To my daughter Noa
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 IMAGES OF POVERTY AND WEALTH IN APULEIUS’ APOLOGIA</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 POVERTY AND WEALTH IN NORTH AFRICA</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of North Africa</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economy</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty and Wealth</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 IMAGES OF POVERTY AND WEALTH IN THE MINOR CHARGES</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Trial</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting the Stage</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Charge of Poverty</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apuleius’ Philosophical Interpretation of Poverty</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Minor Charges</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 IMAGES OF POVERTY AND WEALTH IN THE MAIN CHARGE</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Engagement to Pudentilla</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rufinus</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Wedding Ceremony</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Dowry</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pudentilla’s Donations and Will</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 CONCLUSION</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF REFERENCES</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In Roman antiquity, poverty was often considered to be a disadvantage. Nevertheless, several philosophers and writers regarded poverty as an asset. The same was true for wealth. Public speakers therefore often used both positive and negative opinions about poverty and wealth to win their case or attack their rivals. In the middle of the second century, the North-African writer and philosopher Apuleius was accused of luring a wealthy widow into marriage by means of magic, thereby gaining access to her large fortune. As a trained public speaker and a follower of the Second Sophistic, Apuleius capitalized on the existing ideas about poverty and wealth to win over his audience and utterly annihilate his opponents’ case. He attributed all the positive aspects of poverty and wealth to himself and ascribed all the negatives ones to his rivals. As a result, he was able to completely undermine the case made against him.

Since the province of North Africa was different from Rome, I first survey its history and economy. In addition, I look at Apuleius’ background and life within North African society. In the next chapter, I examine images of poverty and wealth used by Apuleius in order to refute the minor charges. Finally, I explore how Apuleius made use of these images to disprove the main charge brought against him.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

In the middle of the second century, in the North-African city of Sabratha, the Roman writer and philosopher Apuleius of Maudauros defended himself in court against a charge of magic.¹ According to Apuleius, his opponents accused him of having used magical practices to lure a wealthy widow, Aemilia Pudentilla, into marrying him.² In addition to this formal charge, Apuleius was also suspected of supplying exotic ingredients for dental hygiene, writing erotic poems about boys, using fish and mirrors for illicit purposes, being poor and of mixed birth, concealing mysterious objects, making a nocturnal sacrifice, and practicing magic upon epileptic patients.³ The speech that Apuleius delivered in his defense, commonly known as the Apologia, is the only surviving account of the trial.⁴ This immediately presents us with some methodological concerns: is Apuleius a trustworthy source? How biased or distorted is his portrayal of the events and people involved in the trial? Did Apuleius leave out certain facts to help his case? Since we have no other evidence for the trial, we cannot possibly answer these questions adequately. However, Bradley convincingly argues that the essential elements of the speech had to be at least plausible in order for Apuleius to believe that

¹ For the date of the trial see Hunink 1997: 12a and Harrison 2000: 7. For the location of the trial see Apul. Apol. 59. All ancient authors are abbreviated according to the Oxford Latin Dictionary, P. G. W. Glare, ed., Oxford 2006.

² For the official charge see Apul. Apol. 2.: calumnia<em> magiae, quae facilius infamatur quam probatur, eam solum sibi delegit ad accusandum.

³ See Apul. Apol. 4-65 and Graham 1971: 134-135 for the reproaches made against his reputation in addition to the formal charge.

⁴ Though the speech is traditionally called Apologia, the exact title of the work is not known. Some modern editions refer to it as Pro Se De Magia, since this title is based on evidence from the MSS. See Hunink 1997: 11a.
he could convince the judge of his innocence. Nevertheless, we must remember that we are dealing with a one-sided and therefore tendentious document.

Recent scholarship has also focused on the authenticity of the text as a speech. Because of the length of the speech, the many literary digressions, and the fact that ancient writers commonly revised a speech before publication, most scholars conclude that this must also be the case for the Apologia. Yet because of the speaker’s reference to the clock and the audience, the lack of clarity, and the fact that speeches lasting five to seven hours were not unusual, Winters makes a compelling case for the stenographic and therefore unaltered nature of the speech. Less common, but not unfounded, is the view that the trial never took place and that the whole speech was nothing more than an ostentatious display of Apuleius’ eloquence, perhaps to aid his reputation. Ultimately, no real external evidence exists for any of the three possibilities. Augustine is the only ancient author to offer testimony of the trial, but since he wrote about 200 years after Apuleius, it is quite likely that the published speech itself was interpreted as evidence for the trial.

Even though it is not known how the trial ended, it is commonly assumed that Apuleius was acquitted. There is no direct evidence of an acquittal, but the fact that Apuleius was free to publish the speech supports the idea that he was indeed victorious. This supposition is further confirmed by Apuleius’ activity as a celebrated

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5 Bradley 2000: n.3.
7 Winters 1969: 607-612. References to lengthy speeches include Pliny Ep. 2.11 and 4.16.
8 August. C.D. 8.19: postremo Apuleius ipse numquid apud Christianos iudices de magicis artibus accusatus est?
orator in the 160s and his later office of *sacerdos Africae* in Carthage, a position he would never had obtained if he had been found guilty.\(^{10}\) In addition, the mere fact that Apuleius survived the trial seems to indicate that he was acquitted, since a guilty verdict would likely have led to the death penalty.\(^{11}\) For my purposes, I assume that Apuleius was successful in his defense.

Whether revised, verbatim, or fictitious, regardless of the outcome, the speech is nevertheless an important historical document that can better our understanding of several sociological aspects of the high empire. It has, for example, recently gained importance as a crucial document for the understanding of the Roman family.\(^{12}\) This thesis aims to examine the images of poverty and wealth that occur in the *Apologia* and to explore how Apuleius makes use of this imagery to achieve his acquittal. The first task is to survey the meaning of the words ‘poverty’ and ‘wealth’ within a specific Roman-African context and then to analyze Apuleius’ historical background, including his family, education, and social and financial status. The third chapter will focus on images of poverty and wealth in the minor charges brought forth by the accusation, and Apuleius’ rebuttal. The final chapter will examine images of poverty and wealth in the main charge.

\(^{10}\) Harrison 2000: 7-9.


CHAPTER 2
POVERTY AND WEALTH IN NORTH AFRICA

The trial of the *Apolo gia* took place in the Roman province of Africa Nova, which included the coastal cities of Sabratha, Oea (modern Tripoli), and Leptis Magna. The area around these three cities was later fittingly called Tripolitania or “region of the three cities”.\(^1\) The events that led up to the trial occurred at Oea, whereas the trial itself was held in Sabratha. Apuleius was born in the 120s CE in Madauros (modern M’Daourouch), an inland city located to the west of Carthage and described by Apuleius himself as *splendidissima colonia*.\(^2\) He later received part of his education in Carthage.\(^3\) Thus the history and economy of both Africa Nova and Africa (Vetus), which included Carthage, is important for our understanding of the representations for poverty and wealth in the *Apolo gia*.

**History of North Africa**

The first people to bring substantial agriculture, trade, and urban development to North Africa were the Phoenicians. Around 1,000 BCE they started founding colonies along the North African coast, including what was to become the city of Carthage. When they first arrived in this region, they came into contact with the local people, who mainly consisted of nomadic tribes that traveled north each year with their herds.\(^4\) These nomads, who up until the time of Apuleius would disturb the peace with their yearly migrations, were called Lybians by the Greeks, Africans, Numidians, or Moors by the

\(^1\) See Raven 1993: xxviii for historical maps of this region.


\(^3\) See Butler and Owen 1967: ix and Apul. *Fl.* 18.15: *ita mihi et patria in concilio Africæ, id est vestro, et pueritia apud vos et magístri vos et secta, licet Athenis Atticis confirmata, tamen hic incohata est.*

\(^4\) Haywood 1975: 33.
Romans, and later Berbers by the Arabs. Even though the African land itself did not offer many attractions, it lay on the way to Spain, where the Phoenicians obtained their much-desired silver and tin. The different Phoenician settlements in North Africa therefore played a crucial role as watering places and refuges from sudden storms. They also functioned as places of temporary exile, since the motherland of Phoenicia was frequently assaulted by invaders.5

By the sixth century BCE, the Greeks started founding new settlements in the area and soon became rivals of the Phoenicians in their quest for control of the Mediterranean Sea and its precious trade routes. Carthage, which by this time had become the new Phoenician capital, unsuccessfully attempted to drive the Greeks out of its territory and was soon forced out of the eastern Mediterranean. As a result, the Carthaginians now focused their attention on their own hinterland and slowly changed from sea-born tradesmen into farmers (Raven 1993: 10-11). By the late third century BCE the Carthaginians had established their power over most of their surrounding areas, including Tripolitania, and the successful introduction of agriculture in many of its colonies led to a prosperous revival. Carthage soon set its eyes back on the Mediterranean and embarked on a new war with the Greeks. As a result of the war, Greek slaves were imported into African cities and brought with them Greek art and culture. Gods such as Demeter and Dionysus became important cults at Carthage, the Greek custom of cremation replaced inhumation, and wearing Greek clothes became fashionable. Yet the local gods were never abandoned, the use of Greek was restricted

5 Raven 1993: 6-10. Raven’s book Rome in Africa covers the history of Roman Africa from its earliest historical evidence until the end of its Roman rule in the seventh century CE. Though the book is mainly intended for a general audience and lacks clear citations and references, it nevertheless offers a sufficient overview of the history of this region for my purposes.
to practical matters, and unlike the Greeks, the Carthaginians had no real interest in athletics or the human body: while Greek gods were usually depicted without clothes, the Carthaginian gods were represented fully clothed. (Raven 1993: 24-32).

The earliest record of any contact between Carthage and Rome dates from about 510 BCE, when a contract was signed in which Carthage acknowledged Rome’s rule over Latium and allowed it to trade in a limited number of Carthaginian ports. During the next few centuries, the Rome and Carthage continued to enter into contracts stipulating power and rights. In 264 BCE, the first war between the Carthaginians and the Romans broke out. At the core of the dispute was control of Sicily, located directly between the Italian peninsula and Carthage. For the Romans, this was their first military venture outside of the peninsula. They quickly gathered that the Carthaginians could only be defeated at sea. This was a significant challenge, considering the fact that Carthage was known for its powerful and almost invincible fleet. Carthage, tricked into a false sense of security by the initial loss of the Romans, was utterly unprepared. The first Punic war ended in a Roman victory. Carthage gave up some of its territories and paid a heavy fine over the next ten years (Raven 1993: 33-37).

Having lost Sicily, Carthage set its sight on Spain for a new source of income, and it quickly gained control of the southern regions. In 218 BCE, hoping to conquer Italy, Hannibal, who by then was leading the expedition, set out to cross the Alps, bringing with him thirty seven elephants. Despite the lack of trails, unclear directions, extreme cold, and attacks by locals, Hannibal managed to reach Italy, having lost about half his men and almost all his elephants. His arrival took Rome by surprise and in the next few years, Hannibal never lost a battle. Yet he lacked supplies and reinforcements
and was unable to sustain his conquest. He returned to North Africa and met the Romans there for a final battle in 202 BCE. The second Punic War ended with yet another Roman victory, this time aided by a group of African allies (Raven 1993:37-43).

As a result of the war, Carthage lost all its foreign territories and was surrounded by a ditch that separated it from the rest of North Africa. Nevertheless, it was still a very affluent and powerful city of merchants. Even Rome was aware of Carthage’s economic threat, as illustrated by an anecdote from the life of Cato the Elder. He purposely dropped some Carthaginian figs in the senate. When the senators remarked about the size and beauty of the fruit, Cato said that it came from a place only three days away and added that Carthage had to be destroyed. Rome soon set out for North Africa and demanded that Carthage be abandoned and could only be rebuilt twelve miles from the sea, something to which the Carthaginians could not accede. For three years they fought with all their might, until the city was finally captured by Scipio Aemilianus, adopted grandson of the Scipio who had defeated Hannibal. For six additional days the Romans pillaged and ransacked the whole city, slaughtering its inhabitants or selling them into slavery (Raven 1993: 44-49).

North Africa was now officially a Roman province. During the first century of their reign, the Romans mainly focused on keeping the peace and exacting war tribute. Many pieces of land were sold or given away as a reward for siding with the Romans during the war. The tribal kingdoms were mainly left to govern themselves. Caesar was the first to take Rome’s rule beyond Scipio’s demarcation ditch. The area within the original boundaries was now called Africa Vetus, whereas the new annexation was given the

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6 Plut. Cat. Mai. 27.
name Africa Nova. Caesar set out to abolish the tribal kingdoms, gradually establish Roman settlements in Africa, and settle some of his veterans and dispossessed Roman farmers in the area. Under Augustus, Carthage was officially refounded and thousands of the retired soldiers who had fought in the civil war against Mark Antony settled in Africa.

This was the true start of the Romanization of Africa, made possible by Augustus’ implementation of the *pax Romana*. Under Caligula, Mauretania was added to the empire, though most of the western desert was left to the natives due to its extreme heat and harsh terrain. Roman Africa now consisted of Mauretania in the west, Numidia in the south, and Tripolitania in the east. Despite occasional disturbances by the nomads, it was a rather peaceful time, as shown by the fact that many towns were left unwalled. The Romans soon started the construction of public works such as massive aqueducts, baths, and administrative buildings. New towns were founded to house Roman legions or army veterans and were connected by long stretches of roads. The originally Roman veterans soon married with local women and within a few generations the army in Africa consisted mainly of African-born Romans who spoke Latin and were trained according to the rules of the Roman army. This was the Africa in which Apuleius was to be born (Raven 1993: 49-63).

**Economy**

Despite its rather adverse climate, North Africa’s main industry was always agriculture. Since only the valleys were naturally suitable for cereal culture, the

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8 Haywood 1975: 55.
Romans increased the amount of arable land by irrigation. Yet providing a steady supply of water for the new farm lands proved to be a laborious task. At times, it did not rain for years on end. Emperor Hadrian’s arrival in Africa in 128 CE coincided with the first rainfall in five years.\(^9\) As a result, cisterns were used to store rain water, dams and terraces were constructed, and aqueducts were built to transport large amounts of water.\(^{10}\) Due to this scrupulous water management, the Romans were able to turn North Africa into a major source of grain to provide Rome’s growing urban population with enough food.\(^{11}\) After only a century of Roman rule, North Africa even replaced Egypt as Rome’s main importer of grain, since it was located closer to Italy and the transportation of goods was therefore cheaper. According to Josephus, North Africa fed Rome for eight months of the year, while Egypt was only able to provide four months’ worth of corn.\(^{12}\) For more than 300 years, North Africa supplied Rome with about half a million tons of grain each year.\(^{13}\) As for the quality, according to Pliny the Elder, it ranked third among all foreign types: Africa was so fertile that one *modius* would yield 150 *modii* and almost 400 shoots would spring from one grain.\(^{14}\)


\(^{13}\) Raven 1993: 88.

During the first century CE, cultivation of grain was the most important aspect of North African agriculture and many of the sanctuaries at that time were dedicated to the goddess Ceres.\textsuperscript{15} By the time of Apuleius the population had increased greatly and much of the soil had been exhausted. As a result, agriculture now spread to areas that were less suitable for grains due to their lack of water. Yet these areas were perfectly fit for oleoculture. Although olive trees thrive on rather dry and infertile land, they need nearly ten years to come to maturity. Now that North Africa had been settled in a general sense of security, the trees had enough time to produce and the area was peaceful enough to attract capital.\textsuperscript{16} In addition, Italy’s demand for oil had by now exceeded its own production. Consequently, the Africans were actively encouraged to use more land for oleoculture.\textsuperscript{17} In Tripolitania, olives had always been the main crop, but during the second century CE olive groves were planted in Numidia as well to match the cultivation of Tripolitania.\textsuperscript{18} Along the whole east coast of North Africa, oleoculture quickly ousted the cultivation of grains. Not only did it require less labor, it was also a more profitable export than grain, which was bulkier and therefore more expensive to

\textit{Augusto procurator eius ex uno grano, vix credibile dictu, CCCC paucis minus germina, estantque de ea re epistulae.} Raven 1993: 79.

\textsuperscript{15} Plin. \textit{Nat.} 15.8: \textit{cereri totum id natura concessit, oleum ac vinum non invidit tantum.} Haywood 1975: 45. Raven 1993: 80.

\textsuperscript{16} Haywood 1975: 37, 48.

\textsuperscript{17} Raven 1993: 89.

\textsuperscript{18} Haywood 1975: 46. Raven 1993: 87, 91. The number of olive presses found in Tunisia far exceeded the regional requirements, thereby indicating that olive oil was produced on a larger scale in order to export it. See Mattingly 2001: 82. Madauros, the birthplace of Apuleius, was also an important center of oil industry. Oleoculture was mainly situated to the east of Madauros, while the area to the west of it remained focused on cereal production. See Haywood 1975: 47-48.
transport. In addition, it could also be used for things other than food, such as soap, perfume base, and oil for lighting.\textsuperscript{19}

During Apuleius’ lifetime agriculture often included more than the cultivation of grains and olives. North Africa’s prosperity soon allowed for more luxurious crops such as pomegranates, figs, truffles, beans, and artichokes.\textsuperscript{20} Inscriptions found in the area also mention the production of honey and wine.\textsuperscript{21} Equally important to its economy was the raising of livestock such as horses, cows, mules, asses, pigs, sheep, and goats.\textsuperscript{22}

Towards the end of the first century CE, the Roman conquest of North Africa had almost come to an end. Farm land was mainly divided into large estates, both imperial and private. During Nero’s reign, half the province of Africa supposedly belonged to only six landowners. Nero reportedly had them all condemned to death and confiscated their property.\textsuperscript{23} Estates were often subdivided into smaller plots of land, which were either let directly to individual farmers or to tenants who then sub-let it to the peasants.\textsuperscript{24} Rent for these plots was commonly paid in goods: each tenant had to give up a third of his grain harvest, a fifth of the beans, and a third of wine or oil.\textsuperscript{25} The size of these estates sometimes even surpassed North Africa’s urban developments.\textsuperscript{26}

\textsuperscript{19} Raven 1993: 92.
\textsuperscript{20} Raven 1993: 97.
\textsuperscript{21} Inscription: \textit{C.I.L.} VIII.25902. Haywood 1975: 42.
\textsuperscript{22} Inscription: \textit{C.I.L.} VIII.4508. Haywood 1975: 52.
\textsuperscript{25} Inscription: \textit{C.I.L.} VIII.25902. Haywood 1975: 45.
\textsuperscript{26} Finley 1999: 112.
employment and protection they provided, estates often attracted so many workers that small hamlets were founded along the main villa of the estate. However, some farmers had no fixed plot of land to work on and were forced to hire themselves out on a day-to-day basis. They often joined a harvest gang that would work on the large estates during harvest time, but frequently struggled to survive.\textsuperscript{27} Even though a large part of the land was worked by free men, whether tenants or day-laborers, we also find some evidence of the use of slaves in agriculture.\textsuperscript{28}

The first coastal settlements in North Africa were founded every 15 to 20 miles as stops along the Phoenician trade route to the west.\textsuperscript{29} At first their purpose was to provide shelter and victuals, but over time they also became export centers of local goods. The three cities of Tripolitania became crucial ports in the trade routes that developed between North Africa and the rest of the Mediterranean.\textsuperscript{30} At Leptis Magna, a deep-sea port was even constructed to accommodate the large Roman ships.\textsuperscript{31} The main export products included grain, olive oil, wood, and luxury products such as purple dye, gold, ivory, pearls, amber, and marble.\textsuperscript{32} African boys were exported and sold as slaves or boxers for Roman spectacles.\textsuperscript{33} Sabratha’s prosperity was mainly based on

\textsuperscript{27} Raven 1993: 84.
\textsuperscript{28} Haywood 1975: 71.
\textsuperscript{29} Lévy 1967: 11.
\textsuperscript{30} Raven 1993: 70.
\textsuperscript{31} Raven 1993: 71.
\textsuperscript{33} Juv. 5.52-53 and 59-60: \textit{vos aliam potatis aquam. tibi pocula cursor Gaetulus dabit aut nigri manus ossea Mauri … quod cum ita sit, tu Gaetulum Ganymedem respice, cum sitites.} Suet. \textit{Cal.} 18: \textit{munera}
the export of exotic animals, whereas Leptis Magna thrived on its oil and caravan
trade. All three Tripolitanian cities may have been terminals for caravan routes that
came from the interior. Goods meant for local trade were sold in small shops located
around the forum, in front of houses, or near a market building, whereas items for
foreign trade were loaded onto ships that called at the town’s local harbor.

This constant passage of ships also provided local employment: workers were
needed to maintain the ships and sailors would make use of the town’s
accommodations to gather provisions. As a result, items needed for food supply were
the main aspect of North Africa’s industry. Amphorae used for the transportation of
food items were produced on a large scale, though its role in North Africa’s economy by
no means came close to the role played by agriculture. Now that soldiers were
stationed in North Africa, textile production also started to grow in importance. In order
to provide the soldiers with cloaks and blankets, cloth production was increased to a
level that surpassed the level of local consumption. Due to their location on the coast,
Carthage and the cities of Tripolitania also excelled in the production of garum.

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34 Haywood 1975: 110-111.
local industries included the production of glass, jewelry, weapons, and mosaics, but most of the archaeological evidence for this is rather meager.\textsuperscript{41}

During Apuleius’ lifetime, North Africa was at the height of its prosperity.\textsuperscript{42} The main cities attracted ambitious men, such as Apuleius himself, from various parts of the province and soon ranked with cities such as Rome and Alexandria as centers of intellectual enlightenment.\textsuperscript{43} Leptis Magna evolved into a city of about 80,000 inhabitants, whereas Sabratha most likely had between 20,000 and 40,000. However, this long period of prosperity came to an abrupt end in the middle of the fourth century CE, when the Tripolitanian towns suffered from invasions by Gaetulians and Vandals.

**Poverty and Wealth**

Recent scholarly research has shown a great interest in the social aspects of ancient societies, including poverty and wealth.\textsuperscript{44} However, it is difficult to differentiate between poverty and wealth in ancient times, as there are no standard measurements. This is hardly surprising, since even for the Greeks and the Romans ‘rich’ and ‘poor’ were relative terms. The Greek words *ptochos* (beggar) and *penes* (subsistence laborer) for example could be used for people of varied financial backgrounds, depending on the context.\textsuperscript{45} Research is also hampered by the lack of evidence, especially for the poor in Roman society. Those who were landless and destitute were usually missing from population registers and so it is impossible to know how many

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Haywood 1975: 73.
\item Graham 1971: 128.
\item See e.g., Atkins and Osborne 2006.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
there were.\textsuperscript{46} In addition, Roman writers were often elite and showed little to no interest in the poor of their society.\textsuperscript{47} As a result, very little is known about the actual poor. This did not change until the arrival of Christianity, which only had its full effect more than one hundred years after the time of Apuleius.\textsuperscript{48}

Trying to define poverty and wealth in North Africa poses an even greater problem since most of our surviving documents refer to living conditions in the city of Rome. Yet we do know that standards of living in North Africa were sometimes different from those at Rome. When St. Augustine lived in Italy, he was stunned by the fact that artificial light was considered a luxury. In his native North Africa, where olive oil was plentiful and readily available, oil lamps were almost taken for granted and all but the most destitute could afford them.\textsuperscript{49} Not only did agriculture provide ample olive oil for almost everyone in North Africa, it also provided the poor with basic food: in North Africa figs were an essential part of a poor man’s diet.\textsuperscript{50} And unlike their Italian counterparts, the North African rich of the early empire were mainly city dwellers. It was not until the late third and early fourth century CE that country villas became more fashionable and life in North African cities had become rather unpleasant.\textsuperscript{51} In addition, the population of North Africa during the second century CE was made up of both Roman citizens and

\textsuperscript{46} Scheidel 2006: 53.
\textsuperscript{47} Parkin 2006: 61.
\textsuperscript{48} Rathbone 2006: 100.
\textsuperscript{49} Raven 193: 96.
\textsuperscript{51} Raven 1993: 100.
Berber or Punic natives. Many of the Berber natives continued their nomadic lifestyle and thereby added to the number of landless poor.\textsuperscript{52}

Very little information is available on the size of individual fortunes. In the \textit{Apologia}, Apuleius speaks of fortunes measuring two, three, and four million sesterces.\textsuperscript{53} According to Cicero, one needed to have an annual income of six hundred thousand sesterces in order to live a life of luxury.\textsuperscript{54} Pliny the Younger, for example, who was a senator of average fortune, had an annual income of two million sesterces.\textsuperscript{55} In comparison, a legionary under Trajan had a gross annual income of about one thousand two hundred sesterces, from which the cost of food and other expenditures still had to be deducted.\textsuperscript{56} During Apuleius' lifetime, many of the wealthy citizens, who attempted to gain immortality through the erection of statues and mausoleums, poured their money into the improvement of their own city. Now that the province was at peace and there was no need for extensive warfare, they were determined to use their fortune as a means to rise up the social and political ladder. In hundreds of cities temples and forums were built with money from the newly rich.\textsuperscript{57} Several of these gifts were made by benefactors of Punic origin, who had thrived under the Roman rule and had made their

\textsuperscript{52} Haywood 1975: 102, 106.

\textsuperscript{53} Apul. Apol. 23: \textit{profiteor mihi ac fratri meo reliictum a patre HS XX paulo secus. 71: mater sestertium quadragies po<s>sidebat. 75: ipse egens, nudus et ignominia sua tutus reliquit Rufino huic –non mentior!- sestertium XXX devorandum.}

\textsuperscript{54} Cic. Parad. 49: \textit{capit ille ex suis praediis sescena sestertia, ego centena ex meis; illi aurata tecta in villis et sola marmorea facienti et signa, tabulas, supellectilem et vestem infinite concupiscienti non modo ad sumptum ille est fructus, sed etiam ad faenus exiguus. Finley 1999: 55.}

\textsuperscript{55} Finley 1999: 100, 220 n.56.

\textsuperscript{56} Finley 1999: 104.

\textsuperscript{57} Raven 1993: 103, 107-109.
fortune in the shipping business.\textsuperscript{58} There even seems to have been an increase in the amount of smaller fortunes, as illustrated by an increase in small gifts, fewer than 5,000 sesterces, to local towns. However, since people tended to donate more than their fortune really allowed in order to be exempt from certain municipal burdens, the size of these gifts does not always accurately reflect the size of individual fortunes.\textsuperscript{59} In Apuleius’ lifetime, however, many North Africans had become wealthy enough to enter into the Roman equestrian rank, which required a census of four hundred thousand sesterces.\textsuperscript{60} An average-sized North African city had about three or four equestrian families. Even wealthier citizens could be admitted into the senatorial rank, though their fortune was less than that of their counterparts in the city of Rome, who needed a minimum of one million sesterces to become a senator.\textsuperscript{61} Yet since a lot of these wealthy citizens were landowners, their fortune was mainly tied up in land, and they did not necessarily have much cash readily available. They often had to borrow money from professional lenders to maintain their wealthy life-style.\textsuperscript{62}

Since the wealthier people of North Africa spent most of their time outside, whether on the farm or in the forum, their houses were fairly simple. Some houses even had running water, though this never extended into the kitchen, since providing water there was considered work for the slaves. Mosaics commemorating an event at the

\textsuperscript{58} In 53 CE the old forum at Leptis Magna was repaired by Gaius, son of Hanno. The market place and theater at Leptis Magna were built by Annobal Rufus Tapapius in the early first century CE. See Raven 1993: 103, 105-106. Mattingly 2001: 83.

\textsuperscript{59} Haywood 1975: 79.

\textsuperscript{60} Harrison 2000: 4.

\textsuperscript{61} Raven 1993: 126. Finley 1999: 100.

\textsuperscript{62} Finley 1999: 52-53.
amphitheater or circus that had been hosted by the house’s owner often adorned the more luxurious houses. Rich households always had many slaves, including cooks, pedagogues, nannies, bookkeepers, and administrators. Apuleius’ wife, who had a considerable fortune, gave about four hundred slaves to her two sons. Though the cost of a slave depended on each slave’s skills, the average price paid for a slave in the early third century CE was about five hundred denarii or two thousand sesterces, only slightly more than the cost of a horse.

The poor people of North Africa usually lived in their master’s household or in rented apartments or shops. Many were drawn to life in the towns because of the considerable advantages it offered. Since wealthier citizens often donated money for the running costs of the baths, the poor were usually able to visit these bathhouses for free. They were also able to take in any shows at the theater or circus at no cost. In addition, many of the rich people kept open house as part of their political campaign and the poor were thus able to pick up a free meal. Besides the corn dole and the family allowances started by emperor Trajan, the Roman state showed very little concern for the poor. When it displayed generosity, it was usually directed to the whole community and not specifically to the needy. The corn dole, which was available to all citizens regardless of their financial situation, was not made into a distribution for the poor until

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63 Raven 1993: 118-119.
64 Finley 1999: 73.
65 Apul. Apol. 93: … servos quoque haud minus CCCC …
66 Haywood 1975: 71, 81-82.
67 Raven 1993: 114, 119-121.
the early third century CE. When an individual gave to the poor, it was often in exchange for a favor or political support. This *do ut des* mentality that prevailed throughout antiquity had already been expressed as early as the seventh century BCE, when the poet Hesiod suggested to “give to one who gives, but not to one who does not give.” In the first century CE Seneca maintained that a rich man ought to give to the needy, though not to the destitute, whom no amount of money could save. Yet in his letters, he also took the time to mention giving a coin to a beggar and a crust to a starving man, thereby perhaps indicating a slowly shifting mentality.

Poor people and beggars were a normal part of life in a Roman city and most likely of rural life as well. It is likely that the Roman government at times tried to ship them off to colonies, such as North Africa. If one did not own, rent, or inherit enough land to sustain himself and his family, a life of poverty was difficult to avoid. Women and children were especially vulnerable if their family’s breadwinner died. Yet despite one’s humble origins, it was still possible to move up the social ladder and even gain fame and fortune. Chariot racers and gladiators sometimes became local idols and

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73 Finley 1999: 171-172.

74 Osborne 2006: 4-5.

75 Parkin 2006: 73.
benefitted both financially and socially from their newly attained status.\textsuperscript{76} If one was born into a poor family but possessed great talent, wealthy citizens would at times provide patronage and a decent education, which in turn could lead to financial and social advantages.\textsuperscript{77} Marcus Cornelius Fronto, the tutor of the future emperor Marcus Aurelius, obtained great wealth and status. He even made it to consul.\textsuperscript{78} A funeral monument from Makhtar in North Africa tells the exceptional story of a farm laborer who even made it to the rank of censor.\textsuperscript{79} Yet one could also experience a harsh reversal of fortune, resulting in a loss of money or property and therefore social status. When an inheritance was subdivided into many pieces, someone belonging to an originally wealthy family could end up with only a small plot of land, barely enough to sustain himself. This was the case for Sicinius Aemilius, Apuleius’ accuser. Yet fortune favored him again later on when almost all his relatives died in a pandemic and he became wealthy again through the resulting inheritance.

Apuleius, a Roman citizen of Latin nomenclature, was lucky enough to be born into a rather wealthy family.\textsuperscript{80} His father had attained the duumvirate, the highest provincial office, and had left him and his brother the substantial sum of two million sesterces when he died.\textsuperscript{81} Apuleius received his first education in Carthage or possibly

\begin{footnotes}
\item[76] Raven 1993: 112.
\item[77] Raven 1993: 123.
\item[78] Raven 1993: 124-125.
\item[80] For a more extensive biography and chronology of Apuleius’ life, see Sandy 1997 and Harrison 2000 and 2001.
\item[81] This sum was five times the equestrian census at that time. See Harrison 2000: 4.
\end{footnotes}
his native town of Madauros, where he had also started a public career. After his father’s death, his newly found personal wealth enabled him to study abroad, following the standard elite literary education. He certainly spent time in Athens and Rome and he was on his way to Alexandria when the events leading up to the trial took place. After his trial, he spent several years in Carthage as a successful public speaker. His wealth and rhetorical activities made him a member of the local elite and the senate and people of Carthage honored him with a statue and the liturgy of provincial priesthood, which only the rich could afford. Nevertheless, Apuleius does not seem to have pursued a political career after his literary and rhetorical successes. Nothing is known about the end of his life. He most likely spent his last years in Carthage, continuing his career as a public speaker, teacher, and philosopher.
CHAPTER 3
IMAGES OF POVERTY AND WEALTH IN THE MINOR CHARGES

The Trial

During the winter of 156-157 CE, Apuleius was on his way to Alexandria when he stopped at a friend’s house in the North African city of Oea to regain his strengths.¹ While staying there, he was visited by Sicinius Pontianus, with whom he had previously studied in Athens. Pontianus convinced Apuleius to stay in Oea until the following winter, so as to avoid the dangers of traveling during the heat of summer. He also convinced him to stay at his widowed mother’s house near the sea in order to speed his recovery. After a few months, during which Apuleius had started to give speeches in Oea, Pontianus brought up the real reason for wanting Apuleius to stay with him: he was looking for a suitable husband for his widowed mother, Pudentilla, in order to safeguard her considerable fortune for himself and his younger brother Sicinius Pudens. At first, Apuleius was opposed to the idea of remaining in North Africa and entering into marriage since he desired greatly to continue his journey to Alexandria, where he had planned on continuing his studies. But after a lengthy conversation and some considerable pressure, Pontianus was able to persuade Apuleius to marry the wealthy Pudentilla. It was decided that the marriage would take place after Pontianus’ own marriage to the daughter of Herennius Rufinus. Rufinus, hoping to get his hands on Pudentilla’s riches through his new son-in-law, convinced Pontianus that the marriage of his mother to Apuleius was a bad idea. Nevertheless, Pudentilla was determined to continue with the union and the couple was married in one of her suburban villas. Apuleius was able to reconcile Pudentilla with her sons and prevailed upon her to leave

¹ See Harrison 2000: 39-41 for a general introduction of the trial.
considerable portions of her fortune for the two boys. Yet Pontianus died unexpectedly while on his way to Carthage and Sicinius Pudens subsequently left their house and moved in with his paternal uncle, Sicinius Aemilianus. Aemilianus, together with Rufinus, who was purportedly planning on marrying his newly widowed daughter to Sicinius Pudens, used the young boy to attack Apuleius in court. At first, they accused Apuleius of having murdered Pontianus. Yet when Apuleius challenged them to substantiate the accusation and bring a formal charge, they changed their tactic and accused him of having used magic to lure the wealthy Pudentilla into marriage. In order to avoid serious legal repercussions, they had the charge brought forward by Sicinius Pudens, who was still a minor.

While the core of the dispute was his marriage to Pudentilla and her wealth, many other and lesser charges were brought forth against Apuleius. Even though these charges, which included poverty, erotic poetry, and the use of mysterious objects, seemed quite trivial compared to the main issue at stake, Apuleius dedicated a substantial part of his speech to their refutation. The accusers mainly used these additional charges to deface Apuleius’ reputation as a philosopher, which probably aggravated him greatly. As a result, he spent the greater part of his speech dealing with these charges. This also allowed him to gradually paint a picture of his accusers before getting to the actual charge.

This chapter focuses on the first part of the speech by examining how the prosecution used poverty as an accusation to slander Apuleius. It also surveys how

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3 See Apul. *Apol.* 4-65 for the minor charges.
Apuleius used images of intellectual poverty to slowly win over his audience by making them feel part of his privileged and ‘intellectually wealthy’ group, as opposed to the base and ‘intellectually poor’ accusers.

Setting the Stage

From the very beginning, Apuleius makes it clear that the real accusation of poverty should be aimed at Sicinius Aemilianus, who has filled his accusation of Apuleius with nothing but baseless slander, due to a lack (penuria) of actual charges:

Certus equidem eram proque vero obtinebam, Maxime Cl. quique in consilio estis, Sicinium Aemilianum, senem notissimae temeritatis, accusationem mei prius apud te coeptam quam apud se cogitatum penuria criminum solis conviciis impleturum. (1.1)

I felt sure and took it for granted, Claudius Maximus and members of the council, that Sicinius Aemilianus, an old man well known for his recklessness, would fill his accusation of me, which he brought before you before thinking it over himself, with nothing but abuse for lack of real charges.

Aware that his opponents are accusing him of being poor and therefore marrying a wealthy woman, Apuleius casts the accusation of poverty right back at them within the first sentence of his speech. The word penuria does not only refer to a lack of charges in this case, but already foreshadows the material and intellectual poverty of his opponents. He immediately puts this into sharp contrast with his own plentiful resources of oratorical skill:

Quo ego uno praecipue confisus gratulor medius fidius, quod mihi copia et facultas te iudice optigit purgandae apud imperitos philosophiae et probandi mei. (1.3)

Relying on this above all, I count myself lucky indeed: with you as a judge I have now been given the chance and opportunity to clear the name of Philosophy in the minds of the ignorant, and to justify myself.

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4 All Latin excerpts from the speech are taken from Hunink 1997. All English translations are taken from Hunink’s translation in Harrison 2001.
Though Hunink renders *copia* here as ‘chance’, Apuleius’ Latin-speaking audience would surely have also understood it as its other meaning, ‘abundance’, in contrast to Aemilianus’ *penuria*.

Besides portraying Aemilianus as lacking any real charges, Apuleius also depicts him as being void of confidence and cowardly looking for a hiding-place:

> Ibi vero Aemilianus cum te quoque acrius motum et ex verbis rem factam videret, quaerere occipit ex diffidentia latibulum aliquod temeritati. (1.7)

By then, however, Aemilianus saw that you were fiercely indignant and that the matter had become one of deeds rather than words, and for lack of confidence he began to seek a hiding-place for his recklessness.

His sense of decency is compared to a poor man’s tattered and threadbare clothing, worn so often that it no longer receives any care:

> Pudor enim veluti vestis quanto obsole[tior] est, tanto incuriosior habetur. (3.3)

> For a sense of decency is like clothing: the more worn it becomes, the less care it is given.

Apuleius’ sense of decency, on the other hand, is described as undiminished and is therefore implicitly compared with the clothing of a wealthy man, who is able to care for it and only wear it on appropriate occasions:

> Et ideo necessarium arbitror pro integritate pudoris mei, priusquam ad rem aggrediar, maledicta omnia refutare. (3.4)

> And accordingly, I think it necessary for my own sense of decency, which remains undiminished, to refute all abusive allegations before turning to the case itself.

Apuleius’ accusation of intellectual poverty is not only aimed at Aemilianus, but also at his hired sidekicks. They are characterized as day laborers, looking only for a profit and another day’s work, a sight not at all uncommon in Roman Africa. Hunink also points out
that “[g]enerally speaking, in antiquity the motif of financial gain was associated with a low social status,” thereby identifying the social standing attributed to these advocates.⁵

Propter quod paulo prius patroni Aemiliani multa in me proprie conficta et alia communiter in philosophos sueta ab imperitis mercennaria loquacitate effutierunt. Quae etsi possunt ab his utiliter blaterata ob mercedem et auctoramento impudentiae depensa haberi, iam concesso quodam more rabulis id genus, quo ferme solent linguae suae virus alieno dolori locare … (3.6-3.7)

Precisely for that reason, Aemilianus’ lawyers, with their hired garrulity, have just now blurted out many fabrications about me in particular and other general reproaches against philosophers usually made by the ignorant. This may of course be considered as ‘profitable babbling’ for a reward, paid with the fee for their impudence. This is what this sort of tub-thumper is now more or less allowed to do: they commonly hire out their venomous tongues to harm others.

Nevertheless, being the skilled speaker that he is, Apuleius is careful not to just portray himself as a wealthy man and his opponents as poor, as will become clear in the next part of the speech. He is constantly aware of his literary audience and the jury, some of whom most likely would be offended by such a poorly nuanced portrayal.

After the exordium, Apuleius starts tackling the minor charges that will eventually take up most of the speech. He first deals with the charge of beauty and eloquence: Tannonius Pudens, presumably a relative of the young Pudens, had introduced Apuleius in his accusation as handsome, eloquent, and fluent in both Latin and Greek. Most likely, Tannonius had done so in an attempt to create a distance between Apuleius and his audience in court, many of whom were native Punic speakers. In addition, Hunink points out that “excessive grooming could easily be interpreted as a sign of weakness and moral flaws” and thus of “luxury and dandyism.”⁶ Apuleius fights off the

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⁵ Hunink 1997: 19b.

charge, not only by refuting it completely, but also by explaining his shabby appearance as being caused by his intellectual drive for knowledge:

Sed haec defensio, ut dixi, aliquam multum a me remota est, cui praeter formae mediocratatem continuatio etiam litterati laboris omnem gratiam corpore deterget, habituinem tenuat, sucum exsorbet, colorem obliterat, vigorem debilitat. Capillus ipse, quem isti aperto mendacio ad lenocinium decoris promissum dixere, vides quam sit amoenus ac delicatus: horrore implexus atque impeditus, stupere tomento adsimilis et inaequaliter hirtus et globosus et congestus, prorsum inenodabilis … (4.10-4.12)

But this type of defense, as I said, is some distance removed from me. It is not just that I am gifted with only mediocre looks, but incessant literary activity wipes out my bodily charm, makes me perceptibly meager, consumes my vital life-sap, effaces my healthy colour (sic), disables my strength. Just look at my hair! With an outright lie they said I wear it long ‘to make my beauty alluring’. Well, you see how pleasant and elegant it is: it is all entwined and stuck together, much like flax for stuffing cushions, irregularly shaggy, bunched, and piled up, really inextricable.

Apuleius’ description of himself would be more fitting for a poor farmer, working the field all day and not spending any time on his outward appearance. Neglect of one’s physical presence was in a way almost typical of the traditional Roman man.⁷ By successfully refuting the charge, Apuleius therefore reconnects with his North African audience. Yet he continues to tie all of this into his portrayal of himself as an intellectually wealthy man, who finds his riches in the teachings of philosophy. Thus the shabbier his appearance grows, the richer his mind becomes.

Next, Apuleius moves on to the accusation of poetic licentiousness. The accusers had brought forth some of his poems, including one on dental hygiene and two on his love for younger boys. Apuleius incessantly continues to depict his opponents as poor country bumpkins and himself as the educated philosopher. He also feels confident about having the audience on his side, since he claims that the manner in

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⁷ Hunink 1997: 26b.
which the accusers recited the poems is the reason why his poetry raised anger from those listening:

… eos absone et indocte pronuntiarent. (5.6)

… they recited them harshly and ignorantly.

… quos tamen tam dure et rustice legere, ut odium moverent. (9.1)

… which they none the less read aloud with such harshness and rusticity that the poetry raised only ‘hatred’.

Since all wealth and intellectual activity were centered around the urban areas at that time, describing Aemilianus and his henchmen as rustic immediately labels them as ignorant and poor. Apuleius is then quick to contrast this with his own educational background: he starts name-dropping several Greek and Roman poets and writers, including Sappho, Catullus, and even emperor Hadrian, in order to display his own intellectual wealth.\(^8\) In addition, he then recites his own poems to the crowd. According to his own speech, he does this to show that he is not ashamed of them. However, one quickly understands that he is also doing this to offset the poor recitation by his accusers.

Before moving on to the actual charge of poverty, Apuleius very clearly reiterates to the audience why he and Aemilianus are so different. Whereas Apuleius is a wise and intellectually wealthy man, who wonders about things around him and has the intellectual curiosity to look into a mirror, Aemilianus is nothing but an irrelevant and mentally poor field worker, who lives in dirt and darkness, similar to a cockroach or any kind of vermin:

\(^8\) Apul. Apol. 9.7, 10.3, 11.2, and 11.4.
Quem tu librum, Aemiliane, si nosses ac non modo campo et glebis, verum etiam abaco et pulvisculo te dedisses, mihi istud crede, ... profecto discendi cupidine speculum inviseres et aliquando relictio aratro mirarere tot in facie tua sulcos rugarum. (16.7)

If you had known his [Archimedes from Syracuse] book, Aemilianus, and had not devoted yourself just to the clods of the field but also to the sand on the counting-board, believe me, ... curiosity would certainly have made you look into a mirror. Yes, finally you would have left your plough and wondered about all those furrows in your face.

... et adhuc <h>ercle non satis novi. Id adeo factum, quod et tu rusticando obscurus es et ego discendo occupatus. ... cum ipse humilitate abdita et lucifuga non sis mihi mutuo conspicuus. (16.9-13)

Actually, not even today do I know a great deal about you. The reason for this is that you are invisible because of your farmer’s life, whereas I am absorbed by my studies. ... you in turn are kept out of my sight by your lowly life that shuns the light.

The Charge of Poverty

Now that Apuleius has clearly created a division between himself as a man of wisdom and his accusers as ignorant countrymen, he is ready to deal with the actual charge of poverty. According to Aemilianus and his advocates, Apuleius had come to Oea as a poor man in the company of one slave but had shortly thereafter manumitted three slaves in one day. As Hunink points out, the accusers most likely “tried to make the point that Apuleius had come to Oea with one slave only, i.e. as a poor man, and after only a short time was seen to set free three slaves, i.e. as a man who has suddenly become rich (e.g. by marriage) and is now squandering his money.”9 If so, Apuleius is purposely trying to misrepresent the matter by turning to full-fledged sophism:

Quod quidem velim mihi respondeas, qui potuerim ex uno tris manu mittere, nisi si et hoc magicum est. (17.3)

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Well, explain this to me: how can I manumit three slaves out of one? Or is this yet another example of magic?

Most likely, the three slaves had been in Apuleius' possession for a long time.

According to Hunink, a new marriage may have indeed been the perfect time to set free old and faithful slaves.\(^\text{10}\) Apuleius therefore deliberately makes advantage of the fact that he was seen in the company of one slave, which does not rule out possession of more slaves. He then turns the possession of three slaves into a sign of poverty instead of wealth:

… cur potius tris servos inopiae signum putares quam tris libertos opulentiae? (17.5)

… why would you think three slaves are a sign of destitution rather than three freedmen one of wealth?

Though some scholars believe that owning three slaves was actually a sign of wealth, examples also exist to suggest the opposite. For instance, in the fourth century C.E. the Greek sophist Libanius pleaded for an increase in the stipend for his lecturers. He claimed they were miserable and underpaid since they could only afford about two or three slaves each.\(^\text{11}\) Apuleius' accusers most likely agreed that owning three slaves was the privilege of a wealthy man, but Apuleius himself decides to represent it as the opposite to aid his cause and distort the original charge brought against him. According to Apuleius, poverty was actually honorable for a philosopher:

Nescis profecto, nescis, Aemiliane, philosophum accusare, qui famulitii paucitatem obprobraris, quam ego gloriae causa ementiri debuissem, quippe qui scirem non modo philosophos, quorum me sectatorem fero, verum etiam imperatores populi Romani paucitate servorum gloriatos. (17.6)

\(^{10}\) Hunink 1997: 69b.

\(^{11}\) Lib. Orat. 31.11. Finley 1999: 79.
You do not know, Aemilianus, you really do not know, how to accuse a philosopher. Against me you bring up my small number of servants, but that is something I should have simulated for the sake of glory. For I know only too well that not merely philosophers (of whom I claim to be a devotee) but also generals of the Roman people have gloried in the small number of their slaves.

This *laus paupertatis* was by no means a new concept. According to Hunink, it is “clearly redolescent of the rhetorical school and *exempla* literature.”12 For example, in the *Controversiae* Seneca the Elder claimed that poverty actually makes a person innocent.13 Seneca the Younger also stated that riches have shut off many a man from the attainment of wisdom, whereas poverty is unburdened and free from care.14 Already by the middle of the Republic, the Romans cultivated the idea of the poor but virtuous man who only devotes his life to work and civic duty.15 Some well-known examples include Cincinnatus, who returned to his simple farmer’s life after being a dictator, and Cato the Elder, who lived a humble and virtuous life and eventually became consul.16 To justify his amount of slaves, Apuleius also reminds his audience of Marcus Antonius, who owned only eight slaves, Cn. Papirius Carbo, who had only seven, Manius Curius, who had only two, and Marcus Cato, who took only three to Spain with him when he was consul.17 By the late Republic people started seeing lavish luxury as leading to moral decay and political corruption.18 This point was clearly stated by Sallust in the

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12 Hunink 1997: 68b.

13 Sen. Con. 2.4.7: *quam te, paupertas, amo, si beneficio tuo innocens sum!* Woolf 2006: 88.


16 For Cincinnatus, see Liv. 3.26-29. For Cato the Elder, see Plut. *Cat. Mai.* 3.1-3.

17 Apul. *Apol.* 17.7-10.

18 Osborne 2006: 15.
Bellum Catilinae: Catilina's incessant desire for money led to a desire for power and thus depravity as it had done to many Romans before him.\textsuperscript{19} As a philosopher, Apuleius also found his inspiration in the writings of Socrates and Plato. According to Socrates, wealth was by no means essential in obtaining the good life and Plato even suggested that all philosophic rulers should give up their possessions.\textsuperscript{20} In his defense, Apuleius proclaims poverty as the handmaiden of everything good:

\begin{quote}
Enim paupertas olim pilosophiae vernacula est, frugi, sobria, parvo potens, aemula laudis, adversum divitiias possessa, habitu secura, cultu simplex, consilio benesuada. Neminem umquam superbia inflavit, neminem inpotentia depravavit, neminem tyrannide efferavit, delicias ventris en inguinum neque vult ullas neque potest. (18.2-3)
\end{quote}

For Poverty has long been a member of Philosophy’s family; she is honest and sober, content with little and eager for praise, a stable possession compared with wealth, safe to have, easy to maintain, and liberal with good advice. No one has she ever filled with conceit, no one has she corrupted through lack of restraint, no one has she maddened through absolute power, and for gastronomic or sexual pleasures she has neither care nor talent.

Wealth, on the other hand, he claims to be the source of some of the worst crimes in Rome’s history:

\begin{quote}
Quippe haec et alia flagitia divitiarum alumni solent. (18.4)
\end{quote}

These and other shameful deeds are normal only for the nurslings of wealth.

He then states that all eminent men in Rome’s history found their start in poverty, probably hoping to include himself in this number for the sake of his cause:

\begin{quote}
Maxima quaeque scelera si ex omni memoria hominum percenseas, nullum in illis pauperem reperies, ut contra haut temere inter inlustris viros divites comparent, sed quemcunque in aliqua laude miramur, eum paupertas ab incunabilis nutricita est. (18.4-5)
\end{quote}


\textsuperscript{20} Finley 1999: 36.
If you review the worst crimes of history, you will not find a poor man involved in them. Conversely, among illustrious men the rich are not readily to be seen, but all whom we admire for whatever good reason have been nursed from the cradle by poverty.

In addition, Apuleius praises poverty as the source of culture and the arts:

Paupertas, inquam, prisca apud saecula omnium civitatium conditrix, omnium atrium repertrix, omnium peccatorum inops, omnis gloriae munifica, cunctis laudibus apud omnis nationes perfuncta. (18.6)

Poverty, I say, is the age-old, universal founder of communities and inventor of arts, destitute of moral offences, but bountiful with glory, and praised in every manner by all nations.

Yet one should not forget that Apuleius is really a wealthy man, who is married to an even wealthier woman. His father’s wealth provided him with a good education and allowed him to travel to different centers of learning within the Roman Empire. Because of this wealth, Apuleius was able to become a man of ‘culture and the arts’, even though he tells his audience that these aspects have to come from poverty. Later in the speech Apuleius even presents fourteen of his own slaves in his defense and describes them as a “large staff”, which completely contradicts his claim of owning few slaves.\(^{21}\)

To reconcile this contradiction, one must remember that Apuleius was a skilled orator who knew how to manipulate his audience and adapt different ideologies to his own goals. He was a philosopher and was only able to be one because of his wealth: if he had truly been poor, he would have had to work his fields every day or practiced a trade in order to sustain himself. Yet as a Platonic philosopher and a sophist, he supported the ideology of poverty and he used that ideology to refute the charges against him. Since an accusation of poverty was common slander at that time, it was a

\(^{21}\) Apul. Apol. 45.1 and 47.1: \textit{XIII servos quos postulasti exhibeo. ... Aut cur sisti postulabas tantam familiam?}
theme on which he could easily elaborate and about which his audience was most likely very familiar. Apuleius must have been confident that many of his listeners were bound to nod their heads in agreement since this *laus paupertatis* was so well known and ingrained in contemporary ideology and oratory. He also played this card well: his accusers never actually used the word ‘poverty’ against him as far as we can tell. They only stated that he had come to Oea with one slave and had then freed three a short period afterward. It is much more likely that they had actually intended to accuse him of being a *nouveau riche* who had just married a wealthy widow for her money and was now abusing his newly attained position. But it was Apuleius’ turn to speak now, and he cleverly manipulated their charge to aid his own cause. By claiming that he had freed three slaves, they must have meant that he was too poor to own more slaves, so therefore he insists they actually accused him of poverty, a charge he could easily refute based on all the oratorical experience he had. It is clear that Apuleius had no real intentions to live as a poor man. He was obviously not interested in plowing his own field and he never took up any political office, as opposed to textbook examples such as Cincinnatus and Cato the Elder. His real passion in life was philosophy and public speaking, both of which were impossible without financial resources to back them up. His ‘poverty’ therefore, seems to be nothing more than a rhetorical convention.

Nevertheless, Apuleius continued to use his alleged poverty to link himself to several important historical figures. He asks his audience to imagine that the trial was presided over by Gaius Fabricius, Gnaeus Scipio, and Manius Curius, generals from the third century B.C.E., all of whom were so poor that they had to use state funds to

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22 Hunink 1997: 68b.
provide their daughters with a dowry. Next, he brings to mind P. Valerius Publicola, consul during the first year of the Republic, and Menenius Agrippa, consul in 503 B.C.E. and responsible for ending the first *secessio plebis*. Both men were of such modest means that the Roman people collected money to provide them with a proper funeral. Finally he mentions Atilius Regulus, a famous general that was put to death in Carthage in the third century B.C.E., whose field had to be farmed at public expense because he could not afford it by himself. He then addresses his accuser and creates an imaginary confrontation between him and a group of well-known authorities:

… si denique omnes illae veteres prosapiae consulares et censoriae et triumphales brevi usura lucis ad iudicium istud remissae audirent, auderesne paupertatem philosopho exprobrare apud tot consules pauperes? (18.12)

… yes, suppose all those ancient lines of consuls and censors and celebrators of triumphs were temporarily granted the boon of light to come back to earth to attend this trial: would you dare to reproach a philosopher with poverty, in front of so many poor consuls?

Apuleius clearly aims to rank himself among these prominent men to win his case. The word *prosapia*, which can be translated as lineage or family, was a very archaic word. By using this word, Apuleius not only portrays these famous figures as related to him, he also shows off his knowledge and eloquence in order to dazzle his audience and lend weight to his argument.

So as not to overlook the actual judge presiding over his trial, Apuleius then subtly identifies himself with Claudius Maximus, who had also been granted a copious patrimony but was nevertheless a philosopher who was bound to agree with Apuleius’

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23 *Apul. Apol.* 18.9.

24 *Apul. Apol.* 18.10.

25 *Apul. Apol.* 18.11.
views. By putting himself and the judge on the same intellectual and financial level, he aims to create a gap between the accusers and the judge, who most likely felt flattered by the remark. He then puts words in the judge’s mouth that accord with his own views of poverty and wealth. Here at last is a clear picture of how Apuleius defines poverty and wealth:

… fortunam velut tunicam magis concinnam quam longam probare; quippe etiam ea si non gestetur et trahatur, nihil minus quam lacinia praependens impedet et praecipitat. Etenim omnibus ad vitae munia utendis quicquid aptam moderationem supergreditur, honeri potius quam usui exuberat. Igitur et inmodicae divitiae velut ingentia et enormia gubernacula facilius mergunt quam regunt, quod habent irritam copiam, noxiam nimietatem. (19.2-5)

A man of his caliber approves of a fortune on the same grounds as a tunic: it should be a good fit rather than too long. For a man’s fortune too, if it can no longer be worn and must be dragged along, hampers him much like a garment hanging down in front and causes a fall. Really, this is how it is with all things in normal life: whatever exceeds due measure is more of a burden than a benefit. So too, excessive wealth is like an outsize rudder that sinks rather than steers, its abundance being of no avail, its excess bringing only harm.

After flattering the judge with their common ideas on wealth and poverty, Apuleius goes on to justify indirectly his own affluent yet moderate life-style, though he does not openly admit that he is referring to himself:

Quin ex ipsis opulentioribus eos potissimum video laudari, qui nullo strepitu, modico cultu, dissimulatis facultatibus agunt et divitias magnas administrant sine ostentatione, sine superbia, specie mediocritatis pauperum similes. (19.6)

Moreover, even among the more well-to-do, I see that those in particular are praised who live in silence and temperance, and who do not put their resources on display. They manage their huge wealth without affectation or arrogance, and their seemingly moderate means make them look like poor men.
Though Apuleius is speaking about others, it is apparent that he is really describing himself as well. Based on what we know about Apuleius and his financial resources, he clearly fits into this category. Nevertheless, he continues to classify himself as an actual poor man to identify with his audience, which is apparent from his use of the first person plural in the next sentence:

Quod si etiam ditibus ad argumentum modestiae quaeeritur imago quaepiam et color paupertatis, cur eius pudeat tenuioris, qui eam non simulate, sed vere fungimur? (19.7)

But if even rich people wish to convey an impression of modesty and so look for an image and semblance of poverty, why would really poor folk like us be ashamed of it? Our poverty is not fictitious but real.

Despite evidence that proves opposite, he again refers to himself as ‘one of the poor’ in order to maintain his argument of poverty. Yet at the same time he was also able to insert an excuse for his real financial status and way of life. The audience did not seem to mind this rhetorical dichotomy and accepted it easily, as proven by Apuleius’ confidence in bringing forth the argument.

**Apuleius’ Philosophical Interpretation of Poverty**

Next, Apuleius moves on to describe a more philosophical meaning of poverty. He argues that poverty actually has nothing to do with money or lack of it: it is a mentality. A real pauper is one who continuously wants more and is never satisfied, even if he has an immense fortune. A wealthy man, on the other hand, no matter how little money he actually has, is content with what he has and desires the least. As a true philosopher, he reasons that:

Et idcirco divitiae non melius in fundis et in fenore quam in ipso hominis animo aestimantur … (20.3)

Therefore, a man’s wealth should best be measured not in his land or interest but in his own soul.
… as long as nothing is lacking in my soul, I do not bother about how much I miss in external things.

By now, Apuleius has covered his bases no matter where the attack comes from. If they accuse him of being poor, he will take it as a compliment because that is what fits a true philosopher. If they accuse him of being rich, he will equally accept it since this means his soul is free from longing and desire. In all of this, one might notice a striking similarity with the writings of Plutarch, another Platonist, who stated that:26

... Poverty is never dishonorable in itself, but only when it is a mark of sloth, intemperance, extravagance, or thoughtlessness. When, on the other hand, it is the handmaid of a sober, industrious, righteous, and brave man, who devotes all his powers to the service of the people, it is the sign of a lofty spirit that harbors no mean thoughts. ... God alone is absolutely free from wants. ... For as a body which is well tempered and vigorous needs no superfluous food or raiment, so a healthy individual or family life can be conducted with the simplest outlays. ... Great is the simple life, and great its independence, but only because it frees a man from the anxious desire of superfluous things. ... those who were poor in spite of themselves should be ashamed of their poverty; those who, like himself, chose poverty, should glory in it.

Realizing that not everyone in the audience might see poverty and wealth in a philosophical light, Apuleius returns to their materialistic meaning. He starts by listing ways in which he could have been reduced to poverty, if that had actually been the case: a guardian might have reduced his wealth, an enemy might have stolen it, or his father might not have left him any money. He then quickly pretends that this imaginary condition is actually a fact:

Sed finge ... me ideo pauperem ... tu mihi vitio dabis ... quod vivo gracili lare, quod paucioris habeo, parcius pasco, levius vestio, minus obsono? (21.1-2)

26 Plut. Comp. Aristid. Cat. 3.2. Translated by Perrin 1914.
But imagine that … I am ‘poor’ … Will you count against me … my living in a modest household and owning few slaves, eating simply, dressing soberly, and dining sparingly?

For Apuleius, living soberly is a conscious choice. He explains to the audience that this simple life is even too luxurious for him since less luxury leads to more happiness:

… certumque signum est informitatis pluribus indigere. Prorsus ad vivendum velut ad natandum est melior, qui onere liberior; sunt enim similiter etiam in ista vitae humanae tempestate[s] levia sustentui, gravia demersui. (21.4-5)

To be in need of many things is a clear sign of frailty. Living is like swimming: the less you have to carry, the better you will fare. For in the storms of human life likewise lighter things keep you afloat, but heavy things make you sink.

This choice of metaphor was by no means coincidental: it is reminiscent of a similar metaphor by the Stoic philosopher Seneca, whose teachings the judge of the trial adhered.27 As a sophist, Apuleius is clearly very aware of his choice of words. Without naming any specific names, he goes on to almost deify himself and the judge:

Equidem didici ea re praecedere maxime deos hominibus, quod nulla re ad usum sui indigeant, igitur ex nobis cui quam minimis opus sit, eum esse deo similiorem. (21.6)

For my part, I have learnt that the gods rank before men particularly because of this: there is nothing they require. So whoever among us needs the least is most similar to a god.

At this point, Apuleius lets us in on another part of the original accusation:

Proinde gratum habui, cum ad contumeliam diceris rem familiarem mihi peram et baculum fuisse. (22.1)

So I was much obliged by your insulting remark that my property consists of just a bag and a staff.

The accusers had clearly intended this to be an insult, but Apuleius regards it as a compliment. The bag and staff were typical of the Cynic philosophers, who believed in a

rejection of all possessions and aspired to live a life in agreement with nature.\textsuperscript{28} Apuleius is eager to be seen as a true philosopher and does not pass up any opportunity to bring this to the audience’s attention. He offers them the example of Crates, a rich and famous man who gave up everything he owned and went through life as a Stoic, only carrying a little bag. Crates even praised the bag in a poem and Apuleius eagerly quotes the first line of this poem, adding that Aemilianus surely never read this and thereby stigmatizing him again as rustic and uneducated:

\[\text{… quae si tu legisses, magis mihi peram quam nuptias Pudentillae invidisses. (22.5)\] Had you read them, you would have been jealous of my bag rather than my marriage with Pudentilla.

By now Apuleius has finally revealed the truth behind the whole prosecution: Aemilianus had accused Apuleius of being poor and therefore wanting to marry the wealthy widow Pudentilla. For now, Apuleius is careful not touch on this subject too much and he calls attention back to himself by almost rendering himself equal to Hercules, the ultimate hero and the embodiment of the ideal man in both Stoicism and Cynicism.\textsuperscript{29} Not only had Hercules travelled the world and purged it of wild beasts, he had also ascended to heaven wearing nothing but an animal hide and carrying only a staff. In addition, when arriving at a crossroads as a young man, Hercules had been faced with the choice between good and evil. Although the path that lead to evil and pleasure was easy and effortless, Hercules chose the arduous path that led to virtue. Even though Hercules was by no means a philosopher, Apuleius almost makes his audience believe that he is in order to top off his list of historical references with a true hero.

\textsuperscript{28} Hunink 1997: 76b.

\textsuperscript{29} Harrison 2001: 47.
Apuleius concludes his rebuttal to the charge of poverty by casting a light on his own financial situation:

… profiteor mihi ac fratri meo relictum a patre HS XX paulo secus, idque a me longa peregrinatione et diutinis studiis et crebris liberalitatibus modice imminutum. (23.1-2)

So I proclaim that my brother and I inherited nearly 2 million sesterces from our father. I have considerably reduced this capital by travelling abroad for a long time, extended studies, and frequent instances of generosity.

Instead of providing his audience with more clarity in the matter, Apuleius actually causes more confusion. Earlier on he portrayed himself as a poor man in order to turn the initial accusation into a matter of praise and to add to his status as a true philosopher. On the other hand, Apuleius now admits to his rather substantial fortune in order to undermine the accuser’s charge of marrying Pudentilla for her money. And above all, as Hunink points out, “he wants to disassociate himself from poor men like Aemilianus.” So as not to be seen as extravagant, he also elaborates on why he has significantly reduced his fortune: surely no one could fault him for giving his money to his teachers in gratitude, spending it on his education, or offering it to a friend to finance a dowry. This last example is clearly reminiscent of 18.9, where Apuleius discussed the three famous generals from the third century B.C.E. whose daughters were given dowries financed by the state. To finish it all off, Apuleius turns the charge of being a poor man bent on enriching himself on his accusers:

Tu vero, Aemiliane, et id genus homines uti tu es inculti et agrestes, tati re vera estis quantum habetis, ut arbor infecunda et infelix, quae nullum fructum ex sese gignit, tanti est in pretio, quanti lignum eius in trunco. (23.5)

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30 Hunink 1997: 79b.
But you, Aemilianus, and those uncouth and rustic folk like you, are really worth as much as you have. A sterile and barren tree that does not bring forth fruit is worth no more than its wood.

Unlike Apuleius, who brings value to his surroundings by his studies, Aemilianus has no value since he does not benefit others. Apuleius, who in 17.1 had stated that he knew nothing about Aemilianus’ land, slaves, or business, now seems to be privy to all of this information. He urges Aemilianus to stop blaming others for his destitution and divulges to the audience that Aemilianus’ father had left him nothing but a small plot of land, which he had to plow by himself with the help of only one donkey. Even so, he had to wait for the rain to come in order to complete the task, which easily took about three full days. According to Hunink, these were “some devastating details, suggestive of extreme barrenness and poverty.”

By singling Aemilianus out for his destitute condition, Apuleius does not only humiliate him, he also provides us with a very plausible explanation as to why Aemilianus came after him in the first place: his poverty made him envious of Apuleius’ marriage to Pudentilla, whose fortune Aemilianus had hoped to get his hands on. In addition, Apuleius then reproaches Aemilianus for his newfound wealth as well: his recent affluence was undeserved since he gained it through a series of bereavements among his relatives, whose death he might even have caused. To bring the whole reproach to a climax, he wraps it up by giving Aemilianus the nickname ‘Charon’, a figure known for his love of money and the embodiment of an Etruscan demon of death.

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31 Hunink 1997: 80b.
32 Hunink 1997: 81b.
Other Minor Charges

After dealing with the charge of poverty, Apuleius moves on to rebuke several lesser charges such as the acquisition of fish for magical purposes, the hiding of a secret object, the possession of a strange figurine, and the making of a nocturnal sacrifice. Throughout all of these, he continues to tie in his opponents’ intellectual poverty, their base origins, and their inability to comprehend true wealth. He sarcastically apologizes to Aemilianus by saying:

… non elegi illud tuum Atticum Zarath, ut in eo nascerer. (24.10)

… I did not choose this Attic Zarath of yours to be born in.

As Hunink points out, the “poor, provincial village Zarath is sarcastically given an epithet suggesting high culture.” While Aemilianus was ignorant of any Greek, it was widely known that Apuleius was not only fluent in Greek, but had also imbued its culture and learning. Not only does he stigmatize Aemilianus for coming from an uncivilized village, he also chides him for not having any education at all. Aemilianus is also characterized as a man who knows nothing of nor cares for religion, a field in which Apuleius was highly interested and educated:

Atque ego scio nonnullos et cum primis Aemilianum istum facetiae sibi habere res divinas deridere. Nam, ut audio partim Oe<nium qui istum novere, nulli deo ad hoc aevi supplicavit, nullum templum frequentavit … Iste vero nec dis rurationis, qui eum pascunt et vestiunt, segetis ulla aut vitis aut gregis primitias impertit. (56.3-5)

I am well aware that some people, particularly our friend Aemilianus, think it is a witty thing to laugh at matters of religion. For as I am told by some

33 Harrison 2001: 49.
34 For Aemilianus’ inability to read Greek, see 30.11: … ni te dudum animadvertissem Graecam Pudentillae epistulam legere nequisisse.
35 Apul. Apol. 31.1: … si tibi ulla eruditio adfuisse.
residents of Oea who know him, never in all his life has he sacrificed to any god, never has he visited a temple … Not even the gods of husbandry, who none the less feed and clothe him, are given any first offerings of grain, grapes, or sheep.

Apuleius continues to put this into sharp contrast with his own learning by quoting well-known authorities such as Quintus Ennius, Plato, and Aristotle and with the erudition of the judge, whose favor he is courting:

Bene quod apud te, Maxime, causa agitur, qui pro tua eruditione legisti profecto Aristotelis … multiiuga volumina … (36.5)

Thank goodness this case is held before you, Maximus! Of course, as an educated man you have read Aristotle’s many volumes …

A final onslaught against Aemilianus comes in the form of an attack on his friend, Iunius Crassus, in whose house Apuleius had supposedly performed a nocturnal sacrifice. Crassus, who is described by Apuleius as a hog and insatiable drunk, had submitted a written testimony against Apuleius in which he accused him of performing some kind of magic ritual in his house while he was away in Alexandria. He deduced all this from the soot-stained walls of his room and the bird feathers that were left behind on the floor. Unlike Apuleius, Crassus had not gone to Alexandria to study: Apuleius insists that he was only there to indulge his vices and attend numerous symposia. Upon his return, he sold his testimony to Aemilianus, which was a criminal offence. Moreover, he sold it early in the morning, before eight o’clock, presumably so he could spend the rest of the day eating and drinking with the money he had just acquired. In order to undermine this testimony, Apuleius brings us a very lively and detailed description of the man:

Nam equidem hic Sabratae eum hesterna die animadverti satis notabiliter in medio foro tibi, Aemiliane, obructantem. (59.2)

For yesterday I saw him in Sabratha: in the middle of the Forum, Aemilianus, he was fairly conspicuously belching in your face!

… caput iuvenis barba et capillo populatum, madentis oculos, cilia turgentia, rictum <...> salivosa labia, vocem obsonam, manuum tremorem, ructus <po>pinam. Patrimonium omne iam pridem abligurrivit, nec quicquam ei de bonis paternis superest, nisi una domus ad calumniam venditandam, quam tamen numquam carius quam in hoc testimonio locavit; nam temulentum istud mendacium tribus milibus nummis Aemiliano huic vendidit, idque Oeae nemini ignoratur. … res acta est in Rufini cuiusdam domo … Quod eo libentius Rufinus perfecit, quod erat certus ad uxorem suam, cuius stupra sciens dissimulat, non minimam partem praemii eius Crassum relaturum. (59.6-8, 60.2)

… a young man’s head, bereaved of beard and hair, watery eyes, swollen eyelids, a broad grin, slobbering lips, an ugly voice, trembling hands, and a breath smelling of cheap eating-places. He squandered all of his patrimony long ago and nothing of his paternal property is left except for one house, where he can capitalize on his calumny. Never has he rented it out for more than in this testimony. For he has sold his drunken lie to our Aemilianus here for 3,000 sesterces, as everybody in Oea knows perfectly well. … It happened in the house of a certain Rufinus … Rufinus was all the more eager to assist, because he was certain that a large part of the price paid to Crassus was to go to his wife: he readily turns a blind eye to her sexual misconduct.

Since Crassus himself did not attend the trial, his testimony had to be read to the court.

Apuleius takes advantage of this by explaining his absence in a way that stigmatizes him even more as a hopeless drunk who squanders all his money:

Quid sit diei vides: dico Crassum iam dudum ebrium stertere, aut secundo lavacro ad repotia cenae obunda vinulentum sudorem in balneo desudare. … sed fortasse nec tantulum potuit ebria sibi temperare, ut hanc horam sobrie expectaret. (59.3-4)

You see what time of the day it is. I am sure that Crassus has long been drunk and snoring, or is taking a second bath and sweating out his inebriated sweat in the bathhouse, to prepare for an after-dinner drinking bout. … but he probably could not even slightly moderate his lust for drink so as to wait for this hour in a state of sobriety.
Apuleius’ explanation of Crassus’ absence is in sharp contrast with Apuleius’ own strict and sober life-style. While Crassus wastes his days and his money, Apuleius lives as soberly as possible and dedicates his time to the study of the greater good. This of course only adds to Apuleius’ own credibility and completely annihilates that of Crassus’ testimony. Aemilianus’ acquaintance with such a man helps Apuleius in branding both of them as worthless human beings and of intellectual poverty, which is crucial for his defense. If the audience does indeed see Aemilianus and his accomplices through Apuleius’ eyes and acknowledges that they are indeed poor and uneducated men who recently acquired some money and are now hungry for more, they are far more likely to believe Apuleius’ claim that the true reason behind this whole trial is Aemilianus’ desire to obtain part of Pudentilla’s fortune, as Apuleius will attempt to prove in the second half of his speech.

**Conclusion**

Throughout the first half of his speech, Apuleius has led us through many aspects and definitions of poverty. It is impossible to ascribe just one of these to Apuleius. He claims to be both poor and wealthy at the same time, depending on his need. On the one hand, he admits that he has a substantial fortune. The fact that he can devote his life to philosophy and public speaking confirms this. Then again, he calls himself ‘one of the poor’ because he attempts to live a sober and humble life-style, as befits a true philosopher. In contrast, he describes Aemilianus as a poor man who probably acquired his new fortune through criminal means and now aspires to live a life of wasteful luxury. When considering poverty on a more philosophical level, Apuleius considers himself very wealthy because his soul is free from vain desire. Aemilianus on the other hand, is a true poor man because he constantly longs for more. By now
Apuleius has set the scene for the second half of the speech, in which he will refute the fact that he married Pudentilla for her money, since he has no desire for material wealth, and prove that Aemilianus is actually out to get her fortune by means of this trial, since he is a man whose lust for wealth can not be satiated.
While refuting the minor charges, Apuleius carefully presented his audience with his personal views on poverty and wealth. The idea he wanted to convey to them was that he was a poor man by choice, which in turn made him a wealthy man because he was free from materialistic desire. His opponents, so he claimed, desired to live a lavish and decadent lifestyle, which actually made them poor according to Apuleius’ philosophy. He also made it clear that he was an intellectually wealthy man while his accusers were rustic and uneducated and therefore intellectually poor. These ideas are interwoven in most of the first half of the speech and are essential to Apuleius’ refutation of the main charge. Since Aemilianus had accused him of being a dowry hunter who had only married Pudentilla because of her fortune, it was crucial for Apuleius to undermine this argument by proving to the judge that he was not interested in materialistic wealth. However, Apuleius kept delaying the task of tackling the main charge until halfway through the speech, which allowed him to prepare his audience and subtly convince them to adopt his own views. As soon as he perceived that they were fully persuaded and on his side, he felt secure enough to tackle the main charge.

**The Engagement to Pudentilla**

Apuleius starts by countering the accusation that he profited financially from his union with Pudentilla. He even takes it a step further by saying that he should have stayed away from her house completely, if he had any desire for profit:

… quin et in ceteris causis minime prosperum matrimonium, nisi ipsa mulier tot incommoda virtutibus suis repensaret, inimicum. (66.2)

For in general terms this marriage would not be advantageous at all, or would even harm my interests, if the woman herself did not compensate for all discomforts through her virtues.
One is left to wonder what those ‘discomforts’ really were. Apuleius purposely does not elaborate on this. One possible explanation might be the fact that his marriage to Pudentilla prevented him from continuing his journey to Alexandria and eventually led to this court battle. Yet except for her slightly older age and her rebellious younger son, Pudentilla was actually a highly desirable spouse. To obtain his personal goal of acquittal, Apuleius of course stresses the fact that she was virtuous and that this is the real reason he married her since virtue constitutes true wealth for him. Yet one must not forget that Pudentilla was nonetheless a very wealthy woman who owned several estates, hundreds of slaves, and millions of sesterces. If someone would have reminded Apuleius of this at that moment, however, he surely would have responded that her material wealth by no means had enticed him, since he considered the desire for money to be a sign of an intellectually poor man and thus unbefitting for a philosopher.

Apuleius actually turns the tables on his opponents and claims that their own baseless envy is the true reason for the whole trial. He does this by means of elimination:

Aemilianus could not be seeking revenge, since he had not been harmed by Apuleius in any way. Nor could he be trying to gain glory from this trial, because he is a boorish and barbarous man. It was also impossible for him to seek justification for a moral offence, since he does not have the ability to understand what that would be. Apuleius therefore concludes that:

Cuivis clar dilucet aliam rem invidia nullam esse quae hunc et Rufinum, impulsorem huius, … provocarit. (67.1)

…it is as clear as the light at noonday to anyone that it was nothing but envy that motivated this man and his instigator Herennius Rufus ….

This envy was by no means anything new. When Sicinius Amicus, Pudentilla’s first husband and Aemilianus’ brother, died, his father tried to marry Pudentilla to his other
son, Sicinius Clarus, in order to keep the family fortune within the family. If Pudentilla married an outsider, he would bequeath nothing to his grandsons. According to Apuleius, Clarus was nothing but a rustic and decrepit old man. Consequently, Pudentilla kept delaying the undesirable union until her father-in-law had passed away. At this point, her sons were left as heirs. Aemilianus, thinking that Pudentilla would still marry his brother, was very supportive of her intentions to be wed once more. Yet when he found out she had decided to marry Apuleius according to her son’s wishes, he greatly opposed the whole plan. He was, of course, worried that the family fortune would be usurped by this new intruder. Before he found out that Apuleius was the man of her choice, even Pontianus was highly concerned about the fact that his mother was ready to be married again. Upon receiving her letter, in which she explained her desire to enter into a new marriage, Pontianus hastened back from Rome, fearing that a greedy man had taken hold of his mother and all her assets. Even though Pontianus had inherited his grandfather’s money by now, his biggest hope for wealth was placed in his mother’s property, which amounted to about four million sesterces. Yet Pudentilla had not chosen a new husband yet and Pontianus then visited with Apuleius, whom he consider to be:

… peridoneum maritum matri ..., cui bono periculo totam domus fortunam concrederet. (72.4)

… a most suitable husband for his mother, a man to whom he could safely entrust his entire house and fortune.

If Pontianus, who was clearly concerned about his inheritance, was highly in favor of his mother’s plan to marry Apuleius, this surely indicated that Apuleius had no intention of taking hold of her wealth. Apuleius therefore continues to downplay the material advantages of his marriage and stress the fact that he was only persuaded to marry
Pudentilla because of the true riches of her qualities, as befitted his status as a philosopher:

Ni id onus recipiam, quoniam non formosa pupilla, sed mediocri facie mater liberorum mihi offeratur, - si haec reputans formae et divitiarum gratia me ad aliam condicionem reservarem, neque pro amico neque pro philosopho facturum. (73.4)

If however I did not accept the burden, since it was not a beautiful young girl but an average-looking mother of children I was being offered – if pondering this I kept myself for another match, for the sake of beauty and riches, I would be acting neither as a friend, nor as a philosopher.

One might initially be shocked by Apuleius’ rather harsh words about his wife, especially since he was originally offered this description of her by her own son, Pontianus. Yet it wasn’t Apuleius’ intention to insult his wife in any way. On the contrary, he uses this description to present himself in an opportune manner. As Hunink points out, Apuleius “consistently adopts the role of the unselfish philosopher, who does not care about wealth or physical beauty, but is only concerned with moral obligations, virtue, and lofty pursuits”.¹

**Rufinus**

Despite Pontianus’ flattering words about his new stepfather, Apuleius still had to explain the fact that Pontianus temporarily turned against him and the proposed marriage. Apuleius even admits that at one point Pontianus was ready to do and allow anything to prevent the marriage from happening. Yet Apuleius claims that Pontianus, who had passed away by now and could therefore not be called to witness, was by no means to blame. He insists that the boy had come under the influence of his new father-in-law, about whom Apuleius has nothing even remotely kind to say:

¹ Hunink 1997: 189b.
... Herennio Rufino, qui unum neminem in terris viliorem se aut improbiorem aut inquinatiorem reliquit. (74.3)

... Herennius Rufinus, the vilest, most shameless, most impure man on earth.

Hic est enim pueruli huius instigator, hic accusationis auctor, hic advocatorum conductor, hic testium coemptor, hic totius calumniae fornacula, hic Aemilianii huius fax et flagellum ... (74.5)

Yes, he is the instigator of this little boy, he is the bringer of this accusation, the hirer of lawyers, the buyer of witnesses; he is the furnace where this whole calumny was forged, the torch and lash of our Aemilianus here.

Est enim omnium litium depector, omnium falsorum commentator, omnium simulationum architectus, omnium malorum seminarium, nec non idem libidinum ganearumque locus, lustrum, lupanar. (74.6)

For he is the fixer of all quarrels, the deviser of all falsehoods, the architect of all pretences, the breeding-ground of all evils, yes, the place, the haunt, the brothel of licence and gluttony.

From Apuleius' speech, we learn that Rufinus is now a bald and disfigured man, who even as a young man was willing to submit himself to all kinds of unspeakable and unmanly acts in order to get his hands on some money. As a youth, he performed in pantomimes, which were often lewd and obscene. Apuleius claims that Rufinus had absolutely nothing of an actor's skill, except for the sexual impurity that these pantomimes required. He then goes on to describe Rufinus' household as a whole:

Rufinus is a pimp, his wife is a whore, and his sons are no better. All day and all night they open their house to adulterers in order to make a profit:

Neque enim ulii ad introeundum metus est, nisi qui pretium marito non attulit. Ita ei lecti sui contumelia vectigalis est. Olim sollers suo, nunc coniugis corpore vulgo meret. (75.2-3)

For nobody needs to fear going in, provided he has paid the price to the husband. This way the disgrace of his own bed becomes a source of income. Once he smartly earned his money with his own body, now he publicly does so with the body of his wife.
Not only is Rufinus presented as the stock character of the *leno maritus*, but his actions as paterfamilias were also against the law. Rufinus, however, seems to have taken the law in his own hands: whoever brings along ample means to pay for his wife can have his way with her without being watched and can leave whenever he wishes, but those who arrive empty-handed are barred from leaving until they have written Rufinus an acknowledgement of debt. According to Apuleius, all of this stems from Rufinus’ incessant desire for money. He originally obtained his wealth through his own father’s fraudulent actions. His father was indebted to numerous creditors but never paid them back, claiming that he did not have the money to do so. He even took of all his rings and the attributes of his rank in order to come across as a poor man. The wealth he had gathered by means of loans, however, he had transferred into his wife’s name. Despite his claim of being penniless, he left his son, Rufinus, about three million sesterces upon his death. Yet within just a few years, Rufinus managed to reduce this fortune to nothing by means of his gluttony and excess.

Since his wife was by now getting on in years, Rufinus decided to circulate his own daughter among wealthy young men in the hopes of enriching his whole family. This is how she met Pontianus, who decided to marry her, much against his mother’s and Apuleius’ advice. A day before the marriage, Rufinus borrowed the whole dowry from a creditor. According to Apuleius, this dowry was beyond excessive, as was to be expected from Rufinus’ immodesty:

… grandior, quam domus exhausta et plena liberis postulabat. (76.6)

… it was larger than an exhausted house packed with children required.

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2 Hunink 1997: 193b.
In addition, Rufinus threatened to take his daughter away if Pontianus did not stop the proposed wedding between Apuleius and Pudentilla, in the hopes that Pontianus’ family fortune would then somehow end up in his own hands:

… totum Pudentillae quadragens praesumptione cassa devorarat eoque me amoliendum ratus, quo facilius Pontiani facilitatem, Pudentillae solitudinem circumveniret … (77.1)

In his baseless presumption he had already devoured those 4 millions of Pudentilla’s. Therefore he wanted to get rid of me, to make it easier to lay siege to Pontianus’ good nature and Pudentilla’s solitude.

Yet Pontianus’ insistence on ending the engagement only strengthened Pudentilla’s desire to stick to her decision: she could use the help of a husband against Rufinus’ shameless cupidity.

The Wedding Ceremony

The accusers objected that Apuleius and Pudentilla were married in the countryside instead of the city. Though this was by no means illegal, it did arouse some suspicion. After all, Hunink points out that “Pudentilla occupied a prominent place in the society of Oea and was expected to let the people have their share”.³ Apuleius justifies their actions by saying that Pudentilla only shortly before had donated 50,000 sesterces to the people of Oea on the day that Pontianus was married and Pudens received the man’s toga and the couple therefore did not want to spend another 50,000 sesterces. Despite the fact that this was indeed a considerable donation, one might object that Pudentilla’s wealth was large enough for her to afford this first donation and allow for another one during her own wedding. Apuleius also claims that they had wanted to avoid the many banquets and obligations that usually come with a wedding. Even

though this could be considered a breach of social etiquette, it was not unusual for a second marriage to be celebrated less lavishly than the first.\textsuperscript{4} At this point, Apuleius doesn’t hesitate to entertain his audience by turning to Aemilianus and adding with a hint of sarcasm:

\begin{quote}
\ldots nec tecum aut apud te cenandum. Estne causa idonea? (88.1)
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\ldots we did not want to \ldots be obliged to have dinner with you or in your house. That was a good reason, wasn’t it?
\end{quote}

**The Dowry**

In order to support their claim that Apuleius had ulterior motives for marrying Pudentilla, the accusers brought up the fact that she was older than he was. Apuleius tells us that:

\begin{quote}
Formam mulieris et aetatem ipsi ultro improbaverunt idque mihi vitio dederunt, talem uxorem causa avaritiae concupisse atque adeo primo dotem in congressu grandem et uberem rapuisse. (91.5)
\end{quote}

Of their own accord the accusers impugned the woman’s beauty and age and this then was firmly held against me: I could desire such a woman ‘only for the sake of greed’ and so, at the beginning of our union, ‘I seized a large and ample dowry from her’.

According to Apuleius, this dowry was the ‘very root of the accusation’.\textsuperscript{5} In order to refute this claim, he divulges all the details of the dowry to his audience. Before getting married, Apuleius and Pudentilla had signed a marriage contract in which they made provisions for the present and the future. As it turns out, the dowry, which amounted to 300,000 sesterces, was rather modest in comparison with Pudentilla’s large fortune. In contrast, Rufinus, who was penniless and destitute, had procured 400,000 sesterces for his own daughter’s dowry. Furthermore, the dowry was not actually given to Apuleius

\textsuperscript{4} Hunink 1997: 215b.

\textsuperscript{5} Apul. Apol. 90.1: *Venio nunc ad ipsum stirpem accusationis* …
but only promised. If Pudentilla were to die without having any children by Apuleius, the whole amount of the dowry would remain with her sons. If, however, a child of theirs were to survive at the time of her death, half the dowry would go to the youngest child and the other half to the two older ones. Apuleius once more adopts the role of the philosopher who does not care for material wealth and says that the real dowry for him was Pudentilla’s love for him:

… et maritum habet et multis saepe et ingentibus dotibus spretis inani nomine tantulae dotis contentum, ceterum praeter uxorem suam nihil computantem, omnem supellectilem cunctasque divitias in concordia coniugis et multo amore ponentem. (92.3-4)

She has a husband who has often rejected numerous enormous dowries and who was satisfied with the mere pledge of such a small dowry. Apart from his wife there is nothing that counts for him. All household goods, all riches he includes in the loyalty of his partner and the great love she shows him.

If Apuleius had truly been interested in Pudentilla’s money, he would likely have asked for a substantially larger dowry. He tells us that an older woman of average looks who wants to attract a younger man would normally try to lure him into marriage by offering a lavish dowry. Yet if Pudentilla had been a very young and poor girl, she would have still been well endowed:

… affert quippe ad maritum novum animi indolem, pulchritudinis gratiam, floris rudimentum. Ipsa virginitas commendatìo iure meritoque omnibus maritis acceptissima est. nam quodcumque aliud in dotem acciperis, potes, cum libuit, ne sis beneficio obstrictus, omne ut acceperas retribuere; pecuniam renumerare, mancipia restitutere, domo demigrare, praediis cedere; sola virginitas cum semel accepta est, reddi nequiritur, sola apud maritum ex rebus dotalibus remanet. (92.6-7)

For what she brings to her new husband is the fresh nature of her mind, her gracious beauty, her first blossom. Virginity itself is very rightly considered the best recommendation by all husbands. For whatever else you accept as a dowry you can, if you want, return completely as you accepted it and so avoid obligations. Money can be paid back, slaves can be sent back, a
Since Pudentilla was no longer young or a virgin, Apuleius could have easily requested a much larger dowry as compensation. Any other suitor, he claims, would surely have done so. Yet as a philosopher none of this was by any means important to him, so he settled for a modest dowry that would never even come his way.

**Pudentilla’s Donations and Will**

Apuleius’ first act as a stepfather was to reconcile Pudentilla with her sons. In order to do so, he persuaded her to give them the money they had been asking for. He adds that he suggested to pay them out in land valued at a low figure, so that they received a lot of land for their money. It is not clear which money Apuleius is referring to at this point, but most likely he was talking about their father’s money, which Pudentilla had invested for them during her fourteen years of widowhood. Furthermore, he urged his new wife to donate fertile fields from her own possessions, a large house, a great amount of produce and cattle, and 400 slaves. He tells his audience that this was merely a small advance to the boys’ whole inheritance, thereby illustrating the large amount of money that was truly at stake during this trial.

Before this donation had been made, Pontianus had already reconciled himself with his new stepfather and had expressed sincere remorse for having listened to Rufinus. After he had received the donation, he said he owed all of it to Apuleius, without whose help he might still have been waiting for his inheritance. To safeguard his newly acquired money, Pontianus had a will drawn up. Having found out the true ways

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6 Hunink 1997: 229b.
of his young wife and her money-hungry father, Pontianus had decided to name his own mother and brother as sole heirs. By way of an insult he only left his wife linen cloth worth about 200 denarii. Hunink points out that 200 denarii by itself was a very small sum. In addition, linen was commonly associated with prostitutes. A supply of linen worth 200 denarii would have been enough for at least a dozen cloaks and thus hinted at Pontianus’ wife’s extensive involvement in prostitution.7

After Pontianus death, Pudentilla drew up a new will of her own. In it, she wanted to disinherit Pudens for his wrongdoing in opposing her marriage to Apuleius and siding with his uncle Aemilianus. Apuleius strongly opposed his wife’s decision. He even threatened to divorce her if she proceeded. Pudentilla finally relented and allowed Apuleius to dictate her new will instead. He insisted she name Pudens as her heir and only assign himself a modest bequest for the sake of honor, since it would not be appropriate for a husband’s name to be absent from his wife’s will. Despite Pudens’ clear hostility towards his stepfather, Apuleius still wanted him to be the rightful heir to Pudentilla’s fortune, even if it possibly entailed negative consequences:

… obsequentissimum maritum exheredavit, inimicissimum filium scribit heredem, immo enimvero non filium, sed Aemilianii spes et Rufini nuptias, set temulentum illud collegium, parasitos tuos? (100.3-4)

… she disinherited the most indulgent husband, whereas she named her most hostile son as heir – no, not ‘her son’, but rather the hopes of Aemilianus, the marriage of Rufinus, the whole drunken collection, those parasites of yours!

Since Pudens was still a minor, Aemilianus was his legal guardian. As a result, he hoped that Pudens’ inheritance would be his to control and even use up. Rufinus cherished the same hopes by planning to marry his daughter off to the young boy.

7 Harrison 2001: 115.
Apuleius was aware of this, but nevertheless he wanted Pudentilla to do what would eventually place him in the most favorable light and exonerate him from the real charges brought forth during this trial:

Mihi iam dudum satis est, si non modo crimina obiecta plenissime delui, verum etiam radicem iudicii huius, id est hereditatis quaesitae invidia, funditus sustuli. (101.3)

For me it is sufficient by now if I have not only fully removed the charges brought against me, but also completely torn out the roots of this trial, namely envy about an inheritance I allegedly sought to acquire.

Now that he has driven his point home, Apuleius has only one more minor charge to refute. The accusers claimed that Apuleius had used his wife’s money to purchase a beautiful estate in his own name. Apuleius objects by saying it was actually a small estate of only 60,000 sesterces and that Pudentilla had bought it in her own name. He even has a witness present, the tax collector to whom the payment for the house was made. Since this charge was so easily disproved, Apuleius probably saved it until the end.8

As the grand finale of his tour de force, Apuleius reminds his audience of all the individual charges. Then, in a clear attempt to show off his oratorical proficiency, he answers each of the charges with no more than two words:


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8 Harrison 2001: 119.
‘She’s older’: that happens. ‘Seeking gain’: hear dowry, recall donation, read will.
When Apuleius delivered the *Apologia*, Africa was still a young and fledgling province of the Roman Empire. While most of its inhabitants only spoke Punic and continued many of the pre-Roman traditions of their ancestors, Apuleius ventured out to learn about Roman and Greek culture and became fluent in both Latin and Greek. He quickly became inspired by the Second Sophistic, a movement that sought to revive the rhetorical teachings of the Greek intellectuals of the fifth century BCE. As a result, he greatly enjoyed delivering speeches and displaying his rhetorical eloquence in public.

Due to the *Pax Romana* in Africa at the time, Apuleius was able to devote his life to the pursuit of knowledge and oratory. According to Graham, Apuleius even made light of the trial because he lived under emperor Antoninius Pius, under whose peaceful rule personal convictions and religious freedom were greatly respected.¹

Apuleius' *Apologia* was a real *tour de force* in terms of the Second Sophistic. Throughout the whole speech, Apuleius dazzled his audience with archaic Latin words, clever puns, and artful sophisms. His constant name-dropping of venerable writers and philosophers must have made the listeners' heads spin.² Though Apuleius most likely wrote the final version of his speech for a very erudite and literary audience, the actual audience of the trial included common North Africans who were not very familiar with the Greek or Latin language and its literary culture. By showing off his erudition and eloquence, Apuleius created a vast contrast between himself and his accusers, whom

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¹ Graham 1971: 137.
² Sandy 1997: 134.
he characterized as boorish and ignorant. In addition to embellishing his own reputation, this technique allowed him to undermine the charges brought against him.

Though many scholars believe that the main charge against Apuleius was the use of magic, the real issue at stake was Apuleius’ supposed seduction of a widow in order to get her money.\(^3\) The *Apologia* was therefore not a defense of magic, but rather a response to accusations of greed and envy. Even Apuleius admitted in his speech that his wife’s dowry and fortune were the core of his whole case.\(^4\) Nevertheless, it is quite likely that some people indeed believed Apuleius was a magician due to his keen interest in religious mysteries and esoteric science.

In order to win his case, Apuleius had to convince his audience of his own definitions of poverty and wealth. Since he was accused of having married a woman for her money, he had to prove that he had no desire for material wealth. As a result, he spent the first half of his speech persuading his listeners that he was a selfless philosopher who purposely lived a poor lifestyle and had thereby become spiritually and intellectually wealthy. Conversely, he also admitted that he was of affluent descent and therefore had the ability to dedicate himself to a life of learning. Only as soon as he felt that he had won over the audience, did he move on to the main charge. As a result, the charge was played out according to his rules, which he had laid down during the first half of the speech. Apuleius consequently obliterated the whole case against him and even successfully turned the accusation of greed and dowry hunting on his opponents.

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\(^3\) Scholars who indicate the use of magic as the main charge include, for example, Hunink and Sandy.

\(^4\) Apul. *Apol.* 90.1: *Venio nunc ad ipsum stirpem accusationis, ad ipsam causam maleficii.*
Though Apuleius made it clear that the accusers’ driving force was pure avarice, their suspicions of the marriage were not completely unfounded. Rathbone points out that widowed or divorced women past childbearing age tended not to remarry since a formal second marriage would only complicate existing arrangements for children of the previous marriage, as was the case for Pontianus and Pudens. Yet Apuleius was able to utterly remove all suspicions and even make his audience suspicious of Aemilianus’ and Rufinus’ real intentions.

In conclusion, the *Apologia* provides us with an insight into many aspects of North-Africa’s intellectual and daily life. It gives us an idea of how its inhabitants, both commoners and world-travelling intellectuals, perceived poverty and wealth and how being educated or not tied into this. It also offers us an account of the rhetorical, philosophical, and religious trends and practices that were common at the time. Finally, it allows us to better understand the laws and traditions involved with marriage, dowries, and wills. As a result, the *Apologia* enables us to evaluate our own perceptions of poverty and wealth and critically analyze those that try to convince us of an argument. It thus allows us to reflect on our modern world in comparison to the world of Apuleius.

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5 Rathbone 2006: 102, 104.
LIST OF REFERENCES


BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Heidi De Baerdemaeker-Poole was born in 1981 in Merksem, Belgium. She began her study of Latin and Greek at the Groenendaal College in 1993 and soon fell in love with both languages and their culture. In 2003, she graduated from the Karel de Grote Hogeschool of Antwerp as a secondary school teacher of Latin, History, and English as a Second Language. After teaching in Antwerp for one year, she moved to the United States. In 2004, she started teaching Latin, French, and Spanish at the Madeleine Choir School in Salt Lake City, Utah. She received a Master of Arts degree in Latin from the University of Florida in 2010.