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Epic imitation in the "Metamorphoses" of Apuleius

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The Ohio State University, 1990

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EPIC IMITATION IN THE METAMORPHOSES OF APULEIUS

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School
of the Ohio State University

By

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For my teachers, Professors June W. Allison, Charles L. Babcock and Carl C. Schlam in gratitude
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INTRODUCTION

The *Metamorphoses* relates the pursuit of magic by Lucius, his metamorphosis into an ass, his adventures, and, finally, his restoration into human form through the intervention of Isis. As a narrative that involves travel and adventure, the *Metamorphoses* bears resemblances to the journeys of Odysseus¹ and Aeneas² recounted by Homer and Vergil. In addition, Lucius' further journey to Rome after his initiation at Cenchreae may recall the travel Odysseus is told he will have to make, after his safe return to Ithaca and reunion with his wife³. But it is not just in terms of Lucius' wanderings that the novel

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¹ All passages of the *Metamorphoses* are quoted from the Teubner text edited by Helm (1968). The text of the *Aeneid* is from the OCT edition of Mynors (1969). Citations of the *Odyssey* are from the OCT text edited by Allen (1974), while references to the *Iliad* are to the OCT edition of Monro and Allen (1920).

² For the presence of romantic elements in Aeneas' encounter with Dido see Soady (1976) 41.

³ Hom. *Od* 23.264-84. I owe this observation to Professor Carl C. Schlam. For further resemblances with and divergences from Odysseus as far as the Lucius' *curiositas* is concerned see Schlam (1968) 123. Cf. also DeFilippo (1990) 1-22.
invites a comparison with the adventures of epic heroes. This affinity extends to the disposition of material and portrayal of character.

Moreover, we encounter in the prose of the novel allusions to heroic situations and recollections of specific epic contexts. Apuleius' art of "imitation" in the technical rhetorical sense of adapting epic language and conventions is extensive. This epic imitation can have the immediate function of elevating the narrative by evoking the grand tone or pathos of the original contexts. Frequently, however, the borrowed materials are placed in contrast with the tone of the original.

In Book XI, Mithras, the priest of Isis figuratively presents Lucius' previous misfortunes in terms of the perils and sea adventures of an Odysseus:

"multis et variis exanclatis laboribus magnisque Fortunae tempestatibus et maximis actus procellis ad portum Quietis et aram Misericordiae tandem Luci, venisti.

(Met. 11.15/277.5-7).

Odysseus, however, prevails over the dangers initiated in part by his own thirst for knowledge and thus wins glory. Lucius, in contrast, garners a grim reward for his curiosity: *curiositatis improsnerae sinistrum praemium reportasti* (Met. 11.15/277.9-10). There are frequently marked divergences between the situations in the novel and the passages in epic which they evoke. This can be seen in Lucius' lack of foresight, when compared with the exemplary wisdom of Odysseus. Odysseus, in his encounter with the sorceress, Circe, eludes metamorphosis and enjoys her charms. Lucius, on the other hand, is overpowered both by Fotis' beauty and her presumed knowledge of magic.


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This literary training allows for a broad range of sophisticated nuances to which the audience was expected to be alert. A degree of sophistication is suggested by the adjectives with which Apuleius addresses his readers. He distinguishes them in terms of their social position (lector optime Met. 10.2/237.12), intellectual superiority (lector scrupulosus Met. 9.30/225.10), or desire for learning (studiose lector Met. 11.23/285.8). On an aesthetic level, the result is iacetia, that emerges from a stylistic ornamentation set forth in the preface: lector intende laetaberi (Met. 1.2/2).8

Epic influence in Apuleius’ novel is not a recent realization. F. Gatscha constructed extensive lists of clear literary reminiscences in the Metamorphoses subdivided under their distinct generic categories.9 This search for literary echoes was later followed by C. A. Forbes in a short yet useful discussion of the epic reminiscences of Dido’s suicide in the narrative of Charite’s death.10 A fuller discussion, however, of the literary allusions in the novel was later undertaken by P. G. Walsh.11 Walsh puts forward the notion of the rich literary

8. The complicated issue of readership of the ancient novels has been studied in a doctoral dissertation, the initial results of which have been published by Wesseling (1988) 67-77. Wesseling touches upon the issue of readership of Apuleius’ Metamorphoses, listing the Apuleian formulae of addressing the readers of the work, but without any interpretation. The author promises to discuss the issue of the readership in Apuleius in the forthcoming Groningen Commentary on Book IX of the Metamorphoses (see p. 74 and notes 45-48).

9. Gatscha (1898) 144-147.


texture of the Metamorphoses. "Apuleius", as Walsh observes, "exploits the technique of literary evocations most extensively, and in contrast to the Satyricon for a serious and dramatic purpose"12.

Yet in the comic setting of Apuleius' Metamorphoses the literary exploitation of the serious tradition is bound to reveal some tension. An awareness of the generic distinction between the epic and the novel, highlights the humorous intentions of Apuleius' literary adaptations13. This direction is also advanced by Walsh in his discussion of the robbers' cave which he views as burlesquing the rhetorical presentations of Sallust and Livy14. An examination of Apuleius' imitation from the perspective of parody is undertaken in Westerbrink's useful discussion of the most prominent individual allusions in the narrative of the Metamorphoses15.

A more thorough investigation, however, has been recently undertaken by E. D. Finkelpearl16. Expanding on echoes summarily suggested by Walsh, Finkelpearl illustrates the nature and the range of Apuleius' literary imitation, classified under categories of effect or function: parody, character linking and

12 Walsh (1970) 52.

13. Humor and comedy are by no means completely absent even in the serious genre of the epic. Nevertheless, there is a vast difference between comedy in the epic and the novel. On the issue of the "Homeric laughter" see Galinsky (1975) 168 and passim; and most convincingly now Branham (1989) 139 and 254, note 36.


contrasting, context links and contrast, similes, atmospheric and ornamental allusion, style and repeated allusions. A significant part of the work is devoted to the analysis of the extended evocations of episodes from epic, tragedy and novel. Finkelpearl well assesses how the Apuleian borrowings are treated when juxtaposed to their original settings in epic, tragedy, elegiac poetry and history. Making appropriate use of the Thesaurus and available indices, the author avoids considering common poetic phrases as literary reminiscences. The adherence, however, to strict criteria with insufficient attention to details of imagery and structure occasionally leads to some unwarranted conclusions, which I shall later examine. Nevertheless, the work remains the first specialized study to tackle the enormous range of Apuleius' literary imitation in the Metamorphoses and selectively in the Apology and the Florida.

The study of J. Krabbe has proceeded in a further search for literary precedents. Krabbe isolates for discussion Apuleius' use of Ovidian themes and language and illustrates their playful and artful treatment in a new context. The parallel passage adduced, however, sometimes present similarities of themes but do not exemplify a conscious evocation. The playful and amusing treatment of some Ovidian material by Apuleius lightens the account of the hardships of the Ass sold to various cruel masters. Following K. Galinsky's labeling of Ovid's adaptation of Vergil's Aeneas-myth as an alternate Aeneid, the grouping is that of Finkelpearl (1986) 38.

17. The grouping is that of Finkelpearl (1986) 38.
18. See Chapter V, below.
Krabbe coins an equivalent term for Apuleius' treatment of Ovid's poem as an alter-\textit{Metamorphoses}, because she maintains that Ovid's masterpiece serves as a point of departure and artistic \textit{varietas}\textsuperscript{21}. She demonstrates that Apuleius' methodological principles of adaptation are not different from Ovid's treatment of the myth of Aeneas\textsuperscript{22}.

The present study undertakes a more careful examination of adaptation of language and conventions of the pre-Ovidian epic in the \textit{Metamorphoses} of Apuleius. Within the comic setting of the novel such adaptations are likely to receive an ironic treatment. Epic, to draw upon M. M. Bakhtin, is about an absolute past, far removed from the reality of the Hellenistic era reflected in the novel\textsuperscript{23}. When epic is fused into the contemporary world of the novel, it enters into the sphere of familiar reality of the present. On a broad level this fusion acquires some \textit{gravitas} through an association with heroic values evinced in the borrowed material. Given the fact, however, that the environment of the novel is in essence an extension of the world reflected by the New Comedy, a reverent approach is less frequently noticeable. This projection of the contemporary situation onto the distant past or the contemporalization and trivialization of the grand highlights such distinct intentions as parody, burlesque, contrast,

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\textsuperscript{21} Krabbe (1989) 72.

\textsuperscript{22} Krabbe (1989); also Harrison (1989) 17.

\textsuperscript{23} Bakhtin (1988) 16-26. This Bakhttinian approach in analyzing humor in an author roughly contemporary with Apuleius is now most eloquently set forth by Branham (1989) 1-9 and \textit{passim}. 
subversion, or lighthearted playfulness. Therein lie the witticism and sophistication of the narrative.

This wit comes through clearly in the comparison of Lucius with Odysseus in Book IX. The Ass consoles himself with the thought that his animal shape allows him without being noticed to observe everything people say or do in their private life:

nec ullam usplam cruciabilis vitae solaeum aderat, nisi quod ingenita mihi curiositate recreabar, dum praesentiam meam
parvi facientes libere, quae volunt, omnes et agunt et
ioguentur, nec immem priscœ poeticœ divinius auctor apud
Granos summae prudentiae utrum monstrare cupiens multarum:
civitatum obitu et variorum populorum cognitu summas
adempit virtutes cecinit. nam et ipse gratas gratias astino meo
meminti, quod me suo celatum tegmine varisque fortunis
exercitatum, etsi minus prudentem, multiscium reddidit

(Met. 9.13/212.23-213.1-6).

If Lucius lacks the paradigmatic prudence of Odysseus, he expresses his thanks for being able to satisfy his innate curiosity and become "much-knowing" in the form of an ass which in itself is a punishment for his own curiosity about magic.

The comments of the Ass when he recognizes the symptoms of the stepmother in the tale of Book X evokes a text from the Aeneid and places it in a contrasting setting:

heu medicorum ignaræ mentes, quid venæ pulsus, quid coloris
intemperantia, quid fatigatus annellitus et utrimque seculi
sectatæ crebriter laterum mutuæ vicissitudines?

(Met.10.2/237.25-239.1).

This aside alludes to Vergil's comment on the ignorance of the vales in failing to cure Dido's furor:

Yet a disparity with the epic situation emerges from the crucial role of the doctor during the subsequent murder trial. For the doctor, alone unravels the machinations of the stepmother who falsely accuses her stepson of both sexual advances against her and the murder of her own son. Thus the cleverness of the doctor saves the life of both sons.

The narrative of Lucius' adventures as he is sold to various masters abounds in allusions to epic language and conventions found in Homer's *Odyssey* and Vergil's *Aeneid*. I selectively undertake the investigation of heroic material in the middle section of the *Metamorphoses* that follows Lucius' metamorphosis into an Ass. This central section, which is known after P. Junghanns as the Charite-complex, relates the adventures of the Ass and Charite as captives of the robbers.

Given the length of this central section and its thematic variety, it will be useful to offer an overview of its structure. The selected section comprises the episodes of the Ass's imprisonment with the abducted Charite in the cave of the thieves, the *belia tapella* of Cupid and Psyche, which the old housekeeper of the robbers narrates to the lamenting girl in order to console her grief, the rescue of Charite and the Ass by the girl's groom, the union of the couple, the sending of the Ass to a country estate, and, finally, the tragic account of the death of the newlyweds. The arrangement of this material can be indicated diagrammatically as follows:

3.28-4.5 / 72.21-78.17: The capture of Ass by the robbers; the journey

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25. The term is that of Junghanns (1932) 156-165.
and the arrival at the den.

4.6-21 / 78.18-91.8: The robbers’ cave; the robber-tales of Lamachus, Alcimus and Thrasyleon.

4.22-27 / 91.9-96.15: Opening frame: the night expedition and return of the robbers with a lamenting girl abducted from her house on the eve of her wedding; the disruption of the girl’s sleep by a sad dream.

4.28-6.24 / 96.16-147.2: The tale of Cupid and Psyche.

6.25-31 / 147.3-154.4: Closing frame: the failed attempt at escape.

7.1-14 / 154.4-165.7: The arrival of another robber; the destruction of the robbers’ band by Tlepolemus, the fiancé of the captured girl, identified as Charite; the marriage of Tlepolemus with Charite


8.1.14 / 176.14-188.6: The death of Tlepolemus, Charite and Thrasyllus.

A joyous progression starts with the positive interpretation of Charite’s sad dream by the old woman and is carried forward with the tale of the Cupid and Psyche. It reaches its climax in Tlepolemus’ liberation of the captive Charite. The tale of Cupid and Psyche, placed in the middle as an aition, well explains its framing narrative: Psyche’s blissful reunion not only anticipates Charite’s own release from sorrows and final marriage to her groom Tlepolemus but also foretells the end of Lucius’ troubles. The tragic development in the conclusion

26. Also the repeated attempts of the wicked sisters at destroying Psyche’s blessed fortune and in their turn marrying their sister’s husband, Cupid, afford a mythical parallel to the death of the newlywed Tlepolemus, caused by the rival suitor of his wife, Thrasyllus. Notice, for example, that Thrasyllus twice is
of the Charite-complex with the story of three successive deaths is also heralded by the ominous interpretation of Charite's dream in the opening of the sequence. Thus an outer tragic frame encircles an inner picture of lighter overtones. The extensive inner section of the *Metamorphoses* is carefully organized in ring and chiastic fashion.

Although scholars have pointed out analogies with the texts of the *Odyssey* and especially the *Aeneid* in this section and in the later course of Lucius' asinine adventures, further allusions to these epics remain to be noted and discussed. I expand this search by uncovering additional epic wording and references to heroic situations that are reflective of these texts. I establish a connection with heroic situations by observing the use of epic language and conventions and whenever possible their specialized handling or function as compared to their treatment within their given epic setting. In this process Gatscha's list of Vergilian parallel phrases as well as observations made by commentators provide the starting point in identifying an allusion. The

ironically identified as Tlepolemus' "brother" (Met. 8.7/181.18: *fratrem denique additum nominem*; also Met. 8.9/184.14: *tui fratris*).

27. Tatum (1979) 18-19; 75-76; Winkler (1985) 165-168. Harrison (1989) 14-19 broadens this view by showing correspondences in the least expected place, the first two books, when Lucius is still in human shape, albeit with considerably less new to offer as far as Apuleius' adaptation of Vergilian and Ovidian material in the *Metamorphoses* is concerned.

28. The Vergilian material in the *Metamorphoses* has been well documented. See, for example, Gatscha (1989) 144-147; Forbes (1943) 39-40; Walsh (1970) 52-58; Westerbrink (1978) 63-73; Lazzarini (1985) 131-160; La Penna (1985) 145-147; Finkelpearl (1986); Harrison (1988) 265-267.

29. Gatscha (1898) 144-147.
possibility of imitation is strengthened when imagery, circumstances, themes or motifs conform with the situation described in an epic context. The unique development of the epic material in the new setting, when checked against the heroic contexts of the models unveils the artistry of "imitation" and reveals how it has been adapted in the context of the novel.

Chapter I illustrates the epic affiliations of the robbers' hideout with the lair of the Cyclops, Polyphemus. This use of imagery borrowed from the *Cyclopeia* helps to cast the robbers as giant figures and to give a sense of the suffering of their captives. The imposition of imagery, however, that the epic attributes to the dwellings of superhuman monsters reveals an irony. These robbers are not the mythic monsters but contemporary criminals who resort to a rocky cave on to live a lawless life.

Chapter II deals with the heroic material in the three robbers' tales. Alongside the presence of epic material in the robber-stories of Lamachus and Alcimus, the longest tale of Thrasyleon also preserves a narrative adapted from Vergil's epic: the hiding of the Greeks in the Wooden Horse and the subsequent attack on Troy. There is a play, however, with the epic expectation: whereas the Greeks succeed in employing the device, the robbers fail in good part to bring their own operation at burglary to a successful conclusion.

Chapter III examines isolated epic allusions within the frame that precedes or follows the tale of Cupid and Psyche, leading to the introduction of a new recruit, Tlepolemus in the disguise of the notorious Thracian criminal, Haemus.

Chapter IV discusses the epic material within the tale of Cupid and Psyche primarily against the background of the *Aeneid*. Alongside the elements of folklore, the tale makes use of language and motifs borrowed from epic: the
divine wrath, the adventures of the heroine, the journey to the underworld and
the union of the separated couple. But their treatment goes against the
audience's awareness of their traditional handling in their given contexts. Hence
the wit of the narrative.

Chapter V treats the epicisms in the tale of Tlepolemus who comes to the
robbers as the robber Haemus in order to liberate his kidnapped fiancée.
Playfulness, however, emerges from the blend of two distinct epic images from
Homer's Cyclopeia: the physical, rock-like description of the shape of the monster
Polyphemus and the subsequent punishment of the giant by Odysseus. This
blending is assisted by the double identity of this young man as Haemus and
Tlepolemus.

Chapter VI considers the epic texture in the story of Charite's death. A pattern
of Charite's divergence, however, from her primary model, Dido, becomes
recognizable. Apuleius responds to the original treatment by creating an
alternative to the epic heroine: Charite dies maintaining the ideal Roman virtue
of being univira. In addition to the well documented traits of the Vergilian Dido,
the blinding of the suitor Thrasyllus by Charite reveals affinities with Homer's
description of Odysseus' blinding the Cyclops. Charite uses the same device
previously used by Tlepolemus in punishing his opponents, the robbers. In this
manner, Charite becomes the deserving wife of Tlepolemus insofar as her
cleverness30, which is the defining quality of Odysseus, parallels the astuteness
of her husband31. The repeated use of this strategy binds together major but

Thrasyllum inductum petisset.

widely separated episodes in the extensive narrative of the Charite-complex. Hence the artistry and originality of Apuleius in adapting epic material in his diction.
CHAPTER I


Scholarship has often noted the rich literary coloring in the description of the locale and the robbers' cave (Met. 4.6/78.22-79.12). P. G. Walsh, in a short discussion, views the digression on the brigands' settlement as playing with the literary convention of topographical excursuses of historians such as Sallust, Caesar and Livy. A. Schiesaro considers the description as a poetic amalgamation of Vergil's and Seneca's geographical digressions. This search for literary models is in accord with the aim of the narrator-Ass. The reporter-Ass tries hard by means of a highly rhetorical exposition to make it believable that, despite his asinine condition, he still maintains both human intellect and perception:

1. Walsh (1970) 57-58, notes that Apuleius' introduction of the scenery is analogous to the opening formulas of topographical descriptions in Sallust Bel. Jug. 17.1; Bel. Jug. 95.2; and Caesar Bel. Gal. 6.11. More recently, Heine (1978) 36, 41, note 115, has expanded on these correspondances by observing similarities between Met. 4.6/78.18: res ac tempus iugum, descriptionem exponere flagitat, and Sall. Catil. 5.9: res ac tempus iugum, videtur, disserrere, and also Sall. Jug. 17.1 and Tac. Hist. 4.5.1. A similar playful and parodic intent was also recognized by Keuls (1971) 267. Keuls has further pointed out some existing contradictions between the clemens clivulus and mans nortrigus, and between the tons afluentes and the undas argentaeas. See also Westerbrink (1978) 67. A combined list of the examples found in Walsh and Heine with some additions which employ the traditional formula that indicates an excursus is also composed by Schiesaro (1985) 215.

et faxo vos quoque, an mente etiam sensuque fuerim acinus.  
seculo sentiantis  

(Met 4.6/78.20-22).

After all, the priest of Isis, Mithras, later in Book XI, comments on Lucius' exceptional learnedness, despite the fact it did not proved helpful: vel in sa qua flores, usquam doctrina profuit (Met. 11.15/277.7-8). The combination, however, of the theme of the night-journey and of the scenery of the rugged mountain with the cave and a lower valley may suggest affinities with the narrative of the epic: Homer's description of the scenery of the rocky mountain and the cave of the Cyclops Polyphemus. The similarity acquires an added dimension by the subsequent repeated use of the stratagem in the execution of these criminals borrowed from Homer's Odyssey 9: Tlepolemus employs wine in punishing the thieves. Similarly, Charite plucks out Thrasylus' eyes with the tactic of Odysseus in blinding the Cyclops. For this unwanted Thrasylus is also introduced in terms reminiscent of the robbers and, therefore, of Homer's monster.3 There is a broad range of associations with the Homeric Cyclopeia in the lengthy sequence of the Charite-complex.

The imposition of imagery, however, which the Homeric epic traditionally reserves for the abode of non-humans or nymphs demonstrates the untypical

3. The suitor Thrasylus, like the robbers, can also be considered as a thief. Thrasylus kills his antagonist and husband of Charite, Tlepolemus, in order to marry her himself. In this respect Thrasylus can also be associated with his mythic prototype, Polyphemus who kills Acis, his rival in love for Galatea. This association is brought up by Hijmans Jr. (1986) 360, in support of a brief yet valuable observation made by Anderson (1976) 63, that the blinding of Thrasylus by Charite should be compared with the blinding of Polyphemus by Odysseus. According to Hijmans, this connection with Polyphemus is illustrated by a comparison with Ovid's account of Polyphemus (Ov. Met. 13.750ff.). For further analysis see Chapter VI below.
development of these epic features within the new context of the robber's cave. It is my purpose, therefore, to consider the literary adaptation of heroic materials borrowed from Homer's *Odyssey* and Vergil's *Aeneid* in the description first of the night-journey of the Ass with his captors, the robbers, then of their settlement and finally of their initial activities upon their arrival at the cave. Thereby I hope to demonstrate the artfulness of Apuleius' epic imitation. First, the incident of the journey.

The epic association is clearly recognizable in the description of the Ass' meditation, when the animal, exhausted by the load and the frequent beatings, decides to fall down without any intention of getting up:

\[\textit{rebar enim iam me prorsus exanimatum ac semelum mereri causariam missionem, certe latrones partim inpatientia moreae, partim studio festinatae fugae dorsi mei sercinam duobus ceteris lumentis distributuros meque in altioris vindictae vicem lupis et vulturis praedam relicturos}\]


The combination of *festinare* with *fuga* is rarely attested. The only earlier parallel occurs in Vergil, when Aeneas reports to his men Mercury's divine message about their need for a hurried departure from Carthage. It is not unreasonable to assume that the Ass is here reflecting on Aeneas' words to his men:

4. I rely on the classification of the imagery presented by Clay (1983) 115. The author observes that in the *Odyssey*, only subhumans [i.e. Scylla: κολον σπεος Hom. *Od.* 12.84; and Polyphemus], or superhuman creatures [viz. Calypso: μεγα σπεος Hom. *Od.* 5.57; the Nymphs: νυμφαου, αι ἅγγο ρων αίρηνα καρηνα; και ἡγας παταμών και πισεα ποκεντα Hom. *Od.* 6.123-24; also the Naiads in Ithaca: ἄγχοθι δ' αυτῆς ἀντρον ἐπηρτον ἑροειδες; ἱρον νυμφαου αι ηναδες κολεονται Hom. *Od.* 13.103-04; and Aeolus] have their homes in caves. A similar distribution of imagery is observed in Vergil's *Aeneid*: a) superhumans (Aeolus) b) subhumans (Scylla, Polyphemus, Cyclopes, Dirae, Cacus).

5. The expression also occurs in *Carmen de Sodoma* 77, but it is considerably later than the *Metamorphoses*. See TLL, s.v. *festina*.
The effect of this analogy is to capture the rare sense of urgency and speed that the epic passage conveys through its functional alliteration: *testinare fugam fugam fugam*. There is a further implication, however, suggested by this similarity: the Ass is equated with the situation of Aeneas delaying at Carthage, while the robbers in their unwillingness for a delay are elevated to the status of Mercury urging Aeneas to flee: *rumpe moras* (Verg. *Aen.* 4.569). Lucius' previous usage: *nec mora omnium prodigant illi latrones stabulo* (Met. 4.4/77.7-9) stresses this theme of the robbers' need for haste. A similar sense of urgency is again conveyed later when the thieves decide to throw the fellow dead mule into the ravine: *ne fugam morarentur* (Met. 4.5/78.3-5). This association is further supported by the fact that the brigands, like their divine prototype in stealing Apollo's cattle, are here driving the Ass and the animals which they have stolen from the stable of Milo.

---


8. Further details elsewhere may help develop the image of the robbers as Mercuries. Lamenting for her abduction, the girl likens the disruption of her marriage to the wedding of Protesilaos. The implication is that the robbers like Mercury who pitied Laodamia for the premature death of her husband, Protesilaos, will allow her, as does Protesilaos, to return to her fiancée, Tlepolemus (*sic ad instar Attidis vel Protesilai dispectae disturbatae nuptiae* Met. 4.26/95.15-16). A similar association is also implied in the context where the Ass refuses to take the road where Charite directs his course during their failed attempt at escape. His reason is that this path will lead them into direct confrontation with the returning robbers who will force them to return back to the lair, termed as an underworld (*"quid facis, infelix puella? quid agis? cur testinum ac urrum? quid metis neebus tacere contentus? non enim te tantum, verum etiam me pecuniam petis."* Met. 6.29/151.18-21). This sense is also reflected in the context where the
Yet, there is an interesting set of contrasts intended with the epic situation. Whereas Mercury visits Aeneas in order to take the hero away from the dangers at Carthage (\textit{ne quae te circum stant deinde pericula carnis} Verg. \textit{Aen.} 4.561), the Ass who humorously perceives the robbers as Mercuries imagines that they will leave him behind. Furthermore, whereas Aeneas carries forward his mission by obeying Mercury's order:

\begin{quotation}
\textit{sequimur te, sancte deorum},
\textit{aut quosque imperioque iterum paramus ovantes},
\end{quotation}

\textit{(Verg. Aen. 4.576-77)},

the Ass considers abandoning his own duty by feigning exhaustion: \textit{causam iam missionem} (\textit{Met.} 4.4/77.19). It turns out, however, that the Ass is unable to carry out his \textit{tam bellum consiliun} (\textit{Met.} 4.5/77.23). For the fellow mule falls down first, thereby forcing the Ass to go on with the robbers.

This set of contrasts is further enhanced by the fact that Vergil envisions Mercury's missions to Aeneas in his capacity of psychopompos, viz. to ensure the hero's departure from the "underworld" of Carthage. This psychopompic notion is further supported by the Homeric equivalent scene where Zeus dispatches Hermes to the island of Ogygia to instruct the nymph Calypso to allow Odysseus to leave her cave: \textit{νωμὴ ἐνπλοκαμῳ εἰπεὶ ἐμπέρτεο βουλῆν, ἐν τοῖς Ὀδυσσῆος ταχυσφοροῖς ὑς κε νεται} (Hom. Od. 5.30-31). In this way Hermes figuratively takes the hero away from the "underworld" of Ogygia and the cave of Calypso.\footnote{For an analysis of the scene see Knauer (1964) 209-218.}

Robbers are transformed into \textit{lemures} when they wake up from their brief sleep and soon depart for a night operation. They come back before the night is over bringing with them the captive Charite (\textit{Met.} 4.22/92.5). The term \textit{lemures} which Ernout and Meillet (1939) 538, s.v. \textit{lemures}, derive from the word \textit{lemuria} is defined by OLD, s.v. \textit{lemuria} as "a festival held in May in order to appease the spirits of the dead".\footnote{For an analysis of the scene see Knauer (1964) 209-218.}
Reflecting on these well-established epic antecedents, Apuleius casts the burglars into Mercuries who rush to transport the Ass with the mule to a locale of abundant sinister undertones. The arrival at the mountain lair marks the beginning of the Ass’ new perils as captive of the robbers, contrary to his mistaken impression that the brigands would leave him behind in their unwillingness for any further delay. Thus, Apuleius develops the scene in opposition to the epic structure of Aeneas’ speedy departure from Carthage, and with additional eschatological undertones—a pattern, again, motivated by the epic narrative—that underline the description of the rugged landscape and the cave:

mons horridus silvestrisque frontibus umbrosus et in primis altus fuit, hucusque obliqua devea, qua saxis asperrimis et ob id inaccessis cingitur, convalles lacunosae cavaeque nimirum spinetis aggregatae et quaqua versus reposita naturae tum praebentes ambiebant de summo vertice fons afluens bullis ingentibus scaturribat perque prona delapsus evomebat undes argentae tamque rivulis pluribus dispersus ac valles illas agminibus stagnantibus inmodum stipati mariis vel ignavi fluminis cuncta coniebant. Insurgit speuniæ, qua margines montanae desinunt, turris ardua, cauleæ firmæ solides cratibus, ovilia stabulatione commodae, porrectis undique lateribus ante fores exiguorum transit vis structi parietis attenduntur ea tu bona certe men pericolo latronum dixeris atria nec iuxta quicquam quam parva casula canibus temere contecta, qua speculatores e numero latronum, ut postea comperi, sorte ducti noctibus excubabant.

(\textit{Met}. 4-6/78.22-79.12).

A. Schiesaro has pointed out epic associations of this scenery by linking the locale directly with Turnus’ ambush in the \textit{Aeneid} in order to block Aeneas’ infantry. The Apuleian account shares with Vergil’s the following underlined words:

\textit{est curvo anfractu valles, accommoda fraudi armorumque dolis, quam densissimis atrum urget utrinque latus, tenuis quo semita ductit angustaeque ferunt fauces aditusque maligni}
This combination of details, however, a lofty mountain with a rocky cave and a lower plain which is surrounded by waters, may suggest another epic parallel: the mountainous peaks and the lairs where the Cyclopes have as their homes:

\[
\text{άλλ' ο} \gamma' \text{ώψηλων ὀρεων ναιουσι καρνα}
\]
\[
\text{ἐν σπεσσι γλαυσφοισι...}
\]

(Hom. Od. 9.113-14)\(^1\)

and in particular the cave of the monster Polyphemus:

\[
\text{ἐνθε δ' ἐπ' ἐσχατη σπεσισ εἰδομεν, ἀγχι θαλασσησ.}
\]
\[
\text{ώψηλων, δαφνησι κατρηπεσε. ἐνθι δε πολλα}
\]
\[
\text{μηλ'. οιες τε και αιγες, ἱανεσκουν' περι δ' αύλη}
\]
\[
\text{ώψηλη δεδήμτο κατωρυχεεσεα λιθοισι}
\]
\[
\text{μακρήσιν τε πιτυσσιν ιδε δρυσιν ψικομοσιν}
\]

(Hom. Od. 9.182-86)\(^2\).

A description of a similar isolated life-style on a tall mountain is found again in Vergil's presentation of the setting of the Cyclopes (mons altus Met. 4.6/78.22-23; montibus altis Verg. Aen. 3.675). There is a similar emphasis on the darker aspect of the woods and forest foliage (silvestribusque frondibus umbrösus Met. 4.6/78.22-23; silvestribusaue fraeai
g

\(^{10}\) Schiesaro (1985) 213. The above underlined words reflect the words originally italicized by Schiesaro.

\(^{11}\) This is also true of Vergil's description of the cavern of the monster Cacus on the top of the mountain: iam primum saxis suspensa hym arcas cipserem... (Aen. 8.190-95); and of the cave where the giant, Polyphemus dwells: nam quallis quantusque cave Polyphemus in antro... (Aen. 3.641-44). See also the dwelling place of the Nymphs in the shores of Libya: tum silvis scena coruscis... (Aen. 1.164-66).

The Apuleian phrase for the hollow valleys of the mountain, *convallae cavaeaus* (Met. 4.6/78.25) may also recall the setting of the curved hollows of Mt. Aetna: *curvisaque cavernis* (Verg. Aen. 3.674). In this context, Charite's later characterization of the brigands as *horrendum populum* (Met. 4.24/93.17-18) brings to mind Vergil's formula: *concilium horrendum* (Verg. Aen. 3.679) applied to the Cyclopes. For in the *Aeneid*, the term *horrendus* more frequently applies to gods¹³ and less frequently to subhumans ¹⁴. The only human who is described in similar terms is Camilla, *(horrenda in virgine* Verg. Aen. 11.507). The reason for this exception is to underline the uniqueness of this warrior in battle. In reference to subhumans, the use of the term is also rare: Vergil uses it only of the Cyclopes (*concilium horrendum* Verg. Aen. 3.679) or the Cyclops Polyphemus (*Polyphemum monstrum horrendum* Verg. Aen. 3.658), and Mezentius (*horrendus visu Mezentius* Verg. Aen. 9.521-22)¹⁵.

Other details are as well suggestive. The well-fenced wall which encircles the stable (*caueae firmae solidis cratibus, ovili stabulationi commodae* Met. 4.6/79.6-7), recalls the specialized imagery of the well-guarded court that is used only of the cave of Polyphemus, and which is, likewise, crowded with a similar sort of

¹³ TLL. s.v. *horrenus*; OLD. s.v. *horrenus*, b. The rest of examples provided by TLL include: Verg. Aen. 6.10 (Sibyl); 6.299 (Charon); 7.323 (Juno).

¹⁴ TLL. s.v. *horrenus*. Also OLD. s.v. *horrenus*, b. The examples include: Verg. Aen. 3.679 (Cyclopes); Verg. Aen. 9.521-22 (Mezentius).

¹⁵ As the entries in TLL show, an almost similar picture emerges from the use of the epithet in other authors: Sen. *Herc.f.* 101 (Furies); Val. Fl. 1.678 (Neptune); 4.499 (Celaeno); 5.220 (Medea); Ov. *Met.* 4.782 (Medusa); 13.760 (Polyphemus); Manil. 4.566 (Hannibal); Apul. *Met.* 11.2/267.13 (Proserpina); *Met.* 11.11/274.19-21 (Anubis).
domestic flocks (ἔνθα δὲ πολλὰ / μηλὶ, διές τε καὶ αἴγες, ιαύεσκον. Hom. Od. 9.183-84). Besides there is later in the narrative a reference to a herd of domestic animals (pecua Met. 7.11/162.13-14) and a large ram (grandem hircum horricomem Met. 7.11/162.13) which were stolen from a nearby castellum16. Possibly, again, the laurels which cover the cave of the giant (σπεισὶ δόξαν κοπρεπες. Hom. Od. 9.182-83) are picked up in the context of the lethal laurel trees (arboris in lauris fere. Met. 4.2/75.24).

Furthermore, the picture of a lower valley with the stream's stangant waters which encircle this rugged scenery in the manner of a sea or a slow river may underline a further similarity:

valles illas agriminitus stagnantibus innriganus in modum stipati
maris vel ignavii fluminae cuncta cohiebat

(Met. 4.6/79.2-4).

This description can be taken as a reminiscence of Homer's immovable waves of the sea, adjacent to the mountain of the Cyclopes:

οὔτ' οὖν κυματα μακρα κυλινδομενα προτι χερσον
εἰσίδομεν....

(Hom. Od. 9.147-48).

At the very least, this connection may be supported by the set of similar contrasts between the immobility implied by the term stagnans and the speed suggested by the word aomen17, and between the movement conveyed by Odysseus' direction towards the shore (προτι χερσον) and the immobility inferred by the motionless

16. Not surprisingly, the image of a fenced yard with and animals shows up again in the heroic narrative of Vergil's simile of the wolf amidst a fold roaring in the middle of the night (plenia lupus ovili / cum iremit ac caulis ... / nocte super medie. Verg. Aen. 9.59-61). This Vergilian reminiscence is suggested by Eicke (1956) 88, as quoted by Hijmans et al. (1977) 60, s.v. caule firmac

17. Hijmans et al. (1977) 59, s.v. illas.
waves (οὐτ ὀὖν κυματα μακρα κυλινδόμενα). In addition, the motif of Odysseus' arrival at the island in a murky night (νυκτα δ' ὀρφανήν Ηόμ. Οδ. 9.143) is maintained by Apuleius in the robbers' sunset departure (tām in meridiem prōn iubare Met. 4.4/77.7) and eventual arrival at the cave by night18. Alongside the allusion to the Aeneid, the speculation of Odysseus that some god, presumably Hermes, guides him and his companions through the darkness (καί τις θεός ἄγχομενεν / νυκτα δ' ὀρφανήν Ηόμ. Οδ. 9.142-43; later more straightforwardly associated with ἄνωτος Ηόμ. Οδ. 9.566), could also be reflected in the perception of the Ass who views the brigands as Mercuries who drive him to a land of similar eschatological undertones19.

Upon the arrival at the settlement, the bandits enter the cave, take a bath, anoint themselves and finally take a seat at the dinner table:

\[
\text{statim sese devestiant nudatiue et flammae largissimae vapore}
\]

\[
\text{recreati calidique perfusì et oleo peruncti mensas dabant}
\]

\[
\text{iangiter instructas accumunt (Met. 4.7/80.3-6).}
\]

18 Hijnmans et al. (1977) 5 and 46, s.v. tām in meridiem prōn iubare.

19 Further details suggest the sinister undertones of the site where the robbers live. The laurel-roses near a river bank in the lower parts of the cliff, which are explicitly designated as lethal for all live stock (cuncto pecori cibus letalis Met. 4.3/76.3); the funereal associations of the tall cypress tree where the old housekeeper of the robbers hangs herself (ramo procerae quippressus Met. 6.30/152.13). Similar chthonic associations are also observed in the context where the Ass refuses to take the road where Charite directs his course during their failed attempt at escape on the ground that this path will lead them into direct confrontation with the returning robbers and thereby force them to return to the lair described as an underworld. See also note 8, above. In the same scene the ironic remarks of a robber concerning the escaping pair's lack of fear of the ghosts and shades of the moonless night are only relevant if this locale is envisioned as a land of the Dead (*quorum istam festinanti vestigio lucubratis viam nec noctis intertempes Manes larvesque formidatus? Met. 6.29/151.25-27). The interpretation of the cave as an underworld, albeit without any detailed discussion, is advanced by Nethercut (1969) 111 and passim.
The sequence of details as the robbers refresh, anoint themselves and then recline for a meal bears resemblance with the procedure of bathing and anointing of a guest before the meal in the regular epic dinner. Typical example of the epic convention may be Homer's description of Odysseus' hospitality in the wealthy palace of Alcinous:

χερνημα δ' ἀμφιπολος προχω ρ επέχενε φερουσα 
καλὴ χρυσει ὑπερ ἀγνυρεοι λεβητος. 
νυσσαθαι παρα δε εστην ἐτανυσας τραπεζαν. 
σιτιν δ' αίδοιη ταμη παρεθηκε φερουσα. 
εἰδητα πολλ' ἐπιθειςα, χαριζομενη παρεοντων 
αὐται ὁ πίνε και πολυτας διος ὀδυσσευς

(Hom. Od. 7.172-77).

A variant of this convention is also observable in the description of Odysseus' preparation for the feast which is about to take place in the halls of Circe:

η δε τεταρτη νυμ Ͽωρ ἐφορει και πυρ ἀνεκαι 
πολλον ὑπο τριποδι μεγαλω ιανετο δ' νυμ Ͽωρ 
αὐται ἐπει δη ξεσσεν νυμ Ͽωρ εν ἡνοι χαλκω. 
ἐς ρ' ἀσαμνυδον ἐσασα λο' εξ τριποδος μεγαλου. 
θυμηρες κερασασα, κατα κρατος τε και ωμων. 
ὁφρα μοι εκ καματον θυμοθθορον εἰλετο γυιων 
αὐται ἐπει λούσεν τε και ξερισεν λιπ' ἐλαου. 
ἀμφι δε με χλαιαν καλην βαλεν ἢδι χιτωνα. 
εἰς δε μ' εἰσαγαγουσα ἐπι θρωνου ἀργυρωλου 
καλου βαιδαλεου, ὑπο δε βρήνης ποσιν ἦν
χερνημα δ' ἀμφιπολος προχω ρ επεχενε φερουσα 
καλῃ χρυσει, υπερ ἀγνυρεοι λεβητος. 
νυασθαι παρα δε εστην ἐτανυσας τραπεζαν. 
σιτιν δ' αίδοιη ταμη παρεθηκε φερουσα. 
εἰδητα πολλ' ἐπιθειςα, χαριζομενη παρεοντω 
εσθεμεναι δ' ἐκελευνε

(Hom. Od. 10.358-72)20.

20 For a useful discussion on the typology of the Homeric hospitality scenes and an analysis of the typical ingredients in the description of Odysseus' entertainment by Circe see Edwards (1975) 68. It should be observed that the hospitality offered to Odysseus by Circe displays some atypical elements that deviate from the standard order and convention in feeding a guest. Nevertheless, the description of the washing as well as the narration during the meal, as Edwards observes, are typical of the standard pattern of the regular epic meal.
Yet, in contrast to the elaborate procedure taking place in wealthy halls, the robbers refresh and anoint themselves in a cave and without any assistance from their nurse. Furthermore, in opposition to the epic pattern which generalizes on the food served, Apuleius elaborates on the various kinds of dishes. This meticulous description of the meal in turn renders absurd the robbers' previous invective against the old nurse in their mistaken impression that she was allegedly sitting during their absence (Met. 4.7/79.18-20).

In the meantime, a larger group of thieves enters the cave and after an exactly similar procedure of bathing and refreshing, joins with the rest for the meal:

\[
\text{hi simul lavacra refoti inter toros sociorum sese reponunt,}
\text{tunc sorte ducti ministerium faciunt}
\]  

(Met. 4.8/80.10-12).

The stage for the entertaining meal, just like its epic counterpart feasts, is set:

\[
estur ac potatur incondite, puimentis accervatim, panibus aggeratim, poculis aeminatim ingestis
\]  

(Met. 4.8/80.12-14).

Yet, the Homeric convention of Odysseus' well-mannered eating and drinking (\textit{ai' Tap 6 tuvc K ai noXi'TVa^6} o&vcrafus Horn. Od. 7.177), is given an unepic twist: first, there is the sequence of impersonal passives (\textit{estur} and \textit{potatur}), which in the absence of the syntactical agent de-humanize this civilized norm; and also the frequency of adverbs (\textit{incondite}, \textit{acervatim}, \textit{aggeratim}, \textit{aeminatim}) underlines the excessive eating\textsuperscript{21}.

See also Pedrick (1988) 89 in connection with Odysseus' entertainment at the palace of Alcinous.

\textsuperscript{21} This view again emerges in the description of the robbers eating the last meal, which the housekeeper has diligently prepared for them. In that passage also the language employed is appropriate only to the eating of animals (\textit{quam qu借用 detractam prolatinus cum suo sibi funiculo devinctam decrepe praeruptem puellaque statim}}
In addition, Apuleius replaces the relaxed atmosphere that prevails in these epic feasts with shouts and noises. This revelry reaches proportions of the mythic fight during the feast of Centaurs and Lapiths:

\[
\text{clamore ludunt, strepitu cantilant, conviciis locantur, ac iam cetera semiferis Lapithis cenantibus Centaurisque similia} \]

\[(\text{Met. 4.8/60.14-16}).\]

This association with the violent meal of the semi-wild Centaurs and Lapiths during the wedding feast of the Lapith Perithous to Hippodamia becomes particularly apt as the chief of the second group of thieves suddenly and presumably under the influence of wine begins to chide the heroism of the robbers who went to rob towns of Boeotia. In a literal use of the heroic "apologia", the leader of the accused band proceeds to narrate and, therefore, to assert the "kleos" and "heroism" of his group with the account of the ensuing three robber-tales. In this inversion of calm atmosphere of the epic entertainment scenes, the reporter-thief begins the robber-tales which is the subject of the next Chapter.

Against its literary background then, the description of Lucius' initial phase of adventures is appropriately enhanced by epic reminiscences. The overriding effect of this extensive epic coloring and use of imagery drawn primarily from the Homeric Cyclopeia is to attach a dimension of horror and monstrosity as the Ass enters into the heroic world of perils and adventures. This association helps then to introduce the brigands as giant figures and also prepares the ground for a more extensive use of Odyssean allusions in the extensive narrative sequence known as the Charite-complex: Tlepolemus, impersonating the robber Haemus,

\[
gistenta vinculis cenam, quam postuma diligentia praeparaverat infelix ancilla, ferunt invaguntur primis. \text{(Met. 6.31/152.14-18).} \]

22. See also Cooper (1980) 442.
enters into the company of these criminals and, like Odysseus, destroys their band by drugging them to sleep with wine. Similarly, Charite plucks her suitor's eyes with the stratagem Odysseus employed to blind Polyphemus. Nevertheless, the application of imagery and themes that epic, with the exception of nymphs, reserves for giants contributes to the playful effect. After all, these thieves are by no means the mythic figures of an older race. Nor are they the unskilled humans of the pre-Hephaestian or pre-Promethean past (οἱ τὸ παρὸς περὶ ἄντροις ναυτασσόν ἐν οὐρεσὶν ἑτεθηκεῖς Ἡ. Ἡ. 20.3-4; also ἄντρων ἐν μυχοις ἄνηλοις Aesch. PV. 453). On the contrary, they are regular criminals who renounce the humble, yet civilized, norms of living, by resorting to the mountainous caves, to lead a lawless life (humi servilique vitae renuntiantes ad instar tyrannicae potestatis sectam suam conferre malle Met. 7.4/157.9-11). The recognition of this disparity explains the intentions of Apuleius' epic imitation and maintains its artistry and witticism.
CHAPTER II

THE ROBBER-TALES OF LAMACHUS, ALCIMUS AND THRASYLEON

The numerous epic allusions in the tales of the bandits have recently attracted scholarly attention. The setting is that of a banquet during which a narrator reports on the activities of his group in the form of the conventional "dinner conversation". These "banquet-tales" have ample epic precedent: the account of Odysseus' adventures in the palace of Alcinous (Hom. Od. 8.469-86), or the Latin equivalent, Aeneas narrating the story of Troy's fall at the banquet in Dido's

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1. Beyond the observations made by commentators, La Penna (1985) 145-147, briefly discusses the epic allusions within the major episode of the Robber-Tales. While not denying the epic coloring, La Penna denied that the tale depends on or functions as a parody of Vergil's treatment. The explanation offered for this rejection is the seeming absence of verbal features that reveal such a dependence. In the discussion proper (under The tale of Thrasyleon, below), I demonstrate Apuleius' systematic use of epic elements borrowed from Vergil's tale of the Trojan Horse. The identification of these epicisms as well as the awareness of their comic treatment within their adapted context of the novel reveal the sophistication and playfulness of the Apuleian witticism. Lists of parallel passages between the tale of Thrasyleon and Vergil's account of the fall of Troy, without any discussion, were also composed by López (1976) 331-334 and by Gatscha (1898) 145. See also Cooper (1980) 441-442, for general, albeit useful observations on the anti-epic quality of the tales and, in particular, that of Thrasyleon. On the affinities of the tales on Lamachus and Alcimus with satire see Gianotti (1981) 61-83 and Alimonti (1986) 59-63. For a general discussion on the robber-tales, see: Mackay (1963) 149-152, Tatum (1969) 502-508, and Walsh (1970) 158. For a discussion on the brigandage consult McMullen (1966) Appendix B, 255-268, and Millar (1981) 63-75.
There are, however, here in the *Golden Ass* elements of degradation and contrast with the epic. The robber-tales are not told in the traditional form of a formal entertainment after an epic meal, but as a defense of the group of brigands who had headed to plunder towns of Boiotia. As Winkler aptly puts it, "[these tales] are told in praise of heroic robbers defeated by villainous householders, but the reader sees that they are really Apuleius’s tales of clever householders: heroes and villains are reversed". This thematic inversion which is also reflected by the handling of epic language and conventions can be seen within the individual tales.

**THE TALE OF LAMACHUS**

The first robber tale (*Met. 4.8-11/81.6-83.7*) recounts the attack led by Lamachus against the house of the rich money exchanger, Chryserus. An epic atmosphere is suggested by the narrator’s beginning with the arrival of their band at the city of Thebes:

\[\text{vix enim Thebas heptapylos accessimus} \]

\[\text{(*Met. 4.9/81.13-14)*.}\]

Cooper points out the grand associations in the term *heptapylos* frequent in Greek, but unattested in Latin before Hyginus. The use of this archaic epithet sets the

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2. For more examples of this motif see Austin (1971) 225-226. s.v. super. Knauer (1964) 877.

3. Winkler (1985) 48, note 33. The emphasis is mine.

4. Cooper (1980) 441; Hijmans et al. (1977) 78. s.v. *heptapylos* to whose brilliant commentary I am indebted throughout this Chapter; Hildebrand (1842) 235. s.v. *Thebas heptapylos*
tale against the literary background and imagery of the mythic expedition and siege against the seven-gated Thebes. This connection is supported by the description of the attack on the house in terms reminiscent of a military blockade of a fort (mitite domuncula Met. 4.8/81.20; contempta pugna Met. 4.9/81.22; fortibus Met. 4.10/81.24). The semantic associations in the name of Chryseros reinforce this theme. It is derived from the Greek χρυσήρως, which in addition to its meaning "desiring gold", is also associated with the name of the famous old priest, Chryses, of the Iliad. This association with the Iliad foreshadows the robbers' eventual defeat. A comic direction, however, is suggested as the watchful Chryseros silently creeps up, nails Lamachus' hand to the door as the bandit tries to release the lock and then runs to the roof to seek a neighbor help:

\[
\text{lenem gradum et obnixum silentium tolerans paulatim adreptit}
\]
\[
\text{grandique clavo manum duos nostri repente misu fortissimo ad}
\]
\[
\text{ostii tabulam offigit et exitabili nexu patibulatum reliquens}
\]
\[
\text{gurgustioli sui tectum ascendit atque inde contentissima voce}
\]
\[
\text{clamitans rogansque vicinos et unum quemque proprio nomine}
\]
\[
\text{ciens nomine ciens et salutis communis admovens diffamat}
\]
\[
\text{incendio repentino domum suam possiderit!}
\]

(Met. 4.10/82.6-14).

The neighbors, as does Apollo who responds to Chryses' request, quickly rush to his call. Without any alternative, the brigands cut off Lamachus' arm and subsequently run away in terror.

---

5. Further military vocabulary is also employed: castra nostra (Met. 4.8/80.20); exquenare (Met. 4.8/80.18); sux (Met. 4.8/80.22). See also Hijmans et al. (1977)209, Appendix 1, for a collective entry of military terms found successively in each of the robber-tales.

6. TLL. Suppl. s.v. Chryseros

In this handicapped condition the chief Lamachus chooses to die. For the brigand sees no value in prolonging his life now that his most valuable arm is cut off. When none of the band will help, he puts an end to his own life:

\[
\text{manu reliqua sumptur gladium suum diuque deosculatum per medium pectus ictu fortissimo transadigit}
\]

\text{(Met 4.11/83.2-4).}

This description is likely to have been inspired by Vergil's presentation of Aeneas striking Sucro with the sword:

\[
\text{Aeneas Rutulum Sucronem (ea prima ruentis pugna loco statuit Teucros) haud multa morantem, excipit matutus et, qua fata celerrima, crudum transadigit costas et cratis pectoris ensem}
\]

\text{(Verg. Aen. 12.505-08).}

A variation, however, is achieved by the addition of the expression: \text{ictu fortissimo}, absent in the epic narrative. The picture is that of a handicapped and aching thief who strikes himself with the force of Aeneas piercing his sword to Sucro's ribs. Hence the oddity of the comparison. In addition, Apuleius further develops the scene in a playful manner as suggested by the use of the term, \text{seatus}. This word renders an awkward meaning to the Stoic notion of blessedness and suicide:

\[
\text{sat se beatum, qui manu socia volens occumber et}
\]

\text{(Met 4.11/82.30-83.1)8.}

The manner with which his men regarded the chief's suicide inspires awe to the narrator:

\[
\text{magnanimi ductis vigore venerato}
\]

\text{(Met 4.11/83.4-5).}

---

The use of the term, venerari, further modifies the epic tone of the scene. For it is adapted from the language of ritual and religion. In this sense, it occurs again in the context of Lucius' prayer to Isis: veneratus delubris Ephesi (Met. 11.2/267.12). Its use here exaggerates the strength of the thief to a level of veneration and worship.

The heroic tone is finally observable in the description of the disfigured corpse of Lamachus thrown into the sea to be buried by the waters:

et nunc iacet noster Lamachus elemento toto sepultus

(Met. 4.11/83.6-7).

Here the language may be inspired by Vergil's description of the dismembered body of Priam, lying lifeless on the shores of Troy:

iacet ingens truncus, avulsusque caput et sine nomine corpus

(Verg. Aen. 2.557-58).11

This similarity extends to the employment of the verb iacet which repeats exactly in the same person and number Vergil's term iacet, and to the emphasis on the theme of dismemberment, more fully developed in Vergil. At the very least, this association is further supported by the detail that the glory of Lamachus equals the heroic repute of inchoitos reges (Met. 4.8/81.2). Yet the playfulness gains from a

9. Ernout and Meillet (1939) s.v. venerar

10. Hijnans et al. (1977) 90, s.v. venerato

resulting contrast: the mutilated corpse of the robber, which lacks its most valuable arm, is thrown to the sea to be buried by the entire amount of its water (elemento toto sepultus)\(^12\).

**THE TALE OF ALCIMUS**

While Lamachus puts an end to his life in terms acceptable to epic, Alcimus, in the second robber tale (\textit{Met.} 4.12/83.8-84.12) comes to a bizarre and inglorious end. The turning point in the tale occurs when the old woman falls at the knees of the thief and begs him to stop throwing her cheap belongings to the yard of the rich neighbors:

\textit{genibus effus prousa sic nequissima filia deprecatione: "Quid, oro, fili, paupertas pannosaeque rescula miserrimae anus donas vicinis divitibus, quorum haec funesta domum prospectit?" (Met. 4.12/83.18-21).}

Here the description of the old woman at the robber's knees makes use of the distinctive vocabulary of the epic motif of supplication (\textit{genibus profusa deprecatione}), where the suppliant grasps the knees of the supplicated begging him for restoration\(^13\). And it is also the pattern of these scenes that the supplicated either accepting the plea raises the suppliant from this posture or dismissing the request subsequently faces the enmity of Jupiter, protector of the suppliants. The instance of Priam in the \textit{Iliad}, where the Trojan king rolls to the knees of

\(^{12}\) Hijmans \textit{et al.} (1977) 91, s.v. \textit{elemento toto sepultus}.

\(^{13}\) For an analysis of the motif see Perdrick (1982) 125-140, and further bibliography there. The selection of passages for discussion is arbitrary, but representative, I believe, of the epic motif.
Achilles pleading for the return of the corpse of his son, Hector, may serve as an example of the epic typology: λάβε γυναῖ καὶ κύστε χείρας / δεινὰς ἀνδροφόνους (Hom. Il. 24.478-79). A Latin equivalent would be Turnus' gesture at the end of the Aeneid, supplicating the Trojan hero to spare his life: ille humilis supplicique oculos dextremque prescutum / protendens (Verg. Aen. 12.930-31). In a pointed variation Apuleius alters the pattern of this epic norm: Alcimus does not accept the plea. Nor does he dismiss the request. On the contrary, he is being tricked by the old woman to bend down the opened window in order to verify that he is not in fact throwing her possessions to the neighboring yard:

quot sermone callido deceptus astu et vera quae dicta sunt credens Alcimus, verens scilicet, ne et ea, quae prius miserat, quaeque postea missurus foret, non sociis suis, sed in aeneos lares iam certus erroris abiceret, suspendit se funesta sagenter perspectur omnia, praesertim domus attiguae, quam dixerat illa, fortunas arbitraturus

(Met. 4.12/83.21-84.3).

Thus, and as Alcimus leans, the old woman takes her own revenge: she pushes Alcimus down through the window and the bandit falls to his death:

quod eum strenue quidem, set satis improviso coramtem senile illud facinus, quanquam invalido, repente tamen et inopinato pulsu nutantem ac pendulum et in prospectu aitque attonitum praeceps ineunt qui praeter altitudinem nimiam super quemad atiam vastissimum lapidem propter incendem decidens perfracta diffusaque crate costarum rivis sanguinis vomenis vinis narratisque nobis, quae gesta sunt, non dixi cruciatus vitam evertit.

(Met. 4.12/84.3-11).

The description of Alcimus' fall and death is presented in mock heroic terms. The phrase crate costarum may itself is taken from Vergil's language at Aeneid 12.508: transadiquit costas et cratibus sectoris ense m. There is further an evocation of the

vocabulary of Euneus' death when the warrior is being pierced by Camilla: *sanguinis ille vomens rivos* (Verg. *Aen.* 11.668)\(^{15}\). The implication is that Alcimus has become another victim of a woman while the despised old creature has been elevated to the rank of a noble heroine. Yet, there is a contrast with Vergil's narrative. The elevation of an otherwise old and depraved woman (*neuissina* *Met.* 4.12/83.18; also *senile ille factus* *Met.* 4.12/84.4) to the rank of Vergil's warlike and youthful virgin, Camilla is comic. Moreover, Apuleius further alters the mechanics of the death: whereas Camilla strikes her opponent in his open chest, the old woman kicks the robber with an unheroic shove in his back. In this manner the heroic overtone in the description is gradually removed and the death of Alcimus is given a theatrical, and comic development.

**THE TALE OF THRASYLEON**

Before I turn to discuss in more detail the epic allusions in the tale of Thrasyleon (*Met.* 4.13-21/84.13-91.8), it will be useful to offer a brief overview of its thematic structure\(^{16}\). The tale relates the adventures of the robber Thrasyleon, as he impersonates a bear in order to penetrate the house of the rich Demochares and let in the rest of the company of the robbers waiting outside. The account, at least in its outline, is reminiscent of the plot in Vergil's *Aeneid*: the hiding of the Greeks in the Wooden Horse in order to gain an entry to the city and let in the rest

---

\(^{15}\) Hijmans et al. (1977) 99, s.v. *rivos sanguinis vomens*. Gatscha (1898) 145; Finkelpearl (1986) 74. Also Westerbrink (1978) 67, examines the passage from the theatrical perspective of Lamachus' end.

\(^{16}\) See López (1976) 331-334; La Penna (1985) 145-147.
of the troops waiting just outside. Apuleius, however, by describing Thrasyleon's attempt to enter the house of the rich Demochares with the language and motifs, which Vergil traditionally associates with the heroic tale of the Wooden Horse and the subsequent events of the fall of Troy, reduces the epic material to a strikingly comic effect. In addition, there is an element of inversion that primarily involves the aftermath of the two operations; for whereas the Greeks succeed in deploying effectively the device and in sacking Troy, the bandits fail in at least a good part of their mission. They manage to carry out some of Demochares' wealth, but they are stopped and suffer a substantial loss: their leader Thrasyleon is killed.

The humorous exploitation of the epic narrative may be immediately apparent in the description of the corpses of bears, lying all over the streets of Plataea because of a sudden epidemic:

\[
\text{passim per plateas plurimas cerneres locere semivivorum corporum ferina naufragia}
\]

\textit{(Met. 4.14/85.13-14)}.

G. Sandy has noticed an incongruous effect in this description\textsuperscript{17}. This incongruity is indeed created by the heroic associations in the narrative: the description of the dead bears is reminiscent of Vergil's Trojan warriors lying lifeless through the streets of the besieged city:

\[
\text{plurima perque vias sternuntur inertia passim corpora perque domos et religiosa deorum limina}
\]

\textit{(Verg. Aen. 2.364-66)}\textsuperscript{18}.

The echo of the Vergilian lines captures the hopelessness of the situation. Yet

\textsuperscript{17} Sandy (1978) 123.

\textsuperscript{18} Hymans et al. (1977) 112, s.v. \textit{passim per plateas}. 
there is irony in Apuleius' applying the language of dead warriors to dead bears. The humor then emerges as these huge bears (immanis ursae Met. 4.13/85.4) are reduced in number, being unheroically struck down by the outbreak of a pestilentia. This jesting is further underscored by the exaggerated alliteration in passim per plateas plurimes cornes tacere, by the impressive metaphor in naufragia, and by the replacement of Vergil's pathetic inertia corpora with the more vivid semivivorum corporum. The effect of this replacement lies in the contrast between the steadfastness of the beasts in their calamity and the instant death of the epic warriors during the siege of their own city. Apuleius thus develops the epic scene in a comic manner by stripping it of its pathos. Further modifications of the scene are also observable. Apuleius proceeds to elaborate on the hungry and needy people who soon gather around the dead bodies scattered all over the place in order to obtain a free, yet distasteful meal:

\[
\text{tunc vulgus ignobile, quos inculta paupertas sine defectu ciborum tenuato ventri cogit sordentia supellectila et dapes gratuitas conquirere, passim iacentes epulas occurrunt. (Met. 4.14/85.14-17).}
\]

While pretending that they are similarly hungry, the robbers approach the sight of the dead beasts to select the most huge animal. When they find one, they transport it to their post in order to prepare its skin for their upcoming stratagem to enter and rob the house of Demochares:

\[
\text{unam, quae petebat sardina corporis praevaluit, quasi cibo permanebat; portamus ad noctrum receptacula, eoque probe nudum carnibus corum servatis, soliter toto ungibus, ipsam atiam beatae capite adusque continuum cervicio solido relieto tergus omne rasura studiosa tenuamus et minuto.}
\]

19. Hijnans et al. (1977) 112, s.v. passim per plateas.

20. Hijnans et al. (1977) 113, s.v. femina naufragia.
Here the Groningen commentators have detected an echo of Vergil’s technical description of the separation of the skin from the flesh of the slaughtered stags during the preparations of the Trojans for a feast after the shipwreck and safe landing at Carthage:

\[\text{tergora diriimplunt costis et viscer a nudant,} \\
\text{pars in frusta secant ventibusque tementia figunt} \]

\[\text{(Verg. Aen. 1.211-12)}\]^{21}.

But there is a contrast with the epic narrative. Unlike the rather careless separation of the hides from the ribs in the epic text (\textit{tergora diriimplunt costis} Verg. Aen. 1.211), Apuleius asserts that the bear’s pelt is properly laid bare (\textit{prope}). Furthermore, whereas Vergil is more interested in describing the preparations of the Trojans for their upcoming feast after their sea-storm and shipwreck (\textit{oppibusque futuris} Verg. Aen. 1.210), Apuleius elaborates on the process of preparing the pelt and the oath of the thieves in their preparation to enter the house of Demochares:

\[\text{ac dum caelestis vaporis fiammis examurgatur [i.e. corium],} \\
\text{nost interdum pulpis eius valenter saginant es sic instanti} \\
\text{militiae disponimus sacramentum, ut unus et numero nostro,} \\
\text{non qui corporis adeo, sed animi robore ceteris antistaret,} \\
\text{atque is in primis voluntarius, pelle illa contectus ursae} \\
\text{subiret ingenio domumque Demochares inlatus per opportunam} \\
\text{noctem silentia nodis ianuae facile praestaret actus} \]

\[\text{(Met. 4.14/85.25-86.6)}\]^{22}.

---


22. The similarity of \textit{pelle illa contectus ursae} (Met. 4.14/86.4) with \textit{instar montis egum divina Palladis arte / medificant} (Verg. Aen. 2.15-16) is also noticed by López (1976) 331.
The plan of the robbers, set forth in their oath, resembles the description of the stratagem of the Greeks as they fill the empty caverns of the Wooden Horse:

\[
\text{instar montis equum divina Palladis arte aedificant, sectaque intexunt abiete costas, votum pro reditu simulant, ea fama vagatur. huc delecta virum sortiti corpora furtim includunt caeco later: penitusque cavernas ingentis uter unique armate militi complent}
\]

\[(\text{Verg. Aen. 2.15-20}).\]

This association is also supported by the use of the word \textit{sacramentum} which in a technical sense designates a military oath sworn here by the robbers\textsuperscript{23}. There are also elements of playful contrasts. For, unlike the Greeks' choice of the strongest warriors to fill the empty Horse (\textit{nuc delecta virum sortiti corpora furtim} \text{Verg. Aen. 2.18}), Apuleius portrays the thieves as interested in the mental ability rather than the bodily strength. In addition, this process also differs from the procedure described in the epic text in that it involves the principle of both choice and confirmation by means of unanimous approval (\textit{factionis optione delectus} \text{Met. 4.15/86.8})\textsuperscript{24}.

When Thrasyleon is approved by the rest to risk disguising himself as a beast, he covers himself with the hide:

\[
\text{quorum praeceteris Thrasyleon factionis optione delectus anciptis machinae subivit aleam tamque habili cortice mollitie tractabili vultu sereno sese recondit}
\]

\[(\text{Met. 4.15/86.8-10}).\]

albeit without any further discussion.

\textsuperscript{23} OLD, s.v. \textit{sacramentum}, 1 and 2.

\textsuperscript{24} Hijmans et al. (1977) 119, s.v. \textit{quorum praeceteris Thrasyleon factionis optione delectus}. See also OLD, s.v. \textit{deligo}, 2.
The willingness of Thrasyleon to conceal himself in the bear-skin and, thereby, penetrate the house of Demochares, follows, as previously observed, the tactics of the Greeks in filling the empty caverns of the Wooden Animal, in order to gain entry into the city\(^{25}\). Furthermore, there may be in *machinae* (Met. 4.15/86.9) a verbal echo of Vergil's *machine muros* (Verg. Aen. 2.46), and *machine bellii* (Verg. Aen. 2.151). This association, together with the military vocabulary, is supported by the treatment of the bandits' exploits as battle scenes of epic scale\(^{26}\). A contrasting effect, however, with Vergil's narrative is intended. Thrasyleon does not merely conceal himself with the bear skin, nor does he lie hidden in the empty cavern of the beast. On the contrary, with the proper arrangements of the head and neck he takes the shape of the beast:

\[
\text{ad ipsum continuiu gulae, qua cervix bestiae fuerat exacta,}
\]
\[
\text{Thrasyleonis caput subire cognitis parvisque respiralisti circa}
\]
\[
\text{nares et oculos datis foraminibus.}
\]

(Met.4.15/86.13-15).

His transformation is emphasized by the deployment of the particle *prorsus*.

\[
\text{prorsus bestiam factum}
\]

(Met. 4.15/86.16).

The word *prorsus* belongs to the language that describes a metamorphosis\(^{27}\).

---

\(^{25}\) The list of López (1976) 331. suggests a combined reference to Verg. Aen. 2.261-264: *Thessandrus Stheneliduque duces et cirrus filixes / demissum lapsi per
tium - Acamasque Inopaeque / Pelidesque Neoptolemus primusque Pachon / et Menelaus et Ipe

di fabricator Epesc / and Verg. Aen. 2.18-19: *huc selecta virum sortiti corpora furtim / inpl...*

\(^{26}\) See Hijmans et al. (1977) 208-209, Appendix I, for a list of military terms in the episode of Thrasyleon. For a recent study on the military vocabulary and the language of trickery in particular see Wheeler (1988) 50-92, and his useful word indices.

\(^{27}\) Tatum (1972) 309; also Hijmans et al. (1977) 122. s.v. *prorsus bestiam factus*
Thrasyleon continues to maintain the animal form he has adapted as he fights against the raging dogs:

\[
scaenam\  denique,\  quam\  sponte\  sumpserat,\  cum\  anima\  retinens\  nunc\  fugiens,\  nunc\  resistent\  varis\  corporis\  sui\  schemis\  ac\  motibus\  tandem\  domo\  prolapsus\  est
\]

(Met 4.20/89.17-19).

Thus the valiant thief assumes the guise of a beast and ultimately is metamorphosed into a live bear.

Before the account of the entry into the house of Demochares, Apuleius proceeds to elaborate on the robbers' plan. They forge a letter from an old friend of Demochares, the Thracian Nicanor, so as to make the bear with the cage appear as a gift:

\[
siscittati\  nomen\  cuiusdam\  Nicanoris,\  qui\  gener\  Thracin\  priditus\  su\  amicitiae\  summum\  cum\ illo\  Demochare\  celebat,\  litteras\  adfingimus,\  ut\  venationis\  suae\  primitias\  bonus\  amicus\  videretur\  arnando\  munere\  dedicasse
\]

(Met. 4.16/86.19-23).

The description of the strategy figuratively repeats the motif of Sinon seeking captivity. Only thus can Sinon hope to persuade the Trojans to accept the horse in their citadel. Furthermore, Sinon explains the construction of the Horse falsely as a gift to Minerva (donna Minervae Verg. Aen. 2.189; votum pro reeditu simulat Verg. Aen. 2.17)29. Similarly the robbers make the bear appear as a gift to Demochares

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28. A good explanation for the Thracian origin of Nicanor is provided by Hildebrand (1842) 254, s.v. Thracia. It is useful here to quote Hildebrand's argument in full: "Thraciam A [i.e. Apuleius] commemoravit, quae sylvestris et montosa ursus ceterisque feris frequentia luxur praebebat, quod consideraverant latrones. Ha ut eum magis callidum consilium apertum fiant". See further Hijmans et al. (1977) 125, s.v. gen. Thracium, who, likewise, quotes Hildebrand's explanation.

29. The list of López (1976) 331, suggests a connection with Verg. Aen. 2.17: votum
from his friend, whose letter they have forged. But there is a subtle element of
distinction noticeable between the two narratives. The extraordinary size of the
animal causes the Trojan leaders to distrust the offering. Thus Sinon is forced to
come up with the false scheme of the allegedly protective power of the Horse, if it
is allowed to enter the city:

"sin manibus vestris vestram ascendir sit in urbem,
ultra Asiam magni Pelopae ad moenia bello
venturam, et nostros ea fata manere nepotes"

(Verg. Aen. 2.192-94).

By contrast, in the Apuleian context the very size of the beast prompts
Demochares' admiration for the gift:

"qui miratus bestiae magnitudinem suiique contubernalis
opportunity liberalitate laetatus, jubet nobis protinus gaudii
sui geruit decem aureos, ut Ipse habebat, e suis loculis
adnumerari"

(Met. 4.16/86.25-87.1).

His pleasure and good luck is likewise emphasized:

"satis felix ac beatus Demochares ille sepe celebratus, quod
post tantam ciadem ferarum novo proventu quodcum modo
fortunae resisteret, jubet novalibus suis confestim bestiam
summatum diligentiae reportari"

(Met. 4.16/87.5-9).

Demochares' delight is due not only to the size of the animal but also to the
generosity of his friend, who alleviates his despair for the loss of the animals
during the recent pestilence. In this display of surprise and delight by
Demochares, the host, the description brings to mind Vergil's lines of the reaction
of the group of Trojans as the beast stands outside the walls of the city (pars stupe

pro reptu simulant, ea fama vagatur."
innuptae domum extulit Minervae / et molem mirantur equi\(^{30}\). A similar reaction is also observed in Vergil's description of the young boys and girls who delight to lay a hand to the Horse as it is being driven to their citadel (\emph{aatent} Verg. Aen. 2.239). It must be observed, however, that Demochares is not associated with the Trojan chieftains, but rather with that group of amazed citizens or possibly with the joyful Trojan boys and girls when the bear is lead to its proper place. Hence the easiness with which the robbers initially succeed in their trick.

While accepting the gift, Demochares dismisses the robbers' offer to spend the night with the beast inside his house. So they go away, then out of the city and settle near a grave monument, in order to prepare for the upcoming attack against the house. The remote and secluded place where the brigands station (\emph{monumentum quodam conspicarum procul a via remota et ambito loco positum} Met. 4.18/87.28-29) recalls the deserted shores of the island of Tenedos where the Greeks hide themselves before they advance and join forces with those within Troy (\emph{hue i.e. Tenedos se provesti deserit in littere conducit} Verg. Aen. 2.24; also \emph{Argiva phalanx instructis navibus ibat / a Tenedo tactae per amica silentia lunae} Verg. Aen. 2.254-55\(^{31}\). This association is, of course, suggested by the fact that the robbers, as noted before, are presented in terms of an army equipped with arms (\emph{cohortem

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\(^{30}\) Differently La Penna (1985) 146, who sees a similarity between \emph{Met.} 4.16/87.1-6: \emph{lunc, ut novitas consuevit ad repentinas visiones animos nominum pellere, multi numero mirabundii bestiam confiebant: ensoneque citrum voces satis felix ac beatus Demochares ille saepe celebratus...} and Verg. Aen. 2.31ff.: \emph{pars stupet innuptae domum extulit Minervae / molem mirantium equi}, or possibly Verg. Aen. 2.63: \emph{unicum visendi studio Troiana juventus / circumfusa ruin certatiquem includere capto}. Also López (1976) 332, who connects Verg. Aen. 2.63-64 with Apuleius' \emph{Met.} 4.16/87.1-3.

\(^{31}\) López (1976) 332.
Moreover, the robbers' assault against the house of Demochares is timed for that moment when sleep falls most deep:

\[ \text{et ex discipline sectae servato noctis inlumo tempore, quo somnus obvius impetu primo corda mortalium validius invadit ac premit, cohortem nostram gladius armatam ante ipsas fores Democharum velut expiliationis vadimonium sistimus (Met. 4.18/88.3-7).} \]

A. G. Westerbrink has catalogued a number of instances in the epic narrative where disastrous events occur during the time of first sleep\(^{32}\). The similarities with the \textit{Aeneid} 2 established thus far may also suggest that Apuleius has in mind the passages of the \textit{Aeneid} 2 when Aeneas finds out about the disaster currently taking place at Troy:

\[ \text{sopor fessos complectitur artus (Verg. Aen. 2.253);} \]

and specifically:

\[ \text{tempus erat quo prima quies mortalibus aegris incipit et dono divum gratissima serpit (Verg. Aen. 2.268-69).} \]

The epic tone of Apuleius' narrative is maintained by the reference to the time that matches Vergil's hour of the destruction of Troy. The loftiness is further highlighted by the use of the term \text{servato} considered to be the technical term of the epic language that replaces \text{observato}\(^{33}\). But, as the Groningen commentators

\(^{32}\text{The rest of the passages cited by Westerbrink (1978) 66, include: Verg. } \text{Aen. 1.470-71: } \text{primo quae prope somno / Tyndaeus multa vastabat caede and Verg. Aen. 5.857: primos impetum quies laxaverat artus. A similar list of examples also appears in Hijmans (1977) 137, s.v. impetu primum; López (1976) 333. For an analysis of the example of Verg. } \text{Aen. 2 see la Penna (1985) 145.} \]

\(^{33}\text{Hijmans et al. (1977) 137, s.v. servato following Servius on Verg. Aen. 6.198:} \]
argue, the discrepancy between the elevated language and the ignoble context of
the robbers attack undermines the grand tone in Apuleius' narrative. This
undercutting is furthered by the reference to the macabre setting of the grave
monument (*monumentum quoddam conspicamur* Met. 4.18/87.27); by the preparation
of the coffins as storage boxes for the booty from the attack (*caputos passim ad futurae
praedae receptam cedam reseramus* Met. 4.18/87.29-88.3); and by the vulgar undertone of
the term *caput*.

Further evocation of epic language and conventions from Vergil's description
of the tale of the Trojan Horse continues to be echoed in Thrasyleons' advance:

```
ne se$ius Thrasyleon examussim capto noctis lato$ocna$;
momento propepit cavea statimque custodes, qui propter sopiti
quesce$ent, omnesque ad unum, mox$ etiam tanitorem ipsum
gladio conficit clavique subtracta forces lanae repando$que$.
pre$onte$ convolantis et domus alveo re$ceptis$ demonstrat
horreum, ubi vespera sagaciter argentum copiosum recondit
viderat
```

(Met. 4.18/88.7-13).

The account of Thrasyleon, as he creeps out of the cage, kills the sleeping
guardians and the *inter* and, by undoing the fastenings of the double door, unites
with the robbers, showing them the treasury. combines details drawn from two
distinct Vergilian passages: Simon's opening of the fastenings of the Wooden
Horse and joining with the forces pouring out of its cavern:

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illias patet rotas ad auras / regemque laetique cayo se robore promun
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(Verg. Aen. 2.259-

*)servato* as an epic term.

34. Hijmans et al. (1977) 137, *s.v. et ex discipline sectae servato noctis iniurio tempeore,
quod somnum ob iuvat primum carda mortuum validius invacit ad praeemit*.

35. Callebat (1968) 44.
and the killing of the guards and entry into the sleeping city: *invadunt urbem somno vincentem / caeduntur vigiles, portisque patentibus omnis / accipunt socios atque agmina consciat jungunt* (Verg. *Aen.* 2.265-67). Thus Apuleius seems to have formulated the entire incident of the robbers' advance after Vergil's recounting of the fall of Troy. Nevertheless, the heroic quality of the episode is conditioned by the application of epic motifs to an attempt of common criminals at robbing a rich house. This degradation is further exemplified in the ensuing instructions of the reporter of the tale who, being the leader of the expedition, gives orders to the thieves to repeat their trip and carry out as much wealth as possible:

> iubee singulos commilitonum asportare, quantum quisque poterat auri vel argenti, et in illis aedibus fidelissimorum mortuorum occultare propere rursumque concito gradu recurrentis sarcinas iterare


The subordination of the epic motif to the essentially low setting of thievery and stealth of wealth gives a humorous direction that renders the robbers' attempt in a good part ineffective. The turning point in this ironic treatment occurs when a slave is awakened by the noises. In the sequence he informs the rest of the slaves, and soon afterwards the entire populace pursues the running bear.

36. Also López (1976) 332.

37. Also López (1976) 333; La Penna (1985) 147.

38. Notice also the epic use of the term *iterare*. This idiomatic use of *iterare*, according to Hijmans and al. (1977) 139-140 s.v. *sarcinas iterare*, is also attested in epic poetry.

39. According to López (1976) 332, the description of the slave as he wakes up and immediately raises the rest of the household from their sleep (*Met.* 4.19/88.28-89.4: *quidam servulum strepitu sollicit vel divinitus inequitus prosperit leniter visque bestia, quae libere discurrens totis aecibus commovebat, premens obnoxium silentium vestigium suum replicat et utcunque cunctis in opus visa pronuntiat*) alludes to three distinct
nec mere, cum numerosae familiae frequentia domus tota compleetur. taedis, lucernis, cereis, sebacinis et ceteris nocturni luminis instrumentis clarescunt tenebrae. nec inermis quisquam de tanta copia processit, sed singuli fusti, lanceis, destructis denique gradibus armati munirent editus

(Met. 4.19/89.4-9).

The hunting dogs are also let loose:

nec secus canes etiam venaticos auritos illos et horribiles ad comprimendum bestiam cohoruntur

(Met. 4.19/89.9-11).

The narrative as Thrasyleon encounters and fights against this crowd includes an elevated touch in the epic phrase: \( \text{vitae metas ultimae obi ret} \) (Met. 89.14-15). This elevated tone is supported by the metaphor of battle against the gaping jaws of Cerberus applied to the fight of Thrasyleon against the attacking dogs (\( \text{faucibus ipsis hiantis Cerberi} \) Met. 4.20/89.16). There are, however, unepic details woven into the narrative: the use of the technical term for a stage, \( \text{scaena} \)\(^{40}\), and the theatrical overtones of the expression \( \text{varius corporis sui schemis ac motibus} \) (Met. 4.20/89.18-19)\(^{41}\). In this manner, the epic dimension is colored by a language which reflects scenic performance and mime as the emphasis shifts to the gestures and overall visual dimensions of the movements of Thrasyleon in his

Vergilian passages: (1) Aen. 2.270-71: \( \text{in somnis, ece, ante oculos maestissimus Hector} \) / \( \text{visus agesse munit} \); (2) Aen. 2.302: \( \text{excutior somno...} \); (3) Aen. 2.339-42: \( \text{adquant ses} \) / \( \text{scessus Eupus et maximus aemus / Epytus, oblat: per lunam, Hypanique Dymasque / et later: applomerat nostris, juventisque Coroebus / Mygonides...} \)

\(^{40}\) Prescott (1911) 348, construes \( \text{scaenam} \) with \( \text{cum animam} \) in the sense of \( \text{scaenam et animam} \), according to Met. 4.23/92.19, which thus means that the robber, Thrasyleon maintains his role of a bear along with his life. But I am more in agreement with Hijmans et al. (1977) 151, s.v. \( \text{scaenam denique} \), who associates the term \( \text{scaenam} \) directly with stage / theatrical practices.

\(^{41}\) Hijmans et al. (1977) 151, s.v. \( \text{varius corporis sui schemis ac motibus}. \)
effort to maintain his animal disguise.

The tale concludes with a significant inversion of heroic expectations. Thrasyleon is unable to save himself as he is pursued by both Demochares’ entire household and the hounds:

quamquam enim vitae metas ultimas obiret, non tamen sui
nostrique vel pristinae virtutis obitus iam faucibus
ipsis hiantis Cerber, reluctabat

(Met. 4.20/89.14-17).

This caterva of enraged dogs, now transformed into the Hell-hound, Cerberus\textsuperscript{42}, surround Thrasyleon. Thus the heroic strength of the thief, regardless of his amazing fight against them (mire canibus repugnantem Met. 4.20/89.13) is to no avail:

Thrasyleonem nostrum catervis canum saevientium cinctum
atque obsessum multisque numero morsibus laniatum

(Met. 4.20/90.1-3).

The savagery, however, of Thrasyleon’s end is tamed by a tone of play. This sense of playfulness is supported by the prevalence of the "c" sound to convey auditorily a sense of the number of the attacking dogs; and by the linguistic play between the word leon, inherent in the Thrasyleon’s name and canis. Thus Thrasyleon whose name otherwise means "daring lion" is bitten by the bites of the hunting dogs\textsuperscript{43}.

Ironically, he is killed, stricken in the heart by the lance thrown by a strong.

\textsuperscript{42} Also Hijmans et al. (1977) 150, s.v. faucibus.

\textsuperscript{43} For a useful study on the significance of the names in the Metamorphoses see: Hijmans Jr. (1978) 107-122; see Hijmans et al. (1977) 4 and note 2; 119, s.v. Thrasyleon. Also Brotherton (1934) 38. On the dramatic aspect imparted into the narrative of the Metamorphoses by a wide range of associations such as etymological, historical or mythological inherent in the meaning of proper names see dos Santos Palma Granwell (1982-1983) 142-148, for Thrasyleon p. 146.
nevertheless nameless slave of Demochares' family:

quippe quidam procurrens e domo procerus et velicus
incunctanter lanceam means infect urse praecoratis

(Met. 4.21/90.8-10)

Even when he is dead, the household is afraid to touch the fallen beast. A certain butcher, arrives in order to collect meat. In spite of his initial hesitation, he finally dares to cut the beast in the belly, thereby revealing the robbers' scheme by stripping Thrasyleon from his "clothing":

quidam ianus paulo fidentior utero bestiae resecto ursae
magnificum despoliavit latronem

(Met. 4.21/90.22-25).

On the level of structure the arrival of the butcher recalls the previous gathering of the needy people who likewise approached the dead beasts in order to obtain a free meal. In this context also the search for a free meat gives origin to the robbers trick as well as it exposes their scheme. Hence the neat organization of the tale in a ring fashion.

In all three robber-tales, Apuleius has maintained epic language and conventions through repeated allusions to epic contexts and in particular to Vergil's Aeneid. The structure and features of the most extended tale, that of

44. For the use of *quidam* as distinguished from *aliquus* in the narrative of Apuleius see Graur (1969) Vol. 1, 378; for general observations on the nameless characters in the Metamorphoses see Brotherton (1934) 38-40.

45. For a short discussion on the comic elements in this quotation see Hijmans et al. (1977) 157. *s.v. et ecce plurimum*. In addition Tatum (1969) 505 makes the interesting observation that Thrasyleon does not die as a man, but as a bear, which strengthens the notion of further reduction and even subhuman inversion of the hero Thrasyleon. The same point is also repeated by Tatum (1972) 308, in view of the use of the particle *prorsus* used in *Met. 2.1/24.26* which belongs to the technical language that describes a metamorphosis.
Thrasyleon directly associate it with the composition of Vergil's account of the Trojan Horse: an entry by means of an animal disguise, the presentation of the animal as a gift, the release of the attacker from the animal, and, finally, the advance of the plan during the ensuing night. This abundant use of heroic material gives the robber-stories an epic flavor. After all these stories are told in the traditional epic setting of the "dinner tales" in order to assert the "kleos" and "heroic repute" of the group of thieves that had returned unsuccessful from their own expedition.

This literary presence may also be implied in the narrator's statement:

\[\text{ex disciplina sectae}\]

(Met. 4.18/88.3).

For \textit{disciplina} here denotes "training"\textsuperscript{46}. It also means "teaching"\textsuperscript{47}, "instruction" \textsuperscript{48}. In this latter sense the term may acquire the sense of the literary training reflected here by the epic tone of the narrative. In the debased context of the meal in the cave of the thieves, these epic materials receive a variegated treatment. The effect, then, depends upon a set of tensions: the incompatibility between the epic motif of a tale-feast and the unepic manner of its development during the meal of common criminals, and between the epic vestment of the robbers' exploits and the anti-heroic interests of their pursuits. This contrasting treatment must be linked to the overall thematic inversion noted by Winkler\textsuperscript{49}.

\textsuperscript{46} OLD. s.v. \textit{disciplina}, 1.

\textsuperscript{47} OLD. s.v. \textit{disciplina}, 1.

\textsuperscript{48} OLD. s.v. \textit{disciplina}, 1.

\textsuperscript{49} See above, p. 31, note 3.
Hence the sophistication and humor of the Apuleian wit.
CHAPTER III

THE CAPTURED GIRL - THE FAILED ATTEMPT AT ESCAPE

In the preceding Chapters I have concentrated on the heroic materials that deal with the initial phase of Lucius' adventures as captive of the robbers after his metamorphosis into an Ass. The brigands, however, capture and bring along with them a new prisoner, identified later as Charite. As I have previously noted, this extensive piece which interweaves the careers of the Ass and the captive girl is organized around the bella fabella of Cupid and Psyche told by the robbers' housekeeper to the lamenting girl in order to console her in her sorrow. The tale, placed at the organic center of the novel, does not only foretell Charite's end of sorrow but also Lucius' end of troubles. While the rich literary texture of the tale is reserved for later, I here consider the handling of epic material within the episodes that serve as its frame: the arrival of the girl and the failed attempt of the escape of the prisoner with the Ass. Some of these epic reminiscences in isolation have been recently appreciated by A. G. Westerbrink. The purpose of considering some of these epic materials again is twofold: to provide a more systematic treatment of their adaptation within their new environment and to establish the narrative context for the more detailed discussion of the epic borrowings within the tale of Cupid and Psyche and the account of Tlepolemus.

With the conclusion of the robber-tales, the bandits take a few hours rest, and, then depart for a night expedition. When they return, they bring with them a beautiful girl abducted from her parents' house on the night of her wedding. Unable to console her grief, the robbers entrust her to their housekeeper in order to comfort her with a chat. The girl falls asleep, but suddenly she wakes up, beating her breast and lamenting more intensely:

\[ \text{longeque vehementius addicere sese et pectus etiam palmis infestis tundere et faciem illam succurret \ verb are incipit} \]

(Met. 4.25/94.1-3).

This portrayal recalls Vergil's description of the Trojan women on the frieze of Juno's temple at Carthage carrying the robe to Pallas and appealing for her help:

\[ \text{interea ad templum non aequae Palladis ibant} \]
\[ \text{classibus illae passis peplumque ferrebat} \]
\[ \text{suppliciter, tristis et tunsae pectora palmis,} \]
\[ \text{diva solo fixos ocular aversa tenebat} \]

(Verg. Aen. 1.479-82)².

The parallelism between these two accounts is strengthened by the fact that both the Trojan women and the girl are in a state of sorrow. There is also a contrast apparent in the two narratives. The goddess rejects the supplication of the Trojan women out of favor for the side of the Greeks (non aequae Palladis Verg. Aen. 2.479). The housekeeper of the robbers, in contrast, is attentive to the sorrow of the girl and eager to listen to her explanations: quanquam instantissime causas novit et instaurat: minores requirit: (Met. 4.25/94.4-5). The reason for this intense lamentation is a terrible dream in which her husband, while chasing the abductors of his bride, is killed by a stone thrown at his head by a robber:

² Gatscha (1898) 145; Hijmans et al. (1977) 186. s.v. et pectus etiam palmis infestis tundere
The Charite-complex, as it has been previously observed, has a ring structure. This dream vividly anticipates the tragic details of the latter part of the sequence. Within this structure then, the relevance of the dream can be illustrated through the explicit allusions or direct references made to the subsequent situations of the Charite-complex. In addition, Charite's nightmare can be considered as a literary reminiscence of Dido's dream that she is being pursued by Aeneas and abandoned to solitude:

\[\text{agit ipse furens Aeneas, semperque reliqui salsabi, semper longam incomitata videtur ire viam et Tyniis deserta quaerere terra}\]

*(Verg. *Aen.* 4.465-68)*

3. There has been a scholarly disagreement on the interpretation of the dream. Perry (1923) 203, Merkelbach (1962) 75, note 4, and Hijmans et al. (1977) 203-204, s.v. *talis aspectus*, believe that Charite's dream points ahead to Book VIII, where the death of either Charite [so Perry] or Tlepolemus [thus Merkelbach] or both Tlepolemus and Charite [so Hijmans et al.] is described in greater length. On the other hand, Junghanns (1938) 144, note 45, observes that "der inhalt des Traumes stimmt in keiner Weise zu VIII 1-14, auch entkräftet die Alte den Traum sofort durch die Erkäring zur Traumdeutungslehre (96,6-14), die Apul. kaum anbringen würde, wenn er sie für falsch hielte". Each one of the interpretations advanced thus far by the scholarship is in a sense supported by the distinct interpretations of the dream advanced by the characters themselves. For where Charite considers her dream as *funestus*, the *opus* dismisses it as *vanus*.

In Book VIII Charite again dreams of Tlepolemus. There the shade of the dead husband appears in her sleep to illuminate the scena of another calamity, that of Thrasylus' role in causing his death (Met. 8.8/183.11-21). Again, Charite wakes up, as does here, beating her chest with both her palms.

Other details also contribute to the anticipatory interpretation of the dream. In Charite's first nightmare, the description of the domus with the thelemus, cubiculum and torm from which Charite was forcibly seized (de domo, de thelemo, de cubiculo, de torm) must imply the house after her wedding and be different from the individuum contubernium of the domuscula with its cubiculum and torm, all of which the heroine a few lines earlier related as sharing as a child with Tlepolemus:

\[ \text{qui mecum primit ab annis nutritus et adultus individuo} \\
\text{contubernio domusculae, immo vero cubiculi tormique} \]

(Met. 4.26/94.23-25)\(^5\).

Besides, there are strong conjugal implications suggested by the term amplexus which presuppose a wedding\(^6\). Moreover, the reference to Tlepolemus chasing the abductors of his wife anticipates the subsequent expedition of the hunting with Thrasylus, described in Book VIII, and where he met his death. For the term vestigium meaning "footprint" is often associated with the track left by animals or wild beasts\(^7\). This detail also befits Tlepolemus' subsequent claim before the robbers of ancestry from the renown Thracian criminal Theron: patre Therone acque

\(^5\) Some references to the house of Charite occur in Book VIII: Met. 8.9/184.1; 8.10/185.16-22; 8.11/185.6. The case of maritus cannot be pressed any further because Charite refers to Tlepolemus as her husband even before her official wedding.

\(^6\) OLD, s.v. amplexus, 1.

\(^7\) OLD, s.v. vestigium, 1d; 3b.
latrone incito prognatus (Met. 7.5/158.13-14). This proper name is taken from the Greek term θηρός commonly meaning “hunting wild beasts”\(^8\). In the context of the abduction, the noun ractus, which the Groningen commentators consider an hapax, aesthetically expresses Tlepolemus’ irrevocable loss of his bride\(^9\). Furthermore, Charite’s calling aloud the name of her husband as she is carried away in pathless solitudes evokes her future delirious rush to the countryside bewailing the death of her husband Tlepolemus, et arva rurestria lactum insanae voce opus marem quaranans (Met. 8.6/181.6-7). We may note further that Thrasylus who slays the husband, while of noble birth, is also described as πρεδω who has even stained his hands with human blood:

\[
\text{sed luxuriae popinnae spectisque et diurna potationibus exercitatus atque ob id factionibus latronum male sociatus nec non etiam manus infectus humanc crucie (Met. 8.1/177.6-9).}
\]

Charite’s dream is, as she says, funestus insofar as the heroine foresees Tlepolemus’ tragic death, as described in the latter part of the Charite-complex. Hence the renewal of her lament. To console her grief, the anus replies that frequently tortures in dreams foretell a positive outcome, denique flere et vapidare et nonnumquam lugenter lucrosam prosperumque proventum mutuant (Met. 4.27/96.9-11). As a proof to this, the old nurse proceeds to relate a tale of sorrow followed by a happy outcome: viz. the adventures of Psyche in search of Cupid and the final union of the couple. We will turn in Chapter IV to examine the rich literary texture of this tale.

\(^8\) See LSJ, s.v. θηρός.

\(^9\) Hijnmans et al. (1977) 203, s.v. ractus. See also OLD, s.v. ractum.
At the end of this *semelis flabella*, the Cupid and Psyche, the brigands return bringing with them some colleagues wounded during an expedition. After a quick meal the robbers depart taking with them the Ass and the horse in order to transport the loot to their abode. On the way they frequently beat the animal, which finally falls down exhausted by the load and the repeated beatings, only to be forced to get up again. While quarreling about the Ass' punishment, they quickly arrive at their cave, since the Ass' hooves upon hearing about his death are transformed into wings. The expression: *timor ungulas mini æas ferox æat* (Met. 6.26/148.4-5) is a prose adaptation of Vergil's description of Cacus' hurried retreat to his cavern, more fast than the East wind, when the monster realizes that Heracles has found out that he had stolen his bulls and heifers and had hidden them in his cave: *fugit ille nocte Eurus / speluncamque petit, pedibus timor additit æas* (Verg. Aen. 8.223-24). This application of Vergil's imagery is further supported by the situational parallelism as both Cacus and the Ass are on their way to a cave. Even so, humor, as Westerbrink notes, emerges from the awkward application of the image of Cacus' two winged feet to the Ass' four hoofs. This sense of literary play is increased by the opposite development of the two structures: where Heracles immediately goes after the giant in order to avenge him for his theft, the robbers enter to their abode in order to take their wounded companions and all together return and help in the transportation of the loot, without any thought of carrying out their death sentence. This alteration creates an enjoyable antithesis between a lame and worthless pack animal and the

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10 Westerbrink (1978) 68. Also Hijmans et al. (1981) 33, s.v. *nom timor ungulas mini æas ferox æat.*
wounded thieves, viewed as capable of transporting the rest of the gold to their abode:

tum quae ferebamus amoliti properiter nulla salutis nostrae
cura ac ne meae quidem necis habita comitibus aositis, qui
vulnerati remanserunt, dudum recurrunt, reliqua ipsi latiur,
taedio, ut alienant, nostrae tarditatis

(Met.6.26/148.5-9)11.

With the departure of the robbers, the Ass decides to run away from his captors. He breaks the thong by which he was tied, but the housekeeper snatches it. The picture of the old woman dragged along by the Ass is likened to the mythical Dirce (asino dependentem Dirceam anculam Met. 6.27/149.18-19), tied to the bull’s horns by Antithous and Zethus. A weak and old slave woman holding tightly the thong in order to pull back the animal is elevated to the status of the mythical Dirce. This allusion is so handled in its new setting as to function as a comic counterpart. Whereas Dirce, tied on the horns of a bull, is dragged to her death the old woman is forced by the captive girl to let go of the thong. Furthermore, whereas Dirce is torn to pieces by the running bull, the old woman is left behind by the hurrying Ass and the girl who joins in the escape:

(Met. 6.27-28/149.20-26).

11. On the difficulties of this problematic passage see Hijmans et al. (1981) 33, s.v. tum quae ferebamus. As the Groningen Commentators [Hijmans et al p. 33], point out, only the following order of events is agreeable among modern critics: “the robbers hastily unload, forget all about the pack animals, take their wounded colleagues, and run back” to the settlement in order to transport the rest of the loot to their settlement*. 
The description of the Ass' escape with the girl riding on his back employs the epic formula used of the sound of the galloping horses: *equostra capere tate quadruped cueru suolun repleudens* (Met. 6.28/149.24-25). It is applied to the horses of the retreating Rutulians after the disaster following the death of Camilla, *quadrupedumque putrem cueru quatlit unguula campum* (Verg. Aen. 11.875). A closely equivalent expression appears in the simultaneous advance of the Trojan and Arcadian infantries, *quadrupedemque putrem spinto quatlit unguula campum* (Verg. Aen. 8.596). A comic direction, however, is highlighted by the improbable equation of the noise of a galloping Ass with the collective sound produced by Vergil's war-horses. This dissolution of epic intensity is furthered by the use of the language of courtship and seduction (*virgini delicatas voculas adhincire templanam*). Moreover, this not so heroic escape is directly associated with the lyric theme of Jupiter's' abduction of Europa and her journey on his back:

"quod si vero Jupiter mugivit in bove, potest in asno medetene aliqui vel vultus hominis vel facies deorum"

(Met. 6.29/151.9-11).

Amidst this lighter tone the epic-sounding flight is bound to fail. The fugitives are caught by the returning robbers at a crossroad (trivium Met. 6.29/151.13). This crossroad has precedents in literature as a place of catastrophe: viz. the *σχιστή οὖδος* where Laius met with and was killed by his son (Soph. OT 732).

12. Westerbrink (1978) 68; Hijmans et al. (1981) 48, s.v. quadruped cueru suolun repleudens

13. A selection of examples that indicate the erotic connotations of the term *adhincire* is provided by Hijmans et al. (1981) 48, s.v. *virgini delicatas voculas adhincire*

14. Also τραπλης κελευθο Soph. OT. 800-01; τραπλς κελευθ ο Soph. OT. 1398. In addition to the tragic overtones, there is also a comic touch in the Ass' quarrel with the girl which parodies, in turn, the legal procedure known as *actio finium*
The robbers now bring the girl and the Ass back with them to the cave. Although they find that the old woman has hung herself, they greedily eat up the meal she had left. In a turbulent atmosphere, reminiscent of their previous dispute during the dinner, the brigands exchange thoughts on ways to punish the fugitives. Then, and when the violence has somewhat subsided, one of the robbers with a calmness (tunc unus omnium, sedata tumultu, placido sermone sic orsus est: Met. 6.31/158.1-2) that echoes Vergil’s description of Ilioneus’ address Dido at her palace (magnum Ilioneum, placido sic pectore coepit! Verg. Aen. 1.521) proposes a cleverly gruesome punishment, viz. to kill the Ass, put the girl naked in his empty belly and bury them on earth.

The next morning, the brigand who was left at Hypata comes back reporting that Lucius was accused of robbing the house of his rich host, Milo. For he had entered his house by means of a forged letter; and, once inside, he stole the possessions of his host. This strategy reported by the thief is not at all alien to the practices of the thieves. It has been used by the bandits in their previous attempt at breaking into the house of the rich Demochares. The employment of the stratagem by Lucius points up the remarkable failure of the bandits in employing the trick. For, where Lucius is alleged to have brilliantly succeeded in robbing the house of his wealthy host, the brigands, as we have earlier observed, failed in their attempt at robbing the house of the rich showman Demochares. On hearing this report, the Ass is amazed at the gossip and bitterly regrets that he is

\textit{legendarum} For a discussion of the legal parody involved see Maehler (1981) 165. Maehler [p. 164] well points out the tragic associations behind Apuleius’ “crossroad”, that originate perhaps with Sophocles’ \textit{τριπλή δόξα}.

15. Westerbrink (1978) 69; Hijmans et al. (1981) 70, s.v. \textit{placido sermone sic orsus est}.

16. See above Chapter II, under \textit{The Tale of Thrasyleon}. 

15. See above Chapter II, under \textit{The Tale of Thrasyleon}. 

16. See above Chapter II, under \textit{The Tale of Thrasyleon}. 

15. See above Chapter II, under \textit{The Tale of Thrasyleon}. 

16. See above Chapter II, under \textit{The Tale of Thrasyleon}. 

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15. See above Chapter II, under \textit{The Tale of Thrasyleon}. 

16. See above Chapter II, under \textit{The Tale of Thrasyleon}.
unable to defend himself. The situation, however, is soon to change. This newly arrived robber brings with him a new recruit. This recruit is no other than Tlepolemus in the disguise of the notorious criminal Haemus. In this persona Tlepolemus will liberate his abducted fiancée, Charite along with the Ass and will destroy the band of criminals. The abundance of epic material in Tlepolemus' undertaking will be examined in Chapter V after the tale of Cupid and Psyche, to which I now turn.
CHAPTER IV

THE TALE OF CUPID AND PSYCHE

Scholars have sometimes regarded the tale of Cupid and Psyche as organized along dramatic lines. For instance, G. P. Walsh considers the tale as divided into five acts, thus conforming to a pattern that is close to drama\(^1\). A. Schiesaro examines the relatively autonomous opening in relation to tragic models\(^2\). There are also themes that reveal an alignment with the motifs of an epic narrative: the topic of divine wrath, the sorrowful adventures of the heroine in search for her husband, the descent into the underworld, and the happy reunion of the couple. The development of these materials, however, when set against their epic models, can be seen as distinctive and unepic. This contrast in manner is in accord with the pattern of role inversions. For, as Campbell, puts it, "here the principal roles are reversed: instead of the lover trying to win his bride, it is the bride trying to win her lover; and instead of a cruel father withholding his daughter from the lover, it is the jealous mother, Venus, hiding her son, Cupid."

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1. Walsh (1970) 198-199, divides the action of Cupid and Psyche into five acts: Act 1 *Ira Veneris* 4.28-35; Act 2 *Amor Cupidinis* 5.1-24; Act 3 *Psyche errans* 5.25-6.8; Act 4 *Psyche apud Venerem* 6.8-21; Act 5 *Felix Coniugum* 6.21-24. Walsh's tragic scheme was criticized by Stabryla (1973) 266, on the ground that there is not any literary catastrophe here, but that the action runs throughout "with pretty much the same emotional tension".

2. Schiesaro (1988) 143-148; and *passim*. See also the observation of Stabryla (1973) 266.
In the tale of Cupid and Psyche the language and norms of epic are handled with playful wit. This form of literary jesting is heralded in the almost programmatic statement of the anus as she is about to narrate this bello fabella:

\[ \text{sed ego te narrationibus lepidis anilibusque fabulis protnus avocabo} \]

(Met 4.27/96.14-15).

The tale is told to the captive girl in order to distract her mind from the vision of her sad dream. The term used to qualify the tale is lepidus. It is also worth noting that the word lepidus, meaning "charming", "delightful", "amusing", contrasts with the term anilis, expressing a "characteristic of an old woman". For the adjective anilis excludes the notion of charm and delight suggested by the use of the term lepidus. Given, however, the position of the term lepidus in the opening of the tale and its use in other, similarly programmatic places, it is not unreasonable to understand the word as expressing stylistic refinement and literary suggestiveness. In this aesthetic sense, the epithet reiterates the famous

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4. OLD, s.v. lepidus, 1.

5. OLD, s.v. anilis, 1. Heine (1962) 224 on the strength of the contrast between lepidus and anilis dismisses the sense of high literary aspiration reflected by the use of lepidus "durch die Zusammenstellung mit 'anilis' einem abwertendem Sinn, vergleichbar etwa dem deutschen 'Altweibergeschwätz', bekommen kann".

6. Compare for instance the occurrence of the term lepidus in the preface of the work: lepidus susurrro permulceam (Met. 1.1/1.2). See also Winkler (1985) 53 for a list further similarities with the preface of the work. Because of these similarities with the prologue Winkler concludes that the old woman "parodies the opening of the AA [i.e. Asinus Aureus] who is the extreme opposite of the wealthy young man narrating the novel" [p. 54].
Callimachean principle of the μοῦσαν λεπιτάλευ (Cal. Act. 1.34 Pf.), as well as the stylistic values shared by the poetry of Catullus and the neoteries. This leptotic quality is further supported by the central position and function of the tale in relation to the narrative frame. The evil attempt of the sisters to destroy Psyche's marital blessedness and to marry in their turn Cupid parallels Thrasyllus' plot in killing the newlywed Tlepolemus. Psyche's revenge on her wicked sisters is analogous to Charite's vengeance on her unwanted suitor Thrasyllus for destroying her marital happiness. The final reunion of Psyche with her separated husband, Cupid, also corresponds with Charite's renewed marriage with her husband, Tlepolemus after the defeat of the robbers. Later at her suicide, after the death of her husband, Charite speaks of extending her union with him forever. On a broader level, the end of Psyche's sorrow with the assistance of the god Cupid prefigures the end of Lucius' troubles with the similar aid of a divinity. In this respect the tale of Cupid and Psyche, as an action gives meaning to its surrounding narrative frame and illuminates the movement of the entire work.

The tale abounds with sophisticated playfulness and wit. This is, again, underscored by the conclusion of the tale. There the Ass regrets that he does not

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7. For the programmatic occurrence of the term lepidus cf. the opening of Catullus' collection cujusque lepidum novum libellum (Cat. 1.1). For secondary literature on the principles established with this adjective, at least as far as the Catullus' collection is concerned, see Elder (1967) 147 and passim; Cairns (1969) 154-155; van Sickle (1981) 68 and passim. In this function the term must be connected with the lepido suorro of the proem of the work. (Met. 1.1/1.2) also cited by TLL s.v. lepidus 1b, along with Cat. 1.1.; Lucr. DRN 1.644, 6.17, etc.

8. The incident of their death as they are tricked by Psyche to jump from the rock where Psyche had been previously abandoned by her parents in order to unite in marriage with Cupid is treated more extensively later in this Chapter, pp. 78-79.
have a notebook and a pen to write down this _bellam fabellam_

sic captivae puellae delira et temula illa narrabat ancula, sed
astans ego non procul dolebam mehercules, quod pugillares et
stilum non habebam, quod bellam fabellam praeolarem

(Met 6.25/147.3-6)9.

The regret of the Ass is ironic because he has just finished narrating the tale to
the readers10. This playful handling of the serious creates an aesthetic _ηδόνη_,
the stylistic equivalent to the celebration on Mt. Olympus for the birth of the child,
_voluptas_ (=Joy), the offspring of the union of Cupid with Psyche. This is not
farfetched, since the term _voluptas_, is also an aesthetic term that signifies a
stylistic grace11.

The _anus_ then embarks on the tale of Cupid and Psyche with an espousal of
leptotic principles of composition. She tells the tale to comfort the captured girl
whose misfortunes coincide with the adventures of the mythic heroine12. Hence
the element of didacticism. The examination of the epic material, drawn
primarily from Vergil's _Aeneid_, will illustrate and reinforce the programmatic
features of the tale of Cupid and Psyche.

THE WRATH OF VENUS

9. See also Sandy (1978) 128-129.

10. For the programmatic use of _stilus_ see Met 1.1/2.1-3: _haec equidem iosa vocis
    immutato desulatoriae scientiae stilum quem accessimus respondet._

11. See Classen (1968) 103, who has assembled a variety of Greek and Latin
    passages beginning with Homer which demonstrate that _voluptas_, the close
    equivalent of the Greek _ηδόνη_ and _ηώς_ is also used of aesthetic grace and charm.

12. For an outline of the corresponding structures between the narrative of
    charite's adventure and that of Psyche's misfortune see Stabryla (1973) 268.
Let me begin with the presentation of the wrath of Venus against the mortal Psyche and the goddess' appeal for help from her son in order to punish her rival. The account of Venus' anger against Psyche is reminiscent of Juno's two angry soliloquies in the opening of each half of Vergil's *Aeneid*, Books I and VII, and her subsequent recourse to Allecto in order to solicit aid. The presentation, however, of Venus' anger in Apuleius with elements simultaneously drawn from two distinct explosions of Juno's anger in the narrative of Vergil develops the epic material in a humorous direction. There is a playfulness created by the intensification of the goddess' anger against Aeneas and his men. In addition, Apuleius further modifies the motif of Cupid's mission as compared to its treatment within the epic setting: unlike his cooperation and success in the epic, Cupid here fails to carry out his mother's orders. "In the comic spirit", as N. Singleton puts it, "of the appearance of Venus the assignment is bound to fail".

An amusing effect is recognizable in the description of Venus' anger:

\[
\textit{haec honorum cælestium ad puellæ mortalis cultum inmodica}
\textit{translatio verae Veneris vehementer incendit animus et impatiens}
\textit{indignationis capite quassanti fremens altius sic secum deserit}
\textit{(Met. 4.29/98.4-7).}
\]

The presentation of Apuleius' angry Venus has numerous epic antecedents of the wrath of gods against mortals. This is in part preceded by Homer's description of the anger of Poseidon against Odysseus as he sees the hero sailing over the sea.

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14. Singleton (1978) 94 n. 38 for a list of other examples. Also Purser (1910) 5, s.v. capite quassanti.
ο δ’ ἐχώσατο κηρόθι μάλλον,
κινήσας δὲ κάρη προτί ὁν μυθήσατο θυμόν

(Hom. Od. 5.284-85).

A precedent can also be seen in the description of Juno's gesture in the Aeneid, when the goddess catches sight of Aeneas and his men settling in Italy:

statit acris fixa dolore.
tum quassans caput haec effundit pectore dicta

(Verg. Aen. 7.291-92).

Quite remarkably, within this epic setting, Apuleius has incorporated into the soliloquy Venus proceeds to deliver language of creation drawn from Lucretius' invocation to Venus (alma Venus, elementorum, and origo)16:

en rerum naturae prisca parens, en elementorum origo

initialis, en orbis totius alma Venus

(Met. 4.30/98.7-8).

The Lucretian language underlines Venus' creative role in nature. Moreover, Apuleius has enriched this complex pattern by incorporating details from Juno's soliloquy in the Aeneid when the goddess sees the Trojans setting a foot in Latium:

ast ego, magna iovis coniunx, nihil quinque lanae
qua potuit infelix, quae memet in omnia verti,
vincor ab Aenea. quod si mea numina non sunt
magna satis, dubitem haeque equidem implorare quod usquam est

15. Purser (1910) 5, s.v. capite quassant.1

16. Lucr. DRN. 1-20. Apuleius' debt to Lucretius has been amply documented by modern scholarship. See for instance: Schlam (1976) 38; Walsh (1970) 55 and 201; Singleton (1978) 72-73 and 92, note 10; Finkelpearl (1986) 82-84; Tatum (1979) 49, and note 39. Cf. also Hildebrand (1842) Vol. 1, 288, s.v. rerum prisca parens; Grimal (1976) 38, s.v. en rerum naturae prisca parens..., however, denies the allusion to Lucretius, on the ground that the expression recalls the language of the opening line of Lucius' prayer to Isis (Met. 11.5.1/269.12-19).
Consider also her almost identical reaction when the goddess catches sight of the Trojan hero and his men joyfully approaching the shores of Italy:

\[
\text{est ego, quae divum incedo regina lovisque et soror et coniunx, una cum gente tot annos bella gero. et quisquam numen lunonis adorat praeterea aut supplex aris imponet honorem?}
\]

(Verg. Aen. 1.46-49).

Apuleius' dependence on this latter passage is also suggested by the thematic allusion to the famous beauty contest: *frustra me pastor ille. op eximiam speciem tantis praetulit deabus* (Met. 4.30/98.13-15). This allusion is further supported by the use of imagery drawn from Vergil's justification of the wrath of Juno:

\[
\text{...manet alta mente repostum judicium Paridis spretæque iniuria formæ}
\]

(Verg. Aen. 1.26-27).

Furthermore, Juno is concerned for the lack of respect towards her divinity (*et quisquam numen lunonis adorat / praeterea aut supplex aris imponet honorem?* Verg. Aen. 1.48-49). Venus is similarly outraged for having to share her majesty with a mortal rival: *cum mortal! puella partiario majestatis honore tractors et nomen meum caelo conditum terrenis sordibus profanatur* (Met. 4.30/98.9-11). The amusing interpretation, however, of Venus' reaction is warranted by the difference of her motivations when compared with the indignation of Vergil's goddess. Juno's wrath against the Trojans stems from her predilection for her favorite city, Carthage. The use of the patronymic, *Saturnia* (Verg. Aen. 1.22) implies a continuation of the titanic struggles. Juno is thus opposed to the new order decreed by Jupiter and the fates:

\[
\text{progeniem sed enim Troiano a sanquine duci audierat Tyrias olim quae verteret arcis; hinc populum late regem belloque superbum venturum excidio Libyæ; sic voluere Parcas}
\]

By contrast, Venus' anger is motivated by jealousy of a mere mortal girl, worshipped as *Venus altera*. Venus, who styles herself as the creative force in nature, assumes for petty causes the anger of the relentless Juno. The playful implication emerges from a sharp dichotomy Venus as a beneficent deity in nature, which is manifested by the string of her Lucretian epithets (*naturnae... pares... elementorum origo... alma Venus*) and as an indignant deity reflected by the evocation of the wrath of Juno. This tension leads to yet another contrast, between the assertive tone in which Venus puts forward her threats,

\[
\text{sed non adeo gaudens ista, quaecumque est, meas honores usurpabit.}
\]

\[
\text{iam faxo eam huius etiam ipsius inicitae formositis paeniteat.}
\]

(Met. 4.30/98.15-18),

and her apparent inability to assert her power without her son's aid:

\[
\text{"per agô te", inquit, "maternae caritatis foedera deprecor, per tuae}
\]

\[
\text{segitiae dulcia vulnera, per flammæ iustus mollitas uredines,}
\]

\[
\text{vindictam tuae parenti, sed plenam tribue et in pulcheritudinem}
\]

\[
\text{contumacem severiter vindica idque unum et pro omnibus unicem}
\]

\[
\text{volens effice. virgo ista amore fragrantissimo teneatur hominis}
\]

\[
\text{extremi, quem et dignitatis et patrimonii simul et incolunitatis}
\]

\[
\text{ipsius Fortuna damnavit, tamque infimi, ut per totem orbem non}
\]

\[
\text{inueniat miseriae suae comparum"}
\]

(Met.4.31/99.2-11).

Here C. Lazzarini has associated Venus' recourse to a lesser deity with the typologically analogous appeal of Juno to the lord of the winds, Aeolus:

\[
\text{hic vasto rex Aeolus antro}
\]

\[
\text{luctantis ventos tempestatesque sonoratas}
\]

\[
\text{imperio premit ac vincitis et carcere frenat}
\]

17. The legal formulas in the concluding part of Venus' speech as well as the playful manner of their employment are discussed by Singleton (1976) 77; 93, and note 18. Also see Purser (1910) 6, s.v. *iam* faxo, paeniteat; For an overall analysis of the use of legal terms in the novel consult Summers (1970) 511-31.
The portrayal of Aeolus, however, who, as if a slave, gives in to Juno’s demands
(tuus, o regina, quid optes / explorare labor, mihi iussa capessere fas est Vern. Aen. 1.76-
77), contrasts with the more independent and reckless nature of Apuleius’
Cupid:

satis temerarium, malis suis moribus contempta disciplina
publica, flammis et sagittis armatus, per alieas domos
discurrens et omnium matrimonia corrumpens impune committit
lata flagitia et nihil prorsus boni facit

(Met. 4.30/98.20-23).

These details of a bellicose child whom Venus in addition stirs up with words
(verbis quoque insuper stimulat Met. 4.30/98.24-25) may suggest another epic scene:
that of Juno’s resort to the Hellish Allecto in order to request help:

cui tristia bella
iraque insidiae et crimin a noxia cordi

(Verg. Aen. 7.325-28);

and also:

atque odiis versare domos, tu verbera tectis
funereas inferre faces, tibi nomina mille,
mille nocenti artes

(Verg. Aen. 7.336-38)19.

At the very least, this association is facilitated by the oracle’s presentation of
Cupid by the oracle of Apollo as a terrible snake beast and as a winged god feared
by all:

nec spers generum mortali stirpe creatum,
sed seevum atque ferum vipereumque malum,
quod pinnis volitans super aerthra cuncta fatigat
flammaque et ferro singula debilitat.


quod tremit ipse lovis, quo numina terrificantur
fluminaque horrescunt et Stygiæ tenebrae

(Met. 4.33/100.23-101.4).

This double presentation of Cupid assists the sisters in their plan to persuade Psyche that she has been married to a snake husband who will soon eat her and her unborn child when her pregnancy reaches maturity:

"pro vero namque comperimus nec te, sociae scilicet doloris
casusque tui calare possumus immanem colubrum multinodis
voluminibus serpentem, veneno noxio colla sanguinantium
hiantemque ingluvie profunda tectum noctibus latenter adquiscere.
nunc recordare sortis Pythicae, quae te trucis bestiae nuptiis
destinatam esse clamavit"

(Met.5.17/116.15-21).

The ambiguity created by this double presentation is resolved by Cupid himself when the god addresses his wife upon discovering his hidden identity:

sed hoc feci leviter, scio, et præclarus ille sagittarius ipse me telo
meo percussi teque coniugem meam faci; ut bestia scilicet tibi
viderer et ferro caput excideres meum, quod istos amatores tuos
oculos gerit

(Met.5.24/121.4-8).

This snake imagery employed by both the response of Apollo's oracle and later by the sisters may suggest the association of Cupid with Vergil's monster, Allecto. For, like Cupid, Allecto is also presented as a snake-beast:

tam saevae facies, tot pollulat atra colubris

(Verg. Aen. 7.329);

and a few lines later:

vipeream inspirans animam

(Verg. Aen. 7.351).

Venus' appeals for help in obtaining revenge is developed by Apuleius further along the Vergilian details of Venus' plea to her son, Cupid in order to inspire
love in Dido for his brother Aeneas (Verg. Aen. 1.664 ff.)\textsuperscript{20}. This connection is also supported by a verbal similarity: Apuleius' \textit{virgo ista amore fragantissimo teneatur hominis extremi} (Met. 4.30/99.7-8) recalls Vergil's \textit{magnus Aeneae mecum teneatur amore} (Verg. Aen. 1.675). The alteration of Vergil's \textit{Aeneae} with \textit{hominis extremi} as well as the substitution of Vergil's positive \textit{magnus} with the superlative \textit{flagrantissimo} are indicative of thematic difference between the two narratives.

The effect of this network of allusions to two distinct scenes in Books I and VII of the \textit{Aeneid} is to evoke the epic structure that led progressively to the tragedies of Dido and Turnus respectively. In this manner Apuleius foreshadows the vast dimensions of Venus' wrath and also gives an advance indication of the measure of Psyche's future sufferings \textsuperscript{21}. There is, however, a playful tone in the antithetical development of the epic material within its new setting: unlike his success in the epic, Cupid here declines to carry out his mission\textsuperscript{22}. Humor emerges as this boy who otherwise styles himself a \textit{praeclarus... Sagittarius} disobeys his mother's orders to punish Psyche (\textit{parentis meae Veneris praecptorum immemor}...)

\textsuperscript{20} Gatscha (1898) 146. Apparently the description of Venus' appeal to her son Cupid for aid is not simply indebted to Vergil. Behind this Vergilian description, lies the Hellenistic treatment of Eros' mission in Apollonius in order to make Medea fall in love with Jason: \textit{σὺ δὲ παρθένον ἄιττα τοῦ θέλουσαν κατεύθυνες ἐπὶ ήσον} (Apoll. Arg. 3.142-43). Whereas, however, in Apollonius Cupid is again successful in igniting Medea's passion for Jason, in Apuleius Cupid blatantly fails to carry out his mother's mission. For a comparative analysis of Venus' appeal to her son Cupid and that of Eros' mission in Apollonius see Schiesaro (1988) 142-143. In addition to the obvious Hellenistic touches, Schiesaro acknowledges Apuleius' debt to Vergil's presentation of Venus' appeal to her son in Book 1 of the \textit{Aeneid}. See also Purser (1910) 6, s.v. \textit{iam faxo...paeniteat}; and Singleton (1978) 79.

\textsuperscript{21} Horsfall (1982) 41.

\textsuperscript{22} This ironic inversion of the original contexts between the overall structures of the Apuleian and Vergilian scenes is recently noted by Harrison (1989) 15.
Instead, he turns his arms and arrows against himself. But in so doing, he wounds and therefore ignites his own passion for his mother's rival. Hence the witticism of the narrative.

**THE THIRD VISIT OF THE SISTERS**

The purpose of the third visit of the sisters to Psyche is to persuade her to betray the order of the husband beast and then try to kill him. First the sisters falsely relate to her that she has been wedded to a snake-beast of the oracle's response, and then proceed to "invade" directly the thoughts of the simple-minded girl. The abundant use of military imagery in the description of Cupid's renewed warning to Psyche, and the machinations of the sisters as they proceed to "assault" the mind of Psyche, make a figurative use of Vergil's description of Sinon's false account of the Wooden Horse, the joining with the forces and the subsequent advance of the Greek warriors to sack Troy. The use, however, of epic language and imagery of the military assault is here wittily adapted to the domesticated setting of an encounter of sisters and their death, unlike the victory of their epic prototypes.

Vergil's description of the fall of Troy is initially invoked by Cupid's warning to Psyche about the upcoming second visit of her sisters, presented here in terms of a hostile army arrayed for a military assault:

\[
\text{"dies ultima et casus extremus, et sexus infestus et sanguis inimicus iam sumpsit arma et castra commovit et aciem direxit et classicum personavit; iam mucrone desticto jugulum tuum nefariae tuae sorores petunt. neu, quantis} \]

Cupid's warning reworks details from Panthus' sad report to Aeneas about the situation within the city already under siege (Verg. Aen. 2.324-35)\textsuperscript{24}. In the first place, Cupid's abrupt opening; \textit{dies ultima et casus extremus} suggests the beginning of Panthus' announcement: \textit{venit summades et ineluctabile tempus/ Dardanie} (Verg. Aen. 2.324-25). This association is also supported by the fact that the upcoming second visit is presented in the warning justified in terms suggestive of a movement of an army (\textit{sanguis inimicus...symposid arma et castra commovit et aciem direxit et classicum personavit}). Furthermore, there is a distant echo in Apuleius' \textit{mucrone descripto...petunt} of Panthus' \textit{mucrone coruso / stricta, parata neci} (Verg. Aen. 2.333-34). In all probability, Cupid's subsequent apostrophe: \textit{heu, quantis uruemur cladibus. Psyche dulcissima} also recalls the formula of Aeneas' reflection upon learning of the disaster currently taking place at Troy: \textit{heu quantae miseris caedes Laurentibus instant!} (Verg. Aen. 8.537). The description of Cupid's warning about the ensuing \textit{clades} with language related to Panthus' report to Aeneas provides a dimension about the vastness of the upcoming calamity. Playfulness with the epic association, however, is revealed by the inappropriate equation of disasters which had already fallen upon a mighty city with the ruin yet to fall upon the mistress of a hidden deity. Cupid here predicts a future disaster, which will only occur after a the third visit of the sisters. Playfulness is further suggested by a resulting tension between Cupid's warning of an imminent defeat and his own vital role in bringing about the savage death of the sisters: "\textit{sed illae consilatrices egregiae tuae tam perniciosi magisterii dabunt sectulum mihi poenas}" (Met. 5.24/122.9-11).

\textsuperscript{24} Lazzarini (1985) 152.
With their third arrival, the sisters rush down to Psyche and immediately with forced tears put forth their fabricated tale that their sister is actually married to a snake-beast:

\[
\text{lacrimumque pressura palpebrarum coactis hoc astu puellam appelant (Met. 5.17/116.11-12).}
\]

Apuleius' emphasis on the cunning of the sisters is illustrated by the pejorative nuance of the word \textit{astus} when it occurs in a military context\textsuperscript{25}. This insistence on trickery and deceit establishes a connection with Vergil's handling of Sinon's strategy in the \textit{Aeneid} in order to persuade the Trojans to accept the Wooden Horse into their citadel:

\[
talibus insidiis periurique arte Sinonis credita res, captique dolis lacrimisque coactis (Verg. Aen. 2.195-96).
\]

Vergil's \textit{lacrimisque coactis} may be behind the expression: \textit{lacrimisque coactis} used by Apuleius in the presentation of the forced tears of the sisters\textsuperscript{26}. The Vergilian language and imagery continues as the sisters go on to remind Psyche of the oracle's response about the snake identity of her husband\textsuperscript{27}:

\[
\text{pro vero namque comperimus nec te, sociae scilicet doloris casusque tui, celare possumus immanem colubrum multinoctis voluminibus serpentem, veneno nuxio colla sanguinantem hiantemque ingluvie profunda tecum nocibus}
\]

\textsuperscript{25} Wheeler (1988) 73.

\textsuperscript{26} Gatscha (1898) 146; Purser (1910) 47, s.v. \textit{coactus}; Grimal (1976) 71, s.v. \textit{fastidienter}; Finkelpearl (1986) 126. Médan (1926) 256, points out the dactylic rhythm of the phrase \textit{tuis misere cruciamur}, which follows in the sisters' remarks: \textit{cladibus tuis misere cruciamur (Met. 5.17/116.14-15)}

\textsuperscript{27} On the literary use of the animal motif in the \textit{Metamorphoses} and of the snake in particular see: Schlam (1981) 115 and 128.
Here Apuleius has incorporated details drawn from Vergil's description of Minerva's snakes as they swim to the opposite shore from Tenedos in order to devour Laocoon and his two sons:

\[\text{pectora quorum inter fluctus arrecta iubaeque} \]
\[\text{sanguineae superant undas, pars cetera pontum} \]
\[\text{pone legit sinuatque immensa volumine terga} \]

(Verg. Aen. 2.206-08).

The words *veneno noxio* pick upon Vergil's *atrooue veneno* (Verg. Aen. 2.221), while Apuleius' *multinodis voluminibus...colla sanauinantem* recall Vergil's *iubaeque / sanguineae...immensa volumine terga* (Verg. Aen. 2.206-08). Arguably, the immediate effect of these verbal reminiscences is to enrich the narrative by means of borrowed grandeur. Vergil, however, emphasizes the punishment of Laocoon, for striking the Horse of Minerva: *sacrum qui cuspidi robur / laeserit et tergo sceleratam intorserit hastam* (Verg. Aen. 2.230-31). Apuleius, on the other hand, underlines the savage quality of the snake-beast. This snake will eat up Psyche when her pregnancy will reach full circle: *sevissimae bestiae seeliri visceribus* (Met. 5.18/117.6-7). The savagery is aesthetically reflected by details derived from the more realistic descriptions of the pastoral (immanem ante pedes hydrium  Verg. Georg. 4.458; also *atram...ingluviem* Verg. Georg. 3.430)29. In this manner, the

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29. This list of borrowings from the language of the pastoral is made by Walsh (1970) 55. Following Walsh, also Finkelpearl (1986) 94; Undeniably, the association of Cupid with a snake-beast is also assisted by the literary attestation of Eros as a snake. Such an association, for instance, is seen in Sappho's presentation of Eros as a serpent: "Ερός ἐπίτε μ' ὁ λυσιμέλης δόνει / γλυκύπικρον
Vergilian pattern of crime and retribution, carried out by the snakes that devour Laocoon and his sons is silenced. Instead the emphasis falls upon the auditory and visual dimensions of the description. This is suggested by the sound alliteration and the accumulation of terms that indicate fullness or ripeness (prægnationem...plenus...maturovert ... uter us opim iore fructu præeditum devoraturum. Met. 5.18/117.2-3), to play perhaps on the appearance of a woman in advanced pregnancy, more befitting to a comic stage.

Nevertheless, the sisters, when Psyche has accepted their assertions, proceed to instruct their relative to discover the hidden identity of the beast and then kill him. Their advice is presented as a direct assault on the mind of Psyche:

\[
tunc nactae iam portis patentibus nudatum sororis animum
facinerasæ mulieres, omisisis tectae machinæ latibus,
destsectis gladiis fraudium simplicis puellæ paventes
 cogitationes invadunt
\]

(Met. 5.19/118.5-8).

This description makes use of the military imagery from Vergil's context where the Greeks are described as emerging out of the hidden caverns of the Wooden Horse, and subsequently lay siege on Troy:

\[
invadunt urbem somno vinoque sepultam;
caeduntur vigiles, portisque patentibus omnis
 accipiunt socios et arm ãe conscia iungunt
\]

(Verg. Aen. 2.265-67).

The Apuleian portis patentibus is borrowed directly from the Vergilian phrase for the advance of the Greeks through the doors and their joining with the rest of the warriors (portisque patentibus)\textsuperscript{30}. Moreover, as Harrison observes, Apuleius' tectae áµαχανον ὁφητον (130 L-P). For a list of other literary references to animal presentation of Eros see: Wright (1971) 274; Cavallini (1978) 91; Helm (1968) 213.

\textsuperscript{30} Purser (1910) 50, s.v. portis patentibus.
machinae latibulis alludes to Vergil's Wooden Animal, twice mentioned in this section as machina (Verg. Aen. 2.151: machina belli; also Verg. Aen. 2.237: fatalis machina). Apuleius seems to have modelled the entire vignette of the sisters' assault on Psyche on Vergil's representation of the attack of the Greek warriors on Troy. The appropriation of vocabulary associated with the military assault on a city contributes to the wit of the passage. The humor depends upon the boldness of the equation: the sisters here are elevated to regular soldiers who pull out sword of deception and thus engage in military warfare against the thoughts of a simple-minded girl. Hence the oddity of the comparison. Further modifications of the epic scene are also noticeable. Unlike the successful trickery of their epic counterparts, the sisters fall victims to a story fabricated by Psyche. Psyche tells each one of them that Cupid, after she had penetrated his identity and was abandoned by him, wants her as his lawful wife (fallacie germanitatis Met. 5.27/125.3). And unlike their victorious prototypes, the sisters speedily rush to the rock to fly to Cupid's palace. For they were certain that Zephyr, as in the past, would safely transport them to Cupid's palace. They meet, however, with a savage death:

nam per saxa cautium membris lactatis atque dissipatis et proinde, ut merebatur, laceratis visceribus suis alitibus bestiosisque obvium ferens pebulum interiit

(Met. 5.27/124.19-22).

Quite remarkably, this description of the sisters' savage death as they are torn to pieces by the rock and become prey for birds and beasts, reworks the traditional

epic pattern of savage death of heroic warriors\textsuperscript{32}. This motif appears in the celebrated lines of the opening of the \textit{Iliad}, about the destructiveness of Achilles' wrath: \textit{\textgreek{e}l\textgreek{w}\textgreek{r}a \textgreek{t}e\textgreek{u}xe \textgreek{k\textgreek{u}n\textgreek{e}\textgreek{s}e\textgreek{n} / o\textgreek{e}i\textgreek{n}o\textgreek{i}o\textgreek{i} \textgreek{t}e \textgreek{p\textgreek{a}\textgreek{s}}}} (Horn. \textit{II}. 1.4-5). A parallel description of savage end is found, again, in Aeneas' sarcastic remarks when he kills Tarquitius: \textit{alitibus linquere feris, aut gurgite mersum / undo feret piscisique impasti vulnera lambent} (Verg. \textit{Aen}. 10.559-60), or in the wailing of Euryalus' mother for the premature death of her son: \textit{terra ignota canibus data praeda latibus / alitibusque voces!} (Verg. \textit{Aen}. 9.485-86). In contrast to the pathetic effect of this epic pattern, Apuleius employs the motif for the punishment of the jealous sisters who deserved this punishment \textit{(ut merebatur \textit{Met}. 5.27/124.21)}.

On the level of structure, this employment of the trick by Psyche to take vengeance on the sisters becomes particularly apt. For it affords a mythical parallel to the trick used by Charite in taking vengeance on her unwanted suitor Thrasyllus for destroying her marital blessedness. For this Thrasyllus kills his friend, Tlepolemus whom he ironically calls as his brother in order to marry his widow of his friend Tlepolemus. Like Psyche, then Charite takes vengeance in this case by plucking out the eyes of this ps.-"relative". This association is somewhat underlined by a thematic parallelism: Thrasyllus explicitly calls Tlepolemus a "brother" \textit{(fratrem denique addito nomine \textit{Met}. 8.7/181.18; also \textit{tu frater meique carissimi mariti} \textit{Met}. 8.9/184.14)}. Thus Charite, as does the mythic Psyche, takes revenge on the destroyer of her marriage, thereby binding the frame, the death of Charite, with the narrative of its picture, the tale of Cupid and Psyche, closer together.

\textsuperscript{32} Lazzarini (1985) 150, note 54.
A variation of epic tone continues even further. Apuleius has the first sister cry out as she jumps:

"accipe me", dicens, "Cupido, dignam te contugem et tu, Zephyre, suscipe dominam"

(Met. 5.27/124.16-18).

Her remark echoes from Ovid's treatment of Evadne throwing herself from the rock in order to unite with the funeral ashes of Capaneus:

"accipe, me, Capaneu, cineres miscebimur", inquit Iphias in medios desiluitque rogos

(Ovid, Ars. 3.21)\(^{33}\).

Nevertheless, the infidelity of Psyche's sisters towards their lawful husbands contrasts with Ovid's devoted and exemplary mate of Capaneus, Evadne. In this manner, Apuleius brings the epic undertaking of the sisters to an elegiac conclusion with witty touches. The narrator also proceeds to observe ironically that even in their deadly leap, the sisters were unable to reach their desired goal

(nec tamen ad illum locum vel saltem mortua pervenire potuit Met. 5.27/124.18-19).

**PSYCHE**

I now turn to examine the range of allusions that mainly concern Psyche. An epic tone is noticeable in the description of Psyche's sudden introduction and address to her lamenting sisters sitting on the rock where the heroine had been previously exposed:

"quid", inquit, "vos miseris lamentationibus nequicquam effligis quam lugetis, adsum"

The description of Psyche's address to her mourning sisters draws upon Aeneas' appearance to the queen of Carthage, Dido, as the hero mysteriously emerges from the dissolving cloud:

"coram, quem quaeritis, adsum,
Troius Aeneas, Lybicis ereptus ab undis"

(Verg. Aen. 1.595-96).

This analogy is, of course, strengthened by the position of the verb, adsum which repeats Vergil's line-end, adsum. The reminiscence is further supported by a thematic similarity: Psyche, like Aeneas, is considered as dead. This becomes clear in Cupid's warning to the girl that her sisters are coming to the rock thinking that she is dead:

sorores fam tuae mortis opinione turbatae tuumque vestigium
requirentes scopulum istum protinus aderunt

(Met. 5.5/106.17-19).

The scene, however, is constructed in opposition to Vergil's narrative. Unlike the godlike introduction of Aeneas to Dido (deo similes Verg. Aen. 1.589), Psyche appears trembling and distracted in her mind (amens et trepida Psyche procurrir e domo Met. 5.7/108.13-14). Furthermore, in contrast to Venus' encouragement to Aeneas to meet with the queen (pergo modo Verg. Aen. 1.389), Cupid opposes Psyche's wish to meet with her mourning sisters.

The modification of the epic scene extends even further. Psyche invites her sisters to the palace:

"sed et tectum", inquit, "et larem nostrum laetae succedite"

(Met. 5.7/109.1-2).

34. Gatscha (1898) 146; Grimal (1976) 56, s.v. fuerat deserta; Purser (1910) 29, s.v. quam lugetis adsum.
This invitation owes its inspiration to Vergil's description of Dido's offer of entertainment to Aeneas and his men in her royal court:

\[ \text{quare agite, o tectis, juvenes, succedite nostris} \]

(Verg. Aen. 1.627)\textsuperscript{35}.

The occurrence of \textit{tectum...succedite} which repeats Vergil's \textit{tectis...succedite} suggests a linkage between Psyche's invitation and Dido's offer of entertainment in the royal palace (\textit{in regia...tecta} Verg. Aen. 1.631-32). The parallel, however, is used to point a contrast. Dido's generosity prompts Aeneas' gratitude and admiration for the queen:

\[ \text{numquam, regina, negabo} \]
\[ \text{promeritam, nec me meminisse pigebit Elissae} \]
\[ \text{dum memor ipse mei, dum spiritus hos regit artus} \]

(Verg. Aen. 4.334-36),

and a few lines later:

\[ \text{site Karthaginis arces} \]
\[ \text{Phoenissam Libycaeque aspectus detinet urbis} \]

(Verg. Aen. 4.347-48).

Psyche's kindness, on the other hand, provokes the envy of the sisters for the good fortune of their sister.

Consequently, the sisters contrive a plan to overthrow Psyche from her prosperity. In their final visit, they manage to persuade the girl that she is married to a snake beast of the \textit{Pythica sors} and then proceed to instruct her to uncover his identity of the beast and kill him. Psyche agrees, but with their departure she is tormented by conflicting emotions:

\[ \text{af Psyche reticta sola, nisi quod infestis Furii agitata sola non est.} \]

\textsuperscript{35} Also Gatscha (1898) 146.
This description draws from Vergil's presentation of the inner struggle of Dido, when the heroine afflicted by a similar kind of emotional conflict, resolves to take her own life away:

\[
\text{at non infelix animi Phoenissa, neque umquam solvitur in somnos oculisve aut pectore noctem acceptit ingeminent curae rursusque resurgens saevit amor magnoque irarum fluctuat aestu.}
\]

(Verg. Aen. 4.529-32)\(^{36}\).

The imagery of Psyche tossed about like the surging sea \text{aestu pelagi fluctuat} may be inspired by Vergil's nautical metaphor of Dido's rage: \text{iarum fluctuat aestu}. There is emphasis placed on Psyche's solitude, revealed by the twofold repetition of the word \text{solus (sola...sola)}, which is a characteristic of Dido's condition. Not surprisingly, the description of Psyche in torment, \text{at Psyche relicta sola}, is taken as a reminiscence of Vergil's formulaic beginning of the account of the afflicted Dido: \text{at regina gravi...saucia cura} (Verg. Aen. 4.1)\(^{37}\). This association gains from a situational parallelism as well: Psyche, driven along by madness (\text{infestis Furiis agitata}), like the frenzied Dido (\text{concepit furies} Verg. Aen. 4.474), is about to commit a nefarious crime. We may note a further epic reminiscence in the description of the pallor and trembling of Psyche when she catches sight of the beauty of the young god in his sleep:

\[
\text{at vero Psyche tanto aspectu deterrita et impos animi, marcido pallore defecta tremensque desedit in imos poplites et ferrum}
\]

\(^{36}\) Lazzarini (1898) 145-46.

This description recalls Vergil's presentation of the quiver and pallor of Dido (et
trepida et coeptis immutibus efferta Dido / ... maculisque trementis / interfusa genes et pallida
morte futura. / ... et altae conscendit furibunda rogosensemque reclusit Verg. Aen. 4.642-
46), when the heroine sees the mementos of Aeneas: iliacas vestes notumque cubile /
conspexit (Verg. Aen. 4.648-49). The analogy proceeds as Psyche, like Dido, is
about to turn the razor against herself. But, while Dido falls upon the sword
(ferrum / conlapsam Verg. Aen. 4.663-64), Psyche is rescued from a fatal wound as
the razor flees from her reckless hands upon realizing her intentions: ferrum
timore tanti flagitii manibus tamerarisselapsus evolasset (Met. 5.22/120.11-12).

Nevertheless, Cupid, upon being discovered, decides to flee, addressing his wife
for a last time as follows:

"ego quidem, simplicissima Psyche, parentis meae Veneris
praecoptorum immemor, quae te miser extreque hominis
devinctam cupidine infimo matrimonio addicerat, ipse potius
amator advolavit tibi. sed hoc feci leviter, scio, et praeclarus ille
sagittarius ipse me telo meo percussi teque coniugem meam fecit, ut
bestia silicet tibi videret et ferro caput excideres meum, quod
istos amatares tuos oculos gerit haec tibi identidem semper
cavenda censebam, haec benivole remonebam. sed, iliae quidem
consiliatrices egregiae tuae tam perniciosi magisterii dabunt
actum mihi poenas, te vero tantum fugam meam punivero"

(Met.5.24/122.1-12).

This farewell speech has an epic counterpart in Aeneas' last exchange with Dido,
before his departure from Carthage. And there is also some verbal parallelism
between Cupid's opening: ego quidem and Aeneas' opening: ego te (Verg. Aen. 4.333), and between Cupid's: quae jusserat and Aeneas': Italian lyceae iussere
capessere sortes (Verg. Aen. 4.346)38. A contrast, however, emerges between the

38. The verbal similarities are noted by Schiesaro (1988) 145, note 12.
two structures. For, whereas Aeneas is aware of his mission (Verg. Aen. 4.350 ff.), Cupid takes lightly his mother's order to punish Psyche. And whereas Aeneas tells Dido that he did not plan a secret departure from Carthage in order to avenge her (furto / ...[ne finge] fugam Verg. Aen. 4.337-38), Cupid explicitly asserts that he flies away in order to punish his wife for disobeying his order (te vero tantum fugam mea punivero Met. 5.24/122.11-12).

With Cupid's departure, Psyche in despair decides to throw herself into a river thus committing suicide:

sed ubi remigio plumae raptum maritum proceritas
spatii facerat alienum, per proximi fluminis marginen
praecipitem sese dedit

(Met. 5.25/122.16-18).

Quite remarkably, the description of Psyche's withdrawal and fall into the river appears to be following the pattern of another epic scene: Vergil's description of Turnus' retreat after the attempt at breaking into the Trojan camp and plunge into the river Tiber:

    tum toto corpore sudor
    liquitur et piceum (nec respirare potestas)
    flumen agit, fessos quatit aeger anhelitus artus
    tum demum praeceps saltu sese omnibus armis
    in fluvium dedit.

(Verg. Aen. 9.812-16)39.

Psyche's withdrawal, just like Turnus' retreat (Verg. Aen. 9.760ff.), comes after her enterprise to penetrate the hidden identity of Cupid. Furthermore, this moulding of Psyche in the role that in the epic is assigned to Turnus in his aristeia, is suggested by the linguistic similarity of praecipitem sese dedit, with

39. Gatscha (1898) 146.
Vergil's *praecepit saltu sese omnibus armis / in fluvium degit*⁴⁰. And, in all probability, Apuleius borrows the motif of the river's support and safe deposit of the heroine to its bank from Tiber's beneficent aspect in Vergil as the river god cleanses Turnus' wounds and carries him safely to his comrades:

\[
\text{ille suo cum gurgite flavo} \\
\text{acceptit venientem ac mollibus extulit undis} \\
\text{et laetum sociis abluta caede remisit}
\]

*(Verg. Aen. 9.816-18).*

Apuleius seems to have modelled the senselessness *(extra terminum mentis suae positum Met. 117.12-13)* and *furor* of Psyche *(infestis furris agitata Met. 5.21/119.9)* on Turnus' *furor* and *insana cupidio* *(furor ardentem caedisque insana cupidio / ego in adversos Verg. Aen. 9.760-61)*, thereby elevating the heroine's attempt at penetrating the identity of Cupid to an *aristeia!* The fear, however, of the river god contrasts with the cleansing *(abluta caede Verg. Aen. 9.818; also sociis remisit Verg. Aen. 9.818)*. For, this river is not by any means the beneficient Tiber which distributes its power to those in need, but a river god who gives self-interest as his reason:

\[
\text{sed mitis fluvius in honorem dei scilicet, qui et ipsas aquas} \\
\text{urere consuevit, metuens sibi confestim eam innoxio volumine} \\
\text{super ripam florentem herbis exposuit}
\]

*(Met. 5.25/122.19).*

In fact, the reason for this unharmed transportation is the fear of the river god of Cupid's power in drying out his waters, because, according to Philostratus, καὶ γερ αὐτὸ τὸ ὕδωρ Ἰπτέρωτος καίται ἢ ⁴¹. On another level, Apuleius may even play on

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⁴⁰. Gatscha (1898) 146.

⁴¹. Phil. Epist. 48; also (Philostr. Epist. 48; also λαμπάς ὑς ἐφλέξει καὶ ὕδατα AP 9.627.5). The passages of Philostratus and the *Anthologia Palatina* are quoted from Helm (1968) 219, note 126.
both the sound of *mitis* and *metuens* and the past erotic troubles of this river-god as reflected by the use of the frequentative term *consuesco* (*Met.* 5.25/122.18-19).

**THE SURRENDER OF PSYCHE**

Let me now turn to consider the episode of Psyche's surrender to Venus and her accomplishment of four tasks. It must be stated that this section is the most well studied episode of the *Metamorphoses* in terms of its literary reminiscences. After all, Psyche's trial to fetch the beauty-box of Proserpina has the heroic precedent of Aeneas' descent to the underworld. Allusions to Vergil's katabasis, however, continue to be echoed in the entire episode that comprises the account of Psyche's return to Venus' palace. In this sense it would not be farfetched to suggest that Apuleius conceives the entire episode of Psyche's surrender as a figurative entry into the world of the dead. At the very least, this is suggested by the frequent allusions to the episode of Aeneas' journey to the underworld as described by Vergil in *Aeneid* VI. This figurative use is additionally underlined by the double appearance of Mercury, once at the opening in order to find Psyche and later in order to transport her to Mt. Olympus, thereby hence...

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43. Grimal (1976) 84, s.v. *sed mitis fluvius*; Also Purser (1910) 61, s.v. *qui et ipsas aquas urere consuevit*; Wright (1971) 277.

44. Walsh (1970) 56-57, also 215-216; Wright (1971) 279-281; Lazzarini (1985) 133, note 6; and most thoroughly Finkelpearl (1986) 185-208 in her Chapter 3 (III), entitled *Psyche's Descent*. 
fulfilling quite literally his function of ψυχο-νεφρός.

Nevertheless, there is a noticeable element of contrast with the epic narrative: Psyche's descent into the underworld to fetch the box of Proserpina, as Tatum observes, "is actually described before it happens, through the speech of the tower". A similar pattern of inversion, however, is observable throughout the rest of Psyche's trial as well. Furthermore, in the epic the hero usually performs the labors himself. Here the tasks of Psyche end up being accomplished by nonhumans or inanimate creatures. The explanation often sought is that Apuleius in this manner demonstrates Cupid's indirect power in the natural world, or the sympathy of the natural world to Psyche's suffering. We must also take into consideration the contrasting handling of heroic material in the narrative of the tale as if to play with the reader's expectation. This unepic, yet witty development of heroic elements drawn primarily from Vergil's underworld will be the focus of my next discussion.

The presentation of Psyche's arrival at the chamber of Venus in terms reminiscent of a figurative entry into an underworld is observable in the heroine's encounter with Venus' handmaid Consuetudo at the doorway of Venus:

iamque fores ei dominae proximanti occurrit una de famulitione Veneris nomine Consuetudo statimque, quantum maxime potuit, exclamat: "tandem, ancilla nequissima, dominam habere te scire coepisti? an pro cetera morum tuorum temeritate istud quoque nescire te fingis, quantos labores circa tuas inquisitiones sustinuerimus? sed hene, quod meos potissimum manus incidisti et inter Orci conbos

45. Tatum (1979) 60.
47. Singleton (1978) 88.
This description recalls the picture in Vergil of Tisiphone, guarding the entrance of the lofty tower in the kingdom of Rhadamanthus (vestibulum Verg. Aen. 6.556). This association may be assisted by the preceding appearance of Mercury ἀστερισμός who issues a proclamation for the search of Psyche. The house of the goddess is termed as a place of torture, οἰκία πάσχας (Met. 6.8/134.7), which in Vergil’s underworld takes place at Tartarus. The manner in which Rhadamanthus forces the sinners to confess their sins (castigatque audita dolos subigitque fater Verg. Aen. 6.567) may lie behind the description of Psyche as the heroine is dragged to Venus for questions and torture. The subsequent punishment of Psyche with the lashes of the maids, Sollicitudo and Tristities may recall Tisiphone as she scourges the sinners with her sister Furies (sontis ultrix accincta flagello / Tisiphone quattuor insultans vocat spona saeva sororum Verg. Aen. 6.570-72). The loud exclamation, however, of the handmaid (quantum maxime potuit exclamat) as Psyche nears Venus’ doorway (proximant) contrasts with the awesome setting of the punishment of the sinners in Vergil. For the entire description has been reduced to a stereotype encounter of a master (domina) and a runaway slave (ancilla), most likely inspired from comedy.

48. For an analysis of the comic aspects of Mercury’s pronouncement see Marangoni (1985) 52-65.

49. For further humorous effects intended by the use of the comic formula dare poenas in the closing line of the address of Consuetudo to Psyche: datura scilicet actum tantae contumaciae poenas and which lowers in the sequence the epic actum see Callebat (1964) 356. Also Callebat (1962) 119. Note also the use of the term serva instead of the more elevated formula as well as the pleonastic diminutive ancilla, normally found in the language of comedy. For an analysis of the usage of the term ancilla in Apuleius see Abate (1978) 55-56.
After this initial torture, Venus orders Psyche to complete the first task of separating a pile of mixed cereal grains:

"discerne seminum istorum passivam congeriem singulisque granis rite dispositis atque saeugatis ante islam vesperam opus expiditum approbato mihi"

(Met. 6.10/135.13-15).

The trial, however, is accomplished with the miraculous aid of the ants who issue a pathetic call for helping the desperate wife of Cupid:

"miseremini terrae omniparentis agiles alumnæ, miseremini et Amoris uxori, puellæ lepidae, periclitanti prompte velocitale succurrite"

(Met. 6.10/135.23-25).

The description of the ants shares the fervor of these animals in Vergil's simile:

aevelut ingentem formicae ferris acervum cum populant hiemis memores tectoque reponunt, it nigrum campis agmen praedamque per herbas convectant calle angusto; pars grandia trudunt obnixae frumenta umbris, pars agmina cogunt castigantque moras, opere omnis semita fervet

(Verg. Aen. 4.402-07)

There is, however, another Vergilian echo drawn from the context of the underworld: that of Tityos' description as the giant is being punished at Tartara: *Terra omniparentis alumnæ* (Verg. Aen. 6.595). This epic reminiscence becomes especially noteworthy in that the ants as offsprings of earth share the same epithet *omniparentis alumnæ* with Vergil's Tityos. But Apuleius presents the ants

50. Hildebrand (1842) 428, s.v. *agiles alumnæ* refers only to the similarity of the scene with Verg. Aen. 4.402-05.

51. Gatscha (1898) 8; Grimal (1976) 113, s.v. *terrae omniparentis alumnæ*, points only to the similarity of the lines with Verg. Aen. 6.595; while only Purser (1910) 95, s.v. *terrae omniparentis agiles alumnæ* combines both Vergilian passages. See also Finkelpearl (1986) 197-98.
with language applied by Vergil to a nine acre giant. The humor then rests upon the contrast; these pastoral creatures are not Vergil's tortured Tityos who lies motionless at Tartara, but tiny animals that rush quickly (agiles) to assist the helpless wife of Cupid:

\[ \text{ruunt aliae superque aliae sepedum populorum undae summoque studio singulae granatim totum digerunt acervum separatimque distributis dissitisque generibus e conspectu perniciter abeunt} \]

*(Met. 6.10/136.1-4).*

Thus the ants complete the heroic ordeal while Psyche in contrast stands silent with amazement:

\[ \text{nec Psyche manus admolitur inconditae illi et inextricabili moli, sed immanitate praecepti consternata silens obstupescit} \]

*(Met. 6.10/135.17-19).*

Here the grand touches continue to be present. The expression: *silens obstupescit* owes its elevated tone to the recollection of another epic phrase, that of Vergil's formula of the amazed Latin representatives as they find out about the rejection of their peace proposal by Aeneas (*illi obstipuere silentes* Verg. *Aen.* 11.120)*52.*

With the assistance of the ants, Psyche fulfills Venus' first trial. The goddess ironically attributes the completion of the task to Cupid's help. Consequently, she assigns to Psyche the task of obtaining locks of the rams' golden wool from a grove across the river. In despair, Psyche decides to throw herself to the river, but she is timely saved by a talking reed which then proceeds to give her instructions on how to gather the wool from the shrubs in the grove:

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52. Gatscha (1898) 146; Purser (1910) 95, s.v. *silens obstupescit.* Also Grimal (1976) 113, s.v. *tantorum.*
The expression: *leni crepitu dulcis auræ* echoes Vergil’s description of the leaves of the golden bough as they rattle by the gentle blow of the wind (*leni crepitet bratttea vento* Verg. *Aen.* 6.209)\(^5\). The instructions of the reed to Psyche are expressed in the language of Sibyl’s instruction to Aeneas to obtain the golden bough that hangs on an oak tree (*lilce* Verg. *Aen.* 6.209), before he is allowed to descend into the world of the shades\(^5\). The reed, then, by instructing Psyche through divine inspiration (*divinitus inspirata*), humorously acquires characteristics that Vergil assigns to Sibyl. What is achieved, however, by this blending of details from the separate epic images is that the reed initially introduced in terms of Vergil’s golden bough, suddenly is elevated to the status of Vergil’s Apolline *vates*, Sibyl in instructing Aeneas. And therein lies the boldness of the transformation.

Following these instructions Psyche successfully completes Venus’ second task:

\[\text{nec auscultatu inpaenitendo diligenter instructa illia cessavit, sed observatis omnibus furatrina facil fliventis auris mollitie congestum gremium Veneri reportat}\]

\textit{(Met. 6.13/137.21-138.2).}

The goddess, more enraged, now orders the girl to climb a mountain in order to fetch liquid from the spring which waters Styx and the river Cocytus:

>\text{"videsne insistentem celsissimæ illi rupi montis ardui verticem, de quo fontis atri fuscae defluunt undae proxumæque conceptaculo vallis inclusæ Stygias irrigant paludes et rauca Cocytii fluenta nutriunt?" ididem mihi de summi fontis penita scaturrigine rorem rigentem hauritum ista confestim defer}


\(^{54}\) See Newman (1967) 33.
urnula”

(Met. 6.13/138.7-13).

The phrase *Stygias paludes et rauca Cocytii stagna* combines elements drawn from two Vergilian lines of Sibyl: *Cocytii stagna alta vides Stygiamque paludem* (Verg. Aen. 6.323), and *nec ripas datur horrendas et rauci fluenta / transporta priusquam* (Verg. Aen. 6.327-28). A further grand touch is again observed in the eagle’s remarks to Psyche that the gods fear to swear by the waters of the Styx:

"diis etiam ipsique lovi formidabiles aquas istas Stygias vel fando comperisti, quodque vos dei eratis per numina deorum, deos per Stygis majestatem sol-re?"

(Met.6.15/139.19-140.2).

The description employs imagery and language from the intermediate line Vergil uses in connection with Sybil’s comment to Aeneas: *di celius iurare timent et fallere numen* (Verg. Aen. 6.324). But an alteration occurs with the selection of the verb *irriant* in order to express the constant flow of fresh waters that supply Styx. The novelty of Apuleius lies in the addition of an aspect that in itself is indicative of life into the otherwise lifeless picture of Vergil’s underworld. This change is further noticeable in Venus’ directions that Psyche reach this spring by climbing upwards, towards the summit of the mountain *(videsne insistentem celsissimae illi rupi montis ardui verticem* Met. 6.13/138.7-8). This transforms the locale of Vergil’s underworld into a landscape high above on the earth. Psyche’s climb up the mountain is therefore quite literal: *studiose gradum celerans* (Met. 55. Gatscha (1898) 146; Hildebrand (1842) 437, s.v. *rauca Cocytii fluenta*. Purser (1910) 101, s.v. *rauca Cocytii fluenta*.

56. Purser (1910) 105, s.v. *vel tando comperisti?*; Grimal (1976) 121, s.v. *simplex ahiquin*.

This latter expression is, again, found in a Vergilian context of death: the old nurse rushes to call Anna, the sister of Dido, to attend the sacrifices to the Stygian Jupiter (illa gradum studio celerabat anili. Verg. Aen. 4.641). With the aid of the eagle, Psyche, once more, accomplishes this trial. In her anger, Venus now orders Psyche to descent into the underworld in order to fetch some of the beauty of Proserpina. Psyche thinks of plunging headlong from a rock, and thus being dead reach the lower regions as a shade:

\[
\text{nec cunctata diutius pergit ad quamplam turrim praealtam, inidem sese datura praecipitem, sic enim rebatur ad inferos recte atque pulcherrime se posse descendere (Met. 6.17/141.8-11).}
\]

The decision of Psyche to fall down from a rock follows Heracles' comic advice to Dionysus in the Aristophanic Frogs to climb on a lofty hill-top, then to jump down and thereby to reach the underworld quickly as do the shades of the dead:

\[
\text{HPA. βούλει κατάνυτη καὶ ταξείαν σοι φάσω;}
\text{ΔΙΩ. νη τῶν Δί', ὡς ὄντος μὴ βαδιστικοῦ.}
\text{HPA. ἀναβὰς ἐπὶ τὸν πύργον τὸν ύψηλὸν ΔΙΩ. τί δρῶ;}
\text{HPA. ἀναβὰς ἐπὶ τὸν πύργον τὸν ύψηλὸν ΔΙΩ. κάτα τι;}
\text{HPA. ἀφιεμένην τὴν λαμπάδ' ἐντέιθεν θεῶ} \text{(Arist. Frogs 127-31).}
\]

Yet, unlike Dionysus, who rejects Heracles' suggestion, Psyche is prevented by the talking tower from making the fatal jump. The echo of the comic playwright, however, is only one part of a more complex pattern of literary borrowings drawn primarily from Aeneid VI. 58

58. Gatscha (1898) 146; Purser (1910) 102, s.v. studiose gradum celerans; Finkelpearl (1986) 190.

59. Tatum (1979) 60; Walsh (1970) 215. All Vergilian reminiscences found in the tower's advice to Psyche are catalogued by Wright (1971) 280-281, but without any
Specifically, the description of the cavity where Pluto dwells, *inibi spiraculum Ditis, et per portas hiantes monstratur iter invium* (Met. 6.17/141.19-20), echoes Vergil's description of the valley of Ampsanctus, where Allecto returns after stirring up war, *hic specus horrendum et saevi spiracula Ditis / monstrantur* (Verg. Aen. 7.568-69). The Apuleian phrase: *iter invium* may have been suggested by the Vergilian formulation: *via...invia* in connection with Helenus' alliterative line, *longa procul longis via dividit invia terris* (Verg. Aen. 3.383). Furthermore, the advice of the tower to Psyche to carry sops of barley bread soaked in hydromel in both hands (*offas polentae mulso concretas* Met. 6.17/141.23-24), reflects Sibyl's instruction to Aeneas about the cake, soaked in honey and drug-dipped grain (*melle soporatam et medicatis fruaibus offam* Verg. Aen. 6.420). Vergil's ferryman, Charon, who transports Aeneas and Sibyl across the Styx, will likewise carry Psyche to the opposite bank (*ad ripam uter iorem sutili cumba deducit commantes* Met. 6.18/142.6). The epithet *sutilis* which qualifies Charon's boat also occurs in Vergil's description of his boat: *gemuit sub pondera cumba / sutilis* (Verg. Aen. 6.413-14). In

60. Hildebrand (1842) 453, s.v. *Ditis spiraculum*; Gatscha (1898) 146; Purser (1910) 109, s.v. *spiraculum*; Grimal (1976) 125, s.v. *spiraculum*


the Apuleian imagery, the old man who begs to be carried on the boat to the opposite shore (quidam supernatans senex mortuus putris excitanten manus orabit, ut eum intra navigium trahas, nec tamen illicita affectare pietate Met. 6.18/142.13-16) reminds Vergil's description of Palinurus who makes a similar appeal to Aeneas (Verg. Aen. 6.337-83)\(^{63}\). In this setting, there is also a mention of the underworld beast, barking in the empty realm of the shades and the house of Dis:

\[
\text{canis namque prægrandis, teriugo et satis ampio capite praeditus, immansis et formidabiles, tonantibus oblatrans faucibus mortuos, quibus iam nil mali potest facere, frustra territando ante ipsum limen et atra atria Proserpinae semper excubans servat vacuam Ditis domum.}
\]

(Met. 6.19/142.22-27).

This description combines elements drawn from two separate lines in reference to Vergil's Cerberus: liceat ingens janitor antro / aeternum latrans exanuus terreat umbras (Verg. Aen. 6.400-01)\(^{64}\), and Cerberus haec ingens latratu reona tntauci / oersonat adverso recubans immansis in antro (Verg. Aen. 6.417-18)\(^{65}\). Finally, Apuleius' vacuam ditis domus repeats Vergil's description of Aeneas' entrance into the underworld: perque domos Ditis vacues et inania regna (Verg. Aen. 6.269)\(^{66}\).

Beyond, however, these numerous verbal as well as thematic similarities, there remain differences in details between the two narratives. The description of the cavity of Dis owes its grand touches to Vergil's description of the hollow of

\[^{63}\text{Grimal (1976) 128, s.v. nec setius.}\]

\[^{64}\text{Purser (1910) 113, s.v. territando.}\]

\[^{65}\text{Grimal (1976) 129, s.v. canis; Finkelpearl (1986) 194.}\]

\[^{66}\text{Purser (1910) 113, s.v. vacuam ditis domum; Grimal (1976) 129, s.v. canis; Finkelpearl (1986) 201.}\]
Hell. But a set of details, i.e. the conversion of Vergil's plural *spiracula* into a singular *spiraculum*, and the use of the phrase: *canale directo* (Met. 6.17/141.21) change Vergil's traditional setting. This latter expression adds a contemporary touch to the conventional picture of the underworld, since it is a stock phrase, regularly found in the technical language of construction and architecture.67

A skillful mixture of traditional with contemporary is similarly witnessed in the portrayal of the ferryman, Charon. The description of Charon as a squalid old man (*squalido seni* Met. 6.18/142.11) reminds the familiar presentation of the ferryman occurring, for instance, in Vergil's: *terribili squalore Charon* (Verg. Aen. 6.299). Nevertheless, the pathetic outburst of the tower against the avarice of Charon and of Dis maintains its comic tone: *ero et inter mortuos avaritia vivit nec Charon ille Ditis, set nec Ditis pater, tantus deus, quicquam gratuito facit* (Met. 6.18/142.7-8).

The humor lies in the fact that this Dis, the Latin equivalent of Pluton, who is known as *πλούτωδότης* is here presented as concerned with making profit (*quicquam gratuito facit*), despite the fact that he rules unsubstantial shades.68 Henceforth, even the poor must find the necessary sum before embarking on the final journey.

Furthermore, the tower instructs Psyche to pass by in silence the old man who will beg Psyche to transport him to the opposite bank. The appeal of the corpse (*orabit, ut eum intra navigium trahas* Met. 6.18/142.14-15) is a reminiscence of the plea of Palinurus (*tecum me tolle per undas* Verg. Aen. 6.370). This association

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67. Grimal (1976) 127, s.v. *spiraculum*: see also OLD, s.v. *canalis*.

68. For an opposite view, namely that the reference on the avarice does not refer to Dis see Purser (1910) 111-112, s.v. *Ditis et pater*. Purser sees a corruption in the text which prevents him in turn to observe the humorous nuances of the line.
between the two episodes is also supported by the fact that Psyche shares the virtue of 
pietas (ne tu temen iniicta reflectere piétate Met. 6.18/142.15-16) which is otherwise a characteristic of the Trojan hero69. The substitution of a nameless corpse for Aeneas' helmsman, Palinurus, contributes to the alteration of Vergil's imagery. This man is not related in any way with Psyche, as is Palinurus with Aeneas, but is an unknown senex who manages to swim across with the decomposed condition of his hands (putris manus Met.6.18/142.14).

A further contrast with Vergil's scenery occurs in the presentation of the underworld monster Cerberus:

canis namque praegrandis, teriugo et satis ample capite
praeditus, immanis et formidabilis, tonantibus oblatus
faucibus mortuos, quibus iam nulli potest facere, frustra
territando ante ipsum limen et atra atria Proserpinae semper
excubans servat vacuam Ditis domum

(Met. 6.19/142.22-27).

The description of the underworld-hound combines two epic expressions: omos Ditis vacuas (Verg. Aen. 6.269); and Cerberus haec ingens latrato regna trifauci / personat adverso recubans immanis in antro (Verg. Aen. 6.417-18). The notion of the huge beast (immanis) comes from Vergil's description of the watchdog's great size seen across the Styx (ingens ianitor Verg. Aen. 6.400), while Apuleius' excubans almost repeats in the same person and mood Vergil's recubans (Verg. Aen. 6.418). The accumulation, however, of a series of descriptive epithets (praegrandis immanis et formidabilis) exaggerates Vergil's ianitor Orci (Verg. Aen. 6.400; also Aen. 8.296: ianitor Orci). Visually it is a huge wild beast, barking horribly amidst the shades of the dead. The amusing effect gains its force from the comic tension between the terrifying, noisy and ever-present guardian of the court of Proserpina and its

apparent inability to cause any harm to the unsubstantial shades (quibus iam nil mali potent fasere, frustra territando Met. 6.19/142.25)\textsuperscript{70}. This is strikingly opposite to the effectiveness of the dog's barking on the shades in Vergil: licet ingens iiantor antro / aeternum latrans exanuis ter real umbres Verg. Aen. 6.400-01).

Following the tower's advice, Psyche accomplishes almost successfully Venus' last labor. But on returning to earth the heroine is, once again, possessed by curiosity and opens up the box given by Proserpina. A deadly odor spreads and it would certainly have killed her had not Cupid intervened. Cupid now goes to Jupiter, because he is consumed by love for his wife (amore nimio pereus Met. 6.22/145.1). The expression: amore nimio pereus is aptly drawn from Vergil's context concerning those who died out of love (quos durus amor crudel i tabe peredit Verg. Aen. 6.442)\textsuperscript{71}. Jupiter sends Mercury down to earth to bring Psyche on Mt. Olympus, thereby fulfilling quite literary his role of ψυχοπομπός. This psychopompic notion of Mercury becomes here appropriate: Psyche is about to undergo the most significant metamorphosis, from mortal to a goddess. The entire section that begins with Mercury's first mission in search for Psyche is brought to a full circle. In a manner reminiscent of Ovid's account of how Venus deified her son (Venus ambrosia cum dulci nectar e mixta contigit os (i.e. Aenean) fecitque deum Ov. Met. 14.607), Jupiter immortalizes Psyche by offering her ambrosia ("sume", inquit, "Psyche (sc. ambrosiae polum), et immortalis f\'i q" Met. 6.23/146.10-11). Thus Jupiter gives a solution to Venus' concern about the legal problem that

\textsuperscript{70} See Finkelpearl (1986) 194, who most eloquently interprets the ineffectuality of Cerberus barking horribly in the underworld as well as the notion that the realm of Dis is being guarded.

\textsuperscript{71} The parallel has been pointed out by Gatscha (1898) 146; also Purser (1910) 117, s.v. amore nimio pereus.
arises from the union of the mortal Psyche with the god Cupid. The tale
concludes amidst a spirit of joyous celebration with the nuptial feast on Mt.
Olympus. With the passing of time, a child is born, named Voluptas.

Thus, Apuleius, by maintaining epic language and conventions in the tale of
Cupid and Psyche, has created a narrative that embodies elements from Vergil's
epic: the heroic wrath-motif, the military attack, the journey to the underworld.
In this respect the tale in addition to its folk elements is principally epic in
inspiration. These well known epic conventions altered and blended within new
settings provide an amusing and sophisticated aspect to the tale of Cupid and
Psyche. This reshaping and frequently inverted use of the epic material within
the setting of the tale is not alien to the general organization of the narrative of the
entire section of Cupid and Psyche. It is built into the pattern of the reversal of
roles. This Role-inversion--itself a comic device--along with the pattern of epic
reversals are fundamental for the witty and amusing treatment of the serious and
elevated epic borrowings in the tale of Cupid and Psyche.

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72. Campbell (1968) 97-98.
CHAPTER V

THE TALE OF TLEPOLEMUS/HAEMUS

Let me now turn to the tale of the young Tlepolemus as he comes to the robbers disguised as a notorious criminal, Haemus, to assume the leadership of the thieves. Once hailed as their chief, he immediately puts forward a plan to rescue his fiancée. Scholars agree on the essentially epic flavor of the tale but differ widely about its correspondence with a specific episode from epic. A. van Kemphen considers the tale of Tlepolemus an *imitatio cum variatione* of Vergil's description of the capture of Troy by the Greeks. D. E. Finkelpearl, in a slightly

1. The epic allusions in the tale of Tlepolemus / Haemus have been regularly noted by scholars and commentators. See, for instance, Hildebrand (1968) 525 ff; Gatscha (1898) 147; Hijmans et al. (1981), to whose brilliant commentary, also collectively identified as the Groningen commentators, I am greatly indebted throughout.

2. van Kemphen (1981) 280. The entire discussion of van Kemphen runs as follows: "(1) The Greeks build a horse as high as a mountain: 2. A. 15 *instar montis equum, sedificant*. Tlepolemus tells the robbers that his name is Haemus, a doubly significant name (not only meaning "bloody", but also the name of a well-known mountain: see Hijmans in *AAGA* [=Aspects of Apuleius' Golden Ass] 1978, 115. (2) The Trojans, after bringing the horse within the walls, have started drinking: A. 2, 265 *urbem somno vinoque sepultam*. The robbers allow themselves to be made drunk after taking in Haemus. (3) The Trojans will die at the hands of the Greeks who come into the city later: A. 2.333 *stat ferris acies murcone coruscus / stricta, parata neci*. The robbers, *parati morti*, die at the hands of Tlepolemus and his helpers. It is not impossible, therefore, that Charite's recapture constitutes an *imitatio cum variatione* of Vergil's description of the capture of Troy."
more expanded way, establishes a relationship with the Sinon episode in the Aeneid on the basis of situational parallels with Vergil’s treatment. What has not been properly assessed, however, is that the scenery of the cave, the emphasis on Tlepolemus’ cleverness and trickery which suggested a Vergilian comparison, and the strategy of the execution of the robbers’ band may point to a comparison with Homer’s description of Odysseus’ punishment of the Cyclops and his safe exit from his cave. Further, the Homeric hero employed wine in his plan to blind Polyphemus and, thereby, achieve a safe escape for himself and his companions from the monster’s cave. This pattern, to a great extent, is developed in the tale as Tlepolemus, who, disguised as Haemus, enters into a company of thieves. In order to punish the band, he drugs them with wine and, thereby, rescues his kidnapped Charite from captivity in the bandits’ cave. The apparent contradiction which is caused by the description of the young man—once in terms reminiscent of Homer’s giant, Polyphemus and later in terms of Odysseus—should hardly be surprising in view of his double identity as the famous Thracian brigand, Haemus, and as the bridegroom, Tlepolemus. But, the invocation of epic material from Homer’s Cyclopeia (Hom. Od. 9.9-566) in the lowly and unheroic setting of otherwise common criminals may shed some light on the playful

intention of Apuleius' epic adaptation. I propose, therefore, to examine more closely this sophisticated aspect of Apuleius' literary imitation in the tale of Tlepolemus' masquerade as the famous brigand, Haemus (Met. 7.4/156.19-7.14/164.14). This humorous aspect results from the incompatible and inverted treatment of epic materials from Homer's description of Odysseus' punishment of the Cyclops and the safe escape from the giant's cave.

The inverted use of the Homeric epic is aptly signalled by the description of the narrator-Ass when a thief presents the immense, tower-like Tlepolemus disguised as the bandit, Haemus, to the company of his colleagues:

tunc profectus et paululum commoratus ille perducit immanem quendam iuvenem, uti fuerat pollicitus, nescio an ulli praesentium comparandum—nam praster ceteram corporis molem tota vertice cunctos antepollebat et ei commodum lanugo malis inserpebat—sed plane centunculis dispersibus et male consarcinatis semiamlectum, inter quos pectus et venter crustata crassilie reluctabant (Met 7.5/157.21-158.2).

The Groningen Commentors establish the epic coloring of the description by showing correspondences with Iliad 3.210: μενέλαος ὦπειρεξέν εὐρέας ὦμοις; and

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4. See also the prefatory remarks in Hijmans et al. (1981) 5, expanded in the commentary, pp. 111-12. An excellent theoretical survey of ancient and modern perspectives on the humor that arises from the literary imitation of the serious epic, and on the overall limitations of Homeric comedy now appears in: Branham (1989) 127-77; admittedly, this type of literary play with the epic tradition is not by any means limited to Lucian; rather it goes back to early Alexandrian literature of the Hellenistic period. See further, for instance, Gutzwiller (1981) 1-7.

5. To my knowledge only Lazzarini (1985) 157-158, in a short but useful observation has drawn a connection between Apuleius' tale of Tlepolemus and Homer's episode of Odysseus at the palace of Alcinous (Horn. Od. 9.19) or Vergil's description of Aeneas at the palace of Dido (Verg. Aen. 1.378-80). On the other hand Hijmans (1986) 355-356 advances an association of Tlepolemus with Dionysus on the basis of some character traits that the hero shares in common with the god. For an elaboration of Hijmans, idea see discussion in Chapter VI.
Iliad 3.227: [sc. Ajax] ἐξοχὸς Ἄργείων κεφαλὴν τε καὶ εὔρεας ὤμος. But a more forceful comparison may be evoked by the selection of the technical term of sculpturing, crustata, that derives from a root of a word which in Sanscrit means earth; by the use of the rare term crassities, to designate density or thickness; and by the association with the Thracian mountain range, Ἀλμος, inherent in Tlepolemus' fabricated name, Haemus. In this skillful mixture of details that denote massive size as well as a rough, rock-like imagery, the description suggests affinities with another Homeric vignette: Odysseus' account of the gigantic shape of Polyphemus as the hero nears his cave:

ἐνθα δ' ἀνήρ ἐνίαυε πελώριος... (Hom. Od. 9.187).

Also a few lines later:

καὶ γὰρ θαῦμ' ἐτέτυκτο πελώριον, οὗδε ἐψκει ἀνδρὶ γε σιτοφάγῳ. ἄλλα τί πιθήκην υψηλῶν ὀρέων, ὅ τε φαίνεται οἷον ἀπὶ ἄλλων (Hom. Od. 9.190-92).

The emphasis on the massive size of Tlepolemus' body may reasonably allude to the mountain-like build of Polyphemus, best illustrated by the reference to the woody peak of the mountain simile (τί πιθήκην υψηλῶν ὀρέων). It is remarkable

6. Hijmans et al. (1981) 109, s.v. toto vertice
7. OLD, s.v. crusta.
8. OLD, s.v. crassities and crassus; Hijmans et al. (1981) 111, s.v. crassities.
9. For the triple meaning intended by the use of the name, Haemus, as well as the playfulness resulting from the wide range of its associations see: Hijmans (1978 a) 115; also Hijmans (1976) 145; Hijmans et al. (1981) 110, s.v. commodum inserpebat; also 115-116, s.v. Haemus ille; Hijmans (1978 b) 407, and under I. Mt. Haemus, 408-12.
here that the term moles is repeated from Vergil's line of the description of the
dreadful size of Polyphemus: *vasta se mole moventem / pastorem Polyphemum* (Verg. 
*Aen.* 3.656-57). A similar vast body size is attributed to Haemus when the 
bandit narrates how he had met and persuaded the reluctant Haemus to join the 
robbers' gang: *hominem et statu procerum et æstate iuvenem et corpore vastum et manu 
strenuum* (Met. 7.4/157.12-13). For the term vastus belongs to the specialized 
vocabulary used almost exclusively to characterize the awesome size of wild 
beasts or otherwise superhumans. In this latter sense it applies to the 
gigantic shape of the monster Polyphemus and the Cyclopes (Verg. *Aen.* 3.656: 
*vasta se mole*; also Verg. *Aen.* 3.647: *vastosque...Cyclopes*). The technical term immanis 
further underlines the relationship of Haemus with the monster insofar as the 
epithet is used almost exclusively for the size of animals or otherwise awesome

10. It is worth noting that the word moles is a strong term, rarely used to describe 
the human physique. It is almost a stock word for the Wooden Horse, or the 
movement of universe mass. When used for the size of a body-build up, the term 
usually applies to the bodily size of superhuman monsters like Cacus and 
Polyphemus and less frequently to humans. In this latter function it is not 
surprising that it occurs twice in the section of Vergil's Polyphemus. See, for 
instance, the entries of Warwick (1974) s.v. moles.

11. It should be also observed that the term procerus apart from its associations 
with the tallness of trees is also used for the height of mountains. At the very 
least this becomes obvious from the employment of the term for the description of 
the mountain where Psyche directs her course in order to throw herself from the 
top desperate that she will be unable to fetch the dews from the Stygian marshes: 
*saxum immane magnitudine procerum* (Met. 6.14/138.19).

12. OLD, s.v. vastus. 3. It is not accidental then that the epithet vastus is attested 
only for the sound of the giants Incursum vasto...clamore gigantes ps-Verg. *Aen.* 56, 
while Apuleius uses it, again, as the characteristic epithet of the band of the 
robbers who attack Socrates just outside Larisa [sc. Socrates] vastissimis latronibus 
obsessus (Met. 7.7-8/159.7-26).
Moreover, the expression *ei commodum lanugo malis inserebat* may designate the flowery beauty anointed with youthful age, well expressed with the example of *Od. 11.320: πυκάσσει τε γένεις εὔανθεία λάχνα*14. This association with the Homeric Polyphemus reiterates the rich imagery of the Cyclopes, emphatically introduced in the elaborate ekphrasis on the robbers’ cave15.

A clear difference, however, with the epic narrative also exists. The Homeric mountain-simile is essential to the plot development of the *Odyssey* and visually corresponds with the supernatural size of Polyphemus' body shape. On the other hand, Apuleius includes features that explore the incompatible effect implied by the exaggeration of the comparison. The description of a towering, mountain-like image of a youth in language reminiscent of Homer's mythological giant creates a striking incongruity. Tlepolemus is not by any means Homer's monster, but a young bridegroom (*adolescens* Met 4.26/94.21; also *pueritia* Met 7.5/160.6) who has not yet reached full manhood. Instead, Apuleius inserts into the narrative a lighter undertone in view of the tense juxtaposition of the beauty of the age, the *speciosus adolescens* of Charite's youthful groom (Met 4.26/94.21) and the mountain association implied by the physical description of his body. This

13. In this sense the epithet applies to the beast that later kills Tlepolemus: *aper immanis* (Met 179.7), to the bears of Demochares: *immanis urse* (Met 4.13/85.4), to the disguised Thrasyleon as a bear: *immanis forma tantae bestiae* (Met 4.18/88.23), to the snake of the oracle of Apollo *immanem draconem* (Met 5.17/116.16), and, finally, to Cerberus: *canis immanis* (Met 6.19/142.23-24). What should also be mentioned here is that the adjective *immanus* in the syntactical function of a predicate is also used to describe the monster, Polyphemus as he lies intoxicated by the wine of Odysseus (Verg. Aen. 3.631-32: *iacuitque per antrum / immanus*).


15. See Chapter I for further heroic associations with the Homeric *Cyclopeia* as far as the cave of the robbers is concerned.
inversion also gains first from the evocation in Haemus' address: *fortissimo des / Marti clientes* (Met. 7.5/158.3-4), of the language that the goddess Venus elsewhere uses as she talks to her son, Cupid, about his father, Mars: *tuum fortissimum illum Maximum bellatorem* (Met. 5.30/127.7-8); and second from the witty verbal play on the Thracian mountain-range *Alpes*, inherent in his name\(^{16}\).

In this respect, the seriousness reflected by the use of epic language gradually disappears; or better it is slowly transformed into a lighter narrative that aims to miss the understanding of the robbers.

Haemus' reference to his ragged clothing also illustrates the use of epic convention for a comic effect:

\[
\text{nec me putetis egenum uel abjectum neve de pannulis istis} \\
\text{uirtutes aestimatis}
\]

*(Met. 7.5/158.8-9).*

Haemus' false account of the misfortunes that reduced him to his present poverty recalls Odysseus' disguise into a ragged beggar in order to conceal his royal status\(^{17}\). This is evidenced in Eumaeus' warning to the beggar, Odysseus, not to enter into the palace and seek work from the suitors in ragged clothing:

\[
\text{οὐ τοι τοιοῦτον ἐστὶν ὑποδηστηρίᾳς ἐκείνην,} \\
\text{ἄλλα νέον, χαλάνας εὖ εἰμένοι ἢ ἄλλα χιτῶνας,} \\
\text{ἀείδι δὲ λιπαροὶ κεφαλὰς καὶ καλὰ πρόσωπα,} \\
\text{οὐ σφίν υποδήστησιν...}
\]

*(Hom. Od. 15.330-33).*

---

16. See above, note 11.

17. For a thorough discussion of the heroic pattern of clothing as indicative of social standing in the *Odyssey*, see Block (1985) 7. I have borrowed from Block's discussion and list of examples the relevant passage of Hom. *Od. 15.331*, considering it as indicative of the standard epic convention that clothing reflects a man's status.
Instead Odysseus should wait for Telemachus to cloth him in a cloak, tunic and garments: χλαίειν τε κιτῶνα τε εἶματα ἔσσει (Horn. Od. 15.338), and consequently elevate his public standing. In striking violation of this Homeric principle, Haemus, who is also described as leading the life-style of a beggar (manum validam ergoandae stipi porrigaret Met. 7.4/157.16-17) makes the exact opposite claim for his ragged clothing:

virum magnanimae vivacitatis volentem volentes accipite
(Met. 7.5/158.4-5).

The alliteration of the "v" sound in the phrase virum magnanimae vivacitatis volentes volentem stresses this purposeful inversion. Thus, Apuleius employs the epic motif in an opposite way, as Tlepolemus seeks to become the leader of the thieves, despite his poor outfit. This use also contrasts with the ensuing lofty tone of the revelation of the hero's identity:

ego sum praedo famosus Haemus ille Thracius, cuius totae provinciae nomen horrescunt, patre Therone aequo latrone incito prognatus, humano sanguine nutritus interque ipsos manipulos factionis educatus heres et aemulus virtutis paternae
(Met. 7.5/158.10-15).

Here Westerbrink discerns a parodic echo of the pattern of either Odysseus' identification to the king of the Phaeaceans, Alcinous:

εἰμὶ ὁδυσσεύς Λαερτιάδης ὡς πάσι δόλοισιν ἀνθρώποισι μέλω, καὶ μεν κλεος οὐρανον ἱκει
(Hom. Od. 9.19-20),

or Aeneas' introduction to Dido:

Tlepolemus' association with the equally illustrious thief, Theron, may be reminiscent of Odysseus' collective identification of himself with his companions as associates of Agamemnon:

λαοὶ ὑδρατερέων ἄγαμονικος εὔχρηστος εἶναι,
tοῦ δὲ νῦν γε μέγιστον ὑπουράνιων κλέος ἐστὶ
(Hom. Oδ. 9.263-64).

In retrospect, this broad association with Agamemnon acquires a meaningful sense in that it becomes a prerequisite stage of the hero's subsequent false identification to the monster as "οὖν" (Hom. Oδ. 9.366). At the very least, this connection is supported by the morphological similarity between Haemus' claim of relationship with the illustrious thief, Theron: πατὴρ Θέρων οἰκεῖος λατρόν εἰκότο (Met. 7.5/158.12-13) and Odysseus' association with the heroic κλέος of Agamemnon: τοῦ [i.e. Agamemnon] μέγιστον ὑπουράνιων κλέος ἐστί (Hom. Oδ. 9.264). Possibly, the motif of Odysseus telling lies to the monster about the wrecking of the ship by Poseidon during the storm is also present in the tale in Tlepolemus' false account of the heroic Plotina, the subsequent decision of Caesar to execute his band and the fabricated account of his escape amidst enemy soldiers. This connection is further supported by the verbal parallelism between totamque prorsus devastavi Macedoniam (Met. 7.5/158.10) and τοσσυν γαρ ὅπερ πολλούς καὶ ὁμολέος λαύς / πολλούς (Hom. Oδ. 9.265-66). Yet there is a contrast intended between the two narratives: whereas Odysseus admits that he has managed to

escape destruction from the storm caused by Poseidon with at least a handful of his comrades saved: ἐγὼ σὺν τοῖς ὑπέκυψον αἰτίνι ἀλεθέρων (Hom. Od. 9.286), Haemus awkwardly affirms that he has been the only survivor of an original multitude of brave companions lost during the attack of Caesar's soldiers:

\[
\text{tota denique factione militarum vexillationum indegatu confecta atque concisa ipse me furatus ægre solus mednis Orci faucibus ad hunc evasi modum.}
\]  
(Met. 7.7/159.23-26).

The elevated tone is specifically observed in Haemus' description of his escape:

\[
\text{ipse me furatus ægre solus mednis Orci faucibus ad hunc evasi modum}
\]  
(Met. 7.7/159.24-26).

The expression [Orci faucibus occurs again in the epic context of Vergil's description of the vestibulum of Tartarus where a cluster of personified Worries stand (faucibus Orci Verg. Aen. 6.273). The effect of borrowing from this context is to underline the sense of danger as Haemus makes his escape amidst Caesar's soldiers. Nevertheless, the alleged claim of his "heroism" is markedly limited by the ensuing description of the female manner of his escape in clothing:

\[
\text{sumpta ueste muliebri floride, in sinus flaccidos abundant, mitellaque textili contecto capite, calceis femininis albis illis et tenubus indutus et in sequiorem sexum incertus atque}
\]

20. Also Finkelpearl (1985) 129 who persuasively refutes the view of Norden (1971) 212 that the phrase mednis Orci faucibus has proverbial overtones. The proverbial quality of mednis Orci faucibus as a variation of the standard expressions: Orci faucibus ereptum or ex inferis emergere seems to have been already understood by Hildebrand (1842) 542, s.v. mednis Orci faucibus.

21. Cooper (1980) 450-51, likewise, views the description of Haemus' escape in a feminine disguise as unheroic, while Tatum (1972) 309, and notes 18 and 19, treats Haemus' reference to his disguise as a case "metamorphosis never accomplished in fact."
The feminine disguise allows Haemus to deceive Caesar's guard and thereby save his life. Now compared with Odysseus' brave plan when the Homeric hero is in a similar life-threatening situation in the cave of Polyphemus:

αὐτοῦ γὰρ κε καὶ ἀμμες ἀπωλόμεθ' αἰτίνι ὄλεθρον
(Hom. Od. 9.303),

and a few lines later:

ὅτε δὲ μοι κατὰ θυμὸν ἀρίστη φαίνετο βουλή
(Hom. Od. 9.318),

Apuleius creates an anti-heroic picture of Tlepolemus' exit. This unheroic posture can, of course, be seen in Tlepolemus' own account of the protection afforded by the deceptive look of his dress:

nec ab illa tamen paterna gloria vel mea uirtute desciui,
quanquam semitrepidus iuxta mucrones Martios constitutus,
sej habitus alieni fallacia tectus, uillas seu castella solus
adgrediens, utaticulum mihi conrasi
(Met. 7.8/160.6-10).

The unheroic sense is aesthetically reflected by the meaningful use of the hapax legomenon semitrepidus22, and by the syntactical use of the inverse genitive in habitus alieni fallacia23. Indeed it is precisely in this feminine disguise that Haemus makes a claim to become the robbers' chief. At the very least, this notion emerges from the figurative use of the term ἄσ, which basically denotes "property


23. I here adopt the expression "inversive genitive" as used by Hijmans et al. (1981) 136. s.v. habitus alieni fallacia, because of its functional quality.
brought by a bride to her husband as a portion on marriage", "dowry" 24, when he pours out of his rags two thousand coins of gold as part of his calculated plan to deceive the robbers:

et: "en", inquit, "islam sportulam, immo vero dotem collegio vestro libens meque vobis ducem fidissimum, si tamen non racusatis, offero brevi temporis spatio lapideam istam domum vestram facturus auream"

(Met 7.8/160.11-15).

A similar notion created by his feminine disguise again emerges later when Tlepolemus sweeps, cooks and on the whole takes care the cave25:

verrit, sternit, coquit, tucceta concinnat, adponit scitule, sed praecipue poculis crebris grandibusque singulos ingurgitat

(Met 7.11/162.19-21).

Of course, this taking care of the cave, as Winkler keenly observes, is also necessitated by the fact that the robbers are without a housekeeper ever since the death of their old nurse26.

When the robbers, as previously the soldiers, are thus deceived and unanimously confer the leadership on him, straightaway Haemus puts forward the rescue plan for his bride. The pattern of the entire scene carefully follows the development of events in the narrative of the epic. Like Odysseus who saves the lives of his companions from the Cyclops' atrocities, Haemus intends to liberate his kidnapped fiancée, Charite. Haemus' carrying the wine to the robbers under the pretext of sacrifice and prayer to their patron deity, Mars, reflects the Homeric

---

24. Thus OLD. s.v. dow 1.

25. Also observed by Cooper (1980) 450.

reference (supplicatum Marti Comiti perigitus... pecus sacrificatui ac ne vinum... Met. 7.10/162.3-6) to Odysseus' bringing the wine to Polyphemus as a libation (λαυθην φιρον Hom. Od. 9.349). Like Odysseus, Haemus punishes the thieves with the Odyssean strategy of luring them to drink too much wine. And, just as Odysseus outwits the Cyclops by the skillful trick of his pseudonym, ουτις (Hom. Od. 9.366), Tlepolemus deceives the robbers by feigning both a name and a "heroic" descent from the otherwise "renowned" thief, Theron (sum pro e famosus Haemus ille Thracius... patre Therone ... Met. 7.5/158.10-13). The epic pattern of Odysseus' revelation of his real identity when the danger from Polyphemus appears to be over (Hom. Od. 9.504-05), is reflected in the revelation of Tlepolemus' real identity when the stratagem of banishing the robbers' gang appears to be successful (Met. 7.12/163.4 ff.). At this narrative juncture, the revelation of Haemus' real identity also functions as an a priori

27. Schlam (1978) 99. See also Schlam (1968) 41-42; Tatum (1979) 71.
indication that his strategy will be successful and that he will liberate Charite from her captivity.  

Beyond this wide range of similarities in content and detail, however, there is an apparently intentional contrast with Homer's narrative. Unlike the wine of Odysseus, which not accidentally is offered to him as a gift by the priest of the god

28. The revelation of Charite's identity is also suggestive. For Charite's name, which is withheld for two-and-a-half-books, is also revealed within this setting. In the underworld of the robber's cave, the suppression of the heroine's name has some validity and reflects her state insofar as the girl is cut off from real existence. Her identity is revealed as Tlepolemus is about to liberate the girl and destroy the band with the Odyssean strategy of wine. Given the striking Odyssean development of Charite to be discussed in detail in Chapter VI one can also relate the pattern of the loss and restoration of the heroine's identity with Odysseus' absence and revelation of his name in the Cyclops episode.

In the lengthy narrative section from Met. 4.23/92.13-7.12/163.10, Charite, while in the cave, expressly identifies herself as virgo regia (6.29/151.5-6). She is distinguished or addressed either by demonstrative pronouns or by the noun substitutes puella (4.23/92.18; 4.22/93.5; 4.24/93.9; 4.26/94.16; 6.25/147.3; 6.29/151.12; 6.29/151.18; 6.30/152.1; 6.30/152.16; 6.31/152.23; 6.30/153.8; 6.30/153.15; 7.9/161.15; 7.10/161.28; 7.10/162.22; 7.12/163.9,), virgo (4.23/92.17; 6.27/149.16; 6.28/149.23; 6.28/149.25; 6.29/151.5; 6.31/153.11; 6.31/153.14; 7.9/160.21; 7.9/161.9), puella virgo (7.11/162.27-28)and erillis (4.27/96.6). Not surprisingly, Lucius frequently qualifies his statements about Charite with the adjectives liberalis (92.17) captivus (6.25/147.3; 6.27/149.16), liberandus (6.28/149.23), infelix (6.29/151.18), or employs the combined puella virgo (7.11/162.27-28); the old housekeeper of the robbers in one instance uses the sympathetic mi erillis (4.27/96.6). On the other hand, the robbers, whose principal style is an abundant use of pronouns, resort once to the heavily ironic propissimo puella (6.30/151.26 152.1).

Like the revelation of Odysseus' identity when the danger from Polyphemus appears to be over, the name of Charite is revealed when Tlepolemus' strategy to execute this band of thieves appears to be effective: "homo animo es", inquit, "Charite dulcissima, nom tolos istos hostes tuos statim captives hehebis" (Met. 7.12/163.9-11). At the very least, this analogy is strengthened by the fact that Tlepolemus is about to execute the gang with the cunning trickery of an Odysseus, and in a manner unlike the militaristic means suggested by his name. Within this Homeric atmosphere the identity of the girl, concealed for two-and-a-half books, is finally disclosed. In this manner, the wailing and lamenting girl is ultimately reinstated to the very aspect that is implicit in the meaning of her suppressed name: viz. Charm / Grace since the term Charite etymologically is related to the Greek word Charis.
of light, Apollo, Haemus steals the wine from a nearby castellum. Also, whereas Odysseus' revelation creates a dangerous exit from the land of the Cyclopes (Hom. Od. 9.481 ff.) and ultimately, because of the giant's prayer to his father, Poseidon (Hom. Od. 9.528 ff.), becomes the cause of his further sea adventures, the revelation of Tlepolemus' identification serves as an indication of Charite's and the Ass' liberation from their troubles (Met. 7.12/163.4 ff.). Furthermore, the expression vino sepulti iacebant (Met. 7.11/163.16-17) may refer to Homer's description of Polyphemus when the monster remembers the old prophecy of Telemus that he was fated to lose his sight at the hands of Odysseus (χήρων ἐπὶ ὄμορφης ἀμαρτήσεωι ὀπωρίης Hom. Od. 9.512) having been tamed by the wine: μ' ἐκαμάζατο οἶνῳ (Hom. Od. 9.516), or the monster's vomiting as he lies inebriated with too much wine (αἰσθανόμαι οἴνῳ Hom. Od. 9.374)29. The Latin equivalent of the Greek, vino sepultus is Vergilian in origin: Polyphemus lies drunk from the wine of Odysseus (nam simul expletus dapibus vinoque sepultus Verg. Aen. 3.630)30. But, whereas Odysseus, at least, admits that the blinding of the Cyclops demanded great daring (θάρσος . . . μέγα Hom. Od. 9.381), paradoxically, the narrator-Ass asserts that the punishment of the robbers required no special effort (nullo negotio Met. 7.12/163.17-18). Because of this alteration, the seriousness of the epic


30. Finkelpearl (1986) 129-30, cites as a parallel for Apuleius' omnes vino sepulti iacebant (Met. 7.12/163.16-17), Vergil's urbem somno vinoque sepultam (Verg. Aen. 2.265). I place less emphasis on the vino sepultus of Verg. Aen. 2.265, and make instead a connection along with Purser (1906) 45, with the occurrence of the expression in Vergil's episode of Polyphemus: expletus dapibus vinoque sepultus (Verg. Aen. 3.630).
prototype ultimately disappears; and it is substituted instead by the witty remark of the reporter Ass:

\[
\text{et hercules suspici\'onem mihi fecit, quasi soporiferum quoddam}
\]
\[
uenenum cantharis immiscaret illis}
\]

\textit{(Met. 7.12/163.14-16)}.

This description owes its comic force to the skillful blending of the serious \textit{soporiferum qui deploravit} from Dido's speech to her sister Anna (Verg. Aen. 4.486) or possibly from Helen's potion: \textit{εις ο\'λον βάλε φάρμακα} (Hom Od 4.220), with the common word of comic language, \textit{cantharis}, thereby completing the lowering of the epic scene\textsuperscript{31}. Thus a typically heroic scene is developed by Apuleius in a comic way. This playful development is sharply at odds with the handling of the epic or mythic motif of extracting revenge for the abduction of Charite and her subsequent captivity in the robbers' cave.

The adventure ends with Tlepolemus' escape and with Charite riding on the back of an animal. The picture of a girl riding on an Ass, as the keen narrator observes, looks like a triumphal procession:

\[
pompaem cerneres omnis sexus et omnis aetatis novumque
\]
\[
et hercules memorandum spectamen. virginem asino
\]
\[
triumphantem}
\]

\textit{(Met. 7.13/163.23-26)}.

Yet, the rising tone in the reporter-Ass' remark and the use of the animal while departing from the thieves' cave evokes Homer's description of the escape of Odysseus with his companions from a similar situation in the cave of Polyphemus:

\[31. \text{Hijmans et al. (1981) 162, s.v. \textit{cantharis}. Callebat, (1968) 61. In addition to comic playwrights, the term \textit{cantharus} also occurs in Vergil's pastoral (Verg. Ecl. 6.17). For further attestations see OLD, s.v. \textit{cantharus}.}\]
For, the picture of the maiden (virgo) exiting from the robbers' cave upon the Ass is the exact opposite of Homer's hero leaving the cave of Polyphemus beneath the sheep's belly (ὑπὸ γαστέρ' ἑλυσθεῖς Hom. Od. 9.433). As if to further underscore the contrast with the dangers Odysseus still faces with his companions, while the animals pass by the sightless giant in an exiting order, Apuleius, makes Tlepolemus' return triumphant, and while the thieves are still lying unconscious and intoxicated by the wine (cuncti demaue, sed prorsus omnès uino sepulti laccabanti, omnes paritum mortui Met. 7.12/163.16-17). In this way, Apuleius removes the pathetic tone of Homer's narrative, as the delayed departure of the ram that carries Odysseus gives the false impression to Polyphemus that the animal is in sorrow for the loss of its master's sight.

Furthermore, the epic quality is also evinced by the poetic color of dirigit gressum in imposita dorso meo puella, dirigit gressum ad suam patriam (Met. 7.12/163.19-20) and it

32 For a literary appreciation of Homer's scene and assessment of the overall affectionate and moving tone of Polyphemus' address to the animal, see: Glenn, (1971)143.
owes its elevated tinge to the adaptation of Vergil's *derioe oressum / cursum* (Verg. *Aen.* 5.162: *huc derioe cursum*; also 11.855: *huc derioe gressum*)\(^{33}\). In this instance, too, the solemn tone is significantly undermined by the lapse to the lowly tone of everyday speech in the Ass's remark: *imposita dorso meo puella* (*Met.* 7.12/163.19). This remark renders in turn a quite un-Homeric meaning to Homer's close equivalent *κατὰ νῶτα* (*Hom. Od.* 9.433), in the context of the hiding of Odysseus under the ram, in order to avoid Polyphemus' revenge.

To recapitulate, it is progressively evident that Apuleius, in the narrative of Tlepolemus' masquerade as the thief, Haemus, and rescue of his kidnapped fiancée, Charite, has composed a tale that incorporates many features of an epic: viz. the heroic theme of abduction and the subsequent punishment for the unjust captivity, the epic motif of trickery and disguise, etc. In this manner, Apuleius makes both aesthetically tangible and allusive Lucius' professed enthusiasm for the *divinus auctor* of the genre (*Met.* 9.13/213.1). Despite, however, Lucius' expressed admiration for Homer, these epic motifs and echoes receive such treatment in the tale as to call attention to the incompatible and inverted development within their new literary environment in comparison to their handling in the original setting. Hence the comic tone of the narrative. This inverted treatment of epic is not an isolated feature in itself. It is rather an integral part of the greater pattern of plot inversions in the tale, which the Groningen commentators effectively summarize as follows:

\(^{33}\) Hijmans et al. (1981) 163, s.v. *dirigo gressum*. Gatscha (1898) 147 in addition to the examples of Verg. *Aen.* 5.162 and *Aen.* 11.855, also brings in comparison the expression: *cursumque.../derioe* from Vergil's *Aen.* 6.194-195.
"Thrasyleon disguises himself in order not to be recognized as a robber, Tlepolemus so as not to be recognized as a law-abiding citizen." 34

The epic inversion along with the overall pattern of plot inversions account for the witty and highly sophisticated nuances evident in the tale of Tlepolemus as a whole.

34 Hijmans et al. (1981).
CHAPTER VI

THE DEATH OF CHARITE

In the latter part of the previous Chapter V I have dealt with the incident of Charite's liberation from the robbers by her fiancé, Tlepolemus. I also observed there the pattern of the restoration of the girl to the status reflected by her real name, Charite. I now turn to examine in more detail the literary associations in the account of her death at Metamorphoses 8.1/176.15-8.14/188.6. At the outset I must state that the literary reminiscences in the episode of her death have been well studied by modern scholars. Thus, for instance, C. A. Forbes in a brief but convincing contribution identified numerous verbal and structural affinities with Vergil's treatment of Dido\(^1\). More recently, P. G. Walsh\(^2\) and E. D. Finkelpearl\(^3\)

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2. Walsh (1970) 53-54 has uncovered a wide range of literary reminiscences drawn from Herodotus' novella of Atys (Hdt. Hist. 1.34-45), Plutarch's Camma (Plut. Mul. virt. 20) and Vergil's Dido. The idea, however, of this type of merged literary models is not new. It has been persuasively advanced by Anderson (1909) 537-549, tracing the main lines of the tale in Euripides' lost Protesilaos, the Herodotean novella of Atys and Plutarch's Camma (Plut. Mor. 257e; 768b, and Mul. virt. 20). Later, the influence of Plutarch's Camma in the tale of Charite has been discussed by Erbse (1950) 107-126, while Westerbrink (1978) 70, outlined the Herodotean elements in the description of the hunt and the death of Tlepolemus, interpreting them as a parody.

3. Finkelpearl (1986) 139-161, examines the literary material drawn from Vergil's Dido, Plutarch's Camma and Petronius' "Widow of Ephesus". Following Ciaffi, (1960), Finkelpearl explores the association of Charite with Petronius' "Widow of Ephesus" concluding that Apuleius' negative view of Dido stems from Petronius' interpretation and disrespect of Vergil's Dido. It should be kept in mind, however,
have suggested a more complex pattern of literary evocations that results from the simultaneous incorporation of material drawn from Plutarch's Camma (Plut. Mor. 257.22), and Petronius' Widow of Ephesus, alongside the Vergilian parallels. Against this wide range of literary antecedents, the cunning dexterity with which Charite blinds her rejected suitor, Thrasyllus, should also be pointed out (Met. 177.22; also Met. 184.12; Met. 187.20-21). Her strategy of taking vengeance on the unwanted Thrasyllus by luring him to sleep with too much wine may establish a connection with yet another precedent, that of Odysseus' blinding of the monster Polyphemus. The Homeric hero punishes the giant by getting him drunk and then blinding him when he has passed out. Charite takes revenge on this unwanted suitor by putting him to sleep with wine and subsequently plucking out his eyes with her hairpin. Thus her means of exacting revenge strikingly coincide with the Odyssean tactic of her husband in executing the band of his own opponents, the robbers. This is not surprising in view of the fact that this juvenis (Met. 8.1/177.5) in addition to being praenobilis and locuples (Met. 8.1/177.5-6), is also described in terms appropriate for robbers:

sed luxuriae popinalis scortisque et diurnis potationibus
exercitatus atque ob id factionibus letronum male sociatus nec non etiam manus infectus humano cruore

(Met. 8.1/177.6-10)

that a negative picture of Dido is already present in the Vergilian text. As a result Apuleius' critical view as reflected through his divergence from Vergil's Dido may not necessarily come from Petronius' disrespect for Dido, but from the implications of Vergil's text and Apuleius' contrasting treatment of epic material in the new literary environment of the novel. Lazzarini (1985) 140-144.

4. The lengthy characterization of Thrasyllus at this juncture in the narrative puzzled Hijmans et al. (1985) 3; the same comments are also repeated in 32, s.v. for Thrasyllus who is otherwise a known figure to Charite's slaves is here presented “in terms that seem to imply that the audience of eguisones opilionesque etc. has never heard of him...This seems strange when one remembers that it is
On the level of structure this use of the wine links the final episode of Charite's tragedy with the opening incident of her capture by the robbers, a thread holding together the extensive narrative section of the Charite-complex, but more importantly underlining the parallel use of the stratagem of the *Odyssey*.

In spite, however, of the undeniable presence of epic in the tale, these materials are so developed in the new context as to contrast with their literary models in many perspectives. This pattern of reversals fits well into the more general use of inversion apparent in the tale. Unlike the infidelity of the epic heroine Dido to her husband, Sychaeus, Charite is driven to suicide out of loyalty to her newlywed Tlepolemus⁵. The originality of Apuleius' incorporation and handling of epic material appears also in his diction.

In what follows, I propose to illustrate this treatment of epic material in the story of the deaths of Tlepolemus, Charite and Thrasyllus, drawn simultaneously from Vergil and Homer. The atmosphere of the tale with three successive deaths, in the order mentioned above, may initially exclude any thought that Apuleius plays with the serious implication of its models, although, as Westerbrink observes, a parodic flavor is not entirely absent⁶. A sophisticated playing with

Charite's *familia rustica* who form the audience and who might be supposed to have been aware of the *fama* referred to at 177.10". The conclusion reached is that this characterization of Thrasyllus functions as a general introduction to the readers who are otherwise ignorant of details. I think, however, that Thrasyllus' introduction can be also explained on the grounds that it helps develop this figure in direct line with the robbers, thereby justifying the subsequent punishment by Charite

⁵. See Hijnmans et al. (1985) 7.

⁶. In two instances, at least Westerbrink (1978) 70, detects parodic intentions in Apuleius' description of the entire episode of the death of Charite: (1) in the description of the slave's report to his fellow servants concerning the death of Charite as burlesquing the style of Panthus' speech to Aeneas about the
the epic material, however, is recognizable in the opposite development of these epicisms when set against their treatment in their original contexts.

A contrast with the epic scale is implied in the announcement of the servant to his fellow slaves of the tragic death of Charite:

\[
\text{equisones opilionesque, etiam busaeque, fuit Charite nobisque misella et quidem casu gravissimo nec vero incomitata Manis adivit}
\]

(Met. 8.1/176.21-177.1).

Hijmans has shown the metrical and verbal similarities of the servant's report to the epigrammatic and sad announcement of Panthus, the priest of Apollo, to Aeneas about the devastation taking place within the besieged city:

\[
\text{venit summa dies et ineluctabile tempus}
\]
\[
\text{Dardaniae, fuimus Troes, fuit illium et ingens gloria Teucrorum}
\]

(Verg. Aen. 2.324-26)\(^7\).

This association may be strengthened by the similar reference to the night and the fact that there were more than one victim: \text{nec vero incomitata Manis adivit.}

The echo of Vergil in the slave's diction gives us a clue to Apuleius' intention. The effect then depends upon the figurative equation of the death of Charite to the disaster of a fallen city! Apuleius may even playfully exploit the contrast between the vastness of Troy's fall and the particularity of Charite's loss, also conveyed by devastation within the besieged Troy (also see below, p. 123); (2) in the description of Tlepolemus' death as parodying Herodotus' account of the death of Croesus' youngest son by Adrastus (Hdt. Hist. 1.34-45). See also above, note 2.

\(^7\) Hijmans et al. (1985) 29, s.v. \text{fuit Charite nobisque misella}. Hildebrand (1842) Vol. 1, 634, s.v. \text{quam misella}. Also Westerbrink (1978) 70, who views the reference as a direct parody of Vergil's text; Médan (1926) 256. For an analysis of the development of the theme of love in the episode of Charite see Garson (1977-1978) 39-40.
the hypocoristic use of the diminutive term *misellus* (*Charite* *misella*). This tension also extends between the formal and tragic tone of the servant's report and the rustic listeners of *euisones*, *opiliones* and *busae*, who form an audience of otherwise servants.

When Tlepolemus is killed by the trick of Thrasyllus, *fama* quickly spreads the sad news to Charite about the crime committed:

```
necdum satis scelere transacto fama dilabitur et cursus
primos ad domum Tlepolemi detorquet et aures infelicis
nuptae percutit
```

(Met. 8.6/181.1-3).

Apuleius' description of *fama* shares in common the verb: *dilabitur* with Vergil's *adlabitur* from the portrayal of the personified *Fama* as it "slips away" and ultimately reaches the mother of dead Euryalus: *per urbem / nuntia Fama ruat matrisque adlabitur auris / Euryali* (Verg. Aen. 9.473-75). The imagery of *Fama* as it suddenly departs, spreads over cities and finally arrives at its destination is borrowed from another epic scene: the descriptions of *Fama* as it brings the news to Dido's rejected suitor, Iarbas: *exemplo Libvae magnas it Fama per urbes* (Verg. Aen. 4.173 ff.). This latter association is supported by the presence of the adjective *infelix* (*et aures infelicis nuptae percutit* Met. 8.6/181.2-3) which is most

---

8. On the use of diminutives and in particular on the term *misellus* see Abate (1978) 49 and 102.


notable as the epithet of Vergil's tragic Dido and by the employment, in both
cases, of the verb *detorquet* in the same person and number. Incidentally, Charite
is described as distraught in mind (*amens et vecordia percita* Met. 8.6/181.4-5), as is
larbas (*amens animi et rumore amaro accensus* Verg. Aen. 4.203). Nevertheless, there
is a subtle element of inversion between the two narratives. Whereas Dido's *culpa*
initiates the report of the *Fama* and subsequently brings the news to the jealous
suitor, larbas, here the *culpa* of the rejected Thrasyllus makes up the sad report
of *fama*12. Charite immediately rushes forth, bewailing the death of her husband,
Tlepolemus:

\[
\text{quae quidem simul percepit tale nuntium, quale non audiet}
\text{alud, amens et vecordia percita cursuque bacchata furibundo}
\text{per plateas populosas et arva rurestria fertur insana voce}
\text{casum mariti quiritans}
\]

(Met. 8.6/181.3-7).

The description of Charite as she deliriously rushes out employs vocabulary from
the ritualistic language of religious ecstasy and possession (*amens, vecordia, bacchata, furibundo, insana voce*). The passage bring to mind Vergil's description of
Dido's frenzied rushing when a similar *Fama* brings to her the tidings about
Aeneas' preparations with his men for a speedy departure from her city:

\[
\text{saevit inops animi totamque incensa per urbem}
\text{bacchatur}
\]

(Verg. Aen. 4.300-01)13.

---

11. On the frequency of the term infelix in association with Dido see the entries of
Warwick (1975), s.v. *infelix*: 1.749; 4.450; 4.529; 4.596; 4.68; 5.3; 6.456; 6.521.

12. Also Hijmans et al. (1985) 70, s.v. *infelicis nuptae*.

13. The generally epic / poetic flavor in the passage has been well noted by
Hijmans et al. (1985) 71, s.v. *per plateas populosas*; also Forbes (1943-1944) 39; Walsh
(1970) 54, and note 2; Lazzarini (1985) 141, and note 32; and most eloquently
Finkelpaar (1986) 145.
There is, however, a set of neatly articulated contrasts: Vergil confines Dido’s delirium within the city (totamque per urbem). The countryside which also figures prominently is reserved for and functions as the appropriate backdrop for the bacchic rite in the ensuing simile:

\[\text{qualis commoti excita sacr is} \]
\[\text{Thyias, ubi audito stimulant trieterica Baccho} \]
\[\text{orgia nocturnusque vocat clamore Citheron} \]

(Verg. Aen. 4.301-03).

While maintaining the imagery of Dido’s rushing, Apuleius extends Charite’s route to the countryside (per plateas populosas et arva rustrica fertur. Met. 8.6/181.5-6). The isocola stress the sense of equal speed as Charite rushes not only through crowded city squares but also through the countryside. No doubt, the point of this inclusion of the countryside is to assist the notion that Charite is being cast into the role of a Bacchant. This impression is also supported by the reference to Dionysus in Charite’s worshipping the image of the dead Tlepolemus:

\[\text{imagines defuncti, quas ad habitum dei Liberi formaverat,} \]
\[\text{adfixo servitio divinis percolens honoribus ipso se solacio cruciabat} \]

(Met.8.7/182.12-14)\(^1\)

\(^1\) See Hijmans, Jr. (1896) 350-363 who extensively discusses the passage quoted in the text. Hijmans also further advances the association of Tlepolemus with Dionysus throughout the Charite complex on the basis of the following traits that the hero shares in common with the god (355-356):

a. Tlepolemus’ disguise as Haemus (7,8) recalls Dionysus’ disguises mentioned by Hor. Carm. 2,19,23-24; Nomm. Dion. 11,13,18 and passim, especially 45,105 f.

b. Haemus’ female role (7,8) recalls the double nature of Dionysus as male and female.

c. Haemus / Tlepolemus is imberbis (7,5: 157,25; 7,8:160.5) as is Dionysus.

d. Tlepolemus’ name which means endurer in war echoes the warlike nature of Dionysus.

e. Haemus’ Thracian birthplace coincides with Dionysus’ Thracian origin.

f. Tlepolemus uses the Dionysiac weapon of wine in the process of liberating Charite.
For Charite then Tlepolemus has acquired divine status worshipped with a cult and honors offered at his image. The verb colo and its compound percolo bring up this religious sense as terms of the ritualistic language designating "le culte et les honneurs que les hommes rendent aux dieux." In doing so, however, Apuleius doubles Charite's literary route. A similar sense of intensification emerges from the use of the unpoetic term quintans in the sense of "making a public outcry" which serves to bring forth a prosaic aspect of Charite's insanity in her intense bewailing for the death of her husband, Tlepolemus.

While the corpse of Charite is being carried for burial, Thrasyllus feigns sorrow and thus hides his joy. Simultaneously, however, he dares to propose marriage to the widow still mourning for the loss of his victim. Charite becomes suspicious of his schemes and decides to defer his offer for a while in order to give it some additional thought. At this juncture in the narrative the innocent girl, as the Groningen commentators well observe, is transformed into a vindictive fury. In the meantime, the shade of Tlepolemus appears in her sleep, in order to illuminate the circumstances of his death:

g. Tlepolemus' use of good counsel echoes the Eubouleia of Dionysus.
h. Tlepolemus' death by Thrasyllus recalls Dionysus in Hades.
i. The blinding of Thrasyllus by Charite is reminiscent of the punishment of Dionysus' opponent Lycurgus by Zeus.

On the basis of similar associations, I favor an association of Haemus / Tlepolemus with Polyphemus and Odysseus. See further note 25.

15. Ernout and Meillet (1939), s.v. colo. Also OLD. s.v. colo 6.

16. See OLD, s.v. quiritus. b. Also Hijnmans et al. (1985) 71, s.v. quiritans, well points out the prosaic ending of the passage in view of the strong unpoetic flavor of the word quiritans.

17. Hijnmans et al. (1985) 88, s.v. sed intervalla
Here it is relevant to observe that Charite again dreams of Tlepolemus' death caused by a stone thrown by a robber as he was chasing her abductors (Met. 4.27/95.18-96.4). As I have observed in Chapter III, her previous nightmare was considered a literary reminiscence of Dido's recurring dream when the heroine dreams that she was pursued by Aeneas: *agit ipse furentem / in somnis ferus Aeneas,* semperque relinquui / sola sibi, semper longam incomitata videtur / ire viam et Tyrros deserta querere terra (Verg. Aen. 4.465-68)\(^{18}\). In her present vision Charite dreams the ghost of Tlepolemus appearing in her sleep in order to clarify the circumstances figuratively conveyed by her earlier dream. After all Thasyllus, as noted above, in addition to his noble birth is also cast as a robber who has even stained his hands with human blood (Met. 8.1/177.6-9). This motif of Charite's present dream, then, just as her earlier vision is also seen in the epic narrative. For instance, it can be seen in the visitation of the wounded Hector to Aeneas (*in somnis, ecce, ante oculos maestissimus Hector / visus adesse mihi largosque effundere fletus, / captatus bigis ut quondam, atque cruento / pulvere perque pedes trajectus lora tumentis* Verg. Aen. 2.270-73). In addition it is worth noting that Hector also advises the Trojan hero to flee from the fallen city ("heu fuge, nate dea, teaque his aeripe flammis")

\(^{18}\) Hijmans et al. (1977) 204, s.v. talis Aspectus.
Verg. Aen. 2.289). The set of details, however, i.e. the order of events, the deformity of the shape of the ghost, the explication of the circumstances that resulted in his murder, the closeness of the agent, and finally the advice to the widow to turn down the marriage proposal, evoke another Vergilian vignette: viz. Sychaeus' appearing to Dido in a dream and revealing the role of her brother in his murder:

\[
\text{ipsa sed in somnis inhumanat venit imago} \\
\text{contuigis ora modis attollens pallida miris;}
\]
\[
\text{crudeis arae trajectaque pectora fero} \\
\text{nudavit, caecumque domus scelus omne retextit.}
\]
\[
\text{tum celerare fugam patriaque excedere suadet} \\
\text{(Verg. Aen. 1.353-57).}
\]

Like the deformed Sychaeus (ora pallida, trajectaque pectora fero), Tlepolemus appears to his wife in dream with his face covered in blood (sanie cruentam Met. 8.8/183.9) and in pallor (pallore deformem Met. 8.8/183.9), in order to illuminate the circumstances as well as heighten the pathos of the crime. This association is further justified by the use of the term scelus (scenam sceleris Met. 8.8/183.21) which may serve as a direct allusion to Vergil's scelus (scelus... retextit Verg. Aen. 1.356). Like Sychaeus, then, who reveals the horror of Pygmalion's crime to his wife and advises, in turn, his widow to flee (celerare fugam patriaque excedere suadet Verg. Aen. 1.357), Tlepolemus exposes Thrasyllus' murderous deed (lancea mali Thrasylli me tibi fecit alienum) and subsequently counsels his widow to turn down his proposal for marriage (fuge mei percussor is cruentam dexteram). Yet, there is an element of contrast with the pattern of Vergil's narrative. Vergil is more

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19 Hijmans et al. (1977) 90, s.v. pallore deformem attolens faciem.

interested in developing Dido's own sense of guilt by breaking her marital faith to her dead husband Sychaeus with her new love for and devotion to Aeneas. At the very least, this is evident when the heroine blatantly professes: non servata cinem promissa Sychaeo (Verg. Aen. 4.552). In an effective contrast, Apuleius introduces Charite as a perpetua coniunx of the dead Tlepolemus, ideally abiding to the characteristic Roman norm of remaining pudice (pudicae mulier) Met. 8.12/186.30; cf. also quietem pudicam Met. 8.8/183.9) and univiræ. Thus, and as Finkelpearl well puts it, Apuleius presents

"a 'Dido' who does not succumb to the temptation of a new lover—or a new marriage, as Dido insists on calling it—but rather remained faithful to her first husband." 22

In spite of this marked role reversal, the account of Charite continues to echo tragic language of Aeneid IV, most notably in the reaction of the heroine after the vision of her dream:

\[ \text{at illa, ut primum maesta quieverat, toro faciem impressa, et etiam nunc doriens, lacrimis emanantibus genas cohumidat} \]

(Met. 8.9/184.1-3).

The expression \text{toro faciem impressa} recalls Dido's gesture and language \text{os impressa toro} in the Aeneid as the heroine lies on her funeral bed about to commit suicide:

\[ \text{dixit, et os impressa toro "mortem inulæ, sed moriamur" ait. "sic, sic iuvat ire sub umbras} \]

(Verg. Aen. 4.659-60) 23.

---


This connection is somewhat strengthened by the thematic detail that Charite decides to keep in silence her resolution to punish the slayer of her husband and, subsequently, commit suicide (nequissimum percussorem punire et aerumnabili vitae sese subtrahere tacita decernit Met. 8.9/184.7-9). So does Dido who hides from her sister, Anna, the portentous sight of the sacred waters as they turn dark when she offers gifts at the altar (hoc visum nulli, non ipsi effata soror) Verg. Aen. 4.456). But while both women commit suicide, the utterances expressed during their death highlight the disparities between the two narratives. For whereas Dido, in spite of her imprecations against Aeneas and his men resolves to die unavenged ("moriemur invita, sed moriamur" Verg. Aen. 4.659-60), Charite determines first to exact revenge and then take her lie. This skillful twist of Dido's resolution gains an even greater dimension as Apuleius replaces here Vergil's os meaning primarily "mouth", "lips" with the more general term, facies denoting "appearance", "face". This substitution, in turn, helps somewhat to remove the ambiguity inherent in Vergil's os impressa toro. For Dido's act can be interpreted as a parting kiss to the couch which she used to share with Aeneas or as a gesture of pressing her face onto her funeral bed in desperation.

Upon waking up, Charite decides to take revenge on Thrasyllus. She feigns giving in to her wooer's demands and arranges a secret meeting in her room. Thrasyllus welcomes the invitation. Upon his arrival, the nutrix greets him and offers him several cups of drugged wine, while waiting for Charite:

\begin{verbatim}
  tunc anus de iussu dominae blandiens ei furtim depromptis  
calicibus et oenoforo, quod inmixtum vino soporiferum gerebat
\end{verbatim}

24 For the inherent difficulty of interpreting Dido's act as either a gesture of kissing the bed or hiding her face in it see Hijmans et al. (1985) 96-97, toro faciem impressa and further bibliography there. Also Finkelpearl (1986) 149.
venenum, crebris potionibus avide ac secure haurientem
mentite domiae tarditatem, quasi parentem adsideret
aegrotum, facile sepelivit ad somnum.

(Met. 8.11/185.28-186.5).

This description of the nurse drugging Thrasyllus to sleep with wine replays in miniature Odysseus' tricking Polyphemus. In the first place, the eagerness with which Thrasyllus is presented as drinking (crebris potionibus avide ac secure haurientem) resembles the foolishness of Polyphemus asking Odysseus for more wine (καὶ μὴ ήτεε δεύτερον αὐτίς / ἄνοι μοὶ ἐτι πρόφορων... Hom. Od. 9.354-55; also τρις μὲν ἔδωκα ψεῦδην, τρίς δὲ ἐκπεν ἀφραδίζην Hom. Od. 9.361). More importantly, the expression soporiferum venenum reminds the alert reader of its previous use by the narrator-Ass when Tlepolemus, in the role of Haemus, mixed the wine in the cups in order to outwit his own opponents, the robbers. With this Odyssean trick Tlepolemus then destroys their band (quasi soporiferum quoddam venenum cantharis immiseret illis Met. 7.12/163.14-16). In this sense also the way in which Thrasyllus is buried in sleep (facile sepelivit ad somnum Met. 8/11186.4-5), lying on his back (supinato Met. 8.11/186.6), parallels the manner in which Polyphemus reclines on his back (ὁπνικειν... Καὶ ἔτι μὴ ὀπνεικει... ἡμεὶς πανδαιμῶν Hom. Od. 9.371), overcome by a similar deep sleep (ἀνακλινθεὶς πέσεν ὀπνικε... καὶ τῇ ὀπνεῖ πανδαιμῶν... Hom. Od. 9.371-73).

25. Anderson (1976) 63, was the first to propose Homer's episode of Polyphemus as a possible source for Lucian's portrait of Charite blinding her opponent Thrasyllus in the Onos. Without any explication, van der Paardt (1981) 21, denied the validity of Anderson's suggestion for the presentation of Charite by Apuleius. Most recently, however, Hijmans (1986) 360-61, has entertained the plausibility of Anderson's suggestion in the light of the interesting implications, although without any illustration of the association. Given this background, I vigorously argue for the Homeric parallel in the description of Charite as she blinds her opponent Thrasyllus. This use of Odyssean strategy by Charite becomes particularly important in that it repeats Tlepolemus' trick in punishing the bandits, thereby linking the extensive narrative of the Charite-complex closer together. See also note 28.
Within this Odyssean atmosphere, the instructions of Charite to the *nutrix* to tell lies about her delay (mentita dominae tarditatem *Met.* 8.11/186.3) may be a reworking of the motif of Odysseus' lies to the monster about his identity as part of the hero's well calculated scheme of deceiving him (*Hom.* Od. 9.364).

Thus, when the plan is duly being carried out and Thrasyllus, like Polyphemus, is put to sleep, Charite is called in and angrily addresses her suitor:

"*en*, inquit, "fidus coniugis mei comes, en venator egregius, en carus maritus"

(*Met.* 8.12/186.8-9).

The bitterly ironic overtone of this passage is in addition clarified by the literary allusion in the expression *en fidus* to the epic phrase *en dextra fidesoue* (*Verg.* Aen. 4.597) from the context of Dido's sarcastic speech when she sees the Trojan fleet sailing away from Carthage. The threefold reiteration of *en* however, in an emphatic tricolon skillfully exploits Vergil's more subtle and single *en*. This divergence can also be seen in the development of the two narratives. Dido ponders revenge: she could have had Aeneas or his companions cut to pieces or have murdered Ascanius, and made the father, like Atreus, eat the flesh of his own son:

\[
\text{nec potui abreptum divellere corpus et undis spargere? non socios, non ipsum absumerere ferro Ascanium patriisque epulandum ponere mensis?}
\]

(*Verg.* Aen. 4.600-02).

In an effective contrast with Dido, however, Charite goes on to perform the bloody deed of plucking out the eyes of Thrasyllus:

\[
\text{acu crinali capite depromta Thrasylli convulnerat tota lumina eumque prorsus exoculatum relinquens, dum dolore nescio crapulum cum somno discutit}
\]

---

26 Forbes (1943-1944) 40; Finkelpearl (1986) 151.
Quite remarkably, the description of Charite wielding her hairpin to the eyes of Thrasyllus repeats the motif of Odysseus' twisting the stake into the eye of the giant in Homer's narrative (ἐγὼ δ' ἐπισκόπησι τοὺς ἀντρεπόν Ηόμηρος Οδ. 9.383-84). Furthermore, the manly spirit (masculis animis Met. 8.11/186.6) with which Charite rushes into the room and is about to pluck out Thrasyllus' eyes could reflect the great daring (θάρσος μέγα Ηόμηρος Οδ. 9.381) of Odysseus and his men as they are about to whirl the burning stake into the eye of the Cyclops. This extraordinary courage prompts the comment by the narrator Odysseus that it was presumably inspired by some god: αὐτὴν τὸν θάρσος ἐνεπνεύσεν μέγα δαιμόνιον (Ηόμηρος Οδ. 9.381). At the very least, this association is supported by the presence of words that stress Charite's astuteness (astuque mira persona Met. 8.9/184.12; also astu Thrasyllum inductum petisset Met. 8.14/187.20-21) that could be compared with the cleverness of Odysseus' plan in taking vengeance on Polyphemus and the subsequent trick on his identity (Ἀρίστη βουλή Ηόμηρος Οδ. 9.318; also μῆτις ἀμύμων Ηόμηρος Οδ. 9.414). This use of the Odyssean strategy in blinding Thrasyllus establishes an additional point of similarity between Charite and Tlepolemus, insofar as her tactic of exacting revenge coincides with the Odyssean tactic of Tlepolemus in punishing the robbers27. Nevertheless, the overall heroic

27. The apparent contradiction caused by the presentation of this young man at one time in terms reminiscent of a notorious robber, and therefore of Homer's Polyphemus and later of Odysseus, should hardly be surprising in view of his double identity as the Thracian thief, Haemus, and as the bridegroom of Charite, Tlepolemus. In summary, like Odysseus who rescues his companions from the monster's atrocities, Tlepolemus comes to the robbers in order to liberate his kidnapped fiancée, Charite. Significantly the Homeric reference to Odysseus' bringing the wine to Polyphemus as a libation gift (Ηόμηρος Οδ. 9.349) is present in Haemus' carrying the wine to the robbers from a nearby castellum (Met. 7.10/162.9) and with a similar pretext of sacrifice and prayer to their patron deity, Mars (Met. 7.10/162.3-9). In a manner similar to the cunning of Odysseus, Tlepolemus punishes the thieves precisely with the Odyssean strategy of forcing them to drink
interpretation of the episode is conditioned by the tension between the manly spirit of the heroine (masculis animis) and the instrument of the hairpin with which she carries out her punishment. Further modification occurs in the tragic resolution of the scene as Charite rushes in a frenzy to her husband's tomb in order to commit suicide:

arrepto nudo gladio, quo se Tlepolemus solebat incingere, per mediam civitatem cursu furioso proripit se et praecul dubio nescio quod scelus gestiens recta monimentum mariti contendit

(Met. 8.13/187.6-9).

The narrative of Charite's frenzied rush to end her life with the sword of Tlepolemus, *curso furioso proripit se*, bears some resemblance to Dido's furious burst into the interior of her house in order to put an end to her life (*at trepida et coeptis immanibus effera Dido/... inter ior a domus irrumit* Verg. Aen. 4.642-46), while the reference to Tlepolemus' sword owes a debt to Dido's use of the sword that Aeneas has left behind (*ensemque relictum* Verg. Aen. 4.507).

Her imminent death prompts a description of the reaction of the townspeople:

at nos et omnis populus, nudatis totis aedibus, studiose consequimur hortati mutuo ferrum vaesanis extorquere manibus

the wine. This is made plausible by the occurrence of the expression *vino sepultus iacebant* (Met. 7.12/163.16-17) which may serve as an allusion to Homer's description of the drunk Polyphemus, *oivopaphuv* (Hom. Od. 9.374). What is especially worth noticing in the passage of Apuleius is that the expression *vino sepultus* occurs also in the Vergilian context where Polyphemus lies intoxicated by the wine of Odysseus (*nam simul expletus daebibus vinoque sepultus* Verg. Aen. 3.630) For a fuller discussion see Chapter V, pp. 102 ff., above.

28. Hijmans et al. (1985) 127, s.v. *masculis animis* The expression *masculis animis* in conjunction with *efflavit animam virilim* Met. 8.14/187.23-24 is considered by Tatum (1972) 309, note 19, as indicative of the language that suggests a "metamorphosis" of sex.

These details draw primarily from the context of Vergil’s description of the behavior of the Trojan youths as they rush to see their countrymen bringing forward the captive, Sinon: *undique visendi studio Troiana iuventus / circumfusa ruit certantque in ludere capto* (Verg. *Aen.* 2.63-64). But whereas Vergil places emphasis on the tragic potential that underlines the excitement of the youth in striving to play with the unarmed (*inermis* Verg. *Aen.* 2.67) and captive stranger (*certantque in ludere capto* Verg. *Aen.* 2.64), Apuleius is interested in the collective efforts of the townspeople as they struggle to take the sword away out of the girl’s hands in order to save her life. Nevertheless, Charite discourages their efforts to save her, addressing them as follows:

"abicite", inquit, "importunas lacrimas, abicite luctum meis virtutibus alienum. vindicavi in mei mariti cruentum peremptorem, punita sum funestum mearum nuptiarum praedonem. iam tempus est, ut isto gladio deorsus ad meum Tlepoleumum viam quaeram"


The arrangement of details—the revenge for a dead husband followed by the wish to commit suicide with the sword—recalls the sequence of Dido’s thoughts as she reflects first upon her punishment for the death of her husband, Sychaeus: *ulla virum poenas inimico a fratre recent* (Verg. *Aen.* 4.656), and then upon her wish to take her life. But unlike Dido who finally resolves to die, albeit unavenged (*moriemur inulta, sed moriamur* Verg. *Aen.* 4.659-60), Charite proclaims that she has taken proper revenge for the destroyer of both her marriage and husband

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30. Hijnans et al. (1985) 130, s.v. *studiose*

The emphasis on the synonymous terms *vindicavi* and *punite sum* stresses the sense of proper revenge. Thus Charite fulfils the dying wish that Dido regrets for being unable to carry out. Now then, Charite can unite with her lawful and dead husband, Tlepolemus, as does Dido when she later joins in Hades her former husband Sychaeus (coniunx ubi pristinus illi / respondet curis sequatque Sychaeus amrem Verg. *Aen.* 6.473-74).

The description of the heroine's tragic death, as she pierces her chest with Tlepolemus' sword at his tomb, is reminiscent of Dido's final gesture, when the queen falls upon Aeneas' sword and so commits suicide upon her bed. But, once again, whereas Dido takes her own life away with the sword of Aeneas (ensemque.../ Dardanium Verg. *Aen.* 4.646-47)—a token of her infidelity towards her dead husband Sychaeus—and upon the bed often associated with the pleasure of her illicit union with Aeneas, Charite takes the road to death with the sword of Tlepolemus—a sign of her marital faithfulness—so she can extend the marriage union with her lawful husband even in death, as his wife forever.

It is clear then that Apuleius has enriched the presentation of Charite by means of a wide range of verbal and thematic borrowings. These echoes in turn suggest associations not only with Vergil's treatment of Dido, but also with Homer's description of the blinding of Polyphemus, by Odysseus. This connection is assisted by the introductory characterization of Thrasyllus by the narrator-slave as a former thief, like the opponents of Tlepolemus, the robbers. Thus Charite takes revenge on this *praedo* with a tactic previously used by Tlepolemus in punishing his opponents, the robbers, thereby becoming a worthy mate of her husband. In this manner, Apuleius rounds off the extensive range of allusions to the Homeric *Cyclopeia* that humorously help to elevate the band of
brigands to the status of Homer's giant figures. On the level of structure, this parallel use of the *Odyssey* trick by Charite further contributes to the thematic unity, linking in this way the extensive narrative of the Charite-complex closer together. When, however, set in opposition with their original places, these epic materials are frequently treated in such a way as to call attention to their contrasting development. This antithetical development should not be taken as a hint, as a recent critic does, of Apuleius' criticism and negative view of Dido that comes via the novelist's awareness of Petronius' disrespect for Dido\(^{32}\). After all Vergil strives hard to make clear Dido's own guilt in breaking her faith to her husband with her devotion to her new lover for Aeneas. This, of course, implies that Aeneas is innocent as far as the passion of Dido is concerned\(^{33}\). On the contrary, this treatment suggests an imitation of high order insofar as the aim derives its effect not from a linear parallel but from the opposite development of the borrowed material as if to be tested in a new literary environment\(^{34}\). And this form of imitation is artfully reflected in the narrative of the death of Charite by the language alteration and the change of epic norms.

\(^{32}\) Finkelpearl (1986) 156-159.

\(^{33}\) I owe this observation to Prof. Hans-Peter Stahl.

\(^{34}\) This appreciation of the inverted treatment of epic material was originally proposed by Harrison (1989) [manuscript] 13 and 15. See also Lazzarini (1985) 131-132.
CONCLUSION

The Metamorphoses is a work of high literary artistry, which warrants the search for echoes in it of previous works. It is also important to note that Lucius in his journey from Hypata to Cenchreae explicitly compares his situation with the adventures of his literary prototype Odysseus:

nec immerito prisciæ poeticae divinitus auctor apud Graios summae prudentiae uirum monstrare cupiens multarum civilitatum obitu et variorum populi cognitu summas adeptum virtutes ecce nit. nam et ipsa gratias gratias asino meo memini, quod me suo celatum tegmine uarilisque fortunis exercitatum, etsi minus prudentem, multisclium reddidit

(Met. 9.13/212.26-213.1-6).

This projection of the situation of the novel to the paradigms of the distant past acquires some added dimensions. In the Bakhtinian formulation, the breaking of the boundaries between distinct genres as well as their merging reveals the wit of the narrative1.

The different literary environments of the epic and the novel can be seen in the encounter of Lucius with Pamphile's maid, Fotis. This maid, who will perform magic on his behalf, is a Circe-like figure. Odysseus, however, counters Circe with the gesture of the drawn sword: ἐγὼ δ’ ἄρο ὅξου ἐπο χάμιον μαρ χοῦ / Κιρη ἐπιέκα ως τε κταμεναι μενεαίνων (Hom. Od. 10.321-22). In the sequence he is able to maintain his manhood and then enjoy her beauty and benefit from her knowledge (Hom. Od. 10.504-40). In contrast, Lucius, who lacks the qualities of the heroic

Odysseus, is defenseless against the transforming powers of sex and magic and ultimately looses his human shape.

The narrative of Lucius' misfortunes is filled up with allusions to the adventures as described in Homer's *Odyssey* and Vergil's *Aeneid*. Lucius in the shape of the Ass enters into an epic world of adventures under his captors, the robbers. The lengthy central sequence of the novel which is known as the Charite-complex, interweaves the career of the Ass with the fate of the girl captured by the robbers. The description of the robbers' lair is elaborated with imagery drawn from Homer's description of the cave of the Cyclops, Polyphemus. This association introduces the thieves as giant figures and thus increases the sense of horror as Lucius becomes their captive. The use of imagery, however, that the epic attributes to the dwelling of nymphs or superhuman monsters increases the effect of playfulness. For the robbers are not the supernatural figures of a mythic and distant past but contemporary criminals who resort to mountain lairs in order to live a lawless life.

A comparably variegated treatment of epic material is further noticeable in the three robber-tales. This triad of tales abounds in allusions to epic language and conventions. The most extended tale relates Thrasyleon's penetration into the house of the rich Demochares disguised as a bear. Its structure and language is reminiscent of Vergil's description of the tale of the Wooden Horse, but includes apparent elements of inversion. The aftermath of the expedition is developed in opposite ways: whereas the Greeks succeed in deploying the military device of the Wooden Horse, the robbers fail to carry out their mission to a successful conclusion. In the debased context of private plunder the heroic expedition is trivialized.
Playfulness with the epic expectations is also seen in the episode that follows the arrival of the captive Charite and in the tale of Cupid and Psyche. Alongside the abundance of folk elements, this tale exhibits a plot and language influenced by the epic: the divine-wrath motif, the sorrowful adventures of the heroine, and the journey to the underworld. Yet, these epic elements are altered and blended in ways unknown to the epic. Their development is *para prosoption*.

This literary play is also noticeable in the account of Tlepolemus' coming in disguise to the robbers' cave and liberating his bride. The account combines two distinct Homeric images: the physical description of the giant Polyphemus and the strategy of Odysseus in blinding the monster with the wine. The apparent tension created by the presentation of this young man, once in terms reminiscent of the giant Polyphemus and later in the manner of Odysseus, is supported by the double identity of the youth, in the beginning as Haemus and later as Tlepolemus. Sophistication and wit mark the entire episode.

Sometimes the epic materials are developed in a manner opposite to that of the epic text. The tale of Charite's death illustrates this technique. The aim, however, is not simply one of comic degradation, since the tale is given a certain tragic quality. The entire description follows a celebrated epic death-scene, viz. Vergil's description of Dido's suicide. Yet, in opposition to her epic prototype, Charite remains *pudica* and *univira* to her dead husband. Furthermore, alongside the Vergilian overtones, Charite's blinding of her suitor, Thrasylus points to another literary precedent, that of Odysseus blinding Polyphemus. Charite takes revenge on this *praedae* with the tactic previously used by her husband Tlepolemus in punishing her own captors, the robbers. Thus she becomes a deserved wife of her husband since their method of extracting revenge strikingly coincide. These
parallel uses of the *Odyssey* motif contribute to the thematic structure of the extensive narrative of the Charite-complex.

One can expect an audience of the second century, trained in rhetoric, to be sensitive to the epic reminiscences in the mid-section of the *Metamorphoses*. This contrasting treatment of the epic material aesthetically heralds Lucius' subsequent escape from the epic world. For, as Tatum observes, Lucius in this animal transformation cannot win *kleos*, as is understood by the epic. "Glory" is explicitly promised to the Ass as a reward for his services during the liberation of Charite (*gloriare* *Met*. 7.16/166.5). In the sequel, however, he enters the services of the cruel wife of the herdmaster, who earns money at his labor and then of the malicious boy, by whom he experiences considerable beating and suffering.

At the conclusion of the novel, in Book 11, Lucius gains a repute equivalent to the heroic *kleos* of Odysseus with his spiritual conversion and "union" with the goddess Isis:

\[vives autem beatus, vives in mea tutela gloriosus\]

(*Met*.11.6/270.30-271.1).

Also some paragraphs later:

\[nec tamen Fama volucris pigra pinnarum tarditate cessaverat,\]
\[sed protinus in patria deae providentis adorabile beneficium\]
\[meamque ipsius fortunam memorabilem narraverat passim\]

(*Met*.11.18/280.8-11).

In order to achieve such heroic glory, the initiate must abandon the debased values of his former pursuits which are developed in epic proportions. In a sense Lucius' spiritual blessedness can be compared with Odysseus' ὀλίβος in his

\[2 Tatum (1969) 525.\]
old age after the completion of his westward journey advised by the spirit of Teiresias (ἀμφί ὅλοι / ὄλβοι ἐσονται Hom. Od. 23.283-284; also εἰ μὲν ὅι γῆρας ἐς θεοὶ τελέσουσιν ἀρειον Hom. Od. 23.286). This rejection of the life and values during his epic itinerary is aesthetically heralded by the incompatible treatment of these epicisms in their new setting when compared with their treatment in their original contexts. And this handling of the epic material accounts for their witty and highly sophisticated development within the extensive narrative known as the Charite-complex.
LIST OF REFERENCES


