

The *De Deo Socratis*: Apuleius' Romanization of Plato and Homer

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The *de Deo Socratis* represents Apuleius' popularization of Platonic demonology for his presumably non-Greek speaking audience (Harrison 2001). Beginning with a broad characterization of *daemones*, Apuleius' instructs his audience in the role Socrates' *daemon* played in exhorting him to virtue. One of the ways in which Apuleius makes his subject matter accessible to his audience is through a reliance on Ennius, Lucretius, Vergil, and ultimately Homer. In this paper I will explore how Apuleius deploys and manipulates poetic allusions to indoctrinate his audience in Platonic demonology. My discussion will focus on the point at which the two traditions intersect—a moment when Apuleius “spontaneously” translates a line from Homer into Latin. As I will suggest, Apuleius' translation of Homer simultaneously Romanizes and Platonizes Homer as a means of illuminating Socrates' relationship to his *daemon*.

Allusions to Ennius, Lucretius, and Vergil, appear not surprisingly in the highest concentration at the opening of speech as Apuleius defines *daemones* for his audience. Their presence within the speech allows Apuleius to not only ground his topic in a context familiar to his audience, but also to ultimately reinterpret the Roman poetic tradition in terms of the Platonic one. In contrast, Apuleius treats Homer as something that must be introduced to his audience, not unlike the Platonic material he is discussing. Though he often includes direct quotations from these poets, Homer is for the most part paraphrased with the only exception being Apuleius' own translation. As I will argue, just as Platonic demonology must be defined in terms of Roman exempla, so to must Homer. Apuleius' interest, however, is not in Homer per se, but in a philosophical reinterpretation of him.

Though seemingly devoted to Socrates and his *daemon*, I will suggest that this speech provides us with a better understanding of Apuleius' relationship to his Greek predecessors. While the use of Roman poetry presents Platonic demonology within a familiar context, it is not until Apuleius engages in the act of translation that he is able to transition away from relying on Roman sources. Translation, however, is not the purpose of the speech. Instead it becomes a tool by which Apuleius enacts the philosophy he is espousing.