

A Festival of Laughter: Lucius, Milo, and Isis Playing the Game of *Hospitium*

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The world of the second century CE, the world in which Apuleius of Madauros lived, and the world that served as the backdrop for his *Metamorphoses*, was one characterized by a cosmopolitan and international spirit that fostered extensive trade in ideas and goods. The world of the Second Sophistic was a world where individuals such as Herodes Atticus, Dio Chyrsostom, and Philopappus of Commagene forged connections across the Greek and Roman divide, making friends and holding magistracies at the highest levels of society.¹ Given his pan-Mediterranean travel and elite connections in Roman Africa, Apuleius himself can be added to this group, as can the protagonist of the *Metamorphoses*, Lucius.² This type of travel was not restricted to just those of the very richest class, but rather provided a functional model for polite aristocratic society. Yet, at the same time, the *Metamorphoses* depicts the world as a place of danger and uncertainty to the traveler.³ *Cauponae* were an option for those lucky enough to find room, but even these waypoints were fraught with the danger of cut-throats and witches. One only need recall the journey of the embassy in Horace *Sat.* 1,5 to realize that the practice of *hospitium* offered an alternative means for facilitating long distance trade and travel. As we can see from the journey of this famous em-

¹ Millar 1981, 69. Such connections between Roman magistrates and Greek aristocrats had crystallized to a significant degree by the second century CE. The picture of society presented in the *Metamorphoses* reflects this type of hereditary connectedness at the level of the provincial aristocracy.

² Harrison 2000, 6; Mason 1983.

³ Millar 1981, 66–67 notes that there is solid evidence for imperial concerns over banditry and the general lack of safety on the roads of the provinces of Macedonia. Cf. *AE* 1956, 124. The problem was not just restricted to Thessaly, as Riess 2001, 17–18, note 55 and 56 has shown. This type of banditry was rampant throughout the Empire.

bassy, already in the late Republican Period extensive networks of elite connections were fostered in an attempt to provide mutually beneficial relationships for those engaged in travel, and to provide a source of stability and protection for strangers within the community.⁴ Given the importance of *hospitium* in the milieu of the Second Sophistic, it is not surprising that the practice figures prominently in the interactions of the characters of the *Metamorphoses*. Yet the practice of *hospitium* functions as more than a mere echo of standard social practice in the novel; rather it occupies a key place in the literary program of the work.⁵ Apuleius' own legal troubles, stemming from a supposed violation of the *hospitium* of his future wife, may provide the reason for the prominence of this theme, and its centrality for the plot of the *Metamorphoses*.

Despite its prominence in the construction of functional social networks, little work has been done on the practice of *hospitium* in the context of the Second Sophistic movement.⁶ One exception is the study of *hospitium* relationships forged between characters of the first book of the *Metamorphoses* by Fernández Contreras,⁷ which focuses on the use of the practice as a tool employed by Apuleius in an attempt to show his erudition and familiarity with Homeric models. She documents Homeric echoes within these relationships, and in particular, the way that Apuleius sought to play with the conventions of *hospitium*, to show Lucius and Milo respectively as anti-guest and anti-host in an inversion of normal Homeric practice.⁸ Clearly, the Homeric echoes to be found in the *hospitium* scenes in the *Metamorphoses* did fulfill this function, but to limit them to a mere play with epic convention underestimates the importance of the practice in the world of the *Metamor-*

⁴ Millar 1981, 69. Millar suggests *ibid.* 68 that even provincial governors likely invoked the practice of *hospitium* during their tenure in office rather than acquiring permanent residences of their own. The internal evidence of the novel confirms the importance of the practice. The Syrian priests and the soldier who commandeers the asinine Lucius both activate *hospitium* relationships rather than stay in inns while traveling.

⁵ One temptation would be to attempt a straightforward historical reconstruction of the practice, of the kind envisioned by Millar, based on the details contained in the *Metamorphoses*. Millar 1981, 75 and *passim*. As Elizabeth Greene points out (this volume), such a reconstruction fails to consider the use of historically plausible social conventions as tools for advancing the literary program of the work.

⁶ The anthropological basis of these relationships has been studied by Pitt-Rivers 1977 and Bolchazy 1978, but little work has been done to connect the practice to the world of the Second Sophistic period.

⁷ Fernández Contreras 1997. Cf. also *GCA* (Keulen 2007a), who deals with the *hospitium* theme, albeit restricted to Book 1.

⁸ Fernández Contreras 1997, 116–124.

phoses and the hybrid society of the Second Sophistic. Fernández Contreras' narrow description of the function of *hospitium* scenes does not generate an adequate understanding of the programmatic effect of such relationships in driving the plot of the *Metamorphoses* and does not sufficiently consider Apuleius' artfulness in constructing the novel, particularly in his use of *hospitium* scenes in order to prepare the reader for the eventual conclusion to the work.⁹

In addition, such an analysis concentrates excessively on the "Greekness" of the *Metamorphoses*, and as a result does not account for the Roman social elements contained therein.¹⁰ As several recent works have documented, the Second Sophistic movement was characterized by the employment and interaction of multiple identities: Greek, Roman, and local, and the *hospitium* relationships within the *Metamorphoses* bear out this assertion.¹¹ The *hospitium* scenes within the *Metamorphoses* were charged with meaning for the second-century reader because these practices resonated with their own expectations, not just those of a distant Homeric model. This is especially evident given the particularly legal terminology by which *hospitium* relationships are described and the fact that several of the key scenes in which these relationships are detailed occur in passages that did not exist in the Greek predecessor to the *Metamorphoses*.¹² Instead of merely providing a Homeric backdrop for the *Metamorphoses*, the rules of *hospitium* provide the reader with a set of criteria, criteria based on the experience of the hybridized world of the Second Sophistic, on which to evaluate the behavior and transformation of Lucius as he progresses through his adventures.

Winkler's monumental study of the *Metamorphoses* has made it impossible to assert a definitive reading of the novel.¹³ And yet, one possible reading of the *Metamorphoses* is to see the text as a story about a quest for suitable *hospitium*. It is my contention that Apuleius has created an artful play between Lucius' behavior in guest-host relationships and his battle against

⁹ Cf. Sandy 1997, 64–71 for a similar argument.

¹⁰ Cf. Bowersock 1969; Whitmarsh 1999a and b for assertions as to the Greek identity of the intellectual elite of the Second Sophistic. Cf. Millar 1981, 66–67, who makes the opposite assertion with regard to the residents of the Greek countryside. He suggests that the Roman identity dominated both the elite and common classes and the world of the *Metamorphoses* in particular.

¹¹ Borg 2004a; Jones 2004.

¹² As we will see, the *hospitium* relationship contracted between Lucius and Milo will be the primary defense used by the youth in the wake of his grisly slaughter of a trio of wineskins. The episode only takes on its ironic flair if we assume that the defense presented by Lucius would have been at least plausible to his audience.

¹³ Winkler 1985.

his *serviles voluptates* and *curiositas*.¹⁴ This paper will trace Apuleius' description of *hospitium* relationships in order to shed light on his use of *hospitium* as a literary *topos*. *Hospitium* relationships figure in almost every facet of Lucius' adventures, as Lucius interacts with divine, human, and animal hosts. In fact, Lucius' very violation of his pact of *hospitium* with Milo causes his initial transformation, and the restoration of a proper *hospitium* relationship with the goddess Isis accompanies Lucius' conversion and subsequent reversion to human form. The quality of *hospitium* offered by various individuals within the narrative serves to illuminate the character of each host, and the reactions to this *hospitium* allow us to see the progression of Lucius' character from that of a headstrong and self-confident youth into a seemingly penitent, yet enthusiastic devotee of Isis.¹⁵ Apuleius threads the theme of broken compacts of *hospitium* throughout the work in order to play with the reader's perception of Lucius' physical and spiritual journey and transformation, as well as providing an avenue for commentary on and criticism of aspects of second-century society.¹⁶ Such a willingness to deconstruct and rearrange the conventions of daily life via *hospitium* relationships is indicative of Apuleius' fluency with the playful artfulness of the Second Sophistic. The ubiquity of this *topos* in the *Metamorphoses* precludes a full analysis of all of the *hospitium* relationships presented in the novel. Rather, I will analyze a representative pair of relationships (the Milo-Lucius relationship and Isis-Lucius relationship) that demonstrate the importance of the practice for the interpretation of the protagonist's moral condition.

A Guest Who Deserves His Host: Milo and Lucius

The narrative of the opening two books of the *Metamorphoses* is devoted to setting the stage for a *hospitium* relationship between Lucius and his host

¹⁴ For recent work on *serviles voluptates* and *curiositas*, cf. Schlam 1968; Sandy 1974; Penwill 1975; James 1983; DeFilippo 1990; Schlam 1992, 48–57; Shumate 1996, 154, 243, 246–247, 253, 255–257, 267–268, 303, 320; Schlam – Finkelppearl 2000, 169–175; Harrison 2000, 252–254 (with references). The general contention among these authors is that these traits refer to Lucius' addiction to witchcraft, rather than his affair with Photis.

¹⁵ I will consider at a later point the question of whether the character of Lucius is ever actually altered, or whether he continues to display the very *curiositas* and *serviles voluptates* that characterize him at the beginning of the work.

¹⁶ To what extent Apuleius can be regarded as a social satirist, see Elizabeth Greene's contribution to this volume.

Milo. These first two books introduce the reader and Lucius to a pair of individuals (a set of binary opposites), who compete for him as a guest. Lucius plans to enter into a pact of *hospitium* with Milo, a host recommended to him by a friend. Unexpectedly, a competing host, Lucius' relative Byrrhena, offers her hospitality, claiming precedence due to her familial ties. The way in which Lucius enters into a relationship of *hospitium* with Milo serves to give us an early glimpse at the character of Apuleius' protagonist, while the competing claims of Byrrhena further illuminate the faults of brash and curious Lucius, and the household of Milo. Moreover, it is through Byrrhena's offers and gifts that Milo's *hospitium* is shown to be wanting. At the same time, Lucius' behavior in this early episode forces the reader to consider the possibility that he is in fact worthy of Milo as a host due to his own flaws as a guest.

When we first encounter Lucius, it is clear that he is completely unacquainted with his *hospes*. Rather than immediately taking up residence with Milo, he approaches an inn where he can interrogate the *caupona* about the nature of his prospective host. Lucius' questioning sheds light on the lack of trust he places in his friend Demeas, who had recommended Milo. As a result, it is tempting to see this interview as an indication of caution on the part of Lucius. A relationship of *hospitium* was not lightly entered into, as the bond formed was inherited even beyond the generation that had formalized the arrangement.¹⁷ Yet, the fact that Lucius proceeded to Milo's house despite learning that Milo was a moneylender with a reputation for miserliness, suggests that Apuleius is playing with our expectations, and revealing already some of the flaws in the character of Lucius and his prospective host (*Apul. Met.* 1,21,9–11). In addition, this interview sets the stage for the imagined robbery that will lead to the trial within the Festival of Laughter, and the real robbery of the household that triggers Lucius' asinine peregrinations.¹⁸ Rather than addressing the situation with a considered response, Lucius laughs off his bad luck and jokes about Milo's fitness as a host.¹⁹ This trend of playing down the faults of his host will continue throughout the episode as Lucius continually praises both the character and hospitality of

¹⁷ Nicols 2001, 99–100.

¹⁸ The *caupona*'s insistence on the riches within the house of Milo provide a plausible reason for the "attempted robbery" of the house as well as for the real robbery which occurs in *Met.* 3,27–28.

¹⁹ *GCA* (Keulen 2007a), 385 suggests that Lucius' joke is a fitting response to the satirical characterization of Milo provided by the *caupona*. This kind of joking, about such a serious matter as a compact of *hospitium* is an early indication of the faulty character of Lucius.

Milo, even once such hospitality has been shown to be below expectation. It is clear that under the circumstances, hospitality even in such a house as Milo's was still preferable to the dangers for which public inns were famous.²⁰

It is clear that Lucius' arrival at Milo's door in search of *hospitium* is unexpected, but the harsh treatment he receives is an indication of the state of Milo's household rather than evidence of any transgression by Lucius.²¹ Nevertheless, Milo seems content to entertain an individual known to him solely on the basis of letters of introduction indicating the pervasiveness of such ties among the second-century elite. In response to the letter of introduction, Milo begins by praising the character of Lucius, and spells out a number of his particularly admirable qualities, remarking upon Lucius' nobility and seemly appearance and virtue, characteristics that are soon to be altered (Apul. *Met.* 1,23,3):

... *etiam de ista corporis speciosa habitudine deque hac virginali prorsus verecundia generosa stirpe proditum et recte conicerem.*

In itself your good-looks and your chaste modesty would lead me to guess, and quite rightly, that you come from a noble family.

In this pronouncement, Lucius is said to meet the Platonic value of virtue as measured by the standard of an equal beauty and wisdom.²² This pronouncement reveals that Milo is carefully measuring the worth of his potential guest in terms of an expected ability to reciprocate at some time in the future. It is his noble birth (read money) that ensures Lucius is not merely a parasite looking for free lodging.²³ Formal relationships of *hospitium* were

²⁰ Bolchazy 1978, 58. We should also take into account the scare Lucius must have had in terms of the stay of Aristomenes and Socrates in an inn a few nights before, recounted in *Met.* 1,6–20.

²¹ Fernández Contreras 1997, 118–119 argues that Milo's behavior, even here, does not square with the minimum standards of hospitable treatment. In addition the abrupt and desultory nature of the greeting of Milo's doorkeeper Photis may be an attempt to characterize her as a Circe figure.

²² *GCA* (Keulen 2007a), 49.

²³ Mason 1983, 135–136 provides the best discussion of Lucius' background. Cf. also *GCA* (Keulen 2007a), 416 for a description of the epic echoes of Lucius ancestry. It is precisely the elements upon which Milo comments which have been revealed to the reader in response to the *quis ille* query in the prologue. Belfiore 1993, 113–114, 117 notes that as readers we are aware of the content of Demeas' letters. As we will discuss later, Lucius does not, in fact, live up to this expectation. Already he fails to exchange the expected gifts with Milo for the initiation of a pact of *hospitium*.

cultivated because of the practical advantages that accrued to both guest and host.²⁴ As Milo was surely aware, the ability of a host to provide for a guest served as a marker of status within the community of the guest as well as in the host's own community. The creation of bonds of *hospitium* between two individuals removed them from rivalry with each other, with the guest tacitly ceding his own honor to his host for the duration of his stay in exchange for food, lodging, and legal protection.²⁵ The greater the status possessed by the guest, the greater was the degree of honor that accrued to the host. Thus, the importance of the guest stood as a *de facto* marker of the status of the host.

Milo initially shows himself to be a model host, offering Lucius the *loca lautia*, and a share in the frugal dinner placed upon his table, but this impression is soon altered. In conjunction with his praise and invitation, Milo advertises his *hospitium* in terms of that which Hecale offered to Theseus.²⁶ Milo's choice of this particular mythological episode is significant, as Apuleius' reader would have recalled the most extensive ancient treatment of the myth in the central portion of Callimachus' *Hecale*.²⁷ As noted by Hollis and Rosenmeyer, Ovid and Petronius had also made extensive borrowings from the text of the *Hecale* and the related *Victoria Berenices*.²⁸ Apuleius consciously evokes for comic effect the readers' knowledge, not only of the *Hecale*, but also of the similar scenes in Petronius and Ovid.²⁹

The home of Milo, and his hospitality, share many of the common traits included in the earlier stories.³⁰ Milo's house is humble. He describes it as a *gurgustiolum* (OLD s.v. 'small dwelling'), employing at least some hyperbole, but we should note that Milo has already been referred to as *exiguo lare inclusus* ('locked up in his tiny house') by the local *caupona* (Apul. *Met.* 1,23,5; 1,21,11).³¹ Unlike the home of Hecale, Milo's home is not poor due to the poverty of its owner, but rather because of his professed fear of displaying his wealth. His poverty is not virtuous, but a result of his avarice. In Ovid's *Metamorphoses* the small hut of Baucis and Philemon is turned into a temple gleaming with marble and costly materials as a reward for their

²⁴ Bolchazy 1978, 62–65 refers to this type of *hospitium* as 'enlightened self interest.'

²⁵ Grottanelli 1976, 187; Pitt-Rivers 1977, 108; Bolchazy 1978, 58.

²⁶ *GCA* (Keulen 2007a), 49–50 discusses the epic implications of this reference.

²⁷ Hollis 1990, 345; Harrison 1997, 56–57.

²⁸ Hollis 1990; Rosenmeyer 1991 and 1993; Ov. *Met.* 8,612–727; Petr. 134–135.

²⁹ Rosenmeyer 1991, 403–404. Cf. also Harrison 2000, 222–225 on literary allusions in Apul. *Met.* in general.

³⁰ Hollis 1990 and Rosenmeyer 1991 provide the best list of the set elements for this tradition.

³¹ Cf. *GCA* (Keulen 2007a), 382–383 for further discussion of this phrase.

hospitality.³² When Milo makes his offer of *hospitium*, the reader is already familiar with his rapacious lending practices and knows the irony, that Milo's house is actually already a house of silver and gold. These very materials are, in fact, demanded of Lucius when he approaches the door (Apul. *Met.* 1,22,2):

An tu solus ignoras praeter aurum argentumque nullum nos pignus admittere?

Are you alone ignorant that we accept no pledge except silver and gold?

The convention is further altered when the reader considers the nature of the guest: Lucius is not a god or hero, but an intensely flawed human not capable of reciprocating in the same fashion as the mythological visitors included in the versions of Callimachus and Ovid. In another reversal of the Callimachean model, Milo offers a flawed hospitality not because of his poverty, but because of his unwillingness to part with his money.³³

As Hollis notes, the focus of this type of *hospitium* tale is usually an elaborate description of the meal and conversation between the participants.³⁴ In this case, Lucius fails in his duty as a guest by refusing the meager dinner offered by Milo. This refusal to eat takes on a key importance when we note that here Apuleius has chosen to depart from the Greek original on which the *Metamorphoses* was based, where the main character does accept a meager meal.³⁵ Clearly, Apuleius has invented this detail in an attempt to characterize his protagonist. As a result of this decision, we are left without any detailed description of the fare. In addition to refusing dinner, Lucius refuses Milo's offer of the comforts of a bath. Lucius has thus refused the two hallmarks of good hospitality.³⁶ By attempting to provide his own bath and meal, Lucius has usurped the role of host from Milo. Unable to fulfill his duties as a guest, Lucius breaks what Pitt-Rivers has termed one of the cardinal rules of the *hospitium* relationship.³⁷ This breach of the norm is

³² Petr. 135. Cf. Rosenmeyer 1991, 407.

³³ Due to his less than virtuous nature, a reader must wonder if Milo himself believes that he is due the reward of a good host, or if his reference is meant to lower the expectations of Lucius.

³⁴ Hollis 1990, 342; *GCA* (Keulen 2007a), 398.

³⁵ Sandy 1997, 237–238.

³⁶ Grottanelli 1976, 191–192 discusses the importance of the bath as a ritual of incorporation within a foreign society.

³⁷ Pitt-Rivers 1977, 109–110. *GCA* (Keulen 2007a), 424, 459 suggests that Lucius' refusal of the meal is a calculated attempt to win the childless Milo's financial favor.

an early indication of the defective character of Lucius. When he returns from the *Forum Cupidinis* empty-handed as the result of a failed attempt to secure his own meal, he is pestered with questions by his host rather than engaged in the polite and pleasant conversation conventional to the genre.³⁸ Lucius is eager to end the episode, but Milo persists, perhaps in order to probe Lucius' character and his relationship with Demeas (Apul. *Met.* 1,26).³⁹ The scene terminates with Lucius falling asleep in mid-conversation. He is finally dismissed by Milo with the pronouncement that he has feasted on tales alone (*cenatus solis fabulis*) (Apul. *Met.* 1,26,7).⁴⁰

At the beginning of the next book, Apuleius then presents another possible host whose presence serves to highlight the deficiencies of both Milo and Lucius.⁴¹ While exploring Hypata, Lucius encounters his relative Byrrhena. Where Milo's hospitality fails to live up to expectations, Byrrhena's favors show her to be an exemplary *hospes*. At their first encounter, Byrrhena emphasizes their kinship. She uses the same language with which Lucius will address Milo in his moment of distress, referring to herself as *parens* of Lucius, in this case an assertion closer to the truth (Apul. *Met.* 2,3,1).⁴² Byrrhena immediately offers her own *hospitium*, augmented by the security of the just mentioned kinship. So powerful is the bond of *hospitium* that Lucius refuses her offer, citing the previous compact with Milo. He insists that he cannot shrug off his obligations (*officiis*) without some just complaint (*sine ulla querela*) against Milo (Apul. *Met.* 2,3,5). Despite Byrrhena's knowledge of the true character of the household to which Lucius has bound himself, she does not attempt to convince Lucius to break his obligations as a guest, but advocates vigilance due to the magical powers of Milo's wife Pam-

³⁸ *GCA* (Keulen 2007a), 458–460.

³⁹ Millar 1981, 69; *GCA* (Keulen 2007a), 460–462. It is possible that the extensive line of questioning was due to Lucius' privileged position with respect to knowledge about the activity of the provincial governor, through either direct contact or via the proxy of Demeas.

⁴⁰ Winkler 1985, 37–39 sees the interlude as an 'empty frame' contrasting the conversational delight found in the extensive interaction between Lucius and Aristomenes. I do not believe that this is the only reading of this scene. Instead, the encounter is intended to set the stage for the failed relationship between Lucius and Milo. Cf. Drake 1969, 357–360 for an alternative explanation of this passage.

⁴¹ Lucius has violated the rules for a good guest by refusing dinner with Milo, while Milo has failed to offer Lucius the bountiful *hospitium* that his means allow.

⁴² Pitt-Rivers 1977, 108; Bolchazy 1978, 59; Nicols 2001, 102–103. Such strong language of familial connections emphasizes the importance of the relationship between guest and host, as the host acts as proxy kin for the guest as long as he resides in the jurisdiction of the host.

phile.⁴³ Byrrhena further marks herself as an exemplary hostess by providing Lucius with extensive fare for the following evening in the form of a pig, five chickens, and a cask of wine, a far better meal than that offered by his own host, Milo.⁴⁴

Rather than finding some legitimate complaint that would allow Lucius to depart from the household of Milo, Lucius reveals his main fault, *curiositas*, with his decision to observe the activities of the household, a clear breach of the trust entailed in a pact of *hospitium*. His other vice, his *serviles voluptates*, are demonstrated in his plan of action. Playing on Lucius' sense of duty to his *hospes*, Apuleius presents his protagonist as making a conscious sacrifice in order to save Milo the humiliation of violating the compact of *hospitium*. So as to avoid attracting the eye of Pamphile and offend Milo, Lucius chooses to make the sacrifice of taking up with the slave girl of his host, assuming it is a safer option.⁴⁵ Lucius' commitment to his host strengthens rather than lessens, and after a few nights the reader witnesses Lucius engaging in mortal combat with a trio of apparent "robbers" intent on murdering Milo. After defending the household of Milo, Lucius is given no quarter by his host when the authorities burst in demanding his arrest.⁴⁶ In the trial that ensues, Lucius uses the safety of his *hospes* as his primary defense.⁴⁷ He argues that his actions were spurred on by the plan announced by the leader of the robbers (Apul. *Met.* 3,5,4–5):

Stricto mucrone per totam domum caedes ambulet. Qui sopitus iacebit trucidetur; qui repugnare temptaverit feriat.

With a drawn sword let murder walk about the entire household. He who lies sleeping, let him be killed. He who tries to fight back, let him be cut apart.

⁴³ Apparently, even suspicions of the most grave of activities were not powerful enough to break the bonds of *hospitium* in a respectable manner.

⁴⁴ All indications are that the initial dinner offered by Milo was meager at best. Byrrhena, in contrast, offers Lucius a veritable feast that would last for several days.

⁴⁵ Apul. *Met.* 2,6–11; 2,16–17.

⁴⁶ Bolchazy 1978, 59. The host was supposed to provide legal protection for his guest even as long as the guest was present in the region of the host, let alone within his own house.

⁴⁷ There is a high degree of similarity between the ritual surrounding the procession and trial celebrating *Risus* and the *anteludia* of Book 11. As Fick 1987, 35–37 suggests, it is likely that the prior event foreshadows the later procession of the goddess and subsequent redemption. Fick, however, does not suggest the element of *hospitium* as the connective link between the two episodes.

He contends that the defense of a host's home constitutes self-defense, and should secure an acquittal (Apul. *Met.* 3,6,3):

Sic pace vindicata domoque hospitum ac salute communi protecta, non tam impunem me, verum etiam laudabilem publice credebam fore...

Thus having restored the peace, protecting the house of my host and the safety of the community, not only did I truly believe I would be acquitted, but that I would receive public praise...

We should also note the tints of xenophobia included in the speech of the prosecutor, who asserts that the crime is far greater because it is perpetrated by a non-citizen (Apul. *Met.* 3,3,9).⁴⁸

Constanter itaque in hominem alienum ferte sententias de eo crimine quod etiam in vestrum civem severiter vindicaretis.

Thus be firm and bring a conviction against this foreign man for a crime that you would punish severely even against one of your own citizens.

Lucius notes his status as an outsider, specifying the status of the victims (*trinis civium corporibus expositis*) in his own speech, but attempts to justify his actions nonetheless (Apul. *Met.* 3,4,3–4). His first recourse is to mark himself as a protected individual within the community. He attempts to do this by highlighting his relationship with Milo, interjecting the phrase, *ad bonum autem Milonem civem vestrum devorto* in the middle of his version of the events of the previous night (Apul. *Met.* 3,5,1). Lucius appeals to the ritual contract of *hospitium*, a ceremony employed to change his status from stranger and outsider into one of a guest, thereby disarming himself of any harmful intent upon his host or host community.⁴⁹ In effect, Lucius suggests

⁴⁸ Bajoni 1998, 201–202.

⁴⁹ Pitt-Rivers 1977, 95–97; Bolchazy 1978, 46–47. The problem encountered is largely one due to the non-transferable nature of certain types of status. It is the prerogative of each individual community to create its own system of symbols to define status. Thus, diacritical class affirming markers employed by groups within one community, even when unambiguous in their original context, may not be recognized by a foreign community. As a result, the social categories used as cues for interaction between individuals are lost, removing the safeguard of defined social and ethnic markers for guiding the behavior of those involved in any exchange. The stranger must then begin with a blank slate when entering into a new community, only to have the citizens of the new locale ascribe a level of status to the stranger appropriate to their perception of his worth. Cf. Schortman 1989, 53–56 for a discussion of the way that salient social symbols are employed to aid this interaction.

that Milo's citizenship stands in as a proxy for his own lack of that status.⁵⁰ Here, the absence of Milo is of particular consequence. Instead of having Milo arguing the case on his behalf, Lucius is forced to assert the existence of their relationship himself. This puts him in the awkward position of needing to justify his own standing. He does so by appealing to the language of citizenship, something he lacks as an outsider. Lucius argues thus (Apul. *Met.* 3,5,6–7):

Fateor, Quirites, extremos latrones – boni civis officium arbitratus, simul et eximie metuens et hospitibus meis et mihi, gladiolo...adgressus sum.

I admit, fellow citizens, that I approached those harsh robbers, thinking it the duty of a good citizen, and fearing death for myself and my host.

It is interesting to note that even as his host fails to meet his obligations, Lucius appeals to this relationship rather than that of kinship with Byrrhena.⁵¹ Lucius is patently aware of this failing as he notes that the largest blow to his pride is not his own dire situation, but his betrayal by Milo when he spots him laughing with the rest of the crowd (Apul. *Met.* 3,7,3–4):

...nec secus illum bonum hospitem parentemque meum Milonem risu maximo dissolutum. At tunc sic tacitus mecum: 'En fides,' inquam, 'en conscientia! Ego quidem pro hospitis salute et homicida sum et reus capitis inducor; at ille non contentus quod mihi nec adsistendi solacium perhibuit, insuper exitium meum cachinnat.'

And I saw my good father and host Milo dissolved with a great laugh. And then silently I said, 'What faith, what responsibility! I incur a capital charge and become a murderer on behalf of my host, and that guy is not content to deny me the consolation of his assistance, but on top of it all, he laughs away at my destruction.'

The sense of betrayal is heightened by the employment of the terms *parentem* and *hospitem* in a parallel construction. The relationship of *hospitium*

⁵⁰ This mock-trial encapsulated in the Festival of Laughter reminds one of the sort of declamations on fictional or historical topics that were popular throughout the period of the Second Sophistic. Cf. Sandy 1997, 169; Whitmarsh 2005, 24–26.

⁵¹ Cf. Smith 2006 for the best recent discussion of the Roman *gens* and its social importance.

is thus made equivalent to that of close blood relationship.⁵² The entire episode of the Festival of Laughter serves to demonstrate the inadequacy of Milo's patronage. Ironically, it is the very fact that Lucius had engaged in a compact of *hospitium* that will make him a prime suspect later when Milo is actually robbed. Lucius' letters will immediately be deemed to be suspect. Lucius will be branded as a confidence man, and the robbery will be pinned on him as a result of the public outcry at such a betrayal of *hospitium* (Apul. *Met.* 7,1,5–6). Yet again in the case of the mock-trial, we witness a scene focused on details of a *hospitium* relationship that are absent from the Greek *Onos*, as Apuleius uses the practice to demonstrate the deficiencies of his characters.⁵³

After this manifest rupturing of the *hospitium* relationship through the actions of Milo, albeit in a "carnavalesque" context, Lucius takes his turn by violating the trust placed in him as a guest. Following the festival of laughter, Lucius discovers that his previous misfortunes were the direct result of the machinations of Pamphile. As a result, Lucius is filled with *curiositas* to see Pamphile's magical powers in action.⁵⁴ Lucius' *curiositas* causes him to rupture the compact of *hospitium* with Milo once and for all by entering into a forbidden part of the house and stealing magic ointment from Pamphile. This violation leads directly to Lucius' imprisonment in an asinine body. His transformation, then, is as much a result of his violation of the code of *hospitium* as his attraction to magic and obsession with sex.

Isis: The Worthy Hostess

Once the reader proceeds beyond the detailed engagements with Milo and Byrrhena, he is presented with a series of episodes in which the asinine Lu-

⁵² *Hospitium* functions as a way to extend necessarily limited links of kinship into a wider geographical context.

⁵³ Bajoni 1998, 197. In contrast to the view held by Bajoni, I am convinced of the originality of the passage rather than ascribing the account to the realm of derivative adaptation from a lost source. Cf. Mazzarino 1950, 107, who supports the originality of the passage. Bartalucci 1988, 58 probably suggests correctly that the elements of the festival are indeed a pastiche of real Roman religious rites arranged in an order that allows for the advancement of the Apuleian plot.

⁵⁴ The connective nature of the episode of the 'utricide' has been emphasized by Bajoni 1998, 199. Cf. also Bartalucci 1988. The festival is used to provide a link between the warnings Lucius receives at the banquet of Byrrhena and his violation of the household of Milo. It is the revelation that Pamphile is responsible for the animation of the wine-skins that provides this link.

cius receives *hospitium* of varying quality. Each episode plays a part in describing the character of Lucius. This is not the place to examine Lucius' pacts of *hospitium* while in asinine form. Let us turn then to the restoration of Lucius' human form as a result of an encounter with Isis. If we analyze Lucius' first encounter with the goddess, we see that the relationship is cast in terms of *hospitium*. Lucius sees the goddess initially in her manifestation as the moon rising above the sea. Immediately upon seeing the goddess Lucius purifies himself in the water (Apul. *Met.* 11,1,4):⁵⁵

...protinus purificandi studio marino lavacro trado, septiesque summerso fluctibus capite...

...desirous of purifying myself, I went to the sea to bathe immediately, and seven times submerged my head under the waves...

Harrison suggests that this episode has been inserted for comic effect, especially if we visualize the action in Lucius' asinine state, but I believe that in addition to comic effect we can trace the theme of *hospitium* through the scene.⁵⁶ We witness the goddess fulfilling her duties as *hospes* even before she is formally introduced to Lucius. Lucius receives the divine equivalent of a bath from Isis, one of the hallmarks of the *hospitium* relationship. The scene highlights the extraordinary nature of the goddess' *hospitium* especially if we note that Milo's initial assessment of Lucius' character was based on his appearance, adding yet another comic contrast to the scene.

This prelude is followed by a pair of introductions in the form of Lucius' prayer to Isis, and the response of the goddess. The difference between this exchange and the initial interaction between Lucius and Milo is stark. The role of knowledge has seemingly been reversed. Lucius as guest prays to a goddess whose identity he does not know.⁵⁷ In an attempt to identify the

⁵⁵ Cf. Fick 1987, 46–48 for an analysis of the Pythagorean symbolism contained in the episode.

⁵⁶ Harrison 2000, 240.

⁵⁷ Boscolo 1986, 37–38. The language of the prayer is highly artificial and contrived. Boscolo suggests that the prayer can be broken into two sections, the first of which contains a segment where Lucius is unsure or unclear about the identity of the goddess and about his wishes. This section is dominated by a series of complicated rhetorical features that serve to show Lucius' grappling with his address of the goddess. This section is followed by a much simpler conclusion, rhetorically speaking, a section where he becomes clearer in his address, and his request for aid. Pasetti 1999, 248 suggests that Lucius' lack of knowledge about the identity of Isis precludes the effectiveness of his prayer. Thus, the multiplication of identities is an attempt to create a secure basis on which to address the anonymous goddess.

goddess Lucius includes the key geographic elements in the initial phases of the address, trying to locate the home of the goddess as an essential part of her identity.⁵⁸ Again Isis shows the generosity of a good host, granting Lucius much needed divine sleep on the bed (*illo cubili*) of the beach (Apul. *Met.* 11,3,1). When Lucius awakes, the goddess has appeared in her manifestation as Isis. Lucius begins by describing the beautiful appearance of the goddess, the same criterion that Milo used to evaluate Lucius' worthiness to be his guest. Finally, the goddess identifies herself and promises her further benevolence toward Lucius. The details of her promise are highly important for our discussion. Isis promises Lucius a meal prepared by her servants (the elusive roses), as well as legal protection from prosecution against witchcraft. These constitute exactly the elements of hospitality that Lucius refused to accept, and Milo refused to offer in their encounter (Apul. *Met.* 11,6,2–5):

Incunctanter ergo dimotis turbulis alacer continuare pompam mea volentia fretus, et de proximo clementer velut manum sacerdotis osculabundus rosis decerptis, pessimae mihique iam dudum detestabilis beluae istius corio te protinus exue...vel figuram tuam repente mutatam sequius interpretatus aliquis maligne criminabitur.

Therefore do not hesitate, but eagerly join the procession when the crowd parts in accordance with my will, and from nearby as if you were about to kiss the hand of my priest pluck the roses and immediately throw off that beastly hide of yours, so long now detestable to me...nor will anyone indict you spitefully interpreting wrongly your suddenly transformed figure.

This time Lucius is willing to partake in the meal of his host. Isis likewise carries through on her promises of restoration and protection, and Lucius is drawn into the "household" of the goddess in the form of her procession.⁵⁹ In addition to the benefits of hospitality previously mentioned, Isis continues her role as ideal host through the intermediary of her priest. Lucius is immediately provided with a set of clothing. He is described as being in a highly vulnerable state that echoes Odysseus' appearance to Nausicaa upon the island of Phaiakia in the *Odyssey* (Apul. *Met.* 11,14,3–5):

⁵⁸ Pasetti 1999, 249.

⁵⁹ Gianotti 1981, 329 sees the procession as a demonstration of the great variety of types of individuals brought into the household of Isis. He links this patronage to a relationship of *hospitium*. Thus, Lucius is not the only one to enter into this compact, but part of a larger network of devotees.

...nutu significato prius praecepit tegendo mihi linteam dari laciniam. Nam me cum primum nefasto tegmine despoliaverat asinus, compressis in artum feminibus et superstrictis accurate manibus, quantum nudo licebat velamento me naturali probe muniveram.

...quickly giving a nod as a signal he commanded me to be given a linen cloth to cover myself. For as soon as the ass stripped me of that wretched covering, pressing my thighs together and placing my hands carefully in front of me, I was protecting myself properly with my natural covering as much as a naked man is able.

Lucius is at this point not unexpectedly speechless, but again the goddess shows the extent of her hospitality. The conversation expected is provided by the speech of her priest who provides a delightful tale of adventure for the audience, a tale all too familiar for Lucius (*Apul. Met.* 11,15). Lucius, rather than being worn out by the conversation as in the case of Milo, is amazed to hear his own story recounted. Near the end of the speech, a key event for the interpretation of the remainder of the work takes place. Isis' priest extends an offer that fundamentally changes the relationship between the parties involved by transforming the relationship from that of *hospitium* into one of dependence (*Apul. Met.* 11,15,5):

Quo tamen tutior sis atque munitior, da nomen sanctae huic militiae, cuius non olim sacramento etiam rogabar, teque iam nunc obsequio religionis nostrae dedica et ministerii iugum subi voluntarium. Nam cum coeperis deae servire, tunc magis senties fructum tuae libertatis.

Nevertheless to be safer and better protected, enlist in this holy army to whose oath you were called a little while ago. And now dedicate yourself to compliance to our cult and willingly take up the yoke of service. For when you begin to be a slave to the goddess, you will more fully experience the fruit of your freedom.

We must particularly note the use of *servire* at this point in the text, with its connotations of slavery, language never employed in the *hospitium* relationship. As we follow Lucius' adventures throughout the remainder of the eleventh book, the new exploitative direction of the relationship is clear to the reader, although Lucius (immersed in his new Isiac worldview) does not comprehend the tension between being duped and being saved.⁶⁰ Lucius' encounter with Isis does not cure him of his *curiositas* and *serviles volup-*

⁶⁰ Shumate 1996, 286–288.

tates, but instead provides a new object of addiction, one fostered by the priesthood of Isis.⁶¹ It is important to note in conjunction with this, that Lucius has in no way earned his redemptive visit with his new host through any change in character, but rather has received the unmerited favor of the goddess.⁶²

If, as I have argued above, we see the *Metamorphoses* as a quest for suitable *hospitium*, it seems to follow that we must accept a literal reading of the conversion of Lucius in Book 11 as a restoration of a proper *hospitium*, at least from Lucius' perspective. Such a religious reading has come under intense scrutiny in recent years.⁶³ The contrast between the apparent *hospitium* offered by the goddess and the actual slavery offered by her priesthood reveals flaws in the *hospitium* even of the goddess, or at least her earthly representatives. Stephen Harrison argued for a parodic reading of the final book because of these flaws in the relationship, namely the emphasis on money, the series of false endings, and Lucius' own credulity toward Isiac prophecy and pronouncements. These problems with the *hospitium* relationship suggest that Lucius' character has not truly changed, but has found a different focus.⁶⁴ Isis fulfills the expectations of a hostess in exemplary fashion, but the return price is exorbitant. The remainder of Book 11 reads as a catalogue of Lucius' attempts to secure the financial resources necessary for a series of initiations. This exploitation can be seen as a perversion of the Homeric guest gift, exchanged between guest and host as a symbol of the pact of *hospitium*. The price of this gift nearly bankrupts Lucius, but despite its price, it does not create the permanent bond of *hospitium* that Lucius seeks. Instead, the relationship must be continually renewed until finally Lucius is let in on the game by becoming a priest of Isis himself.

Although I could only discuss a pair of key *hospitium* relationships in this context, this theme is woven throughout the text of the *Metamorphoses*, permeating Lucius' adventures in both the human and animal world. I wish

⁶¹ Shumate 1996, 319–320 sees a continued prevalence of these characteristics in the life of Lucius even after his conversion to the worship of Isis. Moreschini 1978, 225, while asserting that Lucius is unchanged at the moment of his conversion, argues for a reform of character in the episodes that follow his restoration to human form. In my opinion, this hypothesis is in sharp conflict with the behavior of Lucius as devotee of Isis, who continues to demonstrate his unhealthy over-eagerness and credulity in the face of continued obstacles to his intimacy with the goddess.

⁶² Moreschini 1987, 224.

⁶³ Kerényi 1927 and Merkelbach 1962 see Isiac symbolism throughout the work. Cf. Münstermann 1995 and Beck 1996 for more recent accounts along similar lines. Turcan 1963 and Winkler 1985, 120–130, for example, reject this view.

⁶⁴ Harrison 2000, 245–252.

to conclude by suggesting that the theme of hospitality, and in particular of ruptured contracts of *hospitium*, serve as powerful tools that Apuleius uses in order to drive the expectations of his readers throughout the plot of the *Metamorphoses* and evaluate the resolution reached in the final book. Lucius was driven to the lowest point of his existence at the same time that he manifestly violated the pact of *hospitium* set up with Milo, and was restored to his human form once a proper relationship was reestablished with Isis, even though this relationship was only fleeting. Alongside Lucius' *curiositas* and *serviles voluptates* should be placed his lack of ability to live up to the standards and fulfill the duties of the *hospitium* relationship.