrica* is 'essentially a hybrid, a Latin adaptation of a Greek work written in a multiplicity of discourse types' (292). This book, handsomely produced by Barkhuis publishing, appears as *Ancient Narrative Supplementum 2*. There is a short Preface and the book is divided into three parts: Part I 'Narrative' (3–84), Part II 'Story' (85–188), and Part III 'Genre' (189–301). Each of the three is further subdivided under separate chapter headings.

Chapter 1.1 'Text, Context and Identity' surveys editions of the *Satyrica* and also the literary interpretations that have arisen from these editions over time. This excavation of earlier and mostly German nineteenth-century scholarship is one of the major contributions of this book. The fragmentary nature of the *Satyrica* has resulted in arbitrariness by editors in ascribing *lacunae* in the text. Müller has recognized this and J. maintains there are less gaps in his 1995