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### Author

Smarr, Janet Levarie

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Igor Candido. *Boccaccio Umanista. Studi su Boccaccio e Apuleio*. Ravenna: Longo Editore, 2014. 165 pp. €20. ISBN: 978-88-8063-775-2.

Candido successfully calls attention Boccaccio's long acquaintance with and interest in the writings of Apuleius, from his early Neapolitan years to his late *Genealogia*. He indicates the manuscripts Boccaccio read, and in some cases annotated, especially Apuleius's *Metamorphoses* and its story of Cupid and Psyche. Candido suggests a three-phased use by Boccaccio of Apuleius's writings: "lettera, mitopoiesi e allegoria," which he sees as three phases of Boccaccio's career more generally. Accordingly, the chapters consider Boccaccio's works chronologically. The title "Boccaccio Umanista" emphasizes this career-long relationship with the classics as opposed to the once prominent notion that Boccaccio's career divides into an early period of vernacular fictions and a later period, under Petrarch's influence, of Latin humanism. Rather, Candido concludes, Boccaccio and Petrarch shared all along an interest in reading and reusing the classics.

Candido traces a variety of connections from direct references to Apuleius and his texts, to the reappearance of thematic and narrative motifs, or even particular words. He sees Apuleius's style and thematic emphases (on fortune, for example, and on animal-to-human transformation) as especially congenial to Boccaccio. The study is uneven but worth reading. Some of the connections are solid and of great interest, others weaker and less persuasive. In the case of widespread topics such as complaints of the *mal maritata* or attacks on women who artificially enhance their beauty, seeking a particular source seems pointless. On the other hand, the identification of Palemone's prayer in the *Teseida* with Psyche, coming to a *locus amoenus* in which stands the palace of Cupid or Temple of Venus, is a strong and fascinating parallel. From Apuleius's *De magia* comes the important idea of the two Venuses, used in Boccaccio's gloss to this passage. Surely, however, not every reference to bestial lust vs matrimonial or spiritual love indicates Apuleius's influence. The ending of the *Comedia delle ninfe fiorentine* offers a reworking of Lucius's transformation from animal to human through the cult of Isis. Prudently, Candido notes that Boccaccio continues the theme of humanizing transformation from the earlier *Caccia di Diana*, written when Boccaccio was not yet thinking about Apuleius and drew on the Ovidian myth of Actaeon; thus Apuleius appealed to Boccaccio because of how well his themes fit in with Boccaccio's own already-forming interests.

The theme of two Venuses carries into the *Amorosa Visione*, where Apuleius figures explicitly among ancient writers in a painted triumph, although Dante is clearly the main model. Suggesting that changes in version B bring it even closer to Apuleius, Candido takes on the debate about whether version B was by Boccaccio or rather by the fifteenth-century Claricio. He was unable to see in time the most recent arguments by Marco Veglia that have swayed the consensus to accepting Claricio's hand.

Scholars have noted a few *Decameron* tales derived from Apuleius. Candido adds an intriguing argument that the Griselda story reworks the story of Cupid and Psyche. He asks why this fable should be given final place in the *Decameron*, and points to its context within the *Metamorphoses*: the tale of Cupid and Psyche is told to comfort a woman in misfortune; so too the *Decameron* tales are told to women in need of comfort.

A short chapter on the *Elegia di madonna Fiammetta* and *Corbaccio* is thinner and less coherent. The *Genealogia* chapter analyzes Boccaccio's allegorization of the Cupid and Psyche narrative, mediated by Martianus Capella, Fulgentius, and Zanobi. The story was read as an account of the soul's relation to God, erring –individually or in the Fall – then restored and rewarded with eternal life. Candido inquires about possible implications of this interpretation for the Griselda story. Here he sees in Griselda "l'ultimo

grado di perfezione raggiunto dall'anima umana" (139); in an earlier chapter he had suggested that the "mansueta" brigata represents the Aristotelian ideal between the less virtuous extremes of Gualtieri's wrath and Griselda's excessive tolerance (108). More than one reading is possible, of course, but the disparity should be acknowledged.

The final chapter turns to Petrarch with the excellent question of whether Petrarch recognized the Apuleian model underlying the Griselda story. A strong support is his explicit moral, which comes close to the allegorizations of Cupid and Psyche. The rest of the chapter wanders into other topics which take us far from the main subject of the book. A final paragraph brings us back to a hasty conclusion about Apuleius and Boccaccio.

Janet Levarie Smarr  
University of California San Diego