Both the Roman Empire and its mirror, the *Natural History*, by their very totality embraced luxury. In the case of the former, luxury was seen as a consequence of conquest and concomitant with the subsequent stability and even stasis of peace. In ch. 4, C. explores the problem of this bond between luxury and power, and examines how Pliny acknowledges the bond through a self-reflexive presentation of both the wonders and the immoralities of luxury. Here, rather than an insufficient development of the conclusions, the reader may feel inadequately provided with background material: there is little indication of the considerable modern literature on the concept of luxury and the vexed question of the understanding and interpretation of ancient views on moral 'decline'.

A series of fascinating studies on the motif of art and nature in ch. 5 articulates the theme of modifying and redefining the boundaries between the natural and the artificial. The treatment of the grottoes attached to a number of imperial villas is particularly illuminating. The main part of the study concludes with an examination of portraiture in the context of memory. Although the topic of memory has been much discussed in the last twenty years, C. reinvigorates the debate with a lively discussion of ancestral portraits and the colossal statue of Nero, showing how the power of images could be manipulated to preserve or even modify memory. The links between portraiture and rhetoric, including rhetorical techniques of memory, are particularly important in the *Natural History*, in which memory is a crucial theme and which also happens to be a major source for ancestral images. There is an implicit link with earlier chapters as the manipulative, persuasive power of portraits, whether on display at Rome or in the text of the *Natural History*, informs a vision of Roman power which is underpinned by *memoria*.

Overall, this is an exciting addition to Plinian studies. As has already been suggested, a reappraisal of art in the *Natural History* in line with modern scholarship on the work's other aspects is long overdue. The result is a coherent and invigorating analysis. Those who look to it for fresh insights and stimulating avenues of inquiry will not be disappointed.

University of Manchester MARY BEAGON

M. C. O'BRIEN, *APULEIUS' DEBT TO PLATO IN THE METAMORPHOSES* (Studies in Classics 21). Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen, 2003. Pp. xvi + 139. ISBN 0–7734–7012–3. US$99.95.

One of the main problems of Apuleian scholarship concerns the 'seriousness' of the novel as a whole. The contrast between the first ten and the final eleventh book has been seen as jarring, and the problem of the overall unity of the novel has been tackled in diverse ways by scholars looking for a master-narrative giving coherence to the *Metamorphoses*. O'Brien sees the unity of the *Metamorphoses* in the coherent use of Platonic philosophy, or more specifically, in an attempt to combine Platonism with modern narratological approaches, of Platonic theory of higher and lower forms of discourse. Apuleius, the self-styled *philosophus Platonicus*, who wrote several works based on Platonic philosophy, encourages this strand of serious interpretation, which has now been given a book-length treatment.

The book divides into four chapters, one introductory on Apuleius' philosophy and three on scenes of the novel concentrating on two early books of the novel, when the hero Lucius is still a man, and the inset tale *Cupid and Psyche*. O'B.'s starting point is the theory that Apuleius propagates the study of Platonism in the novel, whilst looking at the more 'sophistic-rhetorical', 'lower' kind of philosophy using trickery to achieve advantages in Books 1–10, and exploring a more 'philosophical' approach aimed at the search for truth in Book 11. She argues that the unity of the novel is achieved by the distinction between these two types of discourse.

In ch. 1, O'B. offers an introduction into the importance of language, rhetoric, and philosophical discourse. Philosophy, she argues, for Apuleius is intrinsically linked with discourse, and Apuleius' awareness of its two levels is traced in his philosophical works. The superior discourse, pertaining to the truth, is perceived through the soul, the inferior through the ears and eyes. The latter, imperfect discourse, belongs to the sublunar world. On the other hand, for Apuleius, the inferior (sophistic discourse) is an image of the superior discourse. Ch. 2, on Lucius as an anti-Socrates, is perhaps the most successful, illustrating that all events that are threatened against Socrates in the *Crito*, if he were to escape to Thessaly, in fact happen to Lucius, although not all parallels and details may convince everyone. Ch. 3, on the Risus festival, stresses the importance of discourse, since we get four different versions of the murder: Lucius the narrator's, the prefect's, Lucius the defendant's, and Photis', all very much diverging from each

other, and none unequivocally true. The equations of Aspasia (in the minor dialogue *Menexenus*) and Pamphile (and of Diotima and Isis, which is more justified) are less convincing, and Lucius, although he is curious about magic, never really becomes a magician, as O'B. claims, and is only afraid of being taken for one. O'B. ties in the novel-genre of the *Metamorphoses* with the lower, fictional discourse, which is responsible for some of the contradictions in the story. Even after the encounter with Isis, Lucius' discourse remains on the lower, sublunar level, unless he communicates with Isis wordlessly, which lifts him as much as possible in a novel to the higher form of discourse. Ch. 4, on *Cupid and Psyche*, deals with the interpretation of the myth as a Platonic allegory, with Cupid, Psyche, and her sisters resembling, but not being, allegories of the tripartite soul, and the integration of Platonic thought into the literary texture of a fictional work.

O'B. ingeniously argues that Apuleius uses his Platonic knowledge to illustrate a funny story, giving it literary though not philosophical depth, not really leaving the lower discourse in the novel because of its fictional genre. O'B. has some interesting things to say about the importance of discourse in the novel (the ass is unable to communicate through words, and retransformed Lucius can praise Isis only insufficiently in words). A clearer exploration of how this theory impacts on our view of Isis, especially since *Cupid and Psyche*, as widely accepted, is a *mise en abyme* of the whole novel, and how Isis calls for the higher kind of discourse within the constraints of fiction would have been desirable, but overall, O'B.'s subtle approach which combines Apuleian entertainment and Platonic philosophy, and a serious Platonic statement with the obvious problem that Apuleius' heroes do not live up to Platonic expectations, provides some effective illumination of the novel.

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E. PLUMER, *AUGUSTINE'S COMMENTARY ON GALATIANS. INTRODUCTION, TEXT, TRANSLATION, AND NOTES*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003. Pp. xvii + 294. ISBN 0–19–924439–1. £50.00.

Augustine's commentary on Paul's letter to the Galatians (henceforth: *Commentary*) is his only complete commentary on any book of the Bible. What makes it an interesting subject, in addition, is the fact that we have the texts of five other commentaries on Galatians by five different authors which belong to the last third of the fourth and the first decade of the fifth century A.D. So we are able to compare the character and quality of six contemporaneous texts of the same genre and on the same topic. Augustine's *Commentary*, written in A.D. 394/5, is preceded by the ones of Marius Victorinus (not long after A.D. 362), the anonymous 'Ambrosiaster' (between A.D. 366 and 384), and Jerome (A.D. 386 or shortly thereafter) and is earlier than the ones of another anonymous author discovered by Hermann Josef Frede (between A.D. 396 and 405) and Pelagius (between A.D. 405/6 and 410).

Plumer prints the text of Johannes Divjak's edition in *CSEL* 84 (1971) without the *apparatus criticus* and adds his own very clear and comprehensible English translation. It contains a few (eight) reasonably justified changes in comparison with Divjak's Latin text where P. does not make the 'corrections' (238); so we have in eight passages an English text which is different from the Latin. But the book explicitly does not claim to provide a critical edition, and this may be the reason for this shyness to alter the Latin text. The footnotes to the translation provide information for the reader of the Augustinian text.

A lot more analytical thought is produced in the five chapters of the extensive introduction where P. carefully expounds his view on the 'Date of Composition' of the *Commentary*, its 'Relation to the other Latin Commentaries in Late Antiquity', 'The Purpose of Augustine's Commentary', and 'Augustine as a Reader of Galatians'; ch. 5 states the 'Conclusions'. The book is well indexed. The table of contents does not list the many and instructive subtitles within the five chapters and is therefore not as helpful as it could be.

As P. maintains in ch. 2, Marius Victornius' *commentatio simplex* of Paul's letter had the greatest impact on Augustine, especially since it was dealing with theological issues rather than giving learned philological and historical information. P. rightly emphasizes the important role of Marius Victorinus in Augustine's life according to the *Confessions*. Jerome's learnedness in the tradition of Origen and the 'variorum commentary' did not suit Augustine's 'pastoral purpose' (see below), but nevertheless his interpretation of *Gal* 2:11–14 (Paul's rebuke of Peter) provoked the famous dispute between Augustine and Jerome.