As is often the case with conference proceedings, there is some qualitative variety among its contributions, but its overall value is high. Although there is some repetitiveness, there is also cohesiveness of argument. In the end, the main question, whether Tacitus believed in the wonders he recorded, remains unanswered. What becomes clear, however, is that the portents Tacitus records are rarely there for their own sake, i.e. for pure 'entertainment', but respond to a certain historiographic methodology, which requires careful inquiry.

University of Tennessee SALVADOR BARTERA
sbartera@utk.edu
doi:10.1017/S0075435823000552

© *The Author(s), 2023. Published by Cambridge University Press on behalf of The Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies.*

EVELYN ADKINS, *DISCOURSE, KNOWLEDGE, AND POWER IN APULEIUS'* METAMORPHOSES. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2022. Pp. xii + 277. ISBN 9780472133055. $80.00.

Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* tell the story of the young aristocrat Lucius, who is by mistake transformed into an ass and who regains his human shape after a long and amusing series of mishaps, erotic adventures and initiation into the cult of Isis. But the novel brims with other stories too, ranging from simple entertainment to highly sophisticated narratives, such as the tale of Cupid and Psyche, and there are storytellers everywhere and from every walk of life. To cut a long story short: speech plays an enormously important role in the novel. Yet, despite its prominence, a full study of Apuleius' use of language as a tool of characterisation remains a desideratum. With her book, Evelyn Adkins has filled this gap and produced the first comprehensive study of the novel characters' speech in which she demonstrates that written, oral and non-verbal communication are used to negotiate social status and power.

A. explores six different types of discourse: non-elite and elite (chs 1 and 2), private (ch. 3), gendered (ch. 4 as well as ch. 1), silence (ch. 5) and the novel itself (ch. 6). The first chapter argues that the bandits in book 3 and the priests of the Syrian goddess in book 8 appropriate typically male and, respectively, female language to forge their group identity, presenting themselves as heroic, masculine soldiers and, respectively, trans women. However, their language experiments ultimately fail: the priests' feminine gender identity is interpreted as effeminacy while the gap between the bandits' masculine discourse and their incompetence draws mockery. In the second chapter, A. explores successful and failed elite discourse in public rhetorical performances. Thelyphron's tale of his mutilation in book 2 and Lucius' self-defence during the Festival of Laughter in book 3 are examples of failed speech as both characters lack authority and knowledge and are ridiculed and laughed at by their audiences. The wise physician in book 10, on the other hand, represents successful self-fashioning through speech. The third chapter turns to private conversations between Lucius and other characters in the novel, in particular his host Milo, in which he is keen to establish his status and identity as an elite intellectual but repeatedly undermines his own efforts. When he is still a man, Lucius is dominated by Milo in their interactions; when he is an ass, Lucius loses his ability to speak and his status, mirrored in his unsuccessful attempts at asinine communication and in his growing dependence on his various masters. Ch. 4 analyses Lucius' encounters with four female characters in the novel: his aunt Byrrhena, his lover Photis, the Corinthian matron in book 10 and the goddess Isis. A. argues that Lucius' interaction with Isis restores his control over his body and his speech, whereas the other women dominate him and accelerate his loss of self-control. The fifth chapter explores how Lucius' loss of his voice allows him to gain knowledge, first by eavesdropping on others and indulging his curiosity, later through mystical silence as he begins his initiation into the cult of Isis. In the last chapter, A. turns to the novel as a form of discourse in which the narrator interacts with the reader of the *Metamorphoses* and vies for control over the narrative. Book 11, however, reveals that it is the author Apuleius who has the power over the narrative.

A.'s insightful book makes a welcome contribution to Apuleian studies and fills an important gap by exploring how language, knowledge and power are interconnected in the novel. It is thorough, well written and carefully edited, and contains an extensive bibliography. A. is particularly strong when she turns to the novel's lesser-known characters and episodes which have received relatively little attention from scholarship. Her analysis of minor male characters such as Lucius' host Milo

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0075435823000412 Published online by Cambridge University Press

and the physician in book 10, who unravels the lies of the evil stepmother who (almost) killed her own son and tried to poison her stepson, is illuminating. Both characters illustrate how the novel grapples with how status and power are established through language. However, her discussion of the bandits in book 4 is less convincing, making the somewhat tenuous argument that Tlepolemus, who appears in book 7, regards the bandits not as masculine but as 'hypermasculine to the point of effeminacy' (58).

Equally stimulating is A.s discussion of minor female characters such as Byrrhena and the Corinthian matron, which shines light on their pivotal roles in the novel. Her exploration of the power relations between Lucius and the women yields interesting results: while Lucius is dominated entirely by the Corinthian matron, his relationship to the mother-like figure of Byrrhena changes from one of equality to asymmetry. The careful comparison to the *Onos* further demonstrates how Apuleius' changes both strengthen female characters and, in particular, underline the matron's dominance over Lucius. In general, A. is sensitive to the differences between the *Onos* and the *Metamorphoses* and makes them fruitful for her interpretation of the novel.

Various readers will benefit from reading the book which highlights not only the importance of speech and language in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* but also the Second Sophistic's preoccupation with communication and self-representation more generally.

University of Edinburgh JANJA SOLDO
jsoldo@ed.ac.uk
doi:10.1017/S0075435823000412

© *The Author(s), 2023. Published by Cambridge University Press on behalf of The Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies.*

IOANNIS ZIOGAS and ERICA M. BEXLEY, *ROMAN LAW AND LATIN LITERATURE*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022. Pp. ix + 308. ISBN 9781350276635. £95.00.

This highly timely publication, based on an eponymous conference organised by editors Ioannis Ziogas and Erica Bexley at Durham University in 2019, is positioned at a fascinating intersection between disciplines and scholarly approaches. As the title indicates, it is first and foremost a part of, and a response to, the wider 'law and literature' movement, which has in the past few decades sought to investigate the points of contact between the two fields and their respective conceptual frameworks, methodologies and discourses. However, as the editors argue in their introduction, law has long been 'the dominant partner in this marriage', with less emphasis being given to the literary side of the debate (2–3). In addition, Latin literature has been particularly neglected: within Classical studies, the law and literature approach has gained traction only relatively recently, while the legal humanities have largely overlooked literature from the Roman period (17–18). This volume seeks to contribute to filling these lacunae, and as such may be seen as complementary to similar developments within legal history, where scholarly approaches that connect Roman law to its wider societal contexts and highlight a broader range of legal experiences have steadily gained in attention.

The volume explores the points of contact between Roman law and Latin literature by highlighting four key themes. The editors' introduction provides a valuable discussion of the volume's position within the field, as well as two brief case studies on Cicero's *Pro Caelio* and the works of Terence to illustrate the project's underlying ideas. The first three chapters (Part I) deal with 'Literature as Law' — an interesting addition to the traditional distinction between 'law *as* literature', 'law *in* literature' and 'law *and* literature' within the legal humanities. Michèle Lowrie provides the theoretical underpinning for this category, arguing that stories held significant normative force in the Roman republican period, to the point that literature may be considered to have provided a 'functional supplement' to the uncodified, and highly flexible, Roman constitution. This theme of literature's semi-legal efficacy is taken up by Erica Bexley, who discusses the ways in which Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis* functions as an alternative, literary trial of a *princeps* who had placed himself above the law. Another take on the subject is provided by Thomas Biggs, who provides a theoretically dense analysis of the use of the concept of *iustitium* (suspension of legal matters) in Lucan's *Bellum Civile*, arguing that the text creates a similar zone

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0075435823000412 Published online by Cambridge University Press