

A Book-like self. Ovid and Apuleius

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The importance of the Ovidian intertext for Apuleius' novel has been increasingly underlined by recent scholarship. However, by relying on the obvious identity of the titles, research seems almost always to have focussed on the relationship between the two authors' major works.¹ This is of course an interesting and fruitful topic, but its prominence ends up by obscuring other possible interactions: in particular, Ovid's exile poetry has always remained beyond the horizons of Apuleian scholars. In this paper, I shall try to demonstrate that the *Tristia* offer a valuable interpretative key for our comprehension of some important passages of Apuleius' novel.

The first and one of the most stimulating problems of the *Metamorphoses* (a novel that John Winkler regarded as a single, long riddle²) has always been the identity of the prologue speaker, the *ego* that appears in its very first line (*at ego tibi...*). The text is ambiguous, and it is difficult to decide whether we should imagine the prologue as spoken by Lucius, Apuleius himself, both of them, or even by an independent personified *Prologus*. Perhaps, it is even impossible, or methodologically incorrect, to give a single answer to this question, and Ken Dowden is right in taking up a cautious position: 'the Prologue is polyvalent and it is a fallacy to ask which one identity we should adopt to the exclusion of others... No one shall seek to identify the speaker (singular) of Apuleius' Prologue. There shall, however, be no prohibition on *adding* identities'.³ An

¹ See the convenient review by E. Finkelpearl in *Lustrum* 42 (2000) (A Review of Scholarship on Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* 1970-1998), esp. pp. 209-211. Cf. also Finkelpearl (1998) esp. pp. 189-194; and P. James, 'From Prologue to Story: Metaphor and Narrative Construction in the Opening of the *Metamorphoses*', in Kahane – Laird (2001) esp. 258-259 (connections with Ovid's Arachne).

² Winkler (1985) e. g. 227: 'there are many analyses that present thoughtful and interesting answers to the basic puzzle of the book, and as such they are in the first place a testimony to the fact that the *A[sinus] A[ureus]* is a puzzle'.

³ K. Dowden, 'Prologic, Predecessors, and Prohibitions', in Kahane-Laird (2001) 129. Of course, Kahane-Laird (2001) as a whole offers a large choice of different critical views. The very useful and thorough commentary by W. H. Keulen, *Apuleius*

attractive hypothesis, formulated by Stephen Harrison,⁴ identifies the prologue speaker with the book itself, the *Metamorphoses* the reader has in his hands or is listening to. I am not going to break Dowden's 'law' and accept this as an absolute truth, but I'd like to examine briefly Harrison's theory, and if possible to reinforce it, since it involves an interesting relationship with some Ovidian texts. This discussion, I hope, will also shed a new light on the overall Ovidian colour of Apuleius' prologue, a feature to which I will come back again at the end.

After the decisive and intriguing question *quis ille?*⁵ the prologue speaker describes his move from Greece to Rome, and from Greek to Latin.⁶ This description is well suited to the character Lucius, whose adventures begin in Greece and come to an end in Rome, but even more to the book of the *Metamorphoses*, a Latin adaptation of a (lost) Greek original. Of course Lucius, as a 'real' person, could hardly claim to have both Athens, Corinth, and Sparta as his *vetus prosapia* ('ancient stock'), so such a multiple geographical reference could very

Madaurensis. Metamorphoses, Book I, 1-20, (diss. Groningen 2003) appeared too late to be fully considered in this study.

⁴ Harrison (1990). The paper also contains a convenient doxography.

⁵ In my opinion, the question is not uttered by a mysterious third interlocutor (so e.g. S. Harrison – M. Winterbottom, 'The Prologue to Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*. Text, Translation, and Textual Commentary', in Kahane-Laird, (2001) 12). We can more simply imagine that the prologue speaker himself, with an *occupatio*, prevents a question that his audience could ask him (just as in 10,33,4: *sed nequis indignationis meae reprehendat impetum secum sic reputans...*; cf. also 9,30,1 and 11,23,5). Winkler (1985) 195 states instead that 'a reader is here imagined as interrupting the author'.

⁶ *Apul. Met.* 1,1,3-4: 'Who am I? I will tell you briefly. Attic Hymettos and Ephyrean Isthmos and Spartan Taenaros, fruitful lands preserved for ever in even more fruitful books, form my ancient stock. There I served my stint with the Attic tongue in the first campaign of childhood. Soon afterwards, in the city of the Latins, as a newcomer to Roman studies I attacked and cultivated their native speech with laborious difficulty and no teacher to guide me' ('*Quis ille?*' *Paucis accipe. Hymettos Attica et Isthmos Ephyrea et Taenaros Spartiatica, glebae felices aeternum libris felicioribus conditae, mea vetus prosapia est; ibi linguam Atthidem primis pueritiae stipendiis merui. Mox in urbe Latia advena studiorum Quiritium indigenam sermonem aerumnabili labore nullo magistro praeunte aggressus excolui*). The English translations adopted in this paper are from the Loeb collection: J. A. Hanson (1989), Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*; A. L. Wheeler (1988), Ovid's *Tristia*; G. S. Showerman (1986), Ovid's *Amores*; F. J. Miller (1984), Ovid's *Metamorphoses*; D. R. Shackleton Bailey (1993), Martial; E. M. Sanford – W. McAllenn Green (1965), Augustine's *De Civitate Dei*; D. Magie (1953), *Historia Augusta*.

well allude to the Greek origin of the tale of the ass.⁷ The transition from Greek to Latin has not reached perfection, and immediately the speaker apologizes for his language: *en ecce praefamur veniam, siquid exotici ac forensis sermonis rudis locutor offendero* ('so, please, I beg your pardon in advance if as a raw speaker of this foreign tongue of the Forum I commit any blunder').⁸ If the speaker is a book (*also* a book, Dowden could point out), there is an interesting resemblance between Apuleius' prologue and the proemial elegy of the third book of Ovid's *Tristia*, a resemblance that goes far beyond the simple fact⁹ that there too we have a speaking book that addresses the reader. This Ovidian book, just like Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* in Harrison's view, arrives in Rome as a stranger (*hospes*, v. 20; *advena* in Apuleius) and apologizes for any solecism it may contain: *si qua videbuntur casu non dicta Latine, / in qua scribebat, barbara terra fuit* (3,1,17 f.: 'if any expressions perchance shall seem not Latin, the land where he wrote was a barbarian land'). The hypothetical *incipit* (*si qua - si quid*) and the use of similar adjectives (*barbara - exotici*) suggest the possibility that the coincidence is not wholly accidental. Furthermore, the inability to speak Latin appears to be a topos of Ovid's exile poetry,¹⁰ so much so that Ovid could be

⁷ At least for a learned second-reader, as Winkler (1985) 184-185 warns. M. J. Edwards, 'The Proem to Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*', *Hermes* 121 (1993), 375-377, believes that the speaker is Apuleius, and solves the problem of the multiple origin by stating that 'he merely alludes to the pedigree of his writings under the resemblance of a personal genealogy'.

⁸ Apuleius' prologue seems to reverse the situation presented by a famous anecdote, narrated e. g. by Gellius 11,8: A. Postumius Albinus composed a history in Greek, and in the preface he apologized for any errors he could make in a language that was not his own; the elder Cato sharply rebuked him for his unnecessary disclaimer, since nobody had compelled the Roman historian to write in Greek. On this episode see E. S. Gruen, 'Culture and National Identity in Republican Rome' (London 1993), 257; M. Fucecchi, 'Il plurilinguismo della menippea latina', in R. Oniga (ed.), *Il plurilinguismo nella tradizione letteraria latina*, Rome 2003, 91-130.

⁹ Noted by Harrison (1990) 512 and n. 27.

¹⁰ See for example, again in the third book of the *Tristia*, the last elegy: 3,14,45 ff. 'oft when I attempt some utterance – shameful confession! – words fail me: I have unlearned my power of speech... O believe me, I fear that Sinitic and Pontic language may be mingled with the Latin in my writings'. And also 5,7,55 ff. 'I, the Roman bard – pardon, ye Muses! – am forced to utter most things in Sarmatian fashion. I admit it, it shames me: now from long disuse Latin words with difficulty occur even

considered a convenient reference point by any writer dealing with this subject. Martial, for example, humorously quotes our Ovidian passage to blame a *librarius* for his book's faults: 2,8,1-3 *si qua videbuntur chartis tibi, lector, in istis / sive obscura nimis sive Latina parum, / non meus est error: nocuit librarius illis* ('if some things in these papers, reader, strike you as too obscure or doubtful Latin, the error is not mine. The copyst did the damage').¹¹

Ovid is an exile in Tomis, and the remoteness from Rome affects his linguistic skills. Change of language and of cultural context are also important themes in Apuleius. In the novel, the 'displacement'¹² of the prologue speaker, that causes his (alleged) difficulties with the Latin language, could be said to anticipate the metamorphosis of Lucius into an ass, which of course is a further, and indeed complete, deprivation of linguistic skills: see, among other passages,¹³ 3,29,2 *inter ipsas turbelas Graecorum <Romanorum>*¹⁴ *genuino sermone nomen augustum Caesaris invocare temptavi; et 'O' quidem tantum*

to me! And I doubt not there are even in this book not a few barbarism, not to the fault of the man but of the place'; 5,12,57 f. 'I myself, I think, have already unlearned my Latin, for I have learned how to speak Getic and Sarmatian'. On the Ovidian topos, cf. G. D. Williams, *Banished Voices. Readings in Ovid's exile poetry* (Cambridge 1994) esp. 91-99 ('Ovid as a Getic poet').

¹¹ Cf. G. Luck's commentary (Heidelberg 1977) at *Trist.* 3,1,17 f. On Ovidian allusions in Martial see Pitcher 1998, with further bibliography, and Holzberg in this volume. At the Dublin conference S. Hinds also dealt with Martial and Ovid; his paper will be published elsewhere.

¹² For this terminology, cf. N. Slater, 'Space and Displacement in Apuleius', in M. Paschalis – S. Frangoulidis (eds.), *Space in the Ancient Novel* (Groningen 2002) 161-176.

¹³ Cf. also 7,3,3 and 8,29,5.

¹⁴ *Romanorum* is a conjecture by D. S. Robertson (not adopted by Hanson in his text and translation), whose Budé edition I follow for Apuleian quotations in this paper. R. T. van der Paardt, in his commentary (Amsterdam 1971) *ad loc.*, is maybe right in refuting Robertson's conjecture, but I am less inclined to share his idea that Lucius, in Apuleius' novel, spoke Greek. Of course, it is difficult to imagine Lucius speaking Latin with his fellow traveller Aristomenes or his guest Milo, but some degree of uncertainty between Greek and Latin is to be expected in the *Metamorphoses*, and maybe it was also pursued by Apuleius. The novel itself is a Latin adaptation of a Greek original (that by the way already contained at least one instance of the joke of the ass trying to speak: cf. *Onos* 38,2); at the end of the novel Lucius exercises the legal profession in Rome, and of course we have to imagine him speaking Latin (cf. 11,28,6 *patrocinia sermonis Romani*); and see *infra* for the similar case of the Greek god Apollo speaking Latin at 4,32,6.

disertum ac validum clamitavi, reliquum autem Caesaris nomen enuntiare non potui ('I tried amidst those crowds of Greeks to invoke the august name of Caesar in my native tongue. And indeed I shouted the "O" by itself eloquently and vigorously, but I could not pronounce the rest of Caesar's name'). The correspondence between the displaced speaker of the prologue and the metamorphosed speaker of the narrative proper is also suggested by the words *rudis locutor* ('raw speaker') in 1,1,5: the adjective *rudis* can be connected to *rudere*, meaning the braying of an ass, so that the real *rudis locutor* will be, after the prologue, Lucius-the-ass.¹⁵ Besides being metamorphosed, Lucius also sets out on a voyage similar to that of the prologue speaker, and moves from Greece to Rome. But there is also a remarkable difference between the two 'displacements'. The prologue speaker says he arrived in Rome as an *advena*, and there he was at pains learning Latin *aerumnabili labore*, 'with laborious difficulty'. Lucius also arrives in Rome, but this happens after his retransformation, when he has regained the ability to speak fluently (11,14,2 *renata lingua*); no mention is made of the learning of a new language, and on the contrary in Rome Lucius has the opportunity of putting his linguistic skills to intensive use as a lawyer (11,30,4 *gloriosa... patrocinia*). The identification between the prologue speaker and Lucius is certainly suggested, but also partially confuted by the novel.

Just like linguistic problems, personified and speaking books appear to be an important topos in Ovid's poetry, as we will see later in greater detail. It was only too natural for Martial, for example, to adopt Ovid's language when introducing a speaking book in a proem: *Amores* 1, pr. 1 *qui modo Nasonis fueramus quinque libelli / tres sumus...* ('we who erewhile were five booklets of Naso now are three') has a clear echo in the first epigram of Martial's book 10, *si nimius videor seraque coronide*

¹⁵ On the pun cf. Winkler (1985) 197. As far as I know, only R. G. M. Nisbet ('Cola and *clausulae*', in Kahane-Laird (2001) 24) states that the idea that *rudis* plays on *rudere* is 'implausible'. Carver (2001) 167 mentions that already Andreas Schottus (1552-1629) polemically echoed Apuleius' prologue by assimilating the style of the *Metamorphoses* to the braying of an ass. The pun recurs also in 6,29,3 *rudis perpetuabitur historia* (cf. *infra* on this passage). On the braying of the ass as a paradigm of literary crudeness in Kallimachos' *Aitia* 1,30-32 see Winkler (1985) 196.

longus / esse liber, legito pauca: libellus ero ('if I seem too large and long a book with colophon that comes too late, read a few items only: I shall then be a little book').¹⁶ When Martial sends his books to Rome from Forum Iulii or Spain, he recalls the Ovidian theme of the book arriving in Rome as *hospes* or *peregrinus*: cf. Mart. 12,2,2-5 *ibis, io, Romam nunc peregrine liber... non tamen hospes eris, nec iam potes advena dici* ('book... forward, hie you to Rome, a foreigner now... But you will be no stranger, nor can you be termed a newcomer') with Ov. *Tr.* 3,1,20 *hospes in Urbe liber*,¹⁷ and 1,1,59 *nec te, quod venias magnam peregrinus in Urbem / ignotum populo posse venire puta* ('and think not, because you enter into the great city as one from foreign lands, that you can come as a stranger to the people').¹⁸ In the following pages I shall try to show that such conventions, together with more or less explicit Ovidian references, play an important role in Apuleius, in the prologue and in other parts of the novel.

In the texts by Ovid and Martial that I have cited above, when the speaker is a book, it is always clearly identifiable as such. Unfortunately, this is not true in Apuleius: the prologue remains a riddle, and the speaking book hypothesis, even if supported by the Ovidian parallels, is not so self-evident, and does not offer an absolutely reliable explanation for all the doubts raised by the text. The most important objection that can be made against this hypothesis is that there seems to be no clear gap between the long series of first-person pronouns, adjectives, and verbs of the prologue (*at ego... exordior... mea prosapia... merui... excolui... praefamur... offendero... incipimus*) and the first verb of the narrative proper, *petebam* (1,2,1), whose subject is unambiguously Lucius.¹⁹ Maybe it is

¹⁶ On Ovid's epigram see J. C. McKeown's commentary (Leeds 1989) 1-3; on personified books in general see Citroni (1986), Pitcher (1998) 59-65, and on Martial and Ovid see also Holzberg in this volume.

¹⁷ The passage is imitated by Martial also in 1,70: cf. M. Citroni's commentary (Firenze 1975) *ad loc.*

¹⁸ Cf. Citroni (1986) esp. 137-138; Pitcher (1998) 62-63.

¹⁹ Cf. e. g. de Jong (2001) 205. Harrison's statement that 'the final address to the reader, *fabulam graecanicam incipimus. lector intende: laetaberis* [...] neatly marks the transition to the narrative proper in the second chapter of the novel [...] When the narrator begins talking about a trip to Thessaly, it is fairly clear that the identity of

also worth remembering that a plain, autobiographical interpretation of the prologue and of the whole novel, suggested by the first person narrative, was also popular in antiquity: cf. e. g. Augustine, *civ.* 18,18 'that is what Apuleius, in the work entitled *The Golden Ass*, reported, or pretended (*aut indicavit, aut finxit*), had happened to him: having taken a potion he became an ass, without losing his human intelligence'.²⁰ A linear reading of the first chapters of the *Metamorphoses* will probably lead to the assumption that Lucius (or Apuleius) is the speaker of the prologue, even if the geographical multiplicity of his *prosapia* probably instills some doubt; but, reading further on, the reader will acquire new information and will be led to new conjectures. The identity of the author/narrator in the *Metamorphoses* appears to be unstable; for example John Winkler, with his usual sharpness of mind, states that 'the complexity of self in the *Asinus Aureus* cannot be accounted for simply in terms of two fixed locations for Lucius as present narrator and past actor. It also requires that the auctor be thought of sometimes as Apuleius the novelist and sometimes as Lucius the narrator'.²¹

The different identities I have mentioned so far (author, narrator, actor, book) sometimes superimpose on each other, and blend together in a striking and occasionally confusing way. After the prologue, the most notorious conflation of identities

the speaker has changed' (1990) 512-513) is probably the weakest point in his argumentation. Ahuvia Kahane and Andrew Laird report ('Introduction', in Kahane-Laird (2001) 5) that, at the end of the Oxford colloquium on the prologue of Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, 'the following motion was put to a vote: "This House believes that the speaker of the Prologue is Lucius". The motion was carried, twelve votes "for", four "against". There were nine abstentions'.

²⁰ See especially Carver (2001) 169: 'To the narrator's question *quis ille?*, the response of pre-modern readers was generally "Lucius Apuleius Madaurensis". Of course, a great deal of modern philology, and almost all of this paper, stand on the presumption that modern responses are acceptable for questions raised by pre-modern texts. After all, Augustine did not find it difficult to think that in the prologue Apuleius created for himself a fictional *persona*: he was well aware of Apuleius' African origins, but he could interpret the prologue as autobiographical even though the speaker explicitly places his ancestry in Athens, Corinth and Sparta. Again, Ovid's *Tristia* is a remarkable precedent for the (undesired) identification of an author with his own writings: cf. e. g. 2,354 *vita verecunda est, Musa iocosa mea* and A. Barchiesi, *Speaking Volumes* (London 2001) 96-100.

²¹ Winkler (1985) 153.

occurs at 11, 27, 9 where Lucius (who is elsewhere implicitly presented as a Corinthian²²) is unexpectedly said to come from Madauros, Apuleius' native town: the main character of the novel is thus identified, at least provisionally,²³ with Apuleius, the *actor* with his *auctor*.²⁴ This remarkable passage is located near the end of the last book of the *Metamorphoses*; by recalling, or re-reading, the prologue,²⁵ the reader can now easily agree with Winkler (and Dowden), and consider both Lucius and the prologue speaker 'a nexus of connected identities'.²⁶

Other passages have prepared the reader for this conclusion. First of all, a similar disruption of the dramatic illusion occurs

²² See e.g. M. Zimmerman's commentary (Groningen 2000) at Apul. *Met.* 10,19,1 *Corinthum accessimus*. For the general problem of the Corinthian setting of part of Apuleius' novel see Graverini (2002).

²³ Smith (1999) 212-213 notes that 'the narrator is never named again in the closing chapters of the novel... which might seem to leave open the possibility that he has by then been "transformed" into Apuleius himself'. But see also Penwill (1990) 14, who concludes that 'the aura of historicity created in the last five chapters of the *Metamorphoses* is not a signal that we are now reading Apuleius' life story'.

²⁴ Bruce Gibson and Doreen Innes (in Kahane-Laird (2001) 75 and 112 n. 3 respectively) have suggested some literary antecedents (Virgil and Theocritus) for such an identification between character and author. In my opinion, the most important reference is rather the Pseudo-Lucian. At *Onos* 55 we are informed that the main character, whose name is Lucius, is a writer of tales (*historion eimi syngrapheus*) – a name and a profession that is very easy to compare to those of the (supposed) author (cf. H. van Thiel, *Der Eselsroman. I. Untersuchungen*, München 1971, p. 30). It is probable, or at least possible, that also the lost Greek original that gave Apuleius the inspiration for his novel contained a similar joke, echoed by Apuleius with the *Madaurensem* at 11,27,9. After all, the ass-story seems to be a perfect model for humorous autobiographical novels: this possibility was exploited e.g. also by Agnolo Firenzuola in his *L'asino d'oro* (1523-25). On this complex passage see van der Paardt (1999) and Harrison (2000) 228-232.

²⁵ The idea of a direct link between the prologue and the end of the *Metamorphoses* is exploited by Andrew Laird, 'Paradox and Transcendence: The Prologue as the End', in Kahane-Laird (2001) 267-281; but I find it difficult to agree with his paradoxical conclusions (that is, that the prologue is delivered by a dead author). See also van der Paardt (1999) 245-246: at the beginning of the novel Apuleius, as the author of an 'I'-novel, dons the mask of his main character, and becomes Lucius; at the end, in the *Madaurensem* passage, the opposite metamorphosis is performed, and Lucius becomes Apuleius. According to Penwill (1990) 24 n.70, who precedes Laird in pointing out that the verb *obibam* at the end of Apuleius' novel includes the meaning 'to die' in its semantic range, the prologue and the end of the novel are joined by their Ovidianism, and allude to the beginning and to the end of Ovid's poem respectively.

²⁶ Winkler (1985) 203. See also the papers by Ken Dowden and Yun Lee Too in Kahane-Laird (2001).

in the story of Cupid and Psyche. The Greek god Apollo gives an oracular response in Latin: an oddity, but the text explains that this happens *propter Milesiae conditorem* ('to show favour to the author of this Milesian tale': 4,32,6). The tale is told by a drunken housekeeper: she of course can by no means be the *conditor* in question, and the narrator Lucius cannot aspire to such a title either. The *conditor* is, rather, Apuleius:²⁷ this time implicitly identified not with the main character of the novel, but with its most important narrator after Lucius.

But more remarkable for our purpose is another passage. In the second book, Lucius reports a prophecy that a Chaldean named Diophanes uttered to him before the beginning of his journey (2,12,5):

Mihi... multa respondit et oppido mira et satis varia; nunc enim gloriam satis floridam, nunc historiam magnam et incredundam fabulam et libros me futurum.

He gave several strange and quite contradictory responses: on the one hand my reputation will really flourish, but on the other I will become a long story, an unbelievable tale, a book in several volumes.

The multiplicity of our hero's identity comes explicitly to the surface here: Lucius is not only a character in the novel, but he is (will be) also the story and the book itself, and of course, since the *fabula* is a first-person narrative, the author-narrator. This is maybe the best example of the multiple personality I have tried to point out in the prologue; but this passage is well worth considering also for other reasons, and I will briefly investigate them before considering the relevance of Ovid's poetry for its interpretation.

This prophecy, just like the prologue, is also a riddle (and the prologue itself, if we take the pun involved by the words *rudis locutor* seriously, is an obscure prophecy about Lucius' destiny). Lucius reports the words of Diophanes in order to disprove the scepticism of his guest, Milo, whose wife had claimed to be able

²⁷ Cf. e. g. E. J. Kenney's commentary (Cambridge 1990) *ad loc.*

to forecast the next day's weather simply by observing the flame of an oil-lamp. If Diophanes can prophesy, why cannot Milo's wife? The argument should appear even more convincing to the reader than to Lucius or Milo themselves: the book he is reading is indeed the best proof that Diophanes' prophecy cannot be false, since Lucius is really the hero of *historia magna, incredunda fabula*²⁸ and *libri* – and of course this is something that Lucius and Milo cannot know. Unexpectedly, however, the debate does not end at this point: Milo demonstrates that Diophanes is undoubtedly a charlatan, who is unable even to predict his own future.²⁹ His prophecy about Lucius' glory is therefore unreliable. Lucius abandons his defence of the art of divination and of his future glory: perhaps Milo's talk has convinced him, but above all it is delaying the long awaited night of love with the charming maidservant Photis. He has indeed more important things on his mind, but the reader cannot help thinking about a curious situation: an evidently truthful prophecy uttered by an evidently unreliable prophet. Lucius can accept Milo's conclusions because he does not know anything about his own future; but the reader (even a first-time reader), knows for certain that the books foretold by Diophanes have been written, since he is reading them.³⁰ In a short time he will also realize that Pamphile, Milo's wife, really is a powerful sorceress who can perform magic and who can, we assume, also

²⁸ The terms *historia* and *fabula* may be synonyms here, but elsewhere it is possible to draw a distinction between them. The most thorough discussions of the problem are by van Mal-Maeder (2001) *ad loc.*, and Carratello (1973) 208-216. A. Laird, 'Fiction, Bewitchment and Story Worlds: The Implications of Claims to Truth in Apuleius', in C. Gill – T. P. Wiseman, *Lies and Fiction in the Ancient World*, (Exeter 1993) 160, argues that 'fictional and historical texts are less easily distinguished than they are generally thought to be'.

²⁹ Diophanes relates his adventures as an epic narrator: cf. L. Graverini, 'Memorie virgiliane nelle *Metamorfosi* di Apuleio', *Maia* 50 (1988) 139-140; and 'The winged ass. Intertextuality and narration in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*', in M. Zimmerman - S. Panayotakis - W. Keulen, *The Ancient Novel in Context. Acts of the Third International Conference on the Ancient Novel* (Leiden, 2003) 207-218, p. 215. On the inconsistencies deriving from his prediction cf. also Smith (1999) 213.

³⁰ This is not the only place where the *Metamorphoses* is alluded to as a finished book (a fact that contradicts the experiencing focalization of the narrator): cf. 10,2,1 'an outrageous and abominable crime was perpetrated, which I am adding to my book so that you can read it too', and 10,7,4 'what I reliably ascertained I shall set down on these pages'; see also de Jong (2001) 210-211; and *infra*, n. 39.

prophesy:³¹ and if Pamphile can prophesy, why not Diophanes?³² This is just a sample of the aporias and riddles Apuleius is fond of; our *fabula* is really *incredunda*, and the reader should never rely on what seems to be a 'fact'. But if the reader has his interpretative problems, Lucius too will not lack the occasion to challenge the quack prophet's reliability.

The *gloria* that Diophanes foretells is one of the unifying themes of the novel,³³ one of the ideas that somehow link the first ten books to the last by constructing a thematic opposition between the material world, that is subject to magic and chance (*Fortuna*), and Isiac providence.³⁴ At the very beginning of the narrative, Lucius presents himself ostentatiously as the scion of a noble family: 1,2,1 'the ancestry of my mother's family brings us fame (*gloriam*) in the persons of the renowned Plutarch and later his nephew, the philosopher Sextus'. His father's name was Theseus, and the mean Milo gives Lucius the occasion to renew the glory of the Athenian hero (1,23,6 'you will lay claim to a token of great repute... in emulation of the virtues of your

³¹ Pamphile obtains prophetic and metamorphic powers through the same magical instrument, the oil lamp: cf. 2,11,5 *lucernam intuens* and 3,21,4 (= *Onos* 12,3) *multumque cum lucerna secreto conlocuta*.

³² All the involved parties have different perspectives, and in particular the characters Lucius and Milo have only a limited knowledge of the whole situation in comparison with the reader and the author/narrator. This is a case of 'dramatic irony', a narrative device Apuleius frequently adopts: see Rosati (1997) (not dealing with Diophanes' prophecy, however). Rosati correctly argues that 'in Apuleio il narratore si astiene dal rilevare simili effetti di ironia, lasciandoli generalmente alla percezione diretta del lettore. Apuleio evita cioè un legame di complicità con il lettore per assumere invece quasi un atteggiamento di sfida nei suoi confronti' (p. 125).

³³ I cannot agree with the Groningen commentators (B. L. Hijmans Jr. et al., *Apuleius Madaurensis. Metamorphoses. Book IV 1-27*, Groningen 1977), who state (160 *ad* 4,21,3 *gloriam sibi reservavit*), that '*gloria* is not a common notion in the *Metamorphoses*'. First of all, they have taken into consideration only the 9 occurrences of the noun *gloria*, overlooking the adjective *gloriosus* and the verb *glorior* that raise the total to 21; and most of all the concept recurs, as we will see, in several key points of the narrative.

³⁴ The contraposition between magic (represented by Photis and her mistress, as well as by some minor characters like Diophanes) and Isiac faith has been often emphasized by the scholars: see e. g. V. Schmidt, 'Apuleius Met. III 15 F. Die Einweihung in die falschen Mysterien (Apuleiana Groningana VII)', *Mnemosyne* 35 (1982) 269-282. Anyway, especially after Winkler's book challenged the seriously religious character of the last book of the novel, various recent studies try to play down the contrast between Book XI and Books I-X. See e. g. van Mal-Maeder (2001) 409-411: 'Appendice I. Photis: anti-Isis?' at 410: 'le livre d'Isis ne doit pas être lu en opposition systématique aux dix premiers livres, mais en termes de continuation'.

father's namesake Theseus'), if not by making him conquer a Golden Fleece, at least by offering him an hospitality as humble as Hecale's.³⁵ Lucius resigns himself for the moment, but by remembering Diophane's prediction he makes clear that he is waiting for something better. A few days later,³⁶ however, he is brought to trial as the murderer of three young men, and his belief in the Chaldaean prophet has gone: 'yes, this is the fame my journey will bring me, as Diophanes the Chaldaean firmly foretold!' (3,1,4). But Lucius is often represented by Apuleius as giving hasty judgments about people.³⁷ In actual fact, the three young men are discovered to be only three inflated wine-skins, and the trial is a farce in honor of the god *Risus*: therefore, this is not the end of Lucius' ambition to glory, but only a delay – or, better, a first step towards a farcical glory, quite different from the epic fame Lucius hopes to gain. This is suggested by another 'prophecy': the town magistrates of Hypata tell Lucius that the god *Risus*, involuntarily honoured by him in the mock-trial, will always protect him with his favour (3,11,4).

Delay and disappointment, however, seem to be the rule rather than the exception, at least for a long while. Lucius, in the shape of an ass, succeeds in missing another good occasion when he escapes from the den of the brigands together with Charite. The maiden promises that, if the ass brings her to safety, she will give it 'fine food... serene repose and complete happiness', but most of all a 'glorious honour', *dignitas gloriosa* (6,29,1). This is again a form of literary and artistic renown, like that foretold by Diophanes:

³⁵ 1,23,6. On this passage see S. J. Harrison, 'From Epic to Novel: Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* and Virgil's *Aeneid*, *MD* 39 (1997) 56-57. On the name Theseus cf. G. Fiorencis - G. F. Gianotti, 'Fedra e Ippolito in provincia', in G. Magnaldi - G. F. Gianotti, *Apuleio. Storia del testo e interpretazioni*, Alessandria 2000 (already in *MD* 25 (1990) 71-114), esp. 295-296.

³⁶ On the temporal structure of Book II see van Mal-Maeder (2001) 3.

³⁷ Cf. especially 7,10,3-4: 'the moment she saw the young man and heard him mention the words "brothel" and "pimp", she became jubilant and broke out into joyous laughter. This caused me, as was only natural, to vilify the entire sex, when I saw a girl who had pretended love for her young suitor and desire for a faithful marriage suddenly show delight at the mention of a filthy, sordid whorehouse. Indeed, at that moment the character and principles of all woman-kind depended on an ass' verdict'.

I will put a seal on the memory of my present fortune and of divine providence by giving a lasting testimony, and I will have a panel painted with the picture of our present escape and enshrine it in the entrance-hall of my home. People will come to see this simple tale (*rudis historia*), and will hear about it when stories are told (*in fabulis audietur*), and the pens of the learned will perpetuate it (*doctorumque stilis perpetuabitur*). 'A royal maiden flees captivity riding on an ass.' You yourself will be added to the ancient tales of wonder, and from the fact of your actual existence (*exemplo tuae veritatis*) we will now believe that Phrixus swam the sea on a ram's back, that Arion piloted a dolphin, and that Europa rode on the back of a bull. But if Jupiter truly bellowed with the throat of a bull, perhaps in this ass I am riding lurks the face of a man (*vultus hominis*) or the likeness of a god.

Charite's promise³⁸ closely resembles Diophanes' prophecy. Again we have the two terms *historia* and *fabula*, and an allusion to the material reality of the book (there *libri*, here *stili doctorum*³⁹). The words *vultus hominis* and *tuae veritatis* are a

³⁸ The whole passage is characterized by an elaborate literary texture. De Jong (2001) 211-212, observes that 'metanarrative or self-reflexive passages in which characters in a story themselves predict that they will become literary figures are as old as Homer (cf. *Il.* 6. 357-8; *Od.* 3. 204, 8. 579-80, and 24. 196-202)'. Among these Homeric passages, *Od.* 8,579 ff. is particularly interesting. Alcinous, just like Charite, almost makes a good guess about his interlocutor's identity, and asks Ulysses if he had some relative dead at Troy. A wider collection of references is offered by van Mal-Maeder (2001) 214. The focus, as often, seems to be on epic: at 6,28,5-6 Charite lists the thousand attentions she will pay to her saviour donkey, a description that, as Finkelpearl (1998) 58-61 has demonstrated, seems to echo the verses devoted by Vergil and Ovid to the stags of Silvia and Cyparissus. Ovid's story of Europa (who is explicitly numbered among the mythical predecessors of Lucius at 6,29,4; moreover, the hypothesis that a *facies deorum* might be disguised in the donkey is a clear allusion to Zeus metamorphosed in the bull) is especially recalled by the erotic attitude of the donkey towards the maiden: cf. 6,28,2 'sometimes, pretending to scratch my back, I bent my neck and kissed the girl's lovely feet' with Ov. *Met.* 2,863 'the disguised lover... kissed her hands'. I would also suggest that the parallel between Charite and the Phoenician princess Europa is to be connected to the many features that link the *regia virgo* of the novel with another Phoenician princess, Dido (on Charite and Dido see e. g. again Finkelpearl (1998) 115-148).

³⁹ Cf. the passages quoted above, n. 30, and also 8,1,4, where a slave begins to narrate Tlepolemus and Charite's death: 'I shall tell you what happened from the beginning – such events as could justly be written down on paper in the form of a history by persons better educated than I, whom Fortune provided with the gift of the pen' (*referam vobis a capite quae gesta sunt, quaeque possint merito doctiores, quibus stilos fortuna subministrat, in historiae specimen chartis involvere*). This is probably a parody of an historiographical *incipit*: cf. L. Graverini, 'In historiae specimen.

clever wink to the reader by the author-narrator: both of them are more informed than Charite about the real nature of the donkey she is speaking to, just as both of them knew more than Lucius about the *libri* mentioned by Diophanes. Unfortunately, the glorious adventure goes towards a premature and inglorious ending, as the brigands immediatly capture the fugitives: the ass was not destined to become as famous as Phrixus' ram, Arion's dolphin, or Europa's bull.⁴⁰

At the end of the novel we are allowed to have another look at Lucius' destiny. The goddess Isis in person predicts to Lucius *vives autem beatus, vives in mea tutela gloriosus* ('you will live in happiness, you will live in glory, under my guardianship': 11,6,6). Her prophecy is repeated and better defined by the priest Asinius Marcellus, who reports the dream he had had the preceding night and says that *providentia* is preparing *studiorum gloriam* for 'the man from Madauros' (11,27,9); and finally it is confirmed by the god Osiris, who encourages Lucius to *gloriosa reddere patrocina* (11,30,4). So, in the new religious context of the last book, the Egyptian gods reaffirm the glorious destiny of Lucius. But are they really better prophets than Diophanes, and – after so many disappointments – should Lucius and the reader believe them?

Lucius, as ever in the novel, accepts any words that come from a supernatural power, but a careful reader (*lector scrupolosus*: 9,30,1) should be more wary. The bookish, fictional and adventurous glory foretold by Diophanes and Charite is perhaps compatible with the *studiorum gloria* of Asinius' dream, but it is certainly rather different from the *gloriosa patrocina* Lucius is encouraged to by Osiris. As regards these *patrocina*, the novel does not say anything more, and we cannot but take Osiris at his word and believe that they will be *gloriosa*. We only know that, already before this last intervention by Osiris, Lucius' legal profession earned him some money (11,30,2 'I was comfortably provided... by the income I earned as a lawyer'),

Elementi della letteratura storiografica nelle *Metamorfosi* di Apuleio', *Prometheus* 23 (1997) esp. 252-253.

⁴⁰ Another passage is worth at least a brief mention: 7,16,1 *novis Fortuna saeva tradidit cruciatibus, scilicet ut, quod aiunt, domi forisque fortibus factis adoriae plenae gloriarer*. The ass is put out to pasture together with some horses and tries to mate with the mares, but the horses kick it out.

but did not make him rich (11,30,1 'I provided the equipment for my initiation... meeting the expenses more in accordance with religious zeal than with the measure of my assets'). Osiris himself reveals that Lucius' *laboriosa doctrina* was the object of spiteful gossip (11,30,4 *malevolorum disseminationes*).⁴¹ Even at the very end of the novel, *gloria* is predicted, and not yet achieved; it is evidently an extra-textual glory.

Actually, all the three major passages we have analyzed (Diophanes' prophecy at 2,12,5; Charite's promises at 6,29,1-5; and the dream of Asinius Marcellus at 11,27,9) somehow encourage an extra-textual interpretation of these predictions, by alluding to the extra-textual reality of the book and/or the author. That is, they can be read as reflections made by the narrator Lucius or by the author Apuleius on their literary renown. Lucius' fame is obviously due much more to the *incredunda fabula* the reader has just finished to read than to the *tutela* of Isis and the legal profession practised under the auspices of Osiris. As regards Apuleius and his fame, the argument is not so straightforward. Of course, rhetoric played an important role in his career; but did he also rely on his activity as a novelist to gain literary fame, or was it only a *divertissement*, the second-class fruit of his *otium*, or even just an experimental product of his youth?⁴² Unfortunately, we do not know much about Apuleius' life and early fame. Perhaps he really considered rhetoric the most important part of his career; but, if the *Metamorphoses* was only a *divertissement*, it is remarkable that he indulged in such *divertissements* not only once, since he also wrote another novel, the *Hermagoras*.⁴³ Antonio Stramaglia points out that 'i romanzi (*Metamorfosi*;

⁴¹ The topics of malevolent criticism and literary glory are often connected to each other (see e. g. Williams (2002) 425-427 on Ovid, *Am.* 1,15 and various epigrams by Martial); Osiris' prophecy, just like the prophecy of Diophanes, moves along the common path traced by poetic tradition.

⁴² K. Dowden has tried to place the *Metamorphoses* in Apuleius' early years in Rome ('The Roman Audience of *The Golden Ass*', in J. Tatum (ed.), *The Search for the Ancient Novel*, (Baltimore-London 1994) 419-434. I have suggested some arguments against Dowden's thesis in Graverini (2002); and if we read Lucius' statements about his future literary glory as authorial allusions to Apuleius' real fame, then it is all the more difficult to imagine the novel as the product of a young and not yet successful writer.

⁴³ On the *Hermagoras*, see Harrison (2000) 21, and the useful discussion in Carratello (1973) 203-207.

Hermagoras) rientrarono... in quel vasto processo che fece di Apuleio una delle figure emblematiche della tarda pagania',⁴⁴ even though among men of learning they might hold a secondary position in Apuleius' wide-ranging production. Septimius Severus (Hist. Aug. *Alb.* 12,12) blamed the senators, who 'thought he [*sc.* Clodius Albinus] should be praised for his knowledge of letters, when in fact he is busied with old wives' songs, and grows senile amid the Milesian stories from Carthage that his friend Apuleius wrote and such other learned nonsense'.⁴⁵ This is of course an ambivalent testimony: Apuleius' *Milesiae* were considered minor literature (at least in a supposedly austere milieu, like the Roman Senate), but the senators did not ignore their existence and qualities, since Severus expected his invective to be understood.

It seems to me a fair conclusion to say that Apuleius could feel confident about the success of his novelistic production: after all, Martial founded his ambition to world-wide fame on an even 'lighter' kind of literature.⁴⁶ Apuleius was famous as 'letterato, filosofo, mago',⁴⁷ and as far as we know Isis and Osiris played no role in his growing popularity. Both Lucius' and Apuleius' extra-textual literary glory is not strictly associated with the Egyptian gods; after all Diophanes, who predicted a bookish and (mock-)epic fame, proves to be a more trustworthy prophet than Isis or Osiris.⁴⁸

We could ask, however, why, if Diophanes is such a reliable prophet in predicting Lucius' and Apuleius' literary fame, he

⁴⁴ A. Stramaglia, 'Apuleio come *auctor*: premesse tardoantiche di un uso umanistico', *Studi Umanistici Piceni* 16 (1996) 137-161 (p. 139).

⁴⁵ Clodius Albinus himself, it seems, wrote Milesian tales (SHA, *Alb.* 11,8).

⁴⁶ Cf. 1,1,2-3 *toto notus in orbe Martialis / argutis epigrammaton libellis* ('Martial, known the world over for his witty little books of epigrams').

⁴⁷ This is the title of a 1979 book by A. Pennacini, P. Donini, T. Alimenti and A. Monteduro Roccafini.

⁴⁸ Smith (1999) 215 states that 'unlike the classical Roman poets Apuleius (at least in the *Metamorphoses*) is unable to take himself seriously enough to make an eloquent claim that his literary monument will win him immortality'. This understatement should be suggested by Diophanes' prophecy (defined as 'trivial and untrustworthy at best'), while 'in dealing with Isis and Osiris Apuleius discards the irony with which he views his novel'. While Apuleius is surely capable of a high degree of auto-irony, my own understanding of the relative value of the prophecies of Diophanes and Osiris is quite the opposite. For sound criticism of over-hasty dismissals of Diophanes' prediction see Penwill (1990) 20 n. 35.

failed to foretell all the misfortunes Lucius is going to suffer *before* achieving it. But, after all, a prophecy is always ambiguous, and we should be wary of taking it at its face value: apparently innocent words and a favourable prophecy can always hide a bad *omen*, or vice versa. For example, Apollo's oracle at 4,33,1 seems to predict that Psyche will be the prey of a monster, while her actual destiny (that a second-reader can read between the lines of the prophecy) is to marry the god Cupid. Besides this, the face value of Lucius' speech is quite strange. Lucius says essentially: 'Milo, you should not be so sceptical about prophetic powers. For example, a prophet told me that I would become a famous book'. We have a choice: we can consider the passage only as proof of Lucius' lack of logic and high self-esteem;⁴⁹ or we also can go off in search of a further meaning.⁵⁰

Winkler has his own understanding of the prophecy. He states that the complete identification of Lucius with the books that relate his adventures (the 'booklike self' of my title) is unexpected and surprising: 'a locution that the first-reader... translates as "I would be the subject of books", but... later reverts to a more nearly literal sense. Lucius, in becoming an ass who is the subject of this novel, becomes *The Ass*'.⁵¹ The metamorphoses into book and into ass go in parallel. Lucius cannot understand the bad omen disguised in an apparently favourable prophecy, but the reader who knows something about the future developments of the narrative, and who considers the meaning of the title of the book he is reading, can understand.

Intertextuality, I think, can add something to this foreshadowing power of the prophecy of Diophanes. As Winkler says, the words *libros me futurum* come really

⁴⁹ Lucius is ironically defined as *scolasticus* by Photis in 2,10,2: 'a nexus of book and buffoon', according to Winkler (1985) 155.

⁵⁰ It happens frequently, in the *Metamorphoses*, that some words call for an elaborate interpretation: so, for example, Byrrhaena's sentence *tua sunt cuncta quae vides* ('everything you see... belongs to you', 2,5,1; see Rosati (1997) 121). In the novel, the priests of the Dea Syria are real specialists in ambiguous and false predictions: cf. 8,28,1; 8,29,2; 9, 8,2.

⁵¹ Winkler (1985) 158. His argument is of course linked to the assumption that *Asinus aureus* was the first part of the title of Apuleius' novel (292: the title was, according to Winkler, in Varonian style: *Asinus aureus, perì metamorphóseon*).

unexpected at the end of the sentence, just like a ‘scorpion sting’. The equation *Lucius = liber = Metamorphoses* has in Diophanes’ words all the evidence and vividness that it lacks in the prologue; and the allusive and obscure phrasing of the prologue has probably prepared only a few, very alert readers to accept this identification without any sense of surprise.⁵² As we have already seen, simple personifications of books, as well as passages where a character in a story predicts his own literary glory,⁵³ are not infrequent in poetry. The apostrophe of the poet to his book is a well-attested *topos* especially in Horace, Ovid and Martial – three authors linked by an imitative pattern that has been thoroughly studied by Mario Citroni.⁵⁴ However, it would be difficult to find other instances in Greek and Latin literature of a character or author so explicitly and materially identifying *himself* with a book.⁵⁵

First of all, we could take into consideration those passages in which an identification of the author with his book is suggested, but not explicitly declared by the text. For example, the Ovidian *sphragis* at the end of the *Metamorphoses*, *ore legar populi, perque omnia saecula fama, / siquid habent veri vatum praesagia, vivam* (‘I shall have mention on men’s lips, and, if the prophecies of bards have any truth, through all the ages shall I live in fame’: 15,878 f.). It is interesting that at least two leading critics of Ovidian epic resort independently to expressions that seem to recall Apuleius’ text when commenting on this passage: Denis Feeney⁵⁶ states that ‘outdoing Julius Caesar, who went higher than the moon and became a star... Ovid will go higher than the stars, and become a book’, while Leonard Barkan⁵⁷ points out that ‘Hercules and the others may have become gods in eternity, but Ovid will become his poem’.

⁵² So much so that a second scribe tried to put matters right by correcting *futurum* in *facturum* in the codex *F*.

⁵³ Cf. above, n. 38, on the literary texture of 6,29,1.

⁵⁴ Citroni (1986).

⁵⁵ *Historia* or *fabula esse*, of course, are less striking: cfr. van Mal-Maeder (2001) *ad loc.*, 215-216.

⁵⁶ The Gods in Epic. *Poets and Critics of the Classical Tradition* (Oxford, 1991) 249.

⁵⁷ *The Gods Made Flesh. Metamorphosis & the Pursuit of Paganism* (New Haven-London, 1986) 88.

Besides the identification with the book, the prophecy of Diophanes is also linked to these Ovidian verses by the future at the end of the sentence (*me futurum - vivam*): a prominent position, that seems to emphasize the absolute certainty of the prediction. For Lucius as well as for Ovid, future literary glory is connected to the veracity of a prophecy (*siquid habent veri vatum praesagia!*); for both of them, a dangerous exile beyond the confines of humanity and civilization will put at risk the fulfilment of this desire.

Identification with his *Metamorphoses* recurs, even more evidently, in Ovid’s exile poetry. The poem, defined as the poet’s ‘better part’ (*pars melior*) in *met.* 15,875, becomes his ‘more striking portrait’ (*maior imago*) and even his *viscera* in *Tr.* 1,7,11 and 20.⁵⁸ In Diophanes’ prophecy we do not have a quotation of these passages, like in Martial 9,76,10 *haec erit in chartis maior imago meis*,⁵⁹ but Apuleius certainly resorts to a commonplace that was especially distinctive of Ovid’s meditations about his own work – a work that, remember, had the same title as Apuleius’ novel.⁶⁰ I would also point out that, generally speaking, a reference to Ovid is very well suited and even to be expected when the topic is future literary glory. Martial, again, is the right place to find some examples to prove this statement. For example, cf. 1,1,2 *toto notus in orbe Martialis* (‘Martial, known the world over’) with *am.* 1,15,7 f. *mibi fama perennis / quaeritur, in toto semper ut orbe canar* (‘my quest is glory through all the years, to be ever known in song throughout the earth’); 5,13,3 *toto legor orbe* (‘I am much read all the world over’) with *Tr.* 4,10,128 *in toto plurimus orbe legor* (‘throughout the world I am most read of all’); 8,61,5 *spargor*

⁵⁸ On the ‘tendency, pervasive in ancient Roman culture, to view the book as a physical analogue of the author’s body’ see J. Farrell, ‘The Ovidian corpus: poetic body and poetic text’, in P. Hardie – S. Hinds – A. Barchiesi (eds.), *Ovidian Transformations* (Cambridge 1999) 127-141 (quotation from p. 131). Apart from Ovid, the most interesting passages are Ennius’ epitaph, *Epigr.* 2 (*Var.* 17-18) Vahlen³ = *fr.* 46 Courtney (*volito vivos per ora virum*); Hor. *C.* 3,30,6 *non omnis moriar* and *sat.* 1,4,62 *disiecti membra poetae* (on which see also K. Freudenburg, *The Walking Muse* (Princeton 1993) 148-149).

⁵⁹ Cf. G. Luck’s commentary at *Ov. Tr.* 1,7,11: ‘das Werk als “Abbild” des Dichters ist ein frappanter Gedanke, von Martial 9,76,10 übernommen’.

⁶⁰ The consideration is valid, I think, even if we accept Winkler’s ideas on the original title of the novel: see above, n. 51.

per omnes Roma quas tenet gentes ('I am scattered through all the nations under Rome's dominion') with *met.* 15,877 f. *quaque patet domitis Romana potentia terris / ore legar populi* (wherever Rome's power extends over the conquered world, I shall have mention on men's lips').⁶¹

But we can go even further and find that the appropriation of the Ovidian model in Apuleius is much deeper. The *Tristia*, which proved to be useful for our understanding of the prologue, seems to be a useful reference also for the prophecy of Diophanes and the identification with a book. Here we find that Lucius is not the first human being who is about to 'become a book'; before being the destiny of Lucius, it was Ovid's wish '*esse liber*'. The poet is in exile at Tomis; he cannot go back to Rome, as he would like to, and his only consolation comes from being able to send his work there in his stead.⁶² The book is leaving for Rome, and the poet says to it (1,1,57):

tu tamen i pro me, tu, cui licet, aspice Romam:
di facerent, possem nunc meus *esse liber*!

But you go in my stead, do you, who are permitted to do so, gaze on Rome! Would that the gods might grant me now to be my book!

The same idea recurs with some changes in 5,4,3-4 where a personified *epistula* remembers his author's words: *tu cui licet aspice Romam. / Heu quanto melior sors tua sorte mea est*, 'do you, who art allowed, look on Rome. Alas! how much better is thy lot than mine!'. There is not only the verbal similarity of *esse liber - libros me futurum*: this echo of Ovid also helps to increase the prophetic value of Lucius' metamorphosis into a book. As we have seen, Lucius' metamorphosis into a book (entitled *The Ass*) is a foreshadowing of his metamorphosis into an ass. But the destiny of Lucius is also closely, and curiously,

⁶¹ Of course, there is no need to assume that the relationship between these texts is so linear and univocal. Other examples are available in Bömer's, Luck's, and McKeown's commentaries to the quoted passages from *Metamorphoses*, *Tristia* and *Amores*; see also Williams (2002) and Holzberg in this volume.

⁶² For the identification of the poet with an object acting as his substitute (typical of erotic poetry), see again Citroni (1986) 126.

similar to that of Ovid's book (entitled *Tristia*, another telling title). They will both arrive in Rome, after a long westward journey that puts an end to their exile. In Ovid's verses, *fama* has an ambiguous status. The poet is clearly well aware and proud of his wide renown, but the book should be 'untroubled about fame' (*securus famae*: 1,1,49) and even try to conceal his author's name: his fame is now dangerous, and could turn the public against the new book. Lucius' glory, as we have seen, is ambiguous, dangerous and unwelcome as well. So, Diophanes' prophecy is to be connected not only to the final *sphragis* of the *Metamorphoses*, where Ovid proudly predicts his own future glory, but also to the bitter reconsideration of that glorious destiny Ovid makes during his exile.⁶³ Perhaps, besides the similarities, it is also worth pointing out a difference between Apuleius' novel and *Tristia* 1: Lucius' *historia* is *magna*, while Ovid's book is *parvus* from the very first line. Elegy and Callimacheanism⁶⁴ do not suit Apuleius, and from this point of view Ovid's epic poem is of course a much better model.

Diophanes' prediction is indeed a bookish one: it speaks of books, and its mysterious meaning is illuminated by cross-references to other books. There are a number of topics that relate the first elegy of the *Tristia* to Lucius' adventures, and in particular to the words with which the priest of Isis describes them in the last book. The vicissitudes of Lucius and Ovid are described in terms conventionally used to describe a dangerous sea voyage and the tricks of fortune: compare Apuleius *met.* 11,15,1 *magnisque Fortunae tempestatibus et maximis actus procellis ad portum Quietis... venisti* ('you have been driven by Fortune's great tempests and mighty stormwinds; but finally, Lucius, you have reached the harbour of Peace') with Ovid *Tr.* 1,1,42 *me mare, me venti, me fera iactat hiems* ('I am harassed by the sea, by gales, by windy storms'); 1,1,51 *non ita se praebet nobis fortuna secundam...* ('fortune is not so favourable to me...'). Their intellectual endowments did not save them from trouble: Apuleius *met.* 11,15,1 *nec tibi... usquam doctrina profuit* ('not... even your fine education has been of any help whatever

⁶³ On the connection between the *sphragis* of the *Metamorphoses* and the *Tristia* see S. Hinds, 'Booking the return trip: Ovid and *Tristia* I', *PCPS* 31 (1985) 13-32.

⁶⁴ On anti-Callimacheanism in Apuleius' prologue see Winkler (1995) 196 and n. 29. Cf. also above, n. 15.

to you'); Ovid *Tr.* 1,1,55-6 *carmina nunc si non studiumque, quod obfuit, odi, / sit satis ingenio sic fuga parta meo* ('now let it be enough if I do not hate poetry and the pursuit which has injured me; through that my own wit has brought me exile'). Lucius' downfall started with his abandonment to 'slavish pleasures' (*serviles voluptates*, the pleasure offered by the maidservant Photis), which in turn will be abandoned to obtain a 'holy state of happiness' (*religiosa beatitudo: met.* 11,15,2-3). Ovid for his part regrets having written the *Ars amatoria* which caused his disgrace; when his new work arrives in Rome it will have to pretend it does not even know those books (its 'brothers': *Tr.* 1,1,107 ss.), and to guarantee it is not a *praeceptor amoris* (1,1,67).

Finally, and most importantly, Ovid also gives his book a message for the fifteen books of the *Metamorphoses* that are waiting for it in Rome: the book will indicate to them that, among the *mutata corpora* they speak about, they should also number the poet's *fortuna*, which once used to be *laeta* but which is now pitiful (v. 119 f.: *his mando dicas, inter mutata referri / fortunae vultum corpora posse meae*). As we know, Apuleius' programme in the prologue is to tell *figuras fortunisque hominum in alias imagines conversas* ('men's forms and fortunes transformed into other shapes'), a sentence that sums up in a few words all the adventures of Lucius. This sentence is certainly the result of a careful consideration by Apuleius, given its programmatic value.⁶⁵ It also shows a search for originality: the preface of the lost Greek original probably did not mention *figurae* and *fortunae* together, since Photius' summary does not mention any change of luck;⁶⁶ and J. Tatum states that in Greek writers 'we never read of a *metamorphosis* of *tyche*'.⁶⁷

It is precisely this originality, and the words *figuras fortunisque*, which raised a problem to some old editors, who preferred the variant *figuras formasque* (a paleographically easy

⁶⁵ Cf. also H. Münstermann, *Apuleius. Metamorphosen literarischer Vorlagen* (Stuttgart-Leipzig, 1995) 74-78.

⁶⁶ A close comparison between Apuleius' prologue and Photius' summary is in Winkler (1985) 183-185.

⁶⁷ J. Tatum, 'Apuleius and Metamorphosis', *AJPh* 93 (1972) 310.

corruption) attested in certain manuscripts:⁶⁸ they recognized the connection with the prologue of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (*in nova fert animus mutatas dicere formas / corpora*, 'my mind is bent to tell of bodies changed into new forms'; and v. 88 *induit ignotas hominum conversa figuras*, '[the earth] clothed itself with forms of men before unknown') and could not find any place for a metamorphosis of *fortuna* in this Ovidian context.⁶⁹ But, as we have seen, a metamorphosis of *fortuna* is not really an *unicum*: in his prologue Apuleius evidently does not adopt the perspective of the Ovidian *Metamorphoses*⁷⁰ (change of body or shape), but that of the *Tristia*: metamorphosis of shape and destiny, *corporal/figurae* and *fortuna* (two concepts that are also almost identified at *Tr.* 3,8,35 f. *haeret et ante oculos veluti spectabile corpus / adstat fortunae forma legenda*⁷¹ *meae*, 'clinging and standing like a visible body before my eyes is the figure of my fate that I must scan').

So the prophecy of Diophanes, which at first reading might seem only a strange and excessive expression, on closer inspection proves to be an important point in the narrative, closely connected with the prologue with which it shares the same Ovidian flavour. It is also a clue, weak but meaningful, that gives the reader a glimpse of a whole world of adventures. The pretentious Lucius, in relating this prophecy, is also unconsciously tracing his own destiny of fall and resurrection. The Ovidian intertext is fully exploited by Apuleius to create the phraseology of the passages I have tried to analyze, and to offer the reader the possibility of reading them between the lines: and not only the *Metamorphoses*, but also the *Tristia* – a work that already for Martial was clearly to be enumerated

⁶⁸ Collectively indicated by the letter *v* in D. S. Robertson's apparatus.

⁶⁹ Cf. Scotti (1982) 56 and n. 32. The differences with Ovid are noteworthy, too: Penwill (1990) 24, n. 70 correctly points out that 'in the first sentence of the prologue Apuleius carefully avoids using any of the words found in Ovid *Met.* 1,1-4 (note *figuras*... instead of *formas*..., *in alias imagines conversas*... instead of *in nova mutatas corpora*..., *varias fabulas*... instead of *perpetuum carmen*..., the emphatic first person singular of *ego*... *conseram*... instead of Ovid's slippery *fert animus dicere*').

⁷⁰ A work that, in the *Tristia*, is frequently alluded to as 'the poem of *mutatae formae*': cf. 1,1,117; 1,7,13; 3,14,19

⁷¹ On Postgate's conjecture *regenda* see G. Luck (*ad loc.*), to whom it appears 'heute weniger sicher'. The 'shape of luck' can thus be seen like a body, and 'read' like a book.

among the 'classics' – proves to be an important point of reference for the Apuleian commentator.⁷²

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⁷² I am especially grateful to Alessandro Barchiesi and Marco Fucecchi for their helpful advice. Errors and omissions, of course, all my own work.

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