

ELENCHOS

Collana di testi e studi sul pensiero antico

fondata da

GABRIELE GIANNANTONI

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ELENCHOS

Collana di testi e studi sul pensiero antico

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EPINOMIDE
STUDI SULL'OPERA E LA SUA RICEZIONE

a cura di
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con la collaborazione di
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VINCENT HUNINK

THE *EPINOMIS* AND APULEIUS OF MADAUROS

One of the most systematic and detailed accounts of Middle Platonic demonology can be found in a Latin text from the 2nd century A.D. This text, entitled *De Deo Socratis* (*On the God of Socrates*, hence: *DDS*)¹, was written by the Second Sophistic author Apuleius of Madauros (ca. 125-ca. 180), who gained greatest renown on account of his popular novel *Metamorphoses* (*Metamorphoses*, or *The Golden Ass*)². Given the important role

¹ The standard Latin text for *DDS* is *Apuleius. De philosophia libri*, ed. C. MORESCHINI, Teubner, Leipzig-Stuttgart 1991; another useful edition is *Apulée. Opuscules philosophiques [...] et fragments*, Texte établi, traduit et commentée par J. BEAUJEU, Les Belles Lettres, Paris 1973. For a modern English translation with ample introduction and notes, see S. HARRISON, [*Apuleius*] *On the God of Socrates*, in S. HARRISON-J. HILTON-V. HUNINK, *Apuleius. Rhetorical Works*, Translated and annotated, Oxford University Press, Oxford-New York 2001, pp. 185-216. No full commentary is available as yet, but much useful material can be found also in two translated and annotated editions intended for a non Latinist, German speaking, academic audience: M. BALTES-M.L. LAKMANN-J. DILLON-P.L. DONINI-R. HÄFNER-L. KARFÍKOVÁ, *Apuleius. De Deo Socratis / Über den Gott des Sokrates*, Eingeleitet, übersetzt und mit interpretierenden Essays versehen, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt 2004, and M. BINGENHEIMER, *Lucius Apuleius von Madaura. De Deo Socratis / Der Schutzgeist des Sokrates*, Übersetzt, eingeleitet und mit Anmerkungen versehen, Haag + Herchen, Frankfurt am Main 1993.

² For general information about Apuleius, his life and works, there is a helpful monograph: cfr. S. HARRISON, *Apuleius. A Latin Sophist*, Oxford University Press, Oxford-New York 2001.

of demonology in the *Epinomis*³, it does not come as a surprise that both texts are frequently mentioned together in scholarly studies, both on Middle Platonic theory⁴ and on Apuleius and *DDS*⁵, although not all scholars make this connection⁶. In most cases the connection between *Epinomis* and *DDS* is described or suggested in rather general terms, the basic notion being that Apuleius was to some extent influenced by the Greek original.

In the present contribution, I shall review the relevant data in the source texts and attempt to state somewhat more pre-

³ For relevant bibliographical references concerning the *Epinomis*, see both the general introduction and individual contributions in the present volume. I shall further assume that the reader is familiar with the *Epinomis* as a whole.

⁴ Cfr. notably J. DILLON, *The Middle Platonists, a Study of Platonism 80 B.C. to A.D. 220*, Duckworth, London 1977 (1996²), pp. 317-20; F.E. BRENN, *In the Light of the Moon: Demonology in the Early Imperial Period*, in *ANRW*, II 16, 3 (1986) pp. 2069-145, esp. p. 2134.

⁵ Cfr. notably F. REGEN, *Apuleius philosophus Platonicus*, De Gruyter, Berlin 1971, esp. p. 6 n. 50; further C. MORESCHINI, *Apuleio e il Platonismo*, Olschki, Firenze 1978, esp. pp. 20-2, with references to earlier scholarly literature. Further J. BEAUJEU, *Opuscules*, cit., p. 10; M. BINGENHEIMER, *Der Schutzgeist*, cit., pp. 50-1; M. BALTES *et al.*, *Über den Gott des Sokrates*, cit., pp. 132-3.

⁶ Modern accounts of Apuleius' demonology without any mention of the *Epinomis* are: B.L. HIJMANS JR., *Apuleius philosophus Platonicus*, in *ANRW*, II 36, 1 (1987) pp. 395-475; W. BERNARD, *Zur Dämonologie des Apuleius von Madaura*, «Rheinisches Museum», CXXXVII (1994) pp. 358-73; H. CANCEK, *Römische Dämonologie (Varro, Apuleius, Tertullian)*, in A. LANGE *et al.*, *Die Dämonen. Demons. Die Dämonologie der israelitisch-jüdischen und frühchristlichen Literatur im Kontext ihrer Umwelt / The Demonology of Israelite-Jewish and Early Christian Literature in Context of their Environment*, Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen 2003, pp. 447-60, esp. pp. 447-51. On Apuleius' philosophical ideas about gods, see further also J.F. FINAMORE, *Apuleius on the Platonic Gods*, in H. TARRANT (ed.), *Reading Plato in Antiquity*, Duckworth, London 2006, pp. 33-48 (who argues «that Apuleius is an independent Platonic philosopher creating his own Middle Platonic reading of Plato», p. 33, and G. PUCCINI-DELBAY, *La science philosophique d'Apulée comme lieu de mémoire de la pensée platonicienne*, in H. CASANOVA-ROBIN (éd.), *Écritures latines de la mémoire: de l'antiquité au XVIe siècle*, Garnier, Paris 2010, pp. 83-103 (a rather general account of Apuleius as a philosophical author).

cisely how the relationship between Apuleius' *DDS*⁷ and the *Epinomis* could be adequately defined.

Apuleius' text

For a true appreciation of Apuleius' text it is important to realize what it is, or rather what it is not. Apuleius did write and publish books that might be called philosophical, notably his *De Platone et eius dogmate*, a somewhat bookish and rather uninspired account of Platonic teaching, and *De mundo*, a Latin version of the pseudo-Aristotelic *Peri kosmou*. The *DDS* however, unlike most texts on demonology to which it is compared, is not a treatise nor even a philosophical text in the strict sense of the word, but rather a brilliant speech, delivered to an audience in Roman Carthage, probably in the 160s.⁸

Public lectures of this kind were widespread during the Second Sophistic, and surviving *specimina*⁹ clearly show the current taste of the time: a penchant for themes that were sufficiently spectacular or fascinating to catch the interest and imagination of the attending crowds, and above all: a highly developed or even extravagant epideictic style. Apuleius in particular appears to be fond of impressive linguistical "pyrotechnics", inventing new words or resuscitating archaic ones, building elaborate periods or, by contrast, powerful brief lists, and exploit-

⁷ For the sake of clarity I shall not discuss some scattered remarks in Apuleius' other works that may be connected with his ideas on demonology, such as *Apol.* 43, 2: *inter deos et homines natura et loco medias quasdam potestates* and *Flor.* 10, 3: *mediae potestates*. On these and other passages, see *Apuleius of Madauros. Pro se de magia (Apology)*, edited with a commentary by V. HUNINK, Gieben, Amsterdam 1997, II, pp. 130-1.

⁸ Cfr. S. HARRISON, *A Latin Sophist*, cit., p. 139; S. HARRISON *et al.*, *Rhetorical Works*, cit., p. 5.

⁹ The extant *Florida* by Apuleius is a collection of particularly striking oratorical fragments from such speeches. One may also compare the exuberant *De pallio* by Tertullian or some Greek speeches by Dio Chrysostom and Maximus of Tyre.

ing rhythm and sound by means of all possible forms of assonance, alliteration, and even rhyme¹⁰.

In *DDS*, Apuleius admittedly does not carry these elements to the extremes of some of his other works, but it remains fair to say that his written text is the reflection and result of what may be considered a captivating public performance, meant to impress the attending audience, rather than a meticulous, philosophical inquiry for strictly academic purposes. To put it differently, the author of *DDS* could best be designated as a skilled, erudite orator with strong interest in literature and history, philosophy and religion. To consider him a purebred philosopher would be quite misleading.

In *DDS* we may accordingly expect to find a rhetorical, literary version of philosophical themes, rather than a crystal-clear, academic account.

Moreover, *DDS* shows many marks of being directed at a Latin-speaking audience¹¹, e.g. with quotations of Virgil, Lucretius, and Ennius ornamenting the very first paragraphs of the speech¹². The speaker seems to be at pains to underscore his familiarity with Roman literature. Roman examples¹³ and striking Latin words drive home the point that *DDS* aims to display a

¹⁰ For a longer description of Apuleius' flowery style, cf. e.g. J. HILTON, [*Apuleius*] *Florida*, in S. HARRISON *et al.*, *Rhetorical Works*, cit., pp. 121-76, esp. pp. 134-6. On the rhetorical nature of *DDS* see also B.L. HIJMAN JR., *Apuleius philosophus Platonicus*, cit., pp. 425-6 and M. BALTES *et al.*, *Über den Gott des Sokrates*, cit., pp. 34-9.

¹¹ Cfr. S. HARRISON *et al.*, *Rhetorical Works*, cit., p. 187, referring to *DDS* 150: «It would be better to discourse in Latin». It is a matter of debate whether the consciously Latin and Roman nature of *DDS* as we have it allows us to assume a preceding part in Greek. This is related to the vexed question concerning the preface (or so called "false preface") of *DDS*; see V. HUNINK, *The Prologue of Apuleius' De Deo Socratis*, «*Mnemosyne*», XLVIII (1995) pp. 292-312, with further references, and S. HARRISON *et al.*, *Rhetorical Works*, cit., pp. 177-80.

¹² See *DDS* 116, 118, 120, 121. See also *DDS* 130, 131 (Virgil), 143 (Lucretius), 145 (Virgil and Plautus), 150 (Virgil), 165 (Terence), 173 (Virgil), and 176-177 (Accius).

¹³ One may point to e.g. some historical examples from the legendary Roman past (*DDS* 135), or to the deliberate attempt in to explain the

Roman erudition without resorting to Greek language. Indeed, not a word of Greek is to be found in *DDS*¹⁴. Meanwhile, Greek philosophy and literature are, decidedly part of the general cultural background of *DDS*, as appears from the numerous references to Greek names, such as Homer, Odysseus (*Ulixes*), Socrates, and Plato¹⁵.

Given these characteristics of *DDS*, it does not come as a surprise that it does not contain an explicit reference to the *Epinomis*. Although such a reference would not be utterly impossible¹⁶, its absence in *DDS* can be satisfactorily explained.

Consequently, if we look for traces of the *Epinomis* in *DDS*, it is the thematical level which must be considered.

Demonology in DDS

What are the general ideas on demonology that are reflected and expressed in *DDS*? A brief outline of the Apuleian text may prove useful here.

The crucial section on demonology is located in the heart of the text (*DDS* 132-156). It is preceded by a section on gods

highest type of *daemones* in conventional Latin terms such as *Genius*, *Lemur*, or *Lar* (*DDS* 150-154). Even Socrates' *daimonion* is tentatively called *Lar contubernio familiaris* (*DDS* 157).

¹⁴ One might have expected Greek quotations to occur in *DDS*, given the fact that in his other works (notably *Apol.*) Apuleius seems keen to insert quotations in Greek to show off his erudition and impress his audience; see V. HUNINK, *Pro se de magia*, cit., II, p. 23 on *Apol.* 4, 4. As an orator, he clearly was bilingual, as becomes manifest also e.g. from his announcement in *Flor.* 18, 38-39 of a hymn on Aesculapius: *Eius dei hymnum Graeco et Latino carmine uobis iam canam illi a me dedicatum.*

¹⁵ For Homer see *DDS* 145, 157, 158, 166, 177; for Odysseus 159, 176, 177; for Socrates 156, 157, 162, 163, 165, 166, 167, 169, 174, 175 (*meus Socrates*); for Plato 120, 123, 124, 125 (*Platoni [...] meo*), 128, 132, 133, 155, 163 (with the *Phaedrus* mentioned in 164). Cf. also Aristoteles in 138 and 167.

¹⁶ Plato's *Phaedrus* is mentioned in *DDS* 164, with a brief paraphrase of the beautiful setting in which the Platonic dialogue was situated.

and men (115-132), with specific stress on the clear separation of men from the gods (125-132), and followed by a third main section devoted to the special theme of the *daemon* of Socrates (157-167). This last section is concluded with a final, practical encouragement to virtue and philosophy, after Socrates' example (167-169), as well as with some fairly commonplace praise of virtue (169-178)¹⁷.

This leaves sections 132-156 for the theory of demons, amounting to some nine pages of text. In this brief scope, four main themes concerning *daemones* are passed in review.

First, the function of *daemones* is dealt with (132-7). Having highlighted the wide gap between gods and men, Apuleius next brings in Plato, whose general opinion he paraphrases as follows:

There are certain intermediary powers, interjacently situated between the highest heaven and the earth far below in the region of the *aer*, powers through which our desires and our own good services are passed to the gods¹⁸.

The question immediately arises what passage of Plato Apuleius may be referring to, and some scholars are eager to include a reference to *Epinomis* 984d3ff.¹⁹ In the Greek passage the Platonic author refers to δαίμονας as an ἀέριον γένος holding a middle position, a class of beings whom we must honour with prayers for the sake of a good journey across.

On closer scrutiny, the resemblance is fairly general, and there is no specific indication that the *Epinomis* was used by Apuleius. Rather, the basic (and much better known) text of

¹⁷ For similar schemes, see J. BEAUJEU, *Opuscules*, cit., p. 5, and S. HARRISON *et al.*, *Rhetorical Works*, cit., p. 192.

¹⁸ *DDS* 132-133 (translation Harrison, as all English translations of *DDS* in this contribution).

¹⁹ Cfr. M. BALTES *et al.*, *Über den Gott des Sokrates*, cit., p. 57 n. 82; further H. MÜNSTERMANN, *Apuleius. Metamorphosen literarischer Vorlagen*, Teubner, Leipzig-Stuttgart 1995, p. 175.

Plato *Symp.* 202d13-e7 on the intermediate position of demons between gods and men is in the background here, as is proved by the fact that Apuleius mentions this text himself in the immediate context (*DDS* 133). One may also point to similar passages on the essential function of demons in Plutarch, which seem somewhat closer to Apuleius²⁰. If any specific reference is needed here, it seems better and more relevant to mention Apuleius' own general qualification in *Apol.* 41, in the speech delivered only a few years before *DDS*²¹.

Next Apuleius dwells on the various areas or "provinces" in which *daemones* are active, ranging from dream visions to divinatory practices. Here it is Roman history rather than any Greek model which dominates the picture, with famous *exempla* such as Hannibal, Flaminius, and Servius Tullius illustrating the point (*DDS* 134-137).

The second issue concerns the location and physical substance of the *daemones*. Here Apuleius gives the fairly common ancient theory of four elements: earth, water, fire, and *aer* (137-138), and argues that the *daemones* should properly be assigned to the *aer* (138-140). Accordingly, he continues, the *daemones* are neither "earthy" nor fiery, but have an intermediate nature in accordance with their middle position in the *aer*, with a small degree of weight and a little lightness (140-141). As a visible model for this, he adduces the example of clouds, a theme on which he eagerly expands in a passage that owes much to Lucretius, with concluding examples from Greek mythology and Plautus (142-145).

²⁰ Cfr. e.g. PLUTARCH. *De Is.* 361b-c, aptly quoted by H. MÜNSTERMANN, *Apuleius*, cit., p. 175 n. 1. See also V. HUNINK, *Plutarch and Apuleius*, in L. DE BLOIS-J. BONS-T. KESSELS-D.M. SCHENKEVELD (eds.), *The Statesman in Plutarch's Works*. Proceedings of the Sixth International Conference of the International Plutarch Society (Nijmegen/Castle Hernen, May 1-5, 2002), I: *Plutarch's Statesman and His Aftermath: Political, Philosophical, and Literary Aspects*, Brill, Leiden-Boston 2004, pp. 251-60, esp. pp. 252-6.

²¹ This is acutely remarked by M. BINGENHEIMER, *Der Schutzgeist*, cit., pp. 149-50 n. 58.

Here too, it is possible to link the basic notion of the passage in *DDS* with the *Epinomis* passage, in which *daemones* are said to be the class of creatures of the *aer* (984e). However, it does seem striking that Apuleius does not refer to a special notion in the *Epinomis* that may be called truly original, namely the theory that there are actually *five* elements: earth, water, *aer*, fire, and *aether* (*Epinom.* 981c)²². If he were directly using the *Epinomis* as a source, one would have expected him to either support this striking theory or reject it, but not to pass on in absolute silence.

The third special topic concerning *daemones* in *DDS* is their character and “psychology”. It is argued that unlike the supreme gods, who exist in eternal serenity, the *daemones* are susceptible to sensations of both pain and pleasure, and so of emotions of anger and joy. With the supreme gods they share immortality, with men their susceptibility to emotion (145-147).

Again, the *Epinomis* passage makes the same philosophical point: God is remote from affections of pain and pleasure, but the *daemones* show kindness to good men and hate evil men (*Epinom.* 985a). However, it may be observed that the *Epinomis* is rather brief on this issue (susceptibility to emotions being merely mentioned in passing), and even shows a small difference concerning the supreme being²³. Apuleius’ more elaborate and rhetorically refined text does show a decidedly other approach to the theme.

In *DDS* the general portrait of *daemones* is conveniently summed up in a definition:

²² In *DDS*, the *aether* occurs as well, but it is said to be situated above the *aer* and is associated with the element of fire, as the region of the stars.

²³ One may note the use of the singular in the Greek passage: θεόν (985a), whereas Apuleius in this context repeatedly refers to the highest divinity with plural forms: *a deorum caelestium tranquillitate, caelites* (146), *deos* (147), *cum diis immortalibus* (148). This need not be an essential point as far as Platonic theology is concerned, but the linguistic difference between the *Epinomis* and *DDS* is remarkable nonetheless.

Quipe, ut fine comprehendam, daemones sunt genere animalia, ingenio rationabilia, animo passiva, corpore aera, tempore aeterna. (For, to encompass them by a definition, *daemones* are living being in kind, rational creatures in mind, susceptible to emotion in spirit, in body composed of the *aer*, everlasting in time, *DDS* 148)²⁴.

Nothing similar may be found in the *Epinomis*²⁵, which after the short section on *daemones* quickly passes on to creatures of water (that is, nymphs) and to other matters (*Epinom.* 985b and further).

Apuleius, by contrast, even resumes the notion of *daemones* having emotions, adding that the variety of their interests explains the variety of rites and religious ceremonies. Rather than any Platonic passage, it is rather, again, Plutarch which may be adduced as a source of inspiration²⁶.

All of this leads up to Apuleius' fourth and final theme on *daemones*: the various types that may be distinguished. Having briefly discussed the idea that the human mind itself might be called a *daemon* (*DDS* 150-152), he identifies a second group of *daemones* as souls which have left their bodies, called *Lemures*, or *Lares*, *Larvae*, or *Manes*²⁷. The *Epinomis* is entirely silent on such notions.

A third class of *daemones* in Apuleian terms, the highest ones, are those *daemones* that never enter bodies, such as Love and Sleep. *Daemones* from this type, Apuleius adds, are as-

²⁴ Apuleius' impressive definition was to be quoted and repeatedly discussed by Augustine in his *De civitate Dei*, as is noted by e.g. H. CANCIK, *Römische Dämonologie*, cit., p. 448.

²⁵ J. BEAUJEU, *Opuscules*, cit., p. 228 suggests that the list of characteristics in *DDS* is rather common and has been drawn from «un "catéchisme" platonicien». Apuleius may indeed have used a general Platonic source here, but the statement perhaps does not do justice to Apuleius' creativity as a writer of polished Latin.

²⁶ Cf. PLUTARCH, *De Is.* 361b, quoted by J. DILLON, *The Middle Platonism*, cit., p. 318.

²⁷ The various Latin terms are discussed in *DDS* 152-153.

signed to men as witnesses and guardians, never as visible powers, but as judges of our actions and thoughts. At the end of our lives, they drag us off to trial and stand beside us when our case is dealt with.

Here Platonic ideas are certainly at the background²⁸. Indeed, Apuleius himself explicitly mentions Plato as his source again (twice in *DDS* 155). But the connection with the *Epinomis* is, at best, the idea that *daemones* can understand our thoughts (*Epinom.* 985a).

Platonic inspiration

After this detailed comparison of the *Epinomis* and Apuleius' speech *DDS* the conclusion seems clear. Both texts belong to widely different genres addressing different audiences: here we have a Greek treatise meant to be studied, and a Latin speech meant to be appreciated by a live audience. The subject matter of *daemones*, very much the centre of Apuleius' interest, is merely a small theme in the Greek text. Some general notions on their nature seem to be corresponding, but the *Epinomis* does not stand out as a clear model for Apuleius. It is rather Plato's more renowned works such as the *Symposium*, as well as texts by Plutarch, which seem to have inspired him. In fact, Apuleius' silence on some special details in the *Epinomis*, notably the theory of *five* elements, may be taken as an indication that he did not have the Greek texts readily at hand, and may not have known it at all from personal reading²⁹.

²⁸ J. DILLON, *The Middle Platonism*, cit., pp. 319-20 refers to *Symp.* 202e, *Phaed.* 107d ff., and *Resp.* 617d-e and 620d-e; cfr. also S. HARRISON *et al.*, *Rhetorical Works*, cit., p. 208 n. 51 with reference to J. BEAUJEU, *Opuscules*, cit., pp. 237-9.

²⁹ The *Epinomis* is, for that matter, never mentioned in Apuleius' works. As a rule, Apuleius does not refer to Platonic teachings by referring to specifically named works, not even in his *De Platone et eius dogmate*. On occasion, however, he was perfectly able to do so: cfr. *Apol.* 65, 4: *uer-*

From Middle Platonism only a limited corpus of texts has survived. It seems reasonable to assume that many Pseudo-Platonic and Middle Platonic works from the 4th century B.C. to the 2nd century A.D. have gone lost, some of which may have influenced Apuleius' description of *daemones*. In the absence of such texts, we cannot be certain here.

Apuleius' well written and influential³⁰ account of "Platonic" demonology seems to be the result of a long Platonic tradition³¹. In this tradition, the *Epinomis* certainly played a role, but there is no good reason to state that it was of special importance to the *philosophus Platonicus* from Madauros. The textual evidence is too meagre to support such a claim.

ba ipsa Platonis iam senis de nouissimo legum libro, mentioning *Laws*. In general, Apuleius was «a voracious reader both of Latin and Greek (B.L. HIJMANS JR., *Apuleius philosophus Platonicus*, cit., p. 406).

³⁰ Well after the 2nd century, Apuleius' text on demonology became the subject of intense polemic for the Christian Church Father Augustine, who strongly rejected his fellow African's views. On the debate see V. HUNINK, *Apuleius, qui nobis Afris Afer est notior. Augustine's polemic against Apuleius in De Civitate Dei*, «Scholia, Studies in classical antiquity», n.s. XII (2003) pp. 82-9, with further references.

³¹ Cfr. F. REGEN, *Apuleius philosophus Platonicus*, cit., p. 14 with nn. 50-1.

