

**Richard FLETCHER**

**Philosophy in the bedroom: sex and Cynicism in the Apuleian corpus**

Apuleius' *Florida* 14 is a provocative doxographical anecdote that offers intriguing insights into ideas of philosophical conversion and succession and the place of the philosophical marriage in the interrelation of philosophy, gender and sex throughout the Apuleian corpus and beyond. It tells the tale of the philosopher Crates' conversion to the Cynicism through the teachings of Diogenes, his marriage to Hipparche and her own conversion to Cynicism through the public consummation of the marriage in the Stoa Poikile in Athens, and the foundation of Stoicism in Crates' prudish pupil Zeno's act of covering the newly weds with his cloak.

This paper will consider the themes of philosophical conversion and succession in *Florida* 14 and in the Apuleian corpus in general. Despite the recent trend of considering the *Metamorphoses* as a conversion narrative (eg. Shumate *Crisis and Conversion* 1996), nothing has been said concerning the various references to philosophical conversion elsewhere in the Apuleian corpus, from *Florida* 14 to the biography of Plato in the *De Platone et eius Dogmate*. Furthermore, the intrinsic link between philosophical conversion and succession is vital to our understanding of Apuleius' own self-presentation as a philosopher in the line of Pythagoras, Socrates and Plato. The anecdote at *Florida* 14 describes three levels of philosophical succession: the succession of Diogenes to Crates, the parallel succession of Crates to Hipparche, and the transformation from Cynicism to Stoicism through the figure of Crates' pupil, Zeno, authenticated through the loaded *biographeme* of his cloak. The cloak, as part of the Cynic attire, is transformed into the prop that makes the first gesture of Stoicism, at the very site, the Athenian Stoa Poikile, at which Stoicism originated.

Furthermore, this focus on philosophical conversion and succession is written into the portrayal of Hipparche as the first female Cynic, as her marriage and the public act of sexual intercourse represents her literally and ideologically 'following' Crates' conversion. The marriage of Crates and Hipparche begins with her willingness to follow the Cynic and Cynicism (*proinde duceret quo liberet*). This theme of philosophical marriage and sex is further alluded to elsewhere in the corpus. For example, in the section of the *Apology* in which Apuleius refutes the twin charge that he used fish as part of a magic ritual to force Pudentilla to marry him and his research into fish with sexual names and the sexual organs of fish, alluding to the 'Cynic shamefulness' (39. 1 - *Cynicam temeritatem*) of such studies.

I shall end with a brief discussion of the Aristomenes tale in the *Metamorphoses* and the relationship between generalised cynicism and the philosophical school. In refuting the cynical attitude of Aristomenes' companion, Lucius tells an anecdote concerning his visit to the Stoa Poikile in Athens and his amazement at the performances of the street artists there. The fantastic spectacles are mentioned purely to undermine the cynicism of Aristomenes' companion at the site that Zeno transformed Cynicism into Stoicism.