QUIS ILLE?

A. KAHANE, A. LAIRD (edd.): *A Companion to the Prologue of Apuleius'* Metamorphoses. Pp. xv + 325. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001. Cased, £50. ISBN: 0-19-815238-8.

In its 325 pages this book contains twenty-four discussions of the first 119 words of Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*. Classicists are no strangers to such monstrous proportions between text and commentary, but this is no word-by-word trawl through the text (though it does include a commentary, by Stephen Harrison and Michael Winterbottom); instead we have twenty-four snapshots, each catching this arch and playful text from a different angle. The book also provides a snapshot of the current state of classical literary scholarship, and Apuleius' text certainly offers a good 'birdy' for all to watch. Narratology, speech and writing, multiculturalism, intertextuality, reader-response—Apuleius' prologue engages all these current interests, and more. But it also invites more old-fashioned projects, such as R. G. M. Nisbet's identification of the constituent cola of this exquisitely written prologue, served up without comment. In general, though, the contributors, who have been chosen to reflect a wide range of interests and approaches, rise to the challenge of combining detail with the big picture. Even Jonathan Powell's quaintly titled 'Some Linguistic Points in the Prologue' comes to a (tentative) conclusion.

Like all classical texts, *Metamorphoses* has its canonical problems. The most significant of these, the question of who is speaking, is raised by the text itself when the speaker is interrupted by the words 'Quis ille?' At the conference from which these papers originated, the motion 'This House Believes that the Speaker of the Prologue is Lucius' was put to the vote. There were twelve votes for, but more abstentions (nine) than votes against (four); nowadays we are more likely to celebrate than to solve the 'problems', and Apuleius' prologue satisfies our postmodern appetite for aporia and paradox with considerable relish. Anton Bitel points out that the prologue's speaker equivocates between introducing a fictional and a historical narrative, and Ken Dowden, noting the proliferation of allusions to different prologic models, would prohibit us from trying to identify the speaker.

If the speaker cannot be easily identified, nor can the voice that interrupts him (for his sex is not in doubt) with the words 'Quis ille?'. For Niall Slater, the question is put into the mouth of the reader by the author (pp. 218–9): if we have not already asked this question, we should have. Irene De Jong argues that it is addressed by the reader to an anonymous third person, and that the prologue is a conversation, anticipating the triangular first scene of the narrative (p. 205). Ahuvia Kahane sees in the *ille* 'the ultimate acknowledgement of the otherness of written voices' (p. 238); like Don Fowler, he focuses on the way the prologue problematizes the relation between the written and the spoken. But Harrison and Winterbottom would evade the question altogether by emending 'Quis ille?' to 'qui sim (paucis accipe)'.

In his reply to 'Quis ille?', the prologue's speaker contents himself with describing his linguistic education. He claims to be a native of Greece who has acquired Latin as a foreign language, though in Apuleius' case Latin would have come before Greek. Simon Swain contributes an interesting discussion of the ideological value of bilingualism in this period. Andrew Laird, Paula James, and Mark Edwards note the military language used by the speaker of his acquisition of both languages. Does this suggest that the book's African author sees himself as an invader of the cultural centre? It is only in the final book that the narrator (re)identifies himself as

© The Classical Association, 2003

https://doi.org/10.1093/cr/53.1.107 Published online by Cambridge University Press

'Madaurensis' (11.27), but, if I might make my own contribution here, perhaps we can add a third language to the prologue's Greek and Latin. Winkler suggested that the speaker's apology for being a 'rudis locutor' (of Latin) contains a pun on *rudens* (John J. Winkler, *Auctor and Actor: A Narratological Reading of Apuleius' Golden Ass* [Berkeley, 1985], pp. 196–9). The bray of Lucius the ass may allude to the African tongue that lies outside the charmed circle of Greco-Roman culture, to sink into which means a change of being and a loss of power (*Met*. 3.29, compare *Apology* 98). Another cultural context to which the prologue definitely does allude is Egypt, summoned up by the 'Egyptian papyrus' and the 'Nilotic reed (pen)' that anticipate Lucius' conversion to Isis. Yun Lee Too argues that, with its welter of cultural contexts, the prologue demonstrates that 'origins' is an arbitrary idea, and Katherine Clarke notes the way that Rome, center of the world, is consigned to the exotic and marginal.

A separate section of the volume is devoted to intertexts, but the subject of intertextuality crops up throughout. Michael Trapp addresses the allusions to Plato's *Phaedrus*, which he claims is invoked only for the speaker to argue with its warning against seductive pleasure. Emily Gowers suggests that the prologue's opening word, 'At', pits the author's seduction of the reader against the assaults of a satirist, conjured up by allusions to Persius. Against my initial resistance, I am almost convinced that Persius is an intertext here, but Bruce Gibson offers no equivalent pay-off for glimpsing Theocritus in the background. Warren Smith makes the connection to a contemporary religious text, pointing out, among other things, the striking similarity between the end of this work and that of Acts of the Apostles, though it is not clear what he wants to make of the similarity. Andrew Laird makes a provocative argument that the prologue casts itself as an epitaph and that the work's end is in its beginning.

This is a very rewarding volume, and if there is something pleasantly absurd about the enterprise, that is not inappropriate. After all, one of the issues of the prologue is how it casts the speaker's relation to the reader. As John Henderson sums it up: 'He pins tails; we are donkeys . . .' (p. 191).

University of California, Berkeley WILLIAM FITZGERALD

A NEW TEXT OF AMMIANUS

G. VIANSINO (ed., trans.): *Ammiano Marcellino:* Storie. *Vol. 1: libri XIV–XVII; vol. 2: libri XVIII–XXIV.* (Classici Greci e Latini 131, 134.) Pp. ccxi + 433, 651. Milan: Arnaldo Mondadori, 2001. Paper, €12.39 each. ISBN: 88-04-49084-5, 88-04-49683-5.

In scholarly studies of Ammianus Marcellinus and, for that matter, the protagonist of his *Res Gestae*, Julian the Apostate, Italy has a long and prosperous tradition. The names of Pighi, Selem, Neri, Caltabiano, Prato, Marcone, and others spring easily to mind. As to the text of the historian, many have benefited from Maria Chiabo's *Index verborum Ammiani Marcellini* (Hildesheim, 1983) or looked up a particular word in Giovanni Viansino's idiosyncratic *Ammiani Marcellini rerum gestarum Lexicon* (Hildesheim, 1985), which, in spite of its errors and the at times curious structure of its individual lemmata, can often be quite helpful. Not surprisingly, Italian renderings of the *Res Gestae* have not been lacking; the best known outside Italy are the one made by Antonio Selem for the UTET-collection (Turin, 1973^2, with the Latin text on the opposite pages) and Matilde Caltabiano's translation in the series 'I classici di

© The Classical Association, 2003

https://doi.org/10.1093/cr/53.1.107 Published online by Cambridge University Press