

## TWO ETYMOLOGICAL CLUSTERS IN APULEIUS

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ABSTRACT: The present article endeavours to show that Apuleius' use of etymology in the *Metamorphoses* is more sophisticated than NICOLINI's recent study of the subject would lead one to believe.

At the very beginning of his *chef-d'œuvre* Apuleius presents the following tricolon of *adynata*: “*amnes agiles reverti, mare pigrum conligari, ventos inanimis exspirare*” (*Met.* I 3, 1)<sup>1</sup>. This text has recently been the object of much attention in the fine study devoted by Lara NICOLINI to etymological wordplay in Apuleius<sup>2</sup>. NICOLINI gives particular consideration to the third and final element of the triad: “*ventos inanimis exspirare*”. Here the new and amplitudinous commentary by Wytse KEULEN explains *inanimis* as *non flans*<sup>3</sup>. This interpretation of *inanimis* as simply *non flans* is however inadequate. NICOLINI rightly maintains that here the meaning of *inanimis* is in fact *non ventus*. The argument may be set out more fully than is done in her study. The Greek equivalent of *ventus* was *ἄνεμος*<sup>4</sup>, which was regarded as the etymon of *animus* and *anima*<sup>5</sup>, from which in turn *inanimus(-is)* was derived<sup>6</sup>. Apuleius' *ventos inanimis* accordingly entails a species of etymological oxymoron<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Citation follows *OCD*<sup>3</sup> (pp. XXIX–LIV: “Authors and Books”); material not found there is cited according to *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae: Index librorum scriptorum inscriptionum*, Leipzig<sup>2</sup> 1990, and its online *Addenda* at <http://www.thesaurus.badw.de/pdf/addenda.pdf> (updated Dec. 2010).

<sup>2</sup> NICOLINI 2011: 73–77. For the book's merits cf. the review by ADKIN forthcoming (a).

<sup>3</sup> KEULEN 2007: 118. This explanation goes back to a Latinist as distinguished as Otto PRINZ, founder and *langjähriger Generalredaktor* of *Mittellateinisches Wörterbuch*; cf. his article on *inanimus(-is)* in *ThLL* VII 1, col. 820, 8 f.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. LOEWE, GOETZ 1901: 401.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. MALTBY 1991: 36 f. For additions to his documentation cf. ADKIN 2005: 76; ADKIN 2008b: 262; ADKIN 2009a: 174.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. ADKIN 2005: 83.

<sup>7</sup> For similar but subtler etymological play on the Greek equivalent of a Latin word cf. ADKIN 2010a: 9 f., where it is argued that in *Ecl.* 1, 59 (“ante leves ergo pascentur in aethere cervi”) *levis* is