

Benjamin Todd Lee: Apuleius' Florida. A Commentary, Berlin: de Gruyter 2005, xi + 215 S., ISBN 3-11-017771-4, EUR 88,00

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Until recently, those needing a modern commentary on these important and stylish excerpts from the speeches of Apuleius had only lean or relatively inaccessible resources: the scattered notes in Vallette's 1924 Budé edition and the useful but unpublished London doctoral thesis of F. Opeku (*A Commentary with Introduction on the Florida of Apuleius*, 1974). In the last five years, this has been completely altered: Lee's commentary now follows the substantial one of Vincent Hunink (Amsterdam, 2001, in English) and the briefer but useful notes in the translation by John Hilton (in *Apuleius: Rhetorical Works*, Oxford, 2001). Lee operates on a scale near to that of Hunink (132 dense pages of commentary to 34 of text; Hunink has 158 to 25); he often offers more than his predecessor on Latinity, though he is perhaps too selective in what he chooses for comment generally (see below); above all, he has well absorbed and applied the findings and directions of recent scholarship, and the reader of the *Florida* is certainly aided by his exegetical labours.

The introduction (1-35) is a solid piece of work which summarises what is known about the *Florida* and its author: these are anthology excerpts from a larger collection of speeches delivered by Apuleius in Carthage in the 160's AD. Lee rightly points to the coherence of subject-matter in the fragments and their epideictic character, and to their tendency to reinforce certain ideological values (rhetoric, Platonism, education, citizenship). He follows the recent work of Claudio Marangoni [1] in detecting careful poetic-style intertextuality (one might ask how far this can go in texts originally designed for performance), and rightly stresses the way in which similarly-themed fragments are placed sequentially; in his text he actually merges fragments 22 and 23, arguing that the two are closely connected by the theme of the rejection of wealth, but not all will agree that this is an appropriate suture and that the link is especially strong.

On the generation of this text of unusual format (usually presented as twenty-three fragments of length varying from a few lines to several pages, divided by its MSS into four books), Lee is prepared to consider the division into four books as a post-Apuleian editorial strategy to impose order on the disparate fragments, and highlights these divisions in his presentation of the Latin text. The fact that one of these book-divisions falls plainly in the middle of the long and coherent fragment 9

might suggest that any editor who supplied it could only have been working on quantitative grounds; but given the very short books of a few pages each these book-divisions produce, the alternative explanation that these books represent the original books of complete speeches from which these excerpts were extracted (with that in the middle of fragment 9 somehow misplaced) perhaps remains more plausible. On another issue of a textual kind, the so-called 'false preface' to the *De Deo Socratis* (DDS), often treated by scholars as a separated part of the *Florida*, Lee is curiously unforthcoming about recent discussions: though he himself clearly believes that these pieces belong in the DDS (a perfectly reasonable view) and thus does not discuss them in detail, he might have included in the doxography at page 31 n.23 the range of modern debate here, of which he is clearly master elsewhere. [2]

The text presented in this edition follows those of Vallette and Helm with a useful new *apparatus criticus*. Only two readings not found in those editions are deployed, both good suggestions by Andrew Dyck. 12.7 *dicas crocitare non loqui* improves on Helm's *id est crocitare non loqui* for the transmitted *idem conate non loqui*, giving better syntax in context, while 15.12 *natus Samii* for the transmitted *natus* or *natu Samius* rightly picks up the point that *natu* usually occurs in expressions of age not location (though *Sami* not *Samii* is the attested locative form in literature - e.g. Cicero *Verr.*2.184 - and might be read here instead). The text is largely conservative and often (like Helm) prints transmitted spellings which some might regard as medieval vulgarisms (e.g. 1.4 *sepimine* for *saepimine*). I have spotted a pair of obvious misprints in the text (3.12 *viruti* for *virtuti*, 18.38 *prorsa* for *prosa*); there are a few more in the commentary, none vital.

The commentary on each fragment begins with more general 'notes' and then moves to specific 'commentary'. In *Florida* 1 the 'notes' are full and useful on the nuts and bolts of Apuleian high style (rhetorical figures, clausulae, elaborate syntax), but not all fragments are so well covered in this aspect. Two general issues of coverage arise: how far can a commentator note every rhythmic assonance, isocolon and the like in these densely textured pieces by perhaps the most musical prose writer in Latin, and how far should unusual items of vocabulary be noted in themselves for an author who specialises in recondite and colourful language?

My own view is akin to that of the *Groningen Commentaries on Apuleius* on the same writer's *Metamorphoses* (for these see <http://www.forsten.nl>) where (at least in the most recent volumes) most rhythmical, syntactical and euphonic patterns are noted, and rare lexical items are extensively covered as an important element of Apuleius' colourful, archaic and poetic language; these volumes (admittedly hard to obtain outside Europe) are not cited in Lee's bibliography, and nor is Callebat's massive and important *Sermo Cotidianus dans les Métamorphoses d'Apulée*, 1968; though these resources focus on Apuleius' novel rather than his rhetorical works, their rich lexical material would surely have

been useful as well as providing an exegetical model.

Lee takes a more austere view on both these questions, and is often selective about what to annotate. The musicality of Apuleian prose is generally assumed rather than indicated: for example, such musical sequences as 18.14 *quod sum vobis nec lare alienus nec pueritia inusitatus nec magistris peregrinus nec secta incognitos nec voce inauditus nec libris inlectus improbatusve* receive no comment on their complex and intricate sound structure. Likewise, uncommented unusual lexical items include 1.2 *oppido*, 2.1 *itidem*, 3.8 *deridiculo haberi*, 6.7 *praestabile*, 7.2 *inexsuperabili* and *aequiperavit*, 7.6 *caelamine*, 7.8 *relicinae*, 9.20 *superne*, 14.3 *aucto gibbere*, 15.20 *inclitum fatiloquum et piatorem*, 16.11 *deincipiti*, 17.17 *tesquis*, 18.9 *habetote*, 19.3 *aromatis*. The rare initial position of *enim* at 9.22 and 18.32 also merits discussion.

Sometimes, too, matters of content require more coverage. The reader needs further enlightenment on the musician Antigenidas in 4, on the Virgilianising verse lines cited in 6, on the didactic stance of the speaker in 9 and 16, on the list of Apuleian works in 9.27-9, on the self-representation of the speaker in 15, or on the list of stock comic parts in 16. Occasionally there is inconsistency: the use of *mediae comoediae* at 16.6 is interpreted as 'mediocre' in the commentary ad loc. (149) but as 'Middle Comedy' earlier on (91), an important point since if the latter is right it shows Apuleian carelessness in ascribing Philemon to Middle rather than New Comedy. The commentary shows an interest in puns: that suggested between *Orpheus* and *Orfitus* at 17.15 is interesting but may not convince all, but those on *Honorinus* / *honos* and *Severianus* / *severitas* at 9.40 are very attractive (though the prime evidence for the latter play, *mitis austeritas* at 9.35, is not explicitly noted).

In general this volume contains much diligent learning and interpretation: much of the linguistic and other commentary is full and helpful, while in the introductory notes one could pick out in general those which preface 6 and 9 (though a view as to which gathering the latter piece is addressed to might have been ventured), the material on Marsyas and N. Africa in 3, the discussion of the opening 'climax' figure in 8, that of the philosophical and literary sources of 10, on the metaliterary aspect of 11, on the use of Pliny on the parrot in 12, on the *chreia* and Zeno in 14, on Pythagoras in 15, on potential textual disturbance in 17, on the loss of the Greek hymn in 18, on the excerptor's interest in proper names in 19. Lee deserves the gratitude of Apuleian scholars for a significant contribution to the elucidation of the *Florida*, but there is still room for a fuller approach to linguistic and phonic texture. Claudio Marangoni's commentary in progress may yet provide it.

Notes:

[1] Claudio Marangoni: *Il mosaico della memoria: studi sui Florida e sulle Metamorfosi di Apuleio*, Padova 2000.

[2] See his review of *Apuleius: Rhetorical Works* at Bryn Mawr Classical Review 2002.08.01, URL: <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/bmcr/2002/2002-08-01.html>.

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