

This paper is a study of verbal and thematic similarities between the ecphrasis on hair in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* 2.6-9 and Catullus' Poem 66, the *Coma Berenices*. The intertextuality of the *Metamorphoses* with prior Latin authors and genres, particularly epic, has been investigated in depth especially over the course of recent years,¹ and Apuleius' interaction with neoteric sensibility has been noted,² but no one has thoroughly examined a connection between Lucius' well-known obsession for hair and Catullus' poem, itself spoken by a lock. Apuleius' deliberate reference to Catullus has important implications for the interpretation of the second book; in light of this connection we may re-examine the relationship of Lucius and Photis and the purpose of the hair ecphrasis itself, among others.

The bulk of my proofs of a reference between the two works consists of verbal similarities, including that regarding the anointing of hair with perfume in both (Ap. 2.8-9; Cat. 66. 77-78, 91-92), sky imagery and the naming of celestial bodies (Ap. 2.8; Cat. 66. 1-4, 6-7, etc.), shine or brilliance (*nitor splendidus inlucet contra solis aciem, renitet, coruscans*, etc. Ap. 2.8; *solis nitor* Cat. 66.3, *fulgentem* 9, etc.), resistance to removal of hair (Ap. 2.8; Cat. 66.47-50), nudity and the repetition of specific vocabulary (Ap. 2.7-8; Cat. 66.81), and the personification and appearance of Venus (Ap. 2.8; Cat. 66.15, 59, 90). Thematic references include the appearance of Diana/Hecate in both (Ap. 2.4-5; Cat. 66.5, 66) and the erotic desire of the first-person speaker—seduction, in the case of Lucius, and prurient, vicarious interest in sex on the part of the powerless lock (Ap. 2.10-11, 16-17; Cat. 66.19-20, 79-81).

More issues of appreciation and interpretation arise, if these intertexts were intended by Apuleius and he expected his readership to appreciate the connection between the texts. How does a comparison with Berenice affect the characterization of Photis? How is the prominent correspondence of sex and desire meant to be read through the intervening lens of elegy, particularly given the individual intertextuality of both Catullus and Apuleius with elegy? How does the occurrence of unwilling and undesired metamorphosis (and sadness therefrom) in Catullus foreshadow Lucius' own transformation into an ass? The question of authorial intention regarding the resemblances between the two texts leads to fascinating possibilities for the interpretation of the *Metamorphoses*.

¹ Finkelpearl, Ellen. *Metamorphosis of Language in Apuleius: A Study of Allusion in the Novel*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998.

Also: Walsh, P.G. *The Roman Novel: The 'Satyricon' of Petronius and the 'Metamorphosis' of Apuleius*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970.

² Tilg, Stefan. "Eloquentia ludens - Apuleius' *Apology* and the Cheerful Side of Standing Trial." in *Paideia at Play: Learning and Wit in Apuleius*. Ed. Werner Riess. Groningen: Barkhuis, 2008. 105-132.