

Two descriptions of *myêsis*¹

David Jordan

In memory of
Lynette Thompson
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Introduction

Excavations of a columbarium on the Roman Esquiline in 1875 brought to light a figured marble ash urn of Augustan date, which Ersilia Caetani Lovatelli published in 1879. It shows three scenes (Fig. 1), to be read from right to left:²

(A) An adult male, barefoot, wearing a mantle and a lion's skin, stands holding, with his right hand, a pig over an altar. His left has a vessel of some kind. A hierophant, heavily cloaked and barefoot, stands at the other side of the altar, pouring liquid onto it from a vessel held in his right hand; his left has a dish with three poppy pods.

(B) An adult male, barefoot, his head covered with his mantle, sits on a carved stool over which a lion's skin is draped; at his right foot is a ram's horn. Behind him stands a woman, like the hierophant heavily cloaked and barefoot, holding a winnowing fan over his head.

(C) A goddess, lighted torch in left hand and wheat (?) fronds in right, with a headdress of wheat (?) fronds, sits beside a broad cylindrical object, around the back of which a snake is twined. Its head has extended to the goddess' left thigh. At her left stands a young male in a fringed chiton, his

- 1 Translations from Homer are by Richmond Lattimore (1965), those from Apuleius by J. Arthur Hanson (1989), occasionally somewhat modified, those from the Brothers Grimm by M. Hunt, revised by Joseph Stern (*Tales*). I had written the second part of this paper before I read Stephanie West's appealing suggestion (2003) that ancient novels were intended for listeners, not only for readers. That I have not changed 'readers' to 'readers or listeners' in the text below is not meant to imply disagreement.
- 2 Now in the Museo Nazionale Romano, Rome (H. 0.294 m, diam. of rim 0.320). Some of the individual scenes on the urn appear in other works of art found in Italy and elsewhere. Preserving all three, for example, but in a somewhat different form, is the so-called Torre Nova Sarcophagus, the *editio princeps* of which, Rizzo 1910, remains a basic and standard treatment of the several representations of the episodes. Essential also is Roussel 1930.

left hand resting on a club, his right fondling the snake's head. At her right stands a young woman, a breeze fanning her mantle and partly exposing her head; on her left shoulder she carries a lighted torch. The three wear sandals.



Fig. 1. Figures on the Lovatelli Urn, watercolor from Roussel 1930:pl. 2 = Mylonas 1961:pl. 83

According to the generally accepted interpretation, the three scenes, each apparently a copy or reworking of a Greek original of the 4th century BC or earlier, represent episodes from the purificatory rites preliminary to the mysteries of Demeter. The standing male who wears the lion's skin has been interpreted as Heracles, whose need for purification before he could be initiated at Eleusis led Theseus, according to legend, to institute the Lesser Mysteries at Athens; the first scene on the urn shows the purificatory libation and sacrifice. In *B*, the same initiand, again with his lion's skin, sits on a carved stool; this is the rite known as the θρονισμός or θρόνωσις.³ The ram's horn at his right foot symbolizes the δῖον κώδιον, the ram's purificatory pelt.⁴ Over his covered head the priestess is holding a winnowing-fan, from which she evidently sprinkles him.⁵ In *C*, which features

3 For this 'enthronement' we have two ancient sources. Pl. *Euthd.* 277D ὦ Κλεινία, μὴ θαύμαζε εἰ σοι φαίνονται ἀήθεις οἱ λόγοι. ἴσως γὰρ οὐκ αἰσθάνη οἷον ποιεῖτον τὸ ξένο περὶ σε ποιεῖτον δὲ ταῦτόν ὅπερ οἱ ἐν τῇ τελετῇ τῶν Κορυβάντων, ὅταν τὴν θρόνωσιν ποιῶσιν περὶ τοῦτον ὃν ἂν μέλλωσιν τελεῖν. καὶ γὰρ ἐκεῖ χορεία τίς ἐστι καὶ παιδιὰ, εἰ ἄρα καὶ τετέλεσαι· καὶ νῦν τούτω οὐδὲν ἄλλο ἢ χορεύετον περὶ σε καὶ οἷον ὀρχεῖσθον παίζοντε ὡς μετὰ τοῦτο τελοῦντε. νῦν οὖν νόμισον τὰ πρῶτα τῶν ἱερῶν ἀκούειν τῶν σοφιστικῶν, etc. Dio Chr. 12.33 Εἰώθασιν ἐν τῷ καλουμένῳ θρονισμῷ καθίσαντες τοὺς μυουμένους οἱ τελοῦντες κύκλῳ περιχορεύειν. It is not clear whether Plato's Κορυβάντων refers to priests of a particular worship or to revellers in general. Dio does not specify the type of mysteries that included his 'so-called enthronement.' On such 'enthronements' see in general Clinton 2003:62-65 with its bibliography.

4 Polemon fr. 87 (*FHG* III 143f.). For bibliography see Roussel 1930:62 n.2.

the Eleusinian triad, the material of the cylindrical object beside which goddess sits is unclear on the urn, but a sarcophagus from Torre Nova (*supra* n. 2) shows it to be wicker-work, the mystical κίστη.⁶

As P. Roussel (1930:52) and others have stressed, preliminary to the Eleusinian Mysteries was a purificatory μύησις. From the facts that scenes from the *myësis* are depicted in works of art and that those who underwent the *myësis* were not yet full *epoptai* and would not become such until a later rite it follows that what was experienced in the *myësis* did not include any of the well-guarded secrets of the culmination of the Eleusinian mysteries, the *epopteia*, which it was criminal to reveal to the profane.⁷

After Lovatelli's publication, Albrecht Dieterich pointed out, in 1893, that in the *Clouds* Aristophanes presented Socrates' induction of Strepsiades into the Phrontisterion as a parody of what scene B of the urn shows. 'Do you wish,' the teacher asked the new pupil (*Nub.* 250), 'to see clearly the divine things (τὰ θεῖα πράγματα)?' He had Strepsiades sit, crowned, on a sacred *skimpous*, and when Strepsiades, knowing that in such a situation the Athamas of myth was sacrificed (256; Dover 1968:132f.), feared lest he should have the same fate himself, Socrates reassured him that 'all this is what we do to our initiates (261 τοὺς τελουμένους).' He sprinkled Strepsiades with a kind of powder, then solemnly called on *Aër*, *Aithër*, and the Clouds; Strepsiades covered his head with his mantle, as the powers invoked performed a mystic dance. Later, we learn that he has been sitting on a ram's pelt,⁸ again the *dion kôidion*. The Roman urn shows, Dieterich insisted, that the reference to the *myësis* would have been clear to any Athenian viewer of the play. This is worth noting not only about the staging of Strepsiades' induction but about the language throughout the play, which is that of 'mysteries:' 'It is not meet (οὐ θέμις),' the doorkeeper of the Phrontisterion told Strepsiades (140f.), for me

- 5 W. Burkert (1985:76) sees the sprinkling from the *liknon* as symbolic of purification: 'The winnowing fan purifies the corn as the swinging movement of the basket allows the chaff to be blown away by the wind.' He compares it with the rite of *katachysmata*, the pouring of sweetmeats over the head of the new bride or the newly bought slave: they are each, through purification, integrated into their new households. Such seems to have been Heracles' purpose: having been abroad in the world, he wanted to come back into society after his labors, but he needed to be purified before he could be reintegrated.
- 6 Scene B, with the veiled and seated Heracles, is in many respects like that with the veiled and seated Demeter described at *Hom. Hymn. Dem.* 188-211: for discussion and bibliography see N. Richardson 1974:207-17, esp. 211-13, who emphasizes that the *mystês* is seated; he refers to a miniature bronze folding stool among the votives at the Sanctuary of Demeter and Core on Acrocorinth (Stroud 1963:19, pl. 9c); cf. *infra* n. 17.
- 7 The question of the stages leading up to the full Eleusinian experience is too complicated to be discussed here and in any case is not central to this paper. Fuller treatment: Dowden 1980, Clinton 2003.
- 8 *Nub.* 730-1 τίς ἄν δῆτ' ἐπιβάλοι ἐξ ἀρνακίδων γνῶμην ἀποστερητρίδα;

‘to speak to anyone but the pupils: you must respect these μυστήρια;’ the Clouds, when they appeared (303-05), talked of a μυστοδόκος δόμος with its ἄγλαι τελεταί and its σέβας ἀρρήτων ἱερῶν.

In the generations since Dieterich, there has been much scholarly discussion of the depiction of Socrates in the *Clouds* as parodist of the mysteries (e.g. Byl 1990, Auffarth 1999). It is not my purpose here to prolong this discussion but rather to point out two other literary parodies of the *myêsis*, both apparently unnoticed as such. The first (I) is in the dialogue *Protagoras*, in which Plato shows sophists, assembled in the house of the Athenian Callias, enacting some of the scenes from the rite. A good deal of its imagery is in fact that of Aristophanes’ *Clouds*, as if the dialogue were written in reply to the play. The second (II), a scene from the traveller’s tale near the opening of Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses* (1.2-20), is a chief concern of this paper, for it goes some way, I shall try to show, towards giving a better overall understanding of that difficult novel.

Elements of Apuleius’ presentation of the sequel of the travesty, the attempted escape from Hypata, find striking parallels in a story in the collection of the Brothers Grimm. Why this should be has long puzzled me. In an appendix I set out the riddle in the hope that it will find its Oedipus.

I. Early morning at Athens

Some of Plato’s dialogues are ‘acted,’ their texts, like those of plays, consisting only of characters’ speeches. Other dialogues are narrated, one speaker reporting a conversation. Still others are mixed, beginning as ‘acted’ and continuing with a narration by one of the characters. A basic difference between the ‘acted’ and the narrated or mixed types is that in these latter the narrator can not only report the conversations heard but can also describe the actions of the speakers and the setting of these actions.⁹ An obvious distinction between the purely narrated and the mixed types is that much like the overture of an opera, the ‘acted’ part of the mixed dialogue can, and often does, serve to hint at some of the themes that will be developed in the narrated part.

Such a mixed dialogue is the *Protagoras*. The ‘actors’ at the opening are Socrates and an unnamed friend, and the eventual narrator is Socrates himself. The friend playfully chid Socrates as being ever in pursuit of Alcibiades, even though the latter had by then begun to show a beard. Socrates (*Prt.* 309A-B): ‘Well, what of it? Are you not an enthusiast of Homer, who said that the most graceful young age (χαριεστάτην ἦβην) is that which Alcibiades now has, that of the young man first-

9 For example, in the ‘acted’ part of the *Phaedo*, Echechrates asks Phaedo, himself about to become the narrator, to tell of τὰ λεχθέντα καὶ τὰ πραχθέντα (*Phd.* 58C, ‘the words *and* the deeds,’ my emphasis).

bearded (τοῦ πρώτου ὑψηλήτου)?' Now these were Odysseus' words when he described his encounter with the young-looking Hermes:

But as I went up through the lonely glens, and was coming
near to the great house of Circe, skilled in medicines,
there as I came up to the house, Hermes, of the golden
staff, met me on my way, in the likeness of a young man
with beard new grown, which is the most graceful time of young manhood.
(*Od.* 10.275-79) ¹⁰

After this reference to Hermes' looks, Odysseus tells of useful advice that Hermes gave him: when Circe asks you to go to bed with her and you want to leave, stay, said Hermes (297), and: use the magical *mōly* with her and you'll win and not be transformed into a pig (281ff.). After his own reference to Alcibiades' Hermes-like looks,¹¹ Socrates said that on that very day Alcibiades had been of use to him by speaking at length on his behalf. Odysseus went on to tell of his conquest of Circe and of his descent into the Underworld. The narrated part of the dialogue will be Socrates' account of his visit to the house of Callias and of the sophists that he has met there; its imagery, as we shall see, is that of Odysseus' description of his visit to the Underworld. And in his narrative Socrates revealed how Alcibiades, as he had told his friend, was of use: Protagoras had asked Socrates to stay and to let him engage him in a debate, using sophistic set speeches, but Socrates wanted to leave. Stay, said Alcibiades (*Prt.* 336B), who then arranged for Socrates to be allowed to use his own invincible *pharmakon*, his 'Socratic' questioning dialectic (347B), and thereby to win, retaining his own identity.¹²

The narrated part of the dialogue has a second, as it were outer and overall, structure, however. There Socrates told how a younger friend, the enthusiastic Hippocrates, having learned the night before that the famous Protagoras was in town, rushed to his (Socrates') house before dawn, banged on the door, and asked loudly (310B): 'Are you awake or are you asleep?' This is sheer comedy, a

10 279 πρώτου ὑψηλήτη, τοῦ περ χαριεστάτη ἦβη.

11 According to Lucian (*Sacr.* 11) the first-bearded Hermes was a subject of statuary by such artists as Praxiteles, Polykleitos, and Pheidias. Clement of Alexandria tell us (*Protr.* 47) that at Athens sculptors of Hereses used Alcibiades as their model. For the use of models in early Classical 'realistic' portraiture see Barron 1999.

12 In the 'acted' part of the dialogue there may be a third pointer to the Underworld imagery of the narrated part. Socrates had mentioned that he had just seen Protagoras. 'Oh, is he in town?' asked his interlocutor. Socrates: 'it's already the third day' (309D). It was usually on the second day after death (*i.e.* the 'third day' of being dead, as the Greeks, in their inclusive reckoning, would put it) that a body was brought out and interred (Burkert 1985:192, with bibliography). Can it be a mere coincidence that it was on Protagoras' third day in Athens that Socrates described him, as we shall see, as being among the dead?

buffoonery surely as old as any invented by the risible biped. Hippocrates, it turns out, wanted to learn Protagoras' arts, especially that of brilliant speaking. As the narration continues, we see how very close it is to one comedy in particular. Both narration and Aristophanes' *Clouds* begin with pre-dawn scenes of waking, and the idea in both scenes is that the older man (Strepsiades; Socrates) shall introduce the younger (Pheidippides; Hippocrates) to a sophist (to Socrates in the Phrontisterion; to Protagoras in Callias' house). The younger men's names are strikingly alike. Aristophanes emphasized the components of the name Pheidippides: Strepsiades told us that he himself had wanted to call his son Pheidonides, after his own father, Pheidon, but his aristocratic, spendthrift wife insisted on a *hippos* name; the compromise was Φειδιππίδης (← φείδεσθαι 'use sparingly' + ἵππος 'horse'). In the dialogue, Socrates (311B) subtly emphasized his visitor's name (Ἴπποκράτης ← ἵππος + κρατεῖν 'keep control of') by referring to its homonymity with that of the Coan physician.¹³

In both play and dialogue, those entering the house that had the sophists were met with abuse from someone at the door who did not want to let them in. Once they did enter, each of the two older men succeeded in confuting the sophistry that he found inside: Strepsiades ultimately burned the Phrontisterion down, and Socrates, more resourcefully, applied, as noted, his own special technique of questioning.¹⁴ In other words, Socrates in the *Protagoras* assumed the rôle of Strepsiades in the *Clouds*, that of the genial comic hero whose naïve and engaging quality it is to overcome what is sophisticated and unnatural—what in Classical Athens the sophists represented. In the dialogue, Plato has given Protagoras the rôle of chief priest, which Aristophanes gave Socrates in the play.

When Strepsiades looked into the Phrontisterion, his immediate reaction was to exclaim Ἡράκλεις and to remark that the occupants looked starved, as if half-dead souls, and he was told that they were in fact grubbing about for the onions of Tartarus (*Nub.* 184-92). Plato maintains this Underworld imagery in his description of three of the sophists in Callias' house. When Socrates entered, he saw Protagoras, walking back and forth in the courtyard, followed by his listeners; he likened their movements to a circular dance of those charmed by the voice of Orpheus (*Prt.* 314C-5B). Then, almost echoing Strepsiades, Socrates looked up as if surprised, and, although he did not actually say Ἡράκλεις, remarked (315B), τὸν δὲ μετ' εἰσενόησα, ἔφη Ὅμηρος, Ἰπίαν τὸν Ἥλειον. The first four words are from Odysseus' account of the Underworld, and the reader, especially after

13 That Socrates' reference to his visitor's name is *prima facie* irrelevant is enough to invite us to notice it.

14 G. Klosko (1979) draws attention to the deliberately fallacious arguments in the *Protagoras* and to the perplexities of modern scholars who have sought to regard all of Socrates' arguments against Protagoras as rigorously logical and fair.

Socrates' broad hint (ἔφη "Ὀμηρος), expects the rest of the verse, βίην Ηρακληείην; even though Socrates substituted Ἰππίαν τὸν Ἡλείον, Heracles is whom the reader actually sees. Compare Odysseus' description of Heracles,

After him I was aware (τὸν δὲ μετ' εἰσενόησα) of powerful Heracles
 All around him was a clamor of the dead as of birds scattering
 scared in every direction; but he came on, like dark night,
 holding his bow bare with an arrow laid on the bowstring,
 and forever looking, as one who shot, with terrible glances.
 There was a terrible belt crossed over his chest, and a golden
 baldric, with marvellous works of art that figured upon it,
 bears, and lions with glaring eyes, and boars of the forests,
 the battles and the quarrels, the murders and the manslaughters.
 May he who artfully designed them, and artfully put them
 upon that baldric, never again do any designing.

(*Od.* 11.601, 605-14)

and Socrates' of Hippias,

After him I was aware, said Homer, of Hippias of Elis, seated in the opposite part of the courtyard, on a throne. About him on benches sat Eryximachus, son of Acumenus, and Phaedrus of Myrrhine and Andron, son of Androtion, and men from elsewhere, and certain others. They seemed to be asking Hippias astronomical questions about nature and the meteors, and he, sitting enthroned, drew distinctions for each of them and went through the things they asked.

(*Prt.* 315B-C)¹⁵

The reader who today may know nothing of the sophist Hippias can appreciate the humor of Socrates' juxtaposing timid questioners and twittering birds, the latter afraid that they will be shot down by the fierce man. Readers who knew the sophist himself or his reputation would see more. In the *Hippias Minor* (368B-C) Socrates reminded Hippias that he (Hippias) once appeared at Olympia in a chiton that he had made himself, and that he had made everything else he had with him: ring, sealstone, strigil, oil-jar. The sash that he had woven for the chiton had a virtually Asiatic splendor.

It is also with Odysseus' words in the Underworld that Socrates turned to a third sophist, Prodicus: 'and I saw Tantalus also.'¹⁶ Tantalus (*Od.* 11.583-87),

15 'Verba obscura,' write Van Leeuwen and Mendes da Costa (1897) of *Od.* 11.613f., μὴ τεχνησάμενος μὴδ' ἄλλο τι τεχνήσαιτο, / ὅς κείνον τελαμώνα ἐῆ ἐγκάτθετο τέχνη. My own assumption is that the ἐῆ here emphasizes the remarkable and that it was Heracles himself who fashioned his baldric; this is not, to be sure, provable from the Greek. Plato's substitution of the sash-making Hippias for Heracles suggests that this is now he understood the verses.

16 *Od.* 11.583 καὶ μὴν Τάνταλον εἰσείδον; *Prt.* 315C καὶ μὲν δὴ καὶ Τάνταλον γε εἰσείδον.

parched with thirst, was standing in a pool of water that covered him up to his chin but never reached his mouth. Prodicus was still in bed, under several covers (*Prt.* 315D), talking in a voice so heavy that his words were indistinct.

The Callias in whose house this all took place was one of the aristocratic Eleusian officials, a hereditary Kêryx, and he himself also served as δαδοῦχος or torch-bearer at the mysteries. Everything that we know of him suggests that he gloried in the rôle.¹⁷ If we consider these three descriptions of Socrates' more carefully, we see that they refer, subtly but, I believe, unmistakably, to the rite of *myêsis*.

Hippias, when in the *Protagoras* he was likened to Heracles, was sitting on a throne. When Heracles himself is represented, in art and literature, as seated, his usual—indeed almost exclusive—perch is a rock (as Homer shows him in the Underworld). Among the few exceptions are representations of what we have called Scene *B* of the Lovatelli Urn, with Heracles seated on an elaborately man-made stool as arch-*mystês* of Demeter and Core.¹⁸ This central part of the Lesser Mysteries, at least in what we know of them, was in fact called the 'enthronement' (*supra* n. 3) of the *mystês*, before whom there was a dance. Such a scene of 'enthronement' is what we see in Callias' house: Hippias as the initiand Heracles, enthroned before such a dance, which was led by Protagoras as hierophant.

A closer look at the description of Prodicus is also rewarding. There too we find the iconography of the mysteries. Not only is he covered, like the Lovatelli Heracles, but his covering includes certain sheepskins.¹⁹ Surely, immediately after the description of the 'enthronement' of Heracles/Hippias, the reader cannot fail to see in these sheepskins the purificatory pelts of the *myêsis*. Prodicus' voice was heavy, and there was a buzz or murmur (316A βόμβος) in the room that made his words obscure. The word is almost a *terminus technicus* of the *myêsis*: the flutter or roar that sounds in the ear of the mystic at his initiation.²⁰ The skeptic will urge that it is unthinkable that Socrates should be suggesting that the *bombos* of the mystic

17 For Callias and his affairs see Davies 1971:261ff., no. 7826 viii-xii. If one set out to write a comedy about the teachings of sophists and their pretensions in late 5th-century Athens, Callias and his circle would be a good place to start. He had had the most expensive sophistic education that money could buy and had in fact been the object of Eupolis' comedy Κόρακες, *The Flatterers* (PCG 156-90). Fragments of this last show sophists at Callias' house; the title suggests that the sophists were somehow milking him of money.

18 The few other exceptions are an apparently enthroned Heracles at Alba Fucens (Visscher 1962:41, 45) and a congener at Cleonae (Damaskos 1999:19-22). In the Lovatelli scene and its congeners (Rizzo 1910:103-5) Heracles as initiand sits on a stool, which is without a back but is formally carved—as if an abbreviated representation of a throne?

19 *Prt.* 315D ἐγκεκαλυμμένος ἐν κφδίσις τισίν.

20 Cf. *Pl. Cri.* 54D ἐγὼ δοκῶ ἀκούειν, ὥσπερ οἱ κορυβαντιῶντες τῶν αὐλῶν δοκοῦσιν ἀκούειν, καὶ ἐν ἐμοὶ αὕτη ἡ ἰχὴ τοῦτων τῶν λόγων βομβεῖ 'I seem to hear, as the corybants seem to hear the flutes, and within me the sound of these words flutters'

could be heard by such an unparticipating visitor as himself, but would it be unworthy of a story-teller who had begun his narrative with such a ribaldry as 'Are you awake or are you asleep?' and had continued it after the model of a known comedy (which itself had shown a parodying of *myéisis*) to imply that the *bombos* at these particular *Winkelmysterien* was so loud as to make it hard to hear anything else?

II. *Midnight at Hypata*

Σ. Ἄλλον ὀρώμεν λόγον τούτου ἀδελφὸν γνήσιον, τῷ τρόπῳ τε γίγνεται, καὶ ὅσῳ ἀμείνων καὶ δυνατώτερος τούτου φύεται;

Φ. Τίνα τρόπον καὶ πῶς λέγεις γιγνόμενον;

Σ. Ὅς μετ' ἐπιστήμης γράφεται ἐν τῇ τοῦ μανθάνοντος ψυχῇ, δυνατὸς μὲν ἀμῦναι ἑαυτῷ, ἐπιστήμων δὲ λέγειν τε καὶ σιγᾶν πρὸς οὓς δεῖ.

Phdr. 276A

In Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* (or *Golden Ass*), the young man Lucius went to Hypata in Thessaly, a land famous for its magic and its witches. There, erotic encounters with a witch's assistant enabled him to experiment with magic, and the inevitable happened: in his case he was transformed into an ass. The remedy, according to the handbook that they were using, was to eat a rose, but that proved impossible, for it was nighttime, and until a rose might be found the next morning, he as ass had to be put into the stable; robbers came, though, loaded onto Lucius' back what they had taken from the house, and went off with him into the night. After many adventures he was able to escape from the last of his owners and to go

to a hidden stretch of shore. There, next to the spray from the breakers, I stretched out in a soft hollow of sand to refresh my weary body As I surrendered myself to the evening's quiet, sweet sleep overwhelmed me. About the first watch of the night I awoke in sudden fright and saw, just emerging from the waves of the sea, the full circle of the moon glistening with extraordinary brilliance. Surrounded by the silent secrets of dark night, I realised that the supreme goddess now exercised the fullness of her power

(*Met.* 10.35-11.1)

He prayed to this goddess:

‘Grant me rest and peace from the cruel mischances I have endured. Let this be enough toil, enough danger. Rid me of this four-footed form, restore me to the sight of my own people, restore me to the Lucius I was. But if some divine power that I have offended is harassing me with inexorable savagery, at least let me die, if I may not live.’

(*Met.* 11.2)

The goddess, Isis, told him that a procession for her was to take place the next day, in which a priest would be carrying a garland of roses. Lucius was to eat it and to be turned back into to a man, and in his adoration of her he would become one of her initiates and priests.

In considering the *Metamorphoses*, we must remember that Apuleius knew, and embellished on, another account in the *Eselsmensch* tradition, the Λούκιος ἢ Ὀνοϛ of one ‘Lucius of Patrae,’ preserved among the works of Lucian.²¹ The *Onos* is itself an abbreviation of a longer story about a young Lucius who went to Thessaly, experimented with magic, and found himself changed into an ass, the remedy there too being to eat a rose. Many of the adventures of the Apuleian and these other Luciuses are the same, but among the specifically Apuleian additions in the *Metamorphoses*, it is generally agreed, are the traveller’s tale near the beginning of the novel, the tale of Cupid and Psyche near its middle (4.28-6.24), and the initiation into the worship of Isis as its culmination (Book 11). The second and third of these have been much studied, and it has been recognized that the second is a prefiguration of the third.²² The traveller’s tale, on the other hand, has received almost no attention in this regard. I shall argue that one of its episodes is a particularly black parody of the Eleusinian *myēsis*. If I am right, the Apuleian *Eselsroman*, unlike its predecessors, has, as a framework, a perversion of mysteries at the beginning, in the traveller’s tale, before Lucius has lost his human form, and their true celebration at the end, after he has regained it.

Apuleius’ novel, it is notorious, is shot through with Platonic themes and devices. The episode of Lucius and the fellow travellers on the road is in fact like a miniature of a ‘mixed’ Platonic dialogue in that the part (1.2-4) that precedes the narration (1.5-19) points, as we shall see, to motifs developed more fully in the narration itself. And emphasizing, as it does, such themes, the episode on the road

21 Treatments of these forebears include Molt 1938:1-6, Scobie 1975:26-46, Hägg 1983:176-81, and above all Van Thiel 1971-72.

22 For example, Hägg 1983:182, ‘[The] transformation of Apuleius’ novel, in its eleventh and last book, into a serious edifying work is however not as unexpected as has sometimes been suggested. There are several premonitions, though mostly hidden to the uninitiated reader ... A premonition of the end ... comes right in the middle of the novel: ... the deeply serious tale of Cupid and Psyche.’

serves as a kind of overture to the novel proper, which is the account of what happened after Lucius arrived at Hypata.

Before his own adventures began, Lucius, there on the road, dismounted so as to let his horse rest. In doing so, he met two travellers who were arguing about whether magic existed; one had been telling a first-person tale that the other regarded as incredible. Lucius, who was curious about magic, begged the story-teller to continue.

Lucius, we learn later in the book, had an attractive look of young modesty and inexperience (*infra* note 50), and his horse was a white thoroughbred. When the first traveller complained of the unbelievableness of the second's tale about the supernatural, Lucius pointed out that whereas he himself had recently almost choked on too large a piece of cheese, he had seen, nonetheless, a juggler at Athens who swallowed a spear and then brought up, at its point, a dancing boy so lithe as to seem boneless. Lucius was so eager to hear the tale that he offered to pay for the story-teller's supper at the next inn they might stop at. The story-teller agreed, swearing the truth of what he was about to relate:

And you will have no further doubts when you arrive at the next town in Thessaly, for the story is circulating there on everyone's lips about what occurred in plain daylight.

(*Met.* 1.5)

Readers of traditional stories know the device: the story-teller's claim that he is speaking the truth is the surest sign that he is not.²³ In this case, he reveals, in his story, that he intentionally kept secret from the people of Hypata his experience in the inn and the death beside the stream. The story is therefore to be a lie, later to be shown as such. Furthermore, the traveller says that the story is about himself, and there he gives himself the name Aristomenes; it in fact includes motifs and episodes, to be sure disguised to some extent, from legends that the story-teller knew about a real Aristomenes but that his character Aristomenes did not. In other words, it is a first-person story in which the 'I'-character comes to grief because he—impossible to believe—is ignorant of the very source from which the 'I'-narrator draws these motifs and episodes. And the story has every appearance of being invented on the spot, for Lucius' ears in particular, for in it the narrator weaves together the motifs that Lucius himself has just mentioned: cheese, magic, a shaft thrust into a throat, boneless flesh brought out, a free supper in an inn—and he even works in the white thoroughbred, for underlying the story, as we shall

23 An example from the folktale 'The Tinker' (Wace 1964:116, Pindus, early 20th century): "And I was there too," Lushu [the story-teller] concluded, "and the tinker gave me this tin tobacco box. You see it has the letter T for tinker on it and so I have not deceived you."

see, is Plato's *Phaedrus*: one of the story-teller's characters was in fact named Socrates, lying beneath a plane-tree beside a stream. To this lie, *lector, intende: laetaberis* (*Met.* 1.1).

The story, briefly: I, a travelling merchant, when I arrived at Hypata, hoped to buy there fresh cheese to resell but soon found that a wholesaler named Lupus had bought it all the day before. As evening came on, I went, tired, to the baths.

Suddenly I caught sight of Socrates, an old friend of mine. He was sitting on the ground, half-covered by a tattered old cloak, almost unrecognizable in his sallowness, pitiably deformed and shrunken, like those cast-offs of Fortune who are forever begging alms at street corners 'Oh Socrates, my friend,' I said, 'what has happened to you? How terrible you look! What a disgrace! At your home you have already been lamented and ritually addressed as dead, guardians have been appointed for your children by decree of the provincial judge, and your wife, after performing all the funeral services ... is being pressured into ... a new marriage. And you show up here, the image of a ghost, to our shame!' 'Aristomenes,' he answered, 'you do not know the slippery windings and shifting attacks and alternating reversals of Fortune.' And with that he covered his face, which had long since begun to redden from shame, with his patched cloak, baring the rest of his body from his navel down.

(*Met.* 1.6)

I (you now know that my name is Aristomenes²⁴) gave him some clothes, installed him in a room with me in an inn, restored him with food and drink, and listened to him tell of his misfortunes. On the road to Larissa he had been set on by thieves, robbed, and abandoned. He found his way to the inn of a woman named Meroë, *anum sed admodum scitulam* (1.7), who he later learned was a locally notorious witch.²⁵ She gave him a free meal (*cenae gratae atque gratuitae*) and then took him to her bed. Thenceforth he was her slave, forsaking his livelihood and all attachments, working as a bag-carrier (*saccariam faciens*) and giving her all his wages. I expostulated with him and said that we must escape from Hypata the next morning. We then retired, I to a cot, which I pushed up against the door, and Socrates to the main bed. Around midnight, the door, though locked, burst open:

24 The text at the beginning of the traveller's tale is obviously corrupt: 1.5 *sed ut prius noritis cuiatis sim qui sim Aegiensis*. Castiglione (1930:99f.) emended *qui sim* to <*Aristomenes sum*>, 'but this is neither necessary nor consonant with Apuleius' usual practice of postponing the introduction of his characters' names' (Hanson 1989 *ad loc.*; cf. Brotherton 1934:43); to me the proposal to delete *qui sim* seems reasonable. For the ethnic *Aegiensis* and its redolence of αἴξ 'goat' and cheese ('fabrication') see Keulen 2000. Whether or not the story-teller's 'real' name was that of his main character, Aristomenes, I try to avoid confusion in what follows by referring to the narrator as the traveller, the first-person character within the story as Aristomenes.

My cot (*grabatulus*), being low, lame in one foot, and rotten, collapsed from the force of such an assault, and I likewise was rolled out and hurled to the ground. The cot landed upside down on top of me, covering and hiding me.
(*Met.* 1.11)

I peeped out from under the covers and saw two old women, the jealous witch Meroë and her sister, 'one carrying a lighted lamp and the other a sponge and a naked sword' (1.12). Meroë: 'This, sister Panthia,' referring to the sleeping Socrates, 'is my darling Endymion' They had seen me too. The sister proposed that they should tear me to pieces or at least castrate me, but Meroë allowed me to remain alive so that I could bury my friend. She then thrust the sword up to the hilt into Socrates' neck, collected the blood into a pouch, reached into the wound, and drew out Socrates' heart. The sister sealed the wound with a sponge, and said:

'Listen, o sponge, born in the sea, take care to travel back through a river.'
(*Met.* 1.13)²⁶

Thereupon the two women urinated on me and they left—the hinges, bolts, and pins of the doors falling back into their former places.

But I stayed where I was, sprawled on the ground, lifeless, naked, and cold, and covered with urine, as if I had just come out of my mother's womb. No, it was more like being half-dead but still my own survivor, ... posthumous
....
(*Met.* 1.14)²⁷

25 A. Scobie (1983:94): the name, 'like those of the bawds Dipsas and Oenothoe, clearly alludes to a liking for drink' and (*ib.* 260) 'is probably a pun on *merum*;' cf. S. Panayotakis (1998:126): 'obvious pun with undiluted wine,' referring however to Zach 1992 (*non vidi*). Outside Apuleius' novel, there is only one instance of Meroë as a personal name: that of Cambyses' mother (Diod. Sic. 1.33), sister, or wife (Strabo 17.1.5), in memory of whom he named the Nubian capital (*FHN*: Eide *et al.* 1994-2000:II 563f.). The city along with her island, E.A.W. Budge has stressed (1929:19), was known in Egyptian antiquity for her magic. Juvenal (*AD 67), only a few generations before Apuleius, could complain (6.526) of the lost *pudicitia* of the Roman women of his day who went as far as Meroë to take part in Isiac rites, which he implies were somewhat lubricious. Archaeological explorations of Meroë show, in any case, that Isis was worshipped there: see Török 1997; for Isis in textual sources about Nubia, see the index in *FHN*: Eide *et al.* 1994-2000:IV 1264. Magic, *impudicitia*, secret rites: surely Apuleius trusted the reader, on learning the witch's name, immediately to think of the Nubian city and not to extract some far-fetched Latin pun.

26 *Heus tu ... spongia, cave in mari nata per fluvium transeas.*

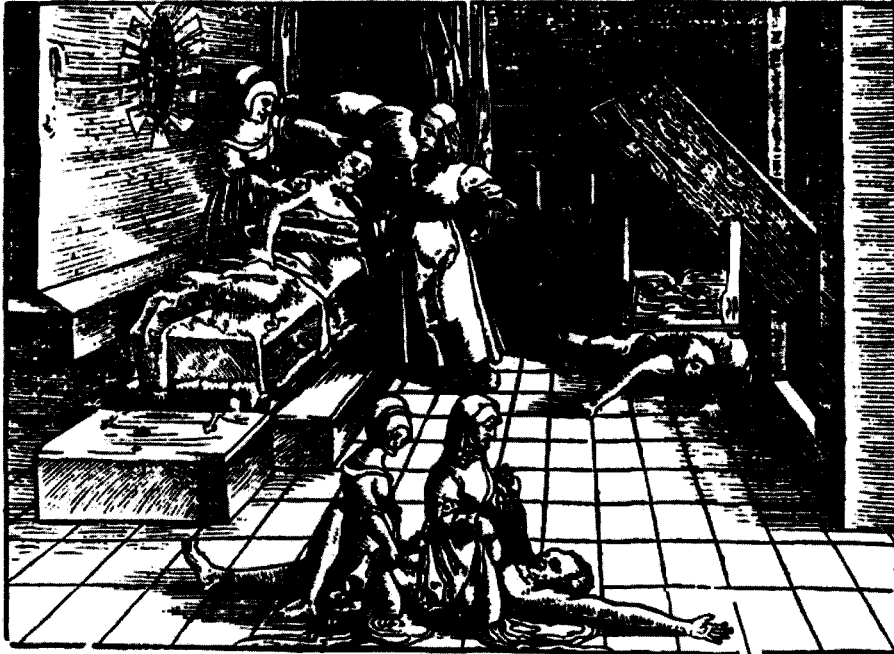


Fig. 2 Woodcut from (Johan Sieder), Lucii Apuleii von ainem gulden Esel (Augustae Vindelicorum 1538), to be read anticlockwise from upper right

The next morning, Socrates woke up, apparently unharmed. In his sleep he had seen the two women come and extract his heart, but, despite the foul stench, we both dismissed as dreams what we had seen. The next morning we two set out from Hypata and soon sat down beneath a plane-tree and had some breakfast.

Socrates ..., when he had polished off enough food, began to feel unbearably thirsty, since he had greedily bolted down a good share of a fine cheese. Not

27 *At ego, ut eram, etiam nunc humi proiectus, inanimis, nudus et frigidus et lotio perlitus, quasi recens utero matris editus, immo veruo semimortuus, verum etiam ipse mihi supervivens et postumus.* As the manuscripts all have it, the story, in what immediately follows, seems somewhat confused. Aristomenes, worried lest he be blamed the next morning for the murder of Socrates, decided to escape in the night on his horse, but the inn-keeper would not open the door. He returned to the room and decided to hang himself from a rafter by jumping from his cot (1.16 *grabatule*), to which he delivered a speech. The rope broke and he fell on Socrates, waking him up. At this point the inn-keeper burst into the room. B.E. Perry (1929) has argued—convincingly, in my view—that the episode with the inn-keeper is a later intrusion, and that it was Socrates who originally spoke some of the speeches that the novel, as we have it today, assigns to the inn-keeper. A problem not mentioned by Perry but possibly related to the interpolation, if this is what it is, is this: Socrates was sleeping on a *lectulus* (1.7 *lectulo refoveo* [*sc. Socratem*]), certainly not on the cot with Aristomenes that was overturned. But when Aristomenes later, in the part that Perry considers intrusive, jumped from a cot and his rope broke, he fell on Socrates. Perry's view has not found universal favour, I should warn: see Mayrhofer 1975.

far from the plane-tree's roots a gentle stream lazily flowed along in the likeness of a quiet pool, rivalling the colour of silver or glass. 'Here,' I said to him, 'quench your thirst with the milky waters of this spring.' He got up, and after a short search for a level enough spot along the edge of the bank, he crouched down on his knees and bent greedily forward to drink. He had not quite touched the water's surface with the edge of his lips, when the wound in his throat gaped open with a deep hole and the sponge suddenly rolled out of it, accompanied by a trickle of blood. Then his lifeless body nearly pitched forward into the river, except that I was just able to catch hold of one of his feet and with great effort to drag him higher up onto the bank. There I mourned my poor friend as much as circumstances would allow and covered him over with sandy soil to remain forever beside the river. As for me, trembling and terrified for my life, I fled through remote and trackless wildernesses, and like a man with murder on his conscience, I abandoned my country and my home and embraced voluntary exile. I now live in Aetolia and have remarried.'

(*Met.* 1.19)

The first traveller said that this was all the most arrant nonsense. Lucius, though:

'Not only do I believe him, by Hercules, but I am also extremely grateful to him for diverting us with a charming and delightful story. I have come out of this rough long stretch of road without either toil or boredom. I think my conveyer is happier over that favour too: without tiring him I have ridden all the way to this city gate here, not on his back, but on my own ears.'

(*Met.* 1.20)

It is a cautionary tale about two men, each with the name of a person from the past and each acting in a way that is strikingly at odds with the nature of his famous older namesake.²⁸ Socrates', of course, can be no other than the Athenian philosopher. As for the main character, his too is the most famous of all men to be so named, the culture-hero of ancient Messenia.²⁹

28 That a character in a plot should suffer because he was ignorant of what his famous homonym should know would be no innovation of Apuleius': we find it, for example, in Euripides' *Helen*, in which a man arrives from the sea, is in rags, dupes his wife's suitor, and wins her for himself. Everyone who sees or reads the play recognizes here the plot of the return of Odysseus to Ithaca—but not Helen's suitor himself, whose name is Theoclymenus, that of the seer in the *Odyssey* who conspicuously knew that Odysseus had returned, who announced it to Penelope, and who foretold the defeat of the suitors.

29 I am not aware that anyone who has written of Apuleius has considered this as even a possibility. W.H. Keulen (2000) discusses the etymology of the name, connecting it with Meroë's remark to her sister at *Met.* 1.12, *hic (sc. est) bonus ... consiliator Aristomenes*.

Pausanias (*AD 111-15) tells us (4.24,1) that when the Spartans had seized Messene, Aristomenes before emigrating went to Delphi with his daughter to consult the oracle; also at the shrine was a Rhodian ruler, who had gone there to ask how he might get a wife and was told to marry the daughter of the noblest Greek. He chose Aristomenes' daughter, considering her father by far the noblest of his day, and took them both with him to Ialysus. Our own knowledge of the stories that attached themselves to Aristomenes is limited mainly to what Pausanias relates. The two sources that he names (4.6.1) are the epic poem *Messeniacae* by Rhianus of Bene (3rd cent. BC), evidently immensely popular well after the poet's death, and the historian Myron of Priene (dates unknown).³⁰ Apuleius (*AD 125), a contemporary of Pausanias, could have expected his own readers to know Rhianus' epic, in which, Pausanias tells us, 'Aristomenes shines no less brightly than Achilles in Homer's *Iliad*' (4.6.3), and necessarily they would have known more than what we ourselves find in Pausanias' *précis*. We are fortunate, though, in that this last preserves two episodes, both from just before the fall of Messenia, that illuminate Apuleius' traveller's tale of Aristomenes.

After the Spartan victory at the battle of the Great Trench (4.17.2-9), Aristomenes and the seer Theoclus consulted the oracle at Delphi and received as answer:

'When a τράγος drinks the swirling water of Neda
I protect Messene no longer, for destruction is nigh.'

(Paus. 4.20.2)

There was fear therefore lest any he-goat (*tragos*) should drink from this river, which runs between Messenia and Elis, until Theoclus saw a wild fig-tree growing beside the river, not upright but bent and brushing the water with its leaves. 'The wild fig-tree is called by some Greeks *olynthê*, but the Messenians call it *tragos*' (4.20.2). Here was the 'goat' drinking from the Neda: Theoclus brought Aristomenes to the tree and explained that the end had come.

Aristomenes is persuaded that this is so and that they can no longer delay, but he made provision in even the present circumstances. For indeed the Messenians had something that they held secret, and if it were to disappear it would keep Messenia hidden forever, subdued, but if it were guarded, the oracles of Lycus the son of Pandion said that it would save the area again for the Messenians. When night fell, Aristomenes, who knew the oracles, brought this, and when he reached the most deserted part of Mount

³⁰ Rhianus: *Coll.alex.* 9, *FGrH* 265. His popularity: he was, for example, Tiberius' favorite poet (*Suet. Tib.* 70.2). Myron: *FGrH* 106.

Ithome, he dug there, imploring Zeus who held Ithome and the gods who were the salvation of the Messenians up to then to stay as guards over what he was depositing and not to put into the hands of the Lacedaemonians the Messenians' only hope of return.

(*Met.* 4.20.3-4)

Later in Book 4, Pausanias tells us what that secret was. Generations afterwards, when Sparta herself had been defeated at the Battle of Leuctra in 371 Epaminondas of Thebes and Epiteles of Argos, intending to refound Messenia and wondering where to establish her capital, both had dreams.

They say that to Epaminondas, in his perplexity, an old man, very much like a hierophant,³¹ said, as he stood over him at night: 'To you gifts there are from me, to prevail over whomever you with your arms approach. And if you vanish from among men, I, O Theban, shall see to it that you are never without name or glory. Give land and country and cities back to the Messenians ...' That he said to Epaminondas, and to Epiteles (whom the Argives had elected to be general, to refound Messene) he said this: wherever on Ithome he should find a yew and a myrtle,³² to rescue, by digging between them, the old woman (τὴν γραῦν), who was suffering through being confined in the bronze chamber and was already fainting. Epiteles, when day began to dawn, went to the place described, dug, and happened on a bronze hydria. Taking it at once to Epaminondas, he explained about the dream and told him to take off the lid himself and to see what was inside. After sacrificing and praying to the dream that appeared, he began to open the hydria, and when he got it open he found tin beaten out very thin. It was rolled up like τὰ βιβλία.³³ There the rite of the Great Goddesses had been written, and this was what Aristomenes had deposited.³⁴ And they say that

31 For the traditional attire of the hierophant see Scene A of the Lovatelli Urn (*supra* Fig. 1) and Rizzo 1910:156-67.

32 Demeter's chaplet was made of yew and myrtle, Ister (*FGrH* 334 F 29) tells us.

33 The great *lex sacra* concerning the mysteries at Andania mentions βιβλία handed down to newly elected priests and priestesses (*LSCG* 65.11f.). The date of the inscription, 97 BC, is late, but the content of the βιβλία would necessarily be the special things that the new officials alone—and not the readers of the *lex sacra* itself—would need to know, such as the *legomena* and the handling of the *drōmena* of the mysteries. I have not seen any other reference to mystery rites as an 'old woman.'

34 To translate Μεγάλων Θεῶν would be tendentious, for we do not know whether Pausanias (or his source) intended the Great Goddesses (Demeter and Core) or the Great Gods (Dioscuri/Cabiri), the gender of the genitive plural being ambiguous. That Pausanias elsewhere in Book 4 (*infra*) emphasizes the installation of Eleusinian rites in Messenia suggests, however, that he had the goddesses in mind.

this man that appeared to Epiteles and Epaminondas in their sleep was Caucon, who came from Athens to Andania, to Messene, daughter of Triopas.

(*Met.* 4.26.6-8)³⁵

At the beginning of his Messenian history Pausanias has told us something of those rites:

The first to reign in this country are Polycaon, son of Lelex, and Messene, Polycaon's wife. Caucon, son of Celaenus, son of Phlyus, came from Eleusis bringing the *orgia* of the Great Goddesses to this Messene. The Athenians say that Phlyus himself was a child of Earth. Musaeus' hymn to Demeter written for the Lycomids agrees with them. The rites of the Great Goddesses Lycus, son of Pandion, many years later than Caucon, promoted to greater honor. And the place where he purified the initiates they still call the Grove of Lycus. ... And that this Lycus was the son of Pandion, verses on a statue set up by Methapus show. For Methapus too made changes in the rites. Methapus, an Athenian by birth, was an initiate and deviser of *orgia* of all kinds. He also dedicated at the cult house of the Lycomids a statue with an inscription telling other things that confirm our account:

'And I purified houses of Hermes and roadways of chaste
Demeter and of Core *prôtogonos*, where they say
Messene established for the Great Goddesses a rite
learned from Caucon, illustrious offspring of Phlyus.
And I marvelled how Lycus, son of Pandion, established all
the sacred rites of Atthis in dear Andania.'

(*Met.* 4.1.5-9)

The Athenians Lycus and Methapus purified rites that the Athenian Caucon had brought from Eleusis. These secrets, then, inscribed on the tin tablet, were the

35 Pausanias is our single witness to an Argive general named Epiteles, son of Aeschines. In his Berlin dissertation Kohlmann (1866, *non vidi*, from Aly 1914:785) denied that Pausanias' source here could have been a composition in dactylic hexameters: Rhianus might have managed 'Επιτέλης, (- ~ ~ ~ ~) by turning it into κάπιτέλης (~ ~ ~ ~ ~), but Αισχίνης (~ ~ ~ ~) is impossible in a hexameter. Nonetheless, even though Pausanias may have learned the patronymic from elsewhere, it is difficult to think that Rhianus would not have included in his *Messenica* such a dramatic and significant story. Its inventor—some propagandist for the Argive-Theban plan to reestablish Messenia?—was artfully drawing on motifs from legends of the last days of Messenia: two men (Theoclus, Epiteles) receive supernatural revelations (from the Pythia, from Caucon in a dream) about trees (the *tragos*, the yew and myrtle), whose discovery and identification lead to diggings on Ithome (Aristomenes buries a hydria, Epiteles unearths it). I have no doubt that the detail of dawn as the time of Epiteles' discovery, as Messenia was about to rise again, reflects the legend that it was a nightfall that Aristomenes buried the secrets, when Messenia had gone into decline.

Eleusinian rites that the Messenian Aristomenes knew, a pious man attentive to the oracles, in which he put his hope.

Of all this and indeed of the legends of his namesake in general, the Aristomenes of the traveller's tale was ignorant or unheeding. If he had known them and paid them due attention, he might not have come to such grief. His is a story of a man who, in not knowing his name, did not know himself.

Let us look at some of the motifs from the legends about the Messenian Aristomenes that Apuleius' traveller has incorporated into his story. They are all disguised but recognizable if we know the legends: (A) mysteries of Demeter and Core, at least those of them that one could refer to in a novel, (B) two men's dreams of a hierophant/hierophantis³⁶ and their reactions to his/her instructions, (C) removal of the heart from a living man (not in Pausanias, but see *infra*), (D) the inauspiciousness of drinking from a flowing stream, and (E) the oracle-founder Lycus.

(A) When the two men retired for the night in Aristomenes' room, Aristomenes lay on a *grabatulus*, a portable trundle-bed like the *skimpous* on which Strepsiades sat.³⁷ When the witches had overturned his bed, his head was hidden under the bed-clothes: like the Lovatelli initiate, Strepsiades and Prodicus, he was *enkekalymmenos*. He saw a scene of sacrifice evidently traditional in everything but the choice of victim: Meroë plunged a sword into Socrates' neck, and 'so as not to deviate, I suppose, from the ritual of sacrificing a victim' (Met. 1.13),³⁸ reached into the wound, and pulled out the heart. Then, instead of sprinkling the *enkekalymmenos* with holy grain from the *liknon*, they stood over him and urinated. Aristomenes' reaction in claiming that he was then 'lifeless, naked and cold ... just come out of my mother's womb ... half-dead but still my own survivor' was surely, whether or not he knew it, that of the newly created *mystês*: compare the opening verse, evidently addressed to the new initiate, on gold tablets from a woman's grave of the 4th century BC at Pelinna in Thessaly:

Now did you die and now were you born, blessed one, on this day.³⁹

Aristomenes, lying drenched in witches' urine, has unknowingly witnessed an ugly perversion of a ritual purification.

From under his covers Aristomenes saw the sisters holding three objects: torch, sponge, sword. Meroë spoke of her dear Endymion: in doing so she revealed her-

36 In what follows, I treat the Apuleian Meroë/Panthia as a unitary symbol.

37 Cf. *Suda*, Hsch. σκίμπους; κράββατος (= Lat. *grabatus*), in general Rodenwaldt 1927.

38 Met. 1.13 *Ne quid demutaret, credo, a victimae religione.*

self as the moon, his lover; that the objects that the sisters carry are three in number calls to mind the triple attributes of the lunar goddess Hecate.

(B) As Aristomenes beheld Meroë and her sister extracting the heart of the sleeping Socrates, Socrates saw the same thing in a dream, which he attributed to indigestion. The next morning, Aristomenes also dismissed as an idle dream what he himself had seen. Again, we have two men dreaming about a hierophant(is), who utters instructions about what to look for (Caucon: a yew and a myrtle) or avoid (Meroë and Panthia: a flowing stream, lest the sponge return to the sea). What happened thereafter in the traveller's tale is curiously symmetrical to but the very reverse of the Messenian legend: Epiteles acted on his dream, went out and obeyed the instructions by finding the trees, and as a result dug someone up (the *graus*), while Aristomenes scoffed at the dream, went out and (accidentally) found a tree but disobeyed the instructions by not avoiding the running water, and as a result buried someone.

(C) Aristomenes assumed that what he saw from under the bed-clothes was a ritual sacrifice and that the extraction of the heart was necessary as part of the ritual. Independently of Aristomenes' remark, A. Henrichs (1972:72) has brought together evidence that such extraction and then sacrifice of victims' hearts was indeed a regular Greek religious practice.⁴⁰ What Aristomenes in fact saw and failed to recognize, though, was a reenactment of one of the legends about his own namesake, who had twice been captured by the Spartans and twice escaped from them; the third time, though, they opened his living body and cut out the heart, which they found to be hairy, a sign of great courage.⁴¹ It may not be going too far to say that the character Aristomenes therefore uncomprehendingly saw a ritual

39 Parássoglou and Tsantsanoglou 1987 (*SEG* 37.497, *OFBern* 485f. $\nu\upsilon\nu$ ἔθανες καὶ $\nu\upsilon\nu$ ἐγένου, †τρισόλβιε, † ἄματι τῶιδε. The adjective must be corrupt, for it makes the line too long for a hexameter; the first editors have suggested μάκαρ; if this last is correct, the meaning could equally well be 'now you became blessed.' The tablets from Pelinna are of the shape of 'cordate leaves,' according to the editors. They may be compared to those inscribed with the *legomena* of the Lernaean mysteries of Demeter; Pausanias (2.37.2f.) speaks of them as inscribed on 'hearts' (evidently heart-shaped tablets) of orichalc, which is an alloy of copper much like gold in appearance. He tells us that the texts were analyzed by one Arriphon, whom he describes as τὸ μὲν ἀνέκαθεν Τρικωνιεύς τῶν ἐν Αἰτωλίᾳ, τὰ δὲ ἐφ' ἡμῶν Λυκίων τοῖς μάλιστα ὁμοίως δόκιμος. Unless Pausanias was tacitly drawing on an earlier source, such tablets must have had some circulation in his own and therefore in Apuleius' day, even if up to now, however, most of those that the archaeologist's spade has brought to light have been of the 4th and 3rd centuries BC (the one late exception is *OFBern* 491, Rome, of the 3rd century of our era). A prevalent view (e.g. Riedweg 1998) is that the words quoted above come from the *legomena* of an initiation and were spoken and even written down at the initiate's funeral (*op.cit.* 367 n. 32). This last, however, would have taken place on the second day after death (*supra* n.12), not on the ἄματι τῶιδε of the death itself. The ἔθανες of the tablets must be symbolic, the words spoken and inscribed rather at the initiation (so Graf 1991:98, despite his later retraction, 1993); see Jordan forthcoming for further argumentation.

surrogate sacrifice of himself as initiand: W. Burkert (1983:46 n.45) has noted similarities between the induction of a new initiand and the ritual sacrifice of a victim.⁴²

(D) The reader, once aware of this mock-*myësis*, sees more. When the two men had left town, Socrates ate some cheese and grew unbearably thirsty. Aristomenes, noticing a plane-tree beside a crystal-clear stream, told his companion to drink of its milky waters.⁴³ When Socrates died as a result, he almost fell into the stream.⁴⁴ After just seeing this travesty of the mysteries, can we fail to think of the phrase 'a kid, I/you fell into milk' of the gold 'Orphic' tablets?⁴⁵ Of the rites from which the phrase comes we know too little to be able to understand the full significance of an animal falling or rushing into milk, but it is clear that in the ritual the animal sym-

- 40 He adduces Galen's description (*De plac. Hipp. et Plat.* 2.4.45) of a case like Socrates': ritual removal of the heart of a chicken, which remained alive and ambulatory, to die only later, from loss of blood (cf. Elias, *Comm. in Arist. Categ.* 231.10). We may add Lucian's description (*Sacr.* 13) of the sacrificing priest, as bloody as any Cyclops, removing his victims' hearts (cf. *Suda* καρδιουκία: τὰς καρδίας ἔλκειν τῶν θυμάτων). Clement of Alexandria (*Protr.* 13) claims that the removal of the heart figured in the mysteries of Demeter (Δηώ) and Core (G. Mylonas arguing [1961:289-91], though, that the rite was Phrygian rather than Eleusinian); in any case, at Ephesus in the 3rd century of our era Demeter, on 190 days of the year, received the sacrifice of an animal who was to suffer extraction of the heart and evisceration (*LSSuppl.* 121.7f., with the editor's notes). (To extract and then indeed to eat a *human* heart was part of the initiation into gangs of thieves in two ancient Greek novels, those of Lollianus and Achilles Tatius: see Henrichs *loc.cit.*.)
- 41 For this we have three sources: Plin. *HN* 11.185 *Hirto corde gigni quosdam homines proditur, neque alios fortioris esse industriae, sicut Aristomenen Messenium qui trecentos occidit Lacedaemonios Tertium capto Lacedaemonii precus dissecuere voventi, hirsutum cor repertum est.* Val. Max. 1.8 ext. 5 *Oculis eius admirabilius Aristomenis Messenii cor, quod Lacedaemonii (codd.: Athenienses) ob eximiam calliditatem exsectum pilis repertum invenerunt, cum eum aliquotiens captum et astutia elapsum cepissent.* Steph. Byz. s.v. Ἀνδανία: Ἐκ ταύτης Ἀριστομένης ἐγένετο, ἐπιφανέστατος στρατηγός. τοῦτον οἱ Λακεδαιμόνιοι πολλάκις αὐτοῦς νικήσαντα θανάμασαντες, ὡς μόλις ἐκράτησεν ἐν τοῖς Μεσσηνιακοῖς, ἀνατεμόντες ἐσκόπουν εἰ παρὰ τοῦς λοιπούς ἐστὶ τι, καὶ εὖρον σπλάγγχον ἐξηλλαγμένον καὶ τὴν καρδίαν δασεῖαν, ὡς Ἡρόδοτος καὶ Πλούταρχος (= fr. 33.3 Dübner) καὶ Ῥιανός. When Stephanus cites Herodotus and Plutarch, he evidently means *De Herod. malign.* 11 (856f.) Ἀριστομένης φησὶν αὐτὸς (sc. Ἡρόδοτος) ὑπὸ Λακεδαιμονίων ζῶντα συναρπασθῆναι, where the reference to Herodotus must be mistaken. Can Stephanus be correct about the poet? If Rhianus was Pausanias' source for his account of Aristomenes' burial of the Messenian secrets, then the poet, if he indeed included the story of the extraction of Aristomenes' heart, would have mentioned it presumably only as an example of persistent old wives' tales invented to illustrate the hero's valor.
- 42 He adduces 'Livy 10.38.9 *admovebatur altaribus magis ut victima quam ut sacri particeps* at the initiation into the *legio linteata* of the Samnites.' The question of surrogate sacrifice of the 'reborn' initiate is beyond the scope of the present discussion: see Jordan forthcoming.
- 43 *Met.* 1.19 *en ... explere latice fontis lacteo.* The water, of course, was not milky: contrast Aristomenes' description of the stream a few lines before: *fluvius in speciem placidae paludis ignavus ibat, argento vel vitro aemulus in colorem.* This is Apuleius' signal that we should pay particular attention.
- 44 *Loc.cit.: denique corpus exanimatum in flumen paene cernuat.*

bolizes the initiate, the rushing or falling the initiate's willingness to accept the allegorical death that the mysteries offer. But in the traveller's dark tale the death is no longer joyous and symbolic but gruesome and real.

Those who know the gold tablets will be reminded of other imagery in them: like Socrates, the deceased initiate in the Underworld is parched with unbearable thirst.⁴⁶ (S)he will see a spring ahead but should be careful in choosing it: beneath a white cypress at the right (*OFBern* 474.2; at the left: 476.1) is the spring to be avoided, with the souls of the dead;⁴⁷ the character Aristomenes, be it noted, was totally incautious: he simply chose the first body of water that he and Socrates saw. His invitation to Socrates to come and drink of it as if of milk is as full of foreboding as the oracle about Messenia's fall when the *tragos* should drink of the Neda. Like the fig-tree 'caprid' and the caprid of the mysteries, Socrates as a kid 'falling into milk' leaned over to drink from the running water and thus he, like the Messenian *tragos*, spelled disaster to the character Aristomenes, who, like his namesake, now went into exile.⁴⁸

(E) The Messenian Aristomenes buried the 'secret thing' because he remembered an oracle of the Athenian Lycus (Paus. 4.20.4). This Lycus (λύκος 'wolf') appears, in disguise, at the very beginning of the traveller's tale, as the wholesaler Lupus ('wolf'), who to be sure spoke no word, oracular or not, but the fact that he had bought all the cheese in the market the day before and frustrated the character Aristomenes' hopes of profit was a warning, as if oracular, to Aristomenes, who took it as such: the day would not go well (*Met.* 1.5).⁴⁹

45 *OFBern* 488.10. ἔριφος ἐς γάλ' ἔπετον. 487.4 ἔριφος ἐς γάλα ἔπετες (both Thuri, IV^a). The tablets from Pelinna (*supra* n. 39) show a variant: after the initiate is told that she has just died and been born (or become blessed) and that she must tell Persephone that the Bacchic god himself has released her, we read: ταῦρος εἰς γάλα ἔθορες· αἶξ (ΑΙΨΑ tab.) εἰς γάλα ἔθορες· κριὸς εἰς γάλα ἔπεσε.

46 *OFBern* 474-6 διψαί δ' εἰμ' αὔος καὶ ἀπόλλυμαι· ἀλλὰ δότ' ὤκα ψυχρὸν ὕδωρ; cf. 478-84.

47 The concern that the traveller in the Underworld should avoid what is to be avoided is a theme that recurs, for example, in the tower's advice to Psyche (*Met.* 6.18f.): avoid a lame ass with a lame driver, a dead man floating in the Styx, women weaving, a meal shared with Persephone, etc.

48 That Apuleius' traveller's character Aristomenes should go into exile after the perversion of the 'purification' rites that he had gone through comes as no surprise, if indeed (*supra* n. 5) the original purpose of such *myēsis* was integration into a group.

49 *Met.* 1.5 *Sed, ut fieri assolet, sinistro pede profectum me spes compendii frustrata est.* The equation of Lupus and the oracle-founder Lycus will seem less far-fetched to the reader who recalls Lucius' own visit (1.24f.) to the market at Hypata before he too went to the baths. Like that of Aristomenes, his visit was made profitless (he was *et nummis simul privatus et cena*) by one Pytheas, whose name (as Hanson [1989] notes *ad loc.*) is also redolent of oracles. Like Lycus, Pytheas, as Lucius points out, came from Athens.

Every one of these points to scenes that the Messenian Aristomenes would have recognized as inauspicious and from which he would have taken warning, which the character Aristomenes fails to heed, through either a lack of acquaintance with the legend (as in *A-D*) or a habitual disregard of such things (as in *E: ut fieri assolet*). It is a cautionary tale about a man who does not know his own name, who does not know himself.

Now in the *Eselmensch* story in Apuleius' sources, the main character already had the name Lucius. Apuleius could not, then, have given his hero a name of his own choosing, as he done for Aristomenes. But he did the next best. When Lucius reached Hypata, he went to the house of his host there, Milo, who, after reading his letter of introduction, remarked:

‘In itself your attractive personal appearance and your quite virginal modesty would lead me to conjecture, and quite rightly, that you come of a noble family I hope you will be pleased to stay with us. Not only will you make our house greater by the honour of your presence, but you will lay claim to a token of great repute if you are content with a tiny hearth, in emulation of the virtues of your father’s namesake Theseus, who did not disdain the meager hospitality of old Hecale.’

(*Met.* 1.23) ⁵⁰

It is as if Lucius' looks themselves reminded Milo of Lucius' father's name and of the mythical Theseus' famously virginal and modest son, Hippolytus. In fact it was as an encrypted Hippolytus (ἵππος + λυτός 'horse to be loosed') that Lucius first presented himself to us and to the two travellers on the road. He had dismounted and unbridled his horse (1.2 *frenos detraho*), which followed him, still unbridled, into Hypata (1.20).⁵¹ Hippolytus, we cannot but remember, came to grief because his stepmother, Phaedra, fell in love with him and then, when he showed horror at the thought, accused him of rape. That myth hung over the story of Lucius in Hypata: the good Byrrhaena warned him of the storied predilection of his hostess, Pamphile, for young men (2.5), and at dinner he took a place where Pamphile's eye would not fall on him (2.11). The motifs are of course those of the story of 'Potiphar's Wife' (Thompson 1955-58: K2111, T418), a type evidently popular always;

50 *Ego te ... etiam de ista corporis speciosa habitudine deque hac virginali prorsus verecundia generosa stirpe proditum et recte conicerem Fac libenter deverseris in nostro. Nam et maiorem domum dignatione tua feceris, et tibi specimen gloriosum arrogaris, si contentus lare parvulo Thesei illius cognominis patris tui virtutes aemulaveris, qui non est aspernatus Hecales anus hospitium tenue.* The first traveller had already remarked (1.20), on the road to Hypata, that Lucius' clothes and manners showed what kind of *vir* he was.

51 G. Drake (1968) has noted that it is not necessary for a horse to be unbridled, as Lucius' horse was, in order to eat grass. The unbridling is 'superfluous,' therefore significant.

from Greek antiquity we have not only the stories of Phaedra and Hippolytus themselves (Eur. *Hipp.*) but of Anteia and Bellerophon (*Il.* 6.156-65), of Cleoboea and Antheus (Parthen. 14⁵²), of Phylonome and Tenes (Paus. 10.14.1-2), of Astydamia/Cretheis and Peleus (Apollod. 3.13.3), of Biadice and Phrixus (Hygin. *Poët. astr.* 2.20), and rewritings by Heliodorus (Cnemon and Demaeneta: 1.9-11) and by Apuleius himself (murderous stepmother: *Met.* 10.2-12). In several of these accounts the reluctant young man is noticeably learned or pious or stands in a special relation to the divine: in the Biblical story (Gen. 39ff., 48) he could interpret dreams; Parthenius (quoting Alexander of Aetolia) describes him as 'dear to quick Hermes,' Apuleius as 'a young son with a good liberal education, consequently unusually pious and modest;' Hippolytus, to whom Apuleius invites us to compare Lucius, was steeped in the incense of Orpheus and his writings.⁵³ The Hippolytus of the myth would no doubt have recognized the religious symbolism of the two episodes of the traveller's tale; in Euripides' play he emphatically distinguished between the two goddesses at work there—Artemis, with whom he also had a special relation—and Aphrodite, that of his stepmother and her lust. Any reader of Apuleius who knew the myth would surely have seen something in the traveller's tale that the hearer Lucius himself did not.

We may now turn to Plato's *Phaedrus*. Whatever background might have come to the minds of those readers when at the end of his tale the traveller described Aristomenes and Socrates beside the stream beneath the plane tree, among them the most conspicuous was surely the *Phaedrus*, with its scene of Socrates and his companion, outside Athens on a summer day, lying on the grass beneath a plane tree beside the Ilissus, not far from where the Lesser Mysteries were celebrated at Agrae (*Phdr.* 229C), discussing Eros in his worse or his better form. Those who could read perceptively, those (I assume) for whom Apuleius wrote the novel, would, I believe, have seen more still.

In the dialogue, when the two had lain down beneath the plane tree, Phaedrus read Socrates a speech, in which the orator Lysias argued that the beloved should gratify the non-lover rather than the lover (*Phdr.* 230E-4D). Challenged by Phaedrus, Socrates gave a speech on the same theme (237A-8C, 238D-41D) but then pronounced it unsatisfactory as treating only of the lower type of Eros, not Eros the son of Aphrodite and therefore a god. During this speech, he kept his head

52 Where it is ascribed, rightly or wrongly, to Aristotle and writers of τὰ Μιλησιακά. Parthenius also reproduces an account of the story in elegiac couplets by Alexander of Aetolia. Discussion: Lightfoot 1999:454-70.

53 Theseus at Eur. *Hipp.* 953f. Ὀρφέα τ' ἄνακτ' ἔχων βάκχευε πολλῶν γραμμάτων τιμῶν καπνοῦς. Bellerophon (*Il.* 6.162) was of a 'virtuous will' (ἀγαθὰ φρονέοντα). In Heliodorus, the young man had just completed his epebic training and has returned home from the Panathenaea wearing festal attire when the stepmother attempted to seduce him.

ered—out of shame, he said. When in the traveller's tale Aristomenes first encountered Socrates, this Socrates also, his face red from shame, covered his head (*Met.* 1.6): as he would relate, he had been enslaved by that lower type of love (1.8 *volutatem Veneriam*, in Aristomenes' words). We have, then, at both the beginning and the end of our encounter with the Apuleian Socrates, references to the Socrates of the *Phaedrus*.

Earlier in the dialogue, as the two men were about to reach the plane tree, Phaedrus mentioned the legend that somewhere along the Ilissus Boreas swept Oreithyia away. One could think of some rational explanation, Socrates offered, that Boreas might, for example, have blown her off a rock and thus 'carried her off' to her death. One might thus explain other such stories, if one had the time.

'But I have no leisure for them at all; and the reason, my friend, is this: I am not yet able, as the Delphic inscription has it, to know myself; as it seems to me ridiculous, when I do not yet know that, to investigate irrelevant things. And so I dismiss these matters and, accepting the customary belief about them, as I was saying just now, I investigate not these things, but myself, to know whether I am a monster more complicated and more furious than Typhon or a gentler and simpler creature, to whom a divine and quiet lot is given by nature.'

(*Phdr.* 229E-30A)

With the exception of Lysias' speech as read by Phaedrus and of Socrates' rival speech and another that followed, the *Phaedrus* is an entirely 'acted' dialogue. But the apparently casual reference to the maxim at Delphi and to the Typhonic vs the gentler beast does serve as the overture of a mixed dialogue in that it prefigures themes in the rest of that work. After delivering his unsatisfactory speech with his head covered, Socrates then uncovered his head and gave a 'purificatory' speech about Eros as a god (244A-57B), in which, as if in obedience to Delphi, he would examine man's very soul, explaining it as a charioteer driving two horses, on the right a white thoroughbred,⁵⁴ a lover of honor in keeping with modesty and decorum, led by command and *logos*, on the left a dark mongrel, with the opposite qualities, resisting whip and spur.

A significant difference in the traveller's tale is that the Socrates there never offered the equivalent of the Platonic 'purificatory' speech, with its examination of the self. There is no suggestion that the traveller's Socrates ever thought of his soul, much less that one of its parts might overcome that baser part that had led him into the clutches of his witch. This story of the very less-than-Platonic Socrates and his poor end, with all its pointers to the *Phaedrus*, is what Lucius himself heard and

54 White: *Phdr.* 253D λευκός ἰδεῖν. Thoroughbred: 246B καλός τε καὶ ἀγαθός καὶ ἐκ τοιούτων.

did not comprehend, enjoying it as a mere *lepida fabula* (*Met.* 1.21) to pass the time. And, he joked, my horse enjoyed it too!—his white thoroughbred, which, like the white thoroughbred of the *Phaedrus*, could hear and understand speech/reason (*Phdr.* 254D κελεύματι μόνον καὶ λόγῳ ἠνιοχεῖται).

Once Lucius installed himself at his host's house at Hypata, he went to the market and met a man who despoiled him of money (*Met.* 1.24f.; *supra* n. 49); then he went to the baths. His own story, then, has already begun, unbeknownst to him, to take the lines of the traveller's tale. It becomes the story of the unfortunate man whom Aristomenes met at the baths. Like that Socrates, he is lodged with a witch. Sexual relations with her ensue (in Lucius' case, with her assistant). Like Socrates, who held up his cloak and exposed his genitals ('*sine, sine*') before telling of his Meroë, Lucius makes a point of exposing his genitals before going to bed with his Fotis ('*miserere*').⁵⁵ Socrates became a bag-carrier, as if a beast of burden; Lucius becomes a pack-ass. If this last analogy is intentional,⁵⁶ then when Socrates, after his degradation, continued to go to bed with his witch, it was as a beast with a human; this is what the course of Lucius' metamorphosis is to entail as well, his sexual intercourse as ass with the Corinthian matron (10.19-22).

Fortunately for Lucius, this is where his adventures as an ass end. After the frog, who, as the Brothers Grimm record in the first of their *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, had been metamorphosed into that shape from a prince, had sat at a human's table, had eaten from a human's plate, and had gone to a woman's bed, he was able to return to human form.⁵⁷ Having met these requirements, the unlucky Socrates, however, was never able to experience this second metamorphosis. Lucius too met them: he ate and drank at the table of his last owner and he went, much to his delight, to a woman's bed, describing it all almost pornographically. Having passed

55 Socrates: *Met.* 1.6 *sutili centunculo faciem suam ... obtexit ita ut ab umbilico pube tenus cetera corporis renudaret.* Lucius: 2.16 *inguinum fine lacinia remota impatientiam Veneris Photidi meae monstrans*

56 Scobie 1983:260f.: 'It is ... worth noting that Meroë's victim, Socrates, is not, like many of the witches' victims, transformed into an animal shape (1.9). In other words, he performs the function of a pack-animal, even though he does not have the shape of one. It therefore seems possible that Apuleius deliberately altered a traditional feature of the tale <of the female inn-keeper and her victim who is metamorphosed into a quadruped> ..., and for a good reason: to have Socrates transformed by a witch into an ass at this stage of the narrative would have detracted from the climax of the first three books of his romance: the transformation of Lucius into an ass at 3.24.'

57 Some version of this man-into-frog-into-man story must have been known in antiquity: Petron. *Sat.* 77.6 *amicus vester, qui fuit rana, nunc est rex.* L. Friedländer 1906:354 refers to Crusius 1890:46 (*non vidit*). Referring to the sequence drink-food-bed in later antiquity, though not necessarily with connotations of metamorphosis, L. Robert (1967:80) mentions an epitaph from Aezani (Le Bas and Waddington 1870: no. 977) with λουσαι (*i.e.* 'go to the baths') πῖε, φάγε, βείνησον and also Clem. Alex. *Strom.* 8.12.78 ἐσθίων, πίνων, καὶ γαμῶν.

through all the stages of the frog story, he began to have human shame. There was to be a spectacle with a masque of the Judgment of Paris, after which, as part of the entertainment, he was supposed to have public sexual intercourse with a woman, a murderess: the idea now appalled him. In describing the masque, he burst into an encomium of the Platonic Socrates, telling how he had been pronounced by the Delphic god to be the wisest of all and had kept a rein on (*frenis coercebat*) the young: ‘even to this day the best philosophers choose his holy school and in their zealous pursuit of happiness swear by his very name’ (10.33). This from Lucius, who before and after his metamorphosis into an ass, was, in his unwisdom, himself indeed, *περὶ τὰ ὄτα λάσιος, κωφός* like the dark horse of the *Phaedrus* (246B), an unreined youth to whom the name of Socrates on the road to Hypata had no such resonance, and his metamorphosis to an animal even more shaggy-eared, head-strong, contemptible was merely the outward manifestation of his allowing the dark horse in his own soul to take the lead. When, that first night, he was put into the stable until a rose could be found, the faithful white thoroughbred, seeing the other, the ugly, quadruped, this foul ass, tried to strike him down. Lucius had become, in other words, that ‘monster more complicated and furious than Typhon’ that Socrates referred to at the beginning of the *Phaedrus* (230A): he had become an ass, the very animal of Typhon (Griffiths 1975:25f., 162).

In his account of the festival, just after his encomium of Socrates, Venus appeared in the masque, rejoiced in her triumph, and filled the theatre with sweet fragrances. At this point the herald announced, as if a demonstration of her victory, the lewd act that the crowd had come to see. The woman was sent for, a bed brought out and prepared; the reluctant Lucius stood by. But no one noticed such a (now) tame ass: his second metamorphosis was progressing.⁵⁸ He ran away.

His legs took him to the sea, from which, at nightfall and as the full moon, Isis arose, ancient enemy of the ass-god Typhon. The rest we know. Lucius’ novel has as a frame-work the mysteries, beginning with their foul travesty by a lustful witch with a Nubian name and ending with the holy rites of the celestial Egyptian goddess. Like the traveller’s tale, the novel is also framed by references to the *Phaedrus*, which took place near the fields of the purificatory Lesser Mysteries. It is back to the *Phaedrus* that Lucius’ conversion took him: to be initiated at Rome, to pray daily ‘to the supreme deity of Queen Isis, who was worshipped with the greatest reverence under the name derived from the site of her temple, *Campensis*’ (*Met.* 11.26)⁵⁹—or, if I may literally translate its Roman term into that of Apuleius’ Attic model, the goddess ἐν Ἀγρᾶς. There at Athens Socrates had covered his head from

58 Hence, we may think, the plural in the title of Apuleius’ book.

59 *Met.* 11.26 *Cotidie supplicare summo numini reginae Isidis, quae de templi situ sumpto nomine Campensis summa cum venerationis propitiatur.*

shame, but then uncovered it as he pronounced a 'purificatory palinode.' Apuleius' novel had begun with the covering of the character Socrates' head; its very last words show that Lucius' own palinode is now complete: 'then, joyfully carrying out the duties of that ancient priesthood founded in the days of Sulla, I once more shaved my head completely, neither covering up nor hiding my baldness, but displaying it wherever I went' (11.30).⁶⁰

The palinode of the Socrates of the *Phaedrus* included his insight about the two horses in our souls. After his metamorphosis back into human shape and his conversion to the worship of Isis, Lucius, who had lost his own white horse, recovered him. As in the Messenian legend and in the traveller's tale, he too had a dream about a hierophant with a message; there he heard that his servant Candidus ('white') would arrive. The next morning servants from Hypata brought Lucius back his horse, the white thoroughbred that had listened to the traveller's tale.⁶¹

Appendix. Socrates and the Goose Girl

As I have noted above, the episodes of the mock-*myēsis* in the bedroom and of Socrates' death at the stream have features reminiscent of two episodes in the legend about Aristomenes of Messenia. Oddly enough, the two episodes, as Apuleius' presents them, together find a striking parallel in part of one of the *Märchen* of the Brothers Grimm, at the beginning of their no. 89, *The Goose Girl (Die Gänsemagd)*. I do not know why this parallelism, which seems to have gone unnoticed,⁶² should exist, but it has aroused my curiosity. In the thought that it may be beneficial for the understanding of the artistry of the *Metamorphoses* and possibly also for the

60 *Met.* 11.30 *Rursus denique quaquā raso capillo collegii vetustissimi et sub illis Sullae temporibus conditi munia, non obumbrato vel obtecto calvitio, sed quoquo versus obvio, gaudens obibam.*

61 Did the *Protagoras*, discussed above, have any direct influence on Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*? I am inclined to believe so. The sequence of Socrates' description of Hippias as the *mystēs* Heracles enthroned before a holy dance and his reference to Prodicus as the thirsty Tantalus, eternally bending down to drink before a pool, seems to be the parent of the same sequence in the traveller's tale: an account of the *myēsis* followed by that of a thirsty man leaning down to drink from a stream. And is not the young Lucius, so eager to learn things secret, who enters the novel so conspicuously as the 'horse-loosing' Hippolytus, the descendent of the earlier young man, so eager to learn, the 'horse-holding' Hippocrates? The dialogue indeed begins with an allusion to metamorphosis: the just-bearded Hermes tells Odysseus how to avoid it. We find this too in the story of Cupid and Psyche: to her sisters the bride, not knowing that she is speaking the truth, describes her husband as *iuvenem quendam et speciosum, commodum lanoso barbitio genas innumbrantem* (5.8). Shortly afterwards he, like the young Hermes, tells her how to avoid degradation (through the transformation of her identity), even if she does not follow it: do not look at his face (5.11).

62 There is no mention of it in the commentaries on the *The Goose Girl* in Bolte and Polívka 1963 or H.-J. Uther 1996.

study, in general, of the transmission of folktales, to direct others' attention to the similarities, I give a translation of *The Goose Girl* here, with a tabulation of its motifs that occur also in the traveller's tale. The two stories, it will be agreed, cannot belong to the same 'tale-type,' but the reader will see not only the conspicuously large number of motifs that they share but that these motifs occur in the same order in each of the two stories.

The Goose Girl (Tales 404-06)

There was once upon a time an old Queen whose husband had been dead for many years, and she had a beautiful daughter. When the princess grew up she was betrothed to a prince who lived at a great distance. When the time came for her to be married, and she had to journey forth into the distant kingdom, the aged Queen packed up for her many costly vessels of silver and gold, and trinkets also of gold and silver; and cups and jewels, in short, everything which appertained to a royal dowry, for she loved her child with all her heart. She likewise sent her maid-in-waiting, who was to ride with her, and hand her over to the bridegroom, and each had a horse for the journey, but the horse of the King's daughter was called Falada, and could speak. So when the hour of parting had come, the aged mother went into her bedroom, took a small knife and cut her finger with it until it bled. Then she held a white handkerchief to it into which she let three drops of blood fall, gave it to her daughter and said, 'Dear child, preserve this carefully, it will be of service to you on your way.'

So they took sorrowful leave of each other; the princess put the piece of cloth in her bosom, mounted her horse, and then went away to her bridegroom. After she had ridden for a while she felt a burning thirst, and said to her waiting-maid: 'Dismount, and take my cup which you have brought with you for me, and get me some water from the stream, for I should like to drink.'

'If you are thirsty,' said the waiting-maid, 'get off your horse yourself, and lie down and drink out of the water, I don't choose to be your servant.' So in her great thirst the princess alighted, bent down over the water in the stream and drank, and was not allowed to drink out of the golden cup. Then she said: 'Ah, Heaven!' and the three drops of blood answered: 'If this your mother knew, her heart would break in two.' But the King's daughter was humble, said nothing, and mounted her horse again. She rode some miles further, but the day was warm, the sun scorched her, and she was thirsty once more, and when they came to a stream of water, she again cried to her waiting-maid: 'Dismount, and give me some water in my golden cup,' for she had long ago forgotten the girl's ill words. But the waiting-maid said still more haughtily: 'If you wish to drink, get it yourself, I don't choose to be your maid.' Then in her great thirst the King's daughter alighted, bent over

the flowing stream, wept and said: 'Ah Heaven!' and the drops of blood again replied: 'If this your mother knew, her heart would break in two.' And as she was thus drinking and leaning right over the stream, the handkerchief with the three drops of blood fell out of her bosom, and floated away with the water without her observing it, so great was her trouble. The waiting-maid, however, had seen it, and she rejoiced to think that she had now power over the bride, for since the princess had lost the drops of blood, she had become weak and powerless.

So now when she wanted to mount her horse again, the one that was called Falada, the waiting-maid said: 'Falada is more suitable for me, and my nag will do for you,' and the princess had to be content with that. Then the waiting-maid, with many hard words, bade the princess exchange her royal apparel for her own shabby clothes; and at length, she was compelled to swear by the clear sky above her, that she would not say one word of this to anyone at the royal court, and if she had not taken this oath, she would have been killed on the spot. But Falada saw all this, and observed it well.

In what follows in the story, princess and maid arrived at the royal court, the maid mounted on Falada, passing herself off as the bride and contriving that Falada should be beheaded. The true Princess, to whom the King gave the job of assistant gooseherd, had Falada's head nailed up in a gateway through which she passed every day with her flock, and Falada addressed her as 'Queen.' She revealed to the gooseherd that she had golden hair, and when he tried to steal some of it, she induced the wind to blow his hat away. The gooseherd complained to the King, who came to see all this himself and at length learned who she was. The maid was put to death, and Prince and Princess married.

It is in the account of the journey to the royal court that *The Goose Girl* and the Apuleian story overlap in their motifs.⁶³

- (A) Both journeys are away from a land dominated by a woman (Meroë in Apuleius; Queen in *The Goose Girl*).
- (B) She has magical powers. (Meroë is actually called a witch; Queen knows magic, as the operation of the pricking of her thumb shows, and she owns a horse that can speak.)
- (C) In a bedroom
- (D) she draws blood (Meroë by plunging sword into Socrates; Queen by pricking thumb),
- (E) some of which she collects with an absorbent material (Panthia with sponge; Queen with cloth).⁶⁴

⁶³ In what follows, I treat the Apuleian Meroë/Panthia as a unit.

- (F) She issues a command concerning the material (Panthia to sponge: 'return to sea through a flowing stream;' Queen to Princess: 'preserve this carefully'),
- (G) which she gives to the person about to travel,
- (H) who carries it in the upper part of the body (Socrates in wound in neck; Princess in bosom).
- (I) Of the two travellers (Socrates and Aristomenes; Princess and maid)
- (J) one (Socrates; Princess) grows thirsty.
- (K) At the other's suggestion, the thirsty one goes to the stream, kneels down, and drinks.
- (L) The drinker's sponge/cloth falls out into the stream, and with it the drops of blood (*Met.* 1.19 *parvus admodum comitatur cruor*).
- (M) In both cases the command in F is disregarded.
- (N) The strength of its bearer wanes. (Socrates actually dies; the princess feels weak, and indeed the loss of her identity follows.)
- (O) The companion worries lest s/he be held guilty of this. (Aristomenes goes into exile; maid makes Princess swear that nothing has happened, and later she has the only other witness, the talking horse, killed.)⁶⁵

It seems inevitable that either one story is the source of the other or the two have a common ancestry. I have put the problem to folklorist friends; some of these who have assumed the first have also assumed that because the Apuleian story is so much earlier than any evidence for *The Goose Girl* it must be the source of this latter. I myself find this unlikely and doubt that anyone would or could take a tale from a book, radically alter its plot and mood—from a witch's Black Mass with human sacrifice to young girl's leaving her mother in order to get married—and that it could then find such currency in oral form as to be accepted by the Brothers Grimm as an oral folktale. On the other hand, *The Goose Girl*, as we now have it, has one key element that is unlikely to be ancient, the bride's virtually unaccompanied journey, with her dowry, to the house of the bridegroom. If the second alternative is the case, though, it is not obvious what form that 'parent' story took. It is probably significant, in any event, that the motifs that *The Goose Girl* and the Apuleian story have in common do not appear in the legends (at least as we have them from Pausanias) about the Messenian Aristomenes; is it possible that

64 Apuleius in fact writes that Meroë and Panthia collected *all* of Socrates' blood into a pouch, but there was some left on the sponge when Socrates fell into the stream: see *L infra*.

65 There may be another common motif, that of a listening horse. Falada has been paying attention, and at the end of the traveller's tale, Lucius remarks that his horse enjoyed it: *Met.* 1.20 *etiam illum vectorem meum credo laetari*.

Apuleius, knowing this 'parent' story, simply imposed them on the Messenian stories?

The Goose Girl has a feature not in the traveller's tale: a talking horse. His name is Falada. We can probably take it for granted that in a story about humans a talking horse, like a talking frog, is a human who has been magically metamorphosed.⁶⁶ Here we have a metamorphosis into a quadruped beast of burden, the subject, in fact, of Apuleius' novel and of course of a number of other stories, ancient and modern, about men who were turned into asses (Scobie 1975:26-46). One of the many is a Catalan example, its age unknown, collected by J. Amades (1950:532, no. 231; cf. Scobie 1975:44f.), in which a mother and a daughter, both witches and both with a reputation for turning into birds and flying out of the chimney at night, have a servant who is curious to learn how they do it. When he tries it himself, he is transformed into an ass, but eventually, at a festival of the Virgin, he is able to eat a rose and to regain his human shape. His name is Felet, obviously a congener of Falada.⁶⁷ I close with what I insist is only a speculation. In *The Goose Girl*, mother (who pricks her thumb and produces protective blood-drops) and daughter (who commands the winds) have magical powers: they are witches, even if benevolent. They own a talking horse, transformed into that shape no doubt by (his misuse of?) their own magic. May *The Goose Girl*, as we have it, have originated, then, as a 'man-into-beast' tale somewhat like the Catalan, with mother and daughter the witches and their talking quadruped the metamorphosed Falada/Felet who here however never regained his human form but remained their servant? If so, the story would be, then, a later chapter in the tale of this metamorphosis, a maturation-story about the daughter-witch for whom it has come time to get married. If it is ancient, it would no doubt be one of the many 'man-into-beast' stories collected and read by Apuleius as he was preparing his own *Metamorphoses* and could well have been the source of those motifs discussed

66 Dare we think this too of Achilles' talking horse Xanthus (*Il.* 19.404-14) and Balaam's ass (Numbers 22.21-31)?

67 It is equally obvious that the name Falada is not German. In Portuguese it means 'rumor' or 'talk' and would not be inappropriate for a speaking horse. Bolte and Polívka 1963: II 274, unconvincingly to my ear, compare the name of the hero's horse, Veillantif (which has variants that include Valantis), in the *Song of Roland*. They also cite a variant on *The Goose Girl* in which the horse is called Folle, a name that they gloss as *Fohlen* 'colt.' It is difficult to see how Folle, though, so close to a normal German word, could have become Falada: it must have had a background that was not German. Scobie (1983:186-9) presents enough early Spanish material to support the view that Iberia got her *Eselmensch* tradition from early Roman colonists there. If *The Goose Girl* reached Germany from Iberia, conceivably its Falada is a translation, from a name in the version as brought to Iberia by the Roman colonists, into one of the Romance languages of the Iberian peninsula.

here that he—for reasons unknown to us—inserted into his own treatment of Aristomenes.⁶⁸

68 I am very grateful, in the first instance, to Synnøve des Bouvrie, the organizer of this conference (2002), for the impetus to set out my thoughts on some passages that have long interested me; I hope that what I have written will not displease those with an ear and an eye for myth and symbol. For references in n. 18 *supra* to representations of Heracles seated not on a rock, I am indebted to Olga Palagia (Athens). I am grateful also to Margarethe Billerbeck (Fribourg) for the Plutarchean reference in n. 41 *supra*, and to Jaime Curbera (Berlin) and Robert Lamberton (St Louis) for their kindness in sending me photocopies of material from Amades and from Bolte and Polívka respectively, both otherwise inaccessible to me. Zanzibar Swahili stories have a closing formula that I would urge here: 'If the story was good, the goodness belongs to all of us; if it was bad, the badness belongs to me alone, the teller.'

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