

SOSPITATOR QUIDEM ILLE ET GENITOR EST OMNIUM.
THE IDEA OF A TRANSCENDENT GOD, CREATOR AND SAVIOUR OF THE UNIVERSE
IN THE WRITINGS OF APULEIUS OF MADAUROS.
APULEIUS' PHILOSOPHY OF GOD

KAZIMIERZ PAWLOWSKI
Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University (Warsaw, Poland)
kazimierzpawlowski@gmail.com

ABSTRACT. The paper presents the philosophy of God in the philosophical writings of Apuleius of Madauros, one of the most outstanding philosophers of the Middle Platonism of the 2nd century after Chr. A special feature of the theology of the Middle Platonism and what clearly distinguished this philosophy from Stoicism, which was still dominant at that time, with its vision of divinity immanent in the world, was the return to the Platonic concept of the “incorporeal” and “transcendent” God – the Creator and Saviour of this world. This concept of God fit very closely into the mystical spirituality of Middle Platonism. The attribute of God as the Saviour (*Sospitator*) of the world is particularly important. This is especially visible in the writings of Apuleius. Apuleius uses the term “the Saviour” in the religious sense. This term expresses the religious aspect of God’s activity in relation to His creatures and supplements His metaphysical function as an efficient cause. Apuleius’ theology quite clearly shows its rootedness in the philosophy and mystical spirituality of Plato himself, and at the same time close to the mystical spirituality of the religious Mysteries popular then. It is a very important element of his philosophical spirituality. The awareness of the existence of God, the Creator, Father, and Saviour of the world, clearly influenced Apuleius’ ethics and his perception of man.

KEYWORDS: Apuleius of Madauros, Middle Platonism, theology, theory of illumination.

**Introduction. Return to the Platonic concept of the transcendent and
incorporeal God in the theology of Middle Platonism**

Middle Platonism revived Plato’s philosophy and expressed it in a mystical spirituality that met the religious and spiritual needs of the people of that era, close to the mystical spirituality that characterized the mystery cults popular at that time, into which Apuleius was zealously engaged and initiated. The latter proves quite clearly his spiritual inclinations and the fact that he was looking for something more in religion than what the traditional cult of gods had to offer. The Middle

Platonic philosophy presented a high intellectual, and spiritual level. God and theological issues were not only the most important topic of philosophical studies, but also the most important goal of spiritual life. According to this philosophy, the meaning of the existence of the world and the meaning of human life can only be understood by reference to God.

A characteristic feature of the theology of Middle Platonism, and at the same time what defined the Middle Platonic theology in relation to then dominant Stoicism, was the return to the Platonic concept of an incorporeal and transcendent God – the Creator of the universe.¹ This inevitably led to a clash between the Platonists and the Stoics (and the Epicureans) in the field of theology. This is particularly visible in the work of Plutarch of Chaeronea, who clashes with the Stoic concept of God, which reduces Him to the immanently understood Logos as the rational soul of the world – that is, to the logical, but at the same time material nature of the cosmos. However, according to Plutarch, God cannot be burdened with any materiality (Plutarch, *De E apud Delphos*, 393 E). He is an incorporeal being and therefore indestructible. This indestructibility of God is ensured by the fact that in his metaphysical structure there is not even a trace of matter, which is destructible and subject to destruction. In the dialogue *De E apud Delphos* he defines God as “Being” (“Existence”), a true Being opposed to such beings as man and other things of the physical world, and the whole world in general about which it cannot be said that “exists”, but that “it becomes” (Ibidem, 391 F - 393 B).² God, the only true being, exists beyond time, beyond all “is” and “will be”. It is unchanging and immovable. According to Plutarch, this is what the mysterious letter “E” of the Delphic temple foretells, so to speak, says: “ei” – “you are” (Ibidem, 391 F – 392 B). Only God can be addressed by saying “you are”, because only He is, i.e. exists in a true way. The world along with all things that are born and die, is condemned to eternal becoming (Ibidem, 392 A–B). Only God does not change. No concepts expressing temporal relations apply to it. Moreover, using such concepts in relation to him would be sacrilege because they refer only to natural reality, to which he is completely alien in the metaphysical sense, because he has a completely different metaphysical structure. God is one and is the unity that fills his essence (Ibidem, 393 A–B). In the *De defectu oraculorum*, based on the discussion about demons and the

¹ The reader will find a comprehensive discussion of the philosophy of Middle Platonism in the books: Dillon 1996; Ferrari 2015, 321-337; Fletcher 2014; Gersh 1987; Göransson 1995; Harrison 2000; Invernizzi 1976; Milhaven 1962; Moerschini 1978; Mortley 1972, 584-590; Reale 1978, 307–364; Sandy 1997; Theiler 1930; Theiler 1966; Witt 1937; Zintzen 1981.

² Cf. Pawłowski 2013, 341-343.

number of worlds, Plutarch completes the image of God, adding to Him virtues such as justice and love (Plutarch, *De defectu oraculorum*, 423 D). This gives God a fully personal character and enables Him to have personal relationships (also with people who, as his children, also inherit from Him his virtues, or at least dispositions to virtues). God is a person. This is an extremely important statement. Plutarch also expresses an interesting thought about God in the *De Iside et Osiride* in Chapter 67. He calls Him Reason who orders the world. And he adds that all people around the world, regardless of their religion, worship the same gods, they just call them differently (Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride*, 377 E – 378 A).

Plutarch's theological thought is undoubtedly interesting and constitutes a very mature stage in the history of Middle Platonism. The next stage was the work of Apuleius, and Alcinous, around the middle of the 2nd century AD.³

“The Return” to the Platonic concept of transcendent and supernatural God was closely related to the Platonic concept of incorporeal, and supernatural human soul which somehow spiritually transcends the human body, with which it has been integrated, and can transcend (in spiritual sense) all material world. It may even have spiritual (personal) relationships with God himself (because the soul inherits the supernatural features of God, of its Creator and Father). This made the philosophy of Middle Platonism had spiritual, even mystical character, close to the mystical spirituality of the Mysteries popular at that time like Mysteries of Isis and Osiris, and Eleusinian Mysteries but without initiation rituals.⁴ But also, the philosophy of the Middle Platonism, as a result of her sensitivity and focus on what is

³ Regarding Apuleius' works, see: Dillon 1996, 306-338; Fletcher 2014; Harrison 2000; Moreschini 1978; Regen 1971; Sandy 1997.

⁴ Apuleius gave a description of the initiation into the Mysteries of Isis in the 11th Book of *Metamorphoses: Accessi confinium mortis et calcato Proserpinae limine per omnia vectus elementa remeavi; nocte media vidi solem candido coruscantem lumine; deos inferos et deos superos accessi coram et adoravi de proximo* (Apuleius, *Metamorphoses*, XI 23). The initiation into the Mysteries of Isis provided salvation (in a religious sense). As Th. Suk Fong Jim writes, “The goddess, who declared her real name as Isis, manifested herself in his (Lucius) dream and told him to join the procession the following day, which would be his ‘day of salvation’ (*Metamorphoses*, XI 5: *dies salutaris*). The goddess further promised that he (Lucius) would live in happiness and glory under her guardianship, and that he would continue to be favoured by her even after death” (Suk Fong Jim 2017, 270). See also: Brenk 2009, 236-237; Moreschini 1978, 27-50. According to Moreschini, “The cult of Isis and Middle Platonism would therefore have in common that mysticism and religiosity which are among the main components of the culture of the imperial age. ... The *Metamorphoses* represent, therefore, the mystical experience of Apuleius, as a development of a Platonic doctrine professed during his youth, even if never repudiated” (Moreschini 1978, 30, transl.

supernatural, and on God, gained the features of a kind of initiation into divinity (like in Mysteries), through the mystical act of love (ecstasy) or an equally mystical act of illumination (cf. Alcinous, *Didaskalikos*, X 165, 27-33; Apuleius, *De deo Socratis*, III 124; Maximus of Tyre, *Dissertationes*, XI, 9-11).⁵ According to Boys-Stones, “Platonism, as it emerged at the end of the Hellenistic era, is distinguished by its ‘religious’ character; even that it might in some sense be considered as a religion” (Boys-Stones 2016, 317). As Moreschini writes, “the texts of the Middle Platonic philosophers are all pervaded by a pronounced mysticism, according to the spirit of the times in which they taught” (C. Moreschini, op. cit., 162; transl. K.P.). This is also visible in the works of Apuleius of Madauros called *Philosophus Platonicus*.⁶

K.P.). See also: Burkert 2001, 76, 97, 98, 127, 171; Suk Fong Jim 2017, 269-272; 276-277; Roubekas 2014, 171-185; Urlich 2023, 95-99.

⁵ Regarding Maximus of Tyre’s *dialexis* (essay), see: Sandy 1997, 94-103; Szarmach 2021, 315-322; Szarmach 1985, 36-39.

⁶ This is the title of Frank Regen’s book about Apuleius and his philosophical works. However, Regen considers Apuleius, as he himself writes in his book, more of a rhetorician than a philosopher (Regen 1971, 108-110). Apuleius is also presented under the nickname Platonicus in some editions of philosophical writings. Cf: *Apulei Platonici Madaurensis opera quae supersunt, vol. III, De philosophia libri*, recensuit Paulus Thomas, Stuttgartiae in Aedibus B.G. Teubneri MCMLXX. See also: Harrison 2000, 38. I am leaving here aside the question of whether Apuleius should be treated as a philosopher or rather as a sophist. Apuleius’ philosophical writings were composed in the second century AD, when philosophy was transforming into theosophy. These tendencies are also clear in the philosophy of Platonism at that time. They can also be seen in the Apuleius’ works. Cf. Mantenero 1970, 63-111; Barra, Pannuti 1962-1963, 81-141. Barra and Pannuti emphasize the role of magic and ritual and mystical experiences in the life and philosophy of Apuleius. T. Mantenero also emphasizes the mystical threads in Apuleius’s philosophy. According to Mantenero, in Apuleius’ works there was a kind of fusion of philosophy with religion and magic. J. Dillon expressed a similar opinion as F. Regen about Apuleius and Maximus of Tyre: „Maximus of Tyre, like Apuleius, was a sophist rather than a philosopher, and a distinguished member of the Second Sophistic movement” (Dillon 1996, 399; see also: Sandy 1997, 178-179). Harrison writes that “But though Apuleius proclaimed himself a philosopher, his status as a star performer in Carthage, his obvious self-promotion and cult of his own personality, and his prodigiously displayed literary and scientific polymathy plainly allow us to designate him a Latin sophist” (Harrison 2000, 38). G. Sandy, speaking on this issue, wrote: “My intention in these past few pages has been to reaffirm my earlier claim that Apuleius *Philosophus* and Apuleius *sophisticus* are not mutually exclusive” (G. Sandy 1997, 187). I do not address the issue of Apuleius’s status as a philosopher or sophist. I will only quote the sentence of Jeffrey Urlich from Urlich 2023, 87-107: “For as everyone familiar

The theory of God in the writings of Apuleius of Madauros

Theory of God is undoubtedly the most important part of Middle Platonic philosophy. It is widely discussed in the writings of the Middle Platonists, also in the works of Apuleius of Madauros, who repeats certain motifs already introduced by Plutarch, but in a slightly different way, and introduces themes specific only to himself.⁷

with the so-called rhetorical works in Apuleius's corpus known, the other unique fact about the Madauran Platonist is that he is the only writer of Latin to be included without qualification in the Imperial resurgence of Greek culture labeled (for better or worse) the Second Sophistic. As the subtitle to Stephen Harrison's full-corpus study testifies to, Apuleius is *sui generis* because he is a "Latin sophist". Any philosophical pretensions he displays have traditionally been viewed as precisely that: epideictic display. Thus, Apuleius affiliates himself with Plato – according to the school of criticism pioneered by Gerald Sandy (1997) and Stephen Harrison (2000) – a method of "self-fashioning": he adopts the moniker *Platonicus philosophus* to advertise "his brand" within this sophistic revival" (Urlich 2023, 87-88). However, according to Jeffrey Urlich, Apuleius (this peripheral North African figure) "carefully and meticulously translated Plato into a specialized Latin discourse for his own native Carthaginian audience." Urlich suggests "that Apuleius acts precisely as a daemon for his readers and listeners, manifesting or reincarnating Socrates, as it were, in his exegesis of Plato" (Urlich 2023, 88). See also: Fletcher 2014 (especially pp. 16-30, 173-293).

⁷ Apuleius is known as the author of *Metamorphoses* (lat. *Metamorphoseon libri*), an extraordinary work full of interesting threads, including the famous fairy tale of *Eros and Psyche*, but also biographical references to his own initiation into the Egyptian Mysteries of Isis (cf. Fletcher 2014, 262-293; Harrison 2000, 210-260; Moreschini 1978, 27-42; Moreschini 1994, 8-96; Sandy 1997, 233-254; Urlich 2023, 95-99). His *Apology* (*Apologia sive pro se ipso de magia liber*) is also known, which is a record of his defense speech in the trial in which he was accused of practising magic (cf. Fletcher 2014, 199-226; Fletcher 2014, 199-226; Harrison 2000, 39-88; Kawczyński 1899, 12-29; Kawczyński 1900, 5-12; Sandy 1997, 131-148; see also: Constantini 2021, 248-269). There is also an anthology of his speeches entitled in Latin *Florida* (cf. Fletcher 2014, 173-261; Harrison 2000, 89-135; Kawczyński 1900, 12-24; Sandy 1997, 148-175). Apuleius wrote three philosophical treatises: the *De Platone et eius dogmate*, the *De mundo*, and the *De deo Socratis*. The earliest is the *De Platone et eius dogmate* considered by scholars to belong to the youthful period of his work. It was also during this period that he was to write the *De mundo*. The *De deo Socratis* is a work of the mature period (likewise – the *Apologia*, and the *Metamorphoses*). Other philosophical writings that entered the canon of his works in the manuscript tradition, namely the *Peri hermeneias* and the *Asclepius sive dialogus Hermetis Trismegisti*, are considered by modern researchers to be inauthentic (cf. Barra 1966 127-188; Harrison 2000, 10-14; Manternero 1970, 63-111; Redfors 1960, 114-119; Regen 1977, 186-227; Regen 1971, 108-110). M.W. Sullivan, B. Hijmans, and G. Sandy consider the *Peri hermeneias* to be the authentic work of Apuleius

*De Platone et eius dogmate.***God as the incorporeal, transcendent, difficult to know Creator of the world**

Apuleius introduced the theory of God as part of the principality theory, as the causative principle of all things in chapter V book I of the *De Platone et eius dogmate*:

Initia rerum esse tria arbitratur Plato: deum et materiam inabsolutam, informem, nulla specie nec qualitatis significatione distinctam, rerumque formas, quas ideas idem vocat.

Sed haec de Deo sentit, quod sit incorporeus. Is unus, ait, *aperimetros*, genitor rerumque omnium exstructor, beatus et beatificus, optimus, nihil indigens, ipse conferens cuncta. Quem quidem caelestem pronuntiat, indictum, innominabilem, et ut ait ipse, *aoraton, adamaston*; cuius naturam invenire difficile est; si inventa sit, in multos eam enuntiari non posse (Apuleius, *De Platone et eius dogmate*, I, V 190-191; cf. Platon, *Timaeus*, 28 C).⁸

God is an Architect, the Creator of the world. Apparently, He is a person, as evidenced by his attributes such as happy, making happy, not feeling any lack, creating everything himself. Its main feature is rationality, which is manifested in its rational operation – rational, because implementing a certain idea. The result of God's rational action is harmony, the mathematical order of the world (the effect

(Sullivan 1967, 9-14; Hijmans 1987, 408; Sandy 1996, 188), and of the earlier scholars Meiss, Kawczyński and Sinko (Meiss 1886, 2-8; Kawczyński 1900, 41-43; Sinko 1905, 39-42; see also: Gersh 1986, 317-320). According to Redfors, the issue of the authenticity of *De Platone et eius dogmate* and *De mundo* cannot be resolved (Redfors 1960, 117). Harrison, however, is convinced „that the *De Mundo* and the *De Platone* are genuine Apuleian works“ (Harrison 2000, 179). According to Harrison, “The *De Mundo* and *De Platone* are respectively a free translation of the extant pseudo-Aristotelian *Peri Kosmu*, and a two-book handbook to the doctrines of Plato, which is also likely to be translation or paraphrase of an earlier Greek text; both are thus attempts to expound in Latin the doctrines of Greek philosophers“ (Harrison 2000, 174). Regen also believes that all Latin philosophical works of Apuleius had their Greek prototypes (Regen 1977, 194; 219-221). Mantenero also claims that the Latin version of the *De deo Socratis* is a translation of some lost Greek text. However, according to her, Apuleius was the author of both the Latin and Greek works (Mantenero 1970, 219-259). Apuleius was also interested in natural sciences, medicine, and astronomy, but his writings on these subjects have not survived. His poems have also not survived (see Harrison 2000, 14-36). The same fate befell his translations of Plato's dialogues. More about Apuleius, his life and works see: Dillon 1997, 306-338; Fletcher 2014; Gersh 1986, vol. I, 215-328; Harrison 2000; Kawczyński 1899; Kawczyński 1900; Moreschini 1978; Sandy 1997.

⁸ Cf. Dillon 1996, 312-313; Gersh 1986, 237-241; Mrugalski 2019, 25-51.

of God's action is mathematically perfect). This is indicated by terms such as “number and measure”:

Quae (scil. elementa rerum) cum inordinate permixtaque essent, ab illo aedificatore mundi deo ad ordinem numeris et mensuris in ambitum deducta sunt (Apuleius, *De Platone et eius dogmate*, I, VII 194).

The features of God, his perfection and beauty, because of his activities appear in his created beings. That is why the world created by God has the same features (Ibid., I, VII 198). It does not have only one of its features, namely incorporeality. Since God is non-corporeal (Ibid., V 190). Having given God so many attributes, Apuleius adds that it is only with great difficulty to get knowledge about God, and even if one possesses it, then only a few would be able to pass it on, because only a few would be able to understand it (Ibid., V 191). It is not difficult to notice that this sounds almost like a quote from Plato's *Timaeus* (Plato, *Timaeus*, 28 C; Plato, *Epistulae*, VII 341 C/D). This thought of how difficult it is to know God is very close to Plato and applies to his entire philosophy, as he suggests in his *Letter II*, and *VII* (Plato, *Epistulae*, II 314 B; VII 341 C – 344 D). There are other characteristics of God that are difficult to know, namely those that mean that he is inexpressible and unnamed (Apuleius, *De Platone*, I, V 191). God's nature cannot be easily known. He is beyond the reach of any concepts trying to express his nature. One of God's terms is “heavenly”. God is heavenly (*celestis*) (Ibid., I, V 190). This probably means that he is in his “heaven”. Presumably this term is to emphasize its separation from the world. God is separated from the world, he is outside of it, in his heaven.

Apuleius' lecture on Platonic theology is supplemented by the teachings on providence and fate in Chapter XII of Book I of the *De Platone et eius dogmate*:

Sed omnia quae naturaliter et propterea recte feruntur providentiae custodia gubernantur nec ullius mali causa deo poterit adscribi. Quare nec omnia ad fati sortem arbitratur esse referenda. Ita enim definit: providentiam esse divinam sententiam, conservatricem prosperitatis eius, cuius causa tale suscepit officium; divinam legem esse fatum, per quod inevitabiles cogitationes dei atque incepta complentur. Unde si quid providentia geritur, id agitur et fato, et quod fato terminatur providentia debet susceptum videri. Et primam quidem providentiam esse summi exsuperantissimique deorum omnium, qui non solum deos caelicolas ordinavit, quos ad tutelam et decus per omnia mundi membra dispersit, sed natura etiam mortales eos, qui praestarent sapientia ceteris terrenis animantibus, ad aevitatem temporis edidit fundatisque legibus reliquarum dispositionem ac tutelam rerum, quas cotidie fieri necesse est, diis ceteris tradidit. Unde susceptam providentiam dii secundae providentiae ita naviter retinent, ut omnia, etiam quae caelius mortalibus exhibentur, inmutabilem ordinationis paternae statum teneant (Apuleius, *De Platone*, I, XII 205, 15–206, 12).

The doctrine of providence begins with the statement that everything that happens according to nature, and therefore rightly so, is done by virtue of God's providence: *Sed omnia quae naturaliter et propterea recte feruntur providentiae custodia gubernantur* (Apuleius, *De Platone*, I, XII 205, 15-16). Apuleius defines providence as a divine thought that ensures prosperity for all those who have accepted such an obligation: *providentiam esse divinam sententiam, conservatricem prosperitatis eius, cuius causa tale suscepit officium* (Apuleius, *De Platone*, I, XII 205, 19-20). Instead, he presents Fate as a divine law by means of which God's intentions and inevitable thoughts are realized: *divinam legem esse fatum, per quod inevitabiles cogitationes dei atque incepta complentur* (Ibid. I, XII 205, 20-22). Therefore, it can be said that if something happens from providence, then it also occurs according to fate, that is, according to God's law: *Unde si quid providentia geritur, id agitur et fato, et quod fato terminatur providentia debet susceptum videri* (Ibid. I, XII 205, 22-24). And what is referred to as the effect of fate should be understood as a work of providence itself.

God is not the cause of any evil: *nec ullius mali causa deo poterit adscribi* (Ibid. I, XII 205, 16-17). In the same way, it cannot be attributed to fate, or God's law: *Quare nec omnia ad fati sortem arbitratur esse referenda* (Ibid. I, XII 205, 17-18). What happens to a man cannot be attributed to fate without any restraint. Accidents depend partly on the people themselves and partly on what fate brings. Unforeseen random events remain covered for people. It happens that people's thoughts are not fully realized due to obstacles sent by fate. When these obstacles prove to be beneficial to man, they are called happiness. When they bring evil, they are accepted as unhappiness (Ibid., I, XII 206, 15-23. Cf. Plato, *Leges*, 709 A-B).

Apuleius writes about two types of providence. He assigned the first and highest providence to the highest God (Father and Architect of the world). The bearers of the second providence are the other gods (who are themselves the work of the supreme God). Creator has arranged all parts of the world for their care and pride. It is up to the gods to providentially direct the daily affairs that occur under the ordinance and providence of the Supreme God (Apuleius, *De Platone*, I, XII 205, 22 – 206, 12).⁹ The lower gods in this second providence make sure that the providence of the supreme God is realized - that everything remains in the unchanged state of God's assigned status. The lowest type of gods, i.e. demons, serve as servants and intermediaries between people and gods. The Romans called them Geniuses and Lars. They are guardians and people's interpreters, submitting their wishes and re-

⁹ Cf. Boys-Stones 2016, 331-332; Dillon 1996, 320-326.

quests to the gods: *Daemonas vero, quos Genios et Lares possumus nuncupare, ministros deorum arbitra[n]tur custodesque hominum et interpretes, si quid a diis velint* (Apuleius, *De Platone*, I, XII 206, 13-15. Plato, *Symposium*, 202 E).

De deo Socratis.

Theory of illumination

In his later work, in the *De deo Socratis*, Apuleius describes God similarly as the Creator and master of the whole world, whose majesty and greatness defies any attempt to put them into words. Knowing God, as it turns out here, is possible, though very difficult. Illumination is the only way to know God. Only the greatest of the wise men, that is, those who managed to free their souls from bodily bondage, access it. Having made such purification of the soul, they may experience a sudden and momentary illumination as in the passage of lightning:

Quorum parentem, qui omnium rerum dominator atque auctor est, solutum ab omnibus nexibus patiendi aliquid gerendive, nulla vice ad alicuius rei munia obstrictum, cur ergo nunc dicere exordiar, cum Plato caelesti facundia praeditus, aequiparabilia diis immortalibus disserens, frequentissime praedicet hunc solum maiestatis incredibili quadam nimietate et ineffabili non posse penuria sermonis humani quavis oratione vel modice comprehendere, vix sapientibus viris, cum se vigore animi, quantum licuit, a corpore removerunt, intellectum huius dei, id quoque interdum, velut in artissimis tenebris rapidissimo coruscamine lumen candidum intermicare? (Apuleius, *De deo Socratis*, III 124).

It seems setting very clear ethical requirements as a necessary condition for illumination is interesting in the given theory of illumination is. The philosopher's cognitive potential was apparently dependent on his ethical (and spiritual) power. A similar motif of illumination was found in the *Asclepius* by Pseudo-Apuleius

(Pseudo-Apuleius, *Asclepius*, XXIX).¹⁰ Plato signalized the theory of illumination in Letter VII (Cf. Plato, *Epistulae*, VII, 341 C–D).¹¹

Apuleius' conviction (expressed in the quoted text) that one can get to know the hidden nature of God only through intellectual illumination, and that only the noblest and wisest are capable of it, is also Plato's thought. The ethical element of this thought about the need to have certain ethical predispositions and a noble nature in order to be able to get to know God, Plato emphasizes in *Letter VII* and in the *Phaedo* (Plato, *Epistulae*, VII 344 A–C; *Phaedo*, 82 D – 84 B). One has to be prepared for illumination, also as said above in ethical aspects too. However, it can only assure a short-lasting cognition, or rather experience of God. Full cognition of God is possible only after death, when the philosopher's soul completely frees itself from the body (hence it can be concluded that posthumous knowledge is of the same nature as cognition through illumination, but long-lasting).

In relation to illumination, the question of what it is remains to be answered. From what Plato and Apuleius write about it, it can be concluded that it is a spiritual experience that can be described as a relationship – both cognitive and personal – between God and man. God is the object of knowledge here, but he remains a person, therefore illumination has not only purely cognitive, but also personal

¹⁰ Pseudo-Apuleius, *Asclepius*, XXIX: „pater enim omnium vel dominus et is, qui soius est omnia, omnibus se libenter ostendit, non ubi sit loco nec qualis sit qualitate nec quantus sit quantitate, sed hominem sola intelligentia mentis inluminans, qui discussis ab animo errorum tenebris et veritatis claritate percepta toto se sensu intelligentiae divinae commiscet, cuius amore a parte naturae, qua mortalis est, liberatus immortalitatis futurae concipit fiduciam.” (Pseudo-Apuleius, *Asclepius, sive dialogus Hermetis Trismegisti*, XXIX). The Pseudo-Apuleius' *Asclepius* gives an almost identical theology to the works of Apuleius. The only difference here is that God in the *Asclepius*, in addition to the attributes assigned to him in the *De Platone*, and in the other works of Apuleius, has one more feature, and an extremely important feature – namely, He is bisexual, like all the creatures in Trismegistus' lecture (*Asclepius*, XX 303 - XXI 304). God reveals himself (or more precisely, reveals some small fragment of his essence) to some people, enlightening their minds. However, it is revealed only to those who, freeing themselves from the influence of their mortal nature, have climbed to the highest moral and spiritual level (*ibidem*, XXIX 313). Nevertheless, God remains ineffable, indefinable, and altogether unknowable in his deepest essence (*ibidem*, XX). Hermes in the *Asclepius* particularly emphasizes the indeterminacy of God. In his opinion, God cannot be summed up in one name. He should be called by all names because He is everything as the Creator and cause of everything (*ibidem*, XX). Hermes also emphasizes the volitional nature of God's creativity, motivating it with his natural goodness (*ibidem*, XX; XXVI).

¹¹ See also: *Respublica*, VI 508 D – 509 B; VII 517 B–C; *Phaedrus*, 247 B – 250 D; *Symposium*, 210 E – 211 B; Alcinous, *Didaskalikos*, X 165, 27-34; Plutarch, *Amatorius*, 19).

dimension. It is the personal dimension of illumination that justifies such high spiritual and ethical requirements that Plato sets for philosophers.

Illumination is naturally a form of *noesis*, spiritual knowledge; it is the highest form of this knowledge. Another type of experience (this time basically purely personal) is ecstasy, mystic unification with God (i.e. with the Form of Beauty), which Plato writes about in the *Symposium*, using terminology taken from the Mysteries of Eleusis (Plato, *Symposium*, 209 E-212 A).¹² In the *Phaedrus* Plato calls love the “madness of Eros”, clearly suggesting that true love is always the fruits of divine inspiration (Plato, *Phaedrus*, 244 A-B; 249 C-E; 245 A-C; 253 C).¹³ In the illumination,

¹² Cf. Gómez Iglesias 2016, 78-82. According to Gómez Iglesias, in the *Symposium*, Socrates, “guided by Diotima, is the subject of an initiation into mysteries of Eros” (Gómez Iglesias 2016, 79). As Bianca Dinkelaar writes: “In her role as *mystagogos*, Diotima purifies Socrates of his false beliefs through an *elenchos* and leads him towards knowledge of the forms through an account of the different steps on the Ladder of Love, just as the Eleusinian guide led the initiates to the *epopteia* through the various rituals” (Dinkelaar 2020, 57). See also: Sattler 2013, 151-190 (187-190); Morgan 1992, 233-235. As Casadesús rightly noted, “Plato chose to introduce into his dialogues the language of Mystery religions to attempt to describe a reality that resisted explanation with other sort of language. Conditioned by the use of Mystery terminology, he therefore developed his philosophy in the image of the initiation process that characterized those religions. Consequently, he regarded the initiation into philosophy as a similar process to a religious initiation in which the purification of the soul, by complying with specific precepts and rites, is a strict requirement” (Casadesús, 2016, 5).

¹³ On the “madness of Eros” in the *Phaedrus*: see Werner 2011, 47-71. Daniel Werner poses a question here: “Socrates’ great speech in the *Phaedrus* – the so called ‘palinode’ – begins with the somewhat shocking claim that ‘greatest goods’ come from madness. ... So is Plato seriously suggesting in the *Phaedrus* that the philosopher is ‘mad’?” (Werner 2011, 47). Werner answers the question that, “at least two responses are possible” to the question he posed: “First, there is what we might call the ‘literalist’ reading: the notion that, yes, the philosopher is literally mad, in the sense that he lacks complete rational self-control or self-awareness, and hence there are times when losing one’s mind or reason is a good thing. Second – and diametrically opposed to the literalist reading – there is what we might call the ‘ironic’ reading: the notion that the philosopher is not ‘mad’ or ‘un-self-controlled’ in a way, and that any apparent suggestion to the contrary is made purely for rhetorical, dialogical, or ironic reason” (Werner 1992, 47). As Werner writes in conclusion of his article: “neither the literalist nor the ironic reading of the *Phaedrus*’ view of madness is right. For it is not the case, as the literalist reading would have it, that the philosopher is literally mad in the typical sense of ‘mania’, either having lost rational self-control or being possessed by anthropomorphic deity. ... But neither is it that case that the praise of madness, and the claim that the philosopher is mad, are wholly ironic. For there is another sense of ‘mania’ that does apply properly to the philosopher, namely, that possession by

because it is partly a personal union, there must also be experiences like those of the “madness of Eros”. For a reason, Platonists like Apuleius believed that philosophy was “the love of wisdom”, and moreover “the preparation for death” (*melete thanatu*) which was understood as nothing more than a journey to God (cf. Apuleius, *De Platone*, II XXI 250-251).¹⁴

Apologia (De magia).

God as the King, Creator and Saviour of the world

It is undoubted that in both works, the *De Platone et eius dogmate*, and in the *De deo Socratis*, Apuleius writes about the same God. The same attributes given to God are evidence to this. In the *De deo Socratis*, God gains the attribute of the Father of other gods which in the *De Platone et eius dogmate* appear in chapter IX book I. Apuleius was strongly convinced to the thesis that God is unknowable (to be more

the divine Forms” (Werner 2011, 69). About love in terms of the Mystery initiation in Plato’s *Phaedrus* see: Casadesús 2016, 12-14; Dinkelaar 2020, 52-54; Gaiser 1992, 66-75; Gómez Iglesias 2016, 61, 66-78; Pawłowski 2020, 421-426. Krokiewicz was inclined to see noetic experiences as well as the “madness of Eros” in the field of intuition which in turn he explained as a relation between consciousness and super-consciousness of man (Krokiewicz 1971, 10-11, 302; Krokiewicz 1958, 121-141).

¹⁴ Apuleius, *De Platone*, II XXI 250-251: “Philosophum oportet, si nihil indigens erit et omnium contumax et superior iis quae homines acerba toleratu arbitrantur, nihil secus agere quam ut semper studeat animam corporis consortio separare, et ideo existimandam philosophiam esse mortis adfectum consuetudinemque moriendi”. Cf. Plato, *Phaedo*, 64 A-B; 65 A; 67 C-E; 82 D – 83 B. See also: Alcinoüs, *Didaskalikos*, I 152. On the concept of philosophy in Plato’s *Phaedo* cf.: Dinkelaar 2020, 41-45. According to Dinkelaar, Plato invoked Orphic/Pythagorean imagery in the *Phaedo* “to emphasize the negative influence of corporeal existence on the soul’s progress” (Dinkelaar 2020, 44). Cf. Dilman 1992, 13-27; Morgan 2010, 63-81; Pawłowski 2021, 585-610; Schefer 1996. Christina Schefer sees in Plato’s *Phaedo* not philosophical speculation about immortality of the human soul, but elements of mystic knowledge that comes directly from Apollo, and she treats philosophy (expressed in this dialogue) as a kind of ecstasy (Schefer 1996, 160-161; cf. Morgan 2010, 64). Kathryn Morgan, however, unlike Christina Schefer, sees in this dialogue only philosophical speculation, and believes that “the *Phaedo* highlights the problems involved in drawing religious and mystical models into philosophical discussion” (Morgan 2010, 64). According to Ilham Dilman, in the *Phaedo*, Socrates “describes philosophy as the pursuit of wisdom, as a purification of the soul, as a preparation for death, indeed as the practice of dying” (Dilman 1992, 27); “To reach ‘the goal of reality’ the soul needs purification, and yet it is the pursuit of philosophy that purifies the soul” (Dilman 1992, 26).

precise - difficult to know). This is also supported by the fact that he also speaks about God in the *Apology* (*Apologia sive Pro se ipso de magia liber*):

... quisnam sit ille non a me primo, sed a Platone *basileus* nuncupatus: *peri ton panton basilea pant' esti kai ekeinou eneka panta*, quisnam sit ille basileus, totius rerum naturae causa et ratio et origo initialis, summus animi genitor, aeternus animantium sospitator, assiduus mundi sui opifex, sed enim sine opera opifex, sine cura sospitator, sine propagatione genitor, neque loco ne-que tempore neque uice ulla comprehensus eoque paucis cogitabilis, nemini effabilis (Apuleius, *Apologia*, C 64).

It was mentioned that Apuleius gave God the name “heavenly”, indicating that it probably points to God’s “whereabouts”. This is a fairly important issue. It is argued that Apuleius speaks of this heavenly place where God resides, also in the *Apology* (*Apologia sive Pro se ipso de magia liber*), a work quite non-philosophical, although strongly saturated with philosophical threads. Here, referring to the Plato’s *Phaedrus*, in which Plato actually mentions the “sky-high place” and “the summit of the sky” (Plato, *Phaedrus*, 247 B–D) points to the highest point in the top of the world where he located the Platonic school (Apuleius, *Apologia*, 64). This fairly attractive school location, of course, only serves to emphasize its intellectual and ethical excellence and its unique position vis-à-vis other philosophical schools. Indeed, in this place there is none other than the King himself. Apuleius presented the King as a cause, principle of all things, and as a Father and Saviour (Ibid.).

It is not difficult to notice that the King (*Basileus*) described by Apuleius in his *Apology* has the characteristics of God from the *De Platone et eius dogmate* (and from the *De deo Socratis*). The special elevation of God – Creator (the King) above other beings probably refers to his metaphysical situation in relation to his creations. In the metaphysical sense, God is the first being (the first among all beings as their creator). The entire metaphysical structure of the world and all things individually, which is somehow initiated in it, depends on him. The location of God in the distant and inaccessible sky makes him aware his transcendence and his inaccessibility for ordinary human knowledge. Most likely, the King from Apuleius’ *Apology* is the same King about whom Plato speaks extremely mysteriously in the *Letter II* (Plato, *Epistulae*, II, 312 E). Presumably, this King in Apuleius’ *Apology* and in Plato’s *Letter II* is none other than God – Creator himself, about whom it is discussed in the *De Platone et eius dogmate* and the *De deo Socratis* (and in Plato’s *Timaeus*).

*De mundo.***God as the Creator and Saviour of the World**

Another work in which Apuleius discusses the topic of God is the *De mundo*. The text from the *De mundo* is even more interesting because it coincides with the quoted piece from the *Apology*. God is defined here as the cause of the creation of the world (*auctor originis*). He is not only the author of the world he created, but also his saviour (*deumque ipsum salutem esse*) and the cause of its duration (*perseverantia earum, quas effecerit, rerum*):

“Vetus opinio est atque cogitationes omnium hominum penitus insedit deum esse originis [haberi] auctorem deumque ipsum salutem esse et perseverantiam earum, quas effecerit, rerum” (Apuleius, *De mundo*, XXIV 342).

God is the Saviour and Father of all creatures in the universe. Nothing escapes his Fatherly protection. Apuleius points out that God the Saviour (*sospitator*) and Father (*genitor*) caused the world to appear without the slightest effort, by the power of his non-fatigable providence:

“Sospitator quidem ille et genitor est omnium, quae ad complendum mundum nata factaque sunt, non tamen ut corporei laboris officio orbem istum minibus suis instruxerit, sed qui quadam infaticabili providentia et procul posita cuncta contingit et maximis intervallis disiuncta complexitur” (Ibid. XXIV 343).

It is he who rules from the highest and loftiest place where he has his abode (*praestantem ac sublinem sedem tenere*): “Nec ambigitur eum praestantem ac sublimem sedem tenere...” (Apuleius, *De mundo*, XXV 343).¹⁵

From it he gives his power to the celestial bodies below him and the most distant Earth, thus giving them strength to last and move. God is the principle of all activity in the universe (Apuleius, *De mundo*, XXIV 342 – XXIX 355).

God is only known with the eyes of the soul (*animae oculis*): ... *quem tantummodo animae oculis nostrae cogitationes vident* (Ibid., XXX 357). Different names given to him by various followers indicate different aspects of his activity (Ibid. XXXVII 370–372). The names such as Providence, Necessity, and Fate refer to him (Ibid., XXXVIII 372–374). He is the most perfect law under which the whole world exists: *Lex illa vergens ad aequitatis tenorem sit deus nulla indigens correctione mutabili* (Ibid., XXXVI 369).

In the *De mundo*, similarly as in the *Apologia*, Apuleius underscores God’s transcendence accentuating his unique position towards his creations. God resides in

¹⁵ See also: Ibid.: XXXIII 562: “Huius locum si quaerimus, neque finitimus est terrae contigionibus nec tamen medius in aëre turbido, verum in mundane fastigio, quem Graeci ‘ouranon’ recte vocant, ut qui sit altitudinis finis”.

the place called heaven (similarly as in the *Apologia*), totally separated from the rest of the world (Ibid., XXXIII 362). At the same time, he marks his ubiquity in this world that permeates with all its power, being not only its Creator, but also the one who keeps it in existence: *ad hoc instar mundi salute tuetur deus aptam revictam sui numis postestate* (Ibid. XXXII 361, XXXIII 362).

In a metaphysical sense, God pervades what He created with his actions. As a person, however, he stays in his heaven, completely separated from the world.

The Treatise *De mundo* is a translation of a Greek work, pseudo-Aristotelian *Peri kosmu*.¹⁶ Apuleius is probably the author of this translation. It is impossible not to notice that the theology of this treatise is consistent with the theology presented in the *De Platone et eius dogmate* and in the other writings of Apuleius (especially in the *Apologia* and in the *De deo Socratis*), which there is no doubt that they convey the beliefs of the author, i.e. Apuleius. Due to the convergence of the *De mundo* with the *De Platone et eius dogmate*, and with the *Apologia* and the *De deo Socratis*, in theological theories, it can be expected that the *De mundo* also expresses the theological beliefs of Apuleius. This position seems to be prompted by the fact that this treatise expresses the same spirituality in which the philosopher of Madauros lived and created. Characteristic for it and characteristic for Apuleius himself is the combination of philosophy and religion in it, which results in a picture of a kind of “philosophical Mysteries” in which philosophy becomes an instrument of knowing God, and a way to discover the divinity contained in the soul of the philosopher. This mystery tone resounds already in the first chapter of the *De mundo*. Apuleius maintains a mythological way of speaking about God in the *De mundo* referring to well-known ancient mythological figures. Extracting philosophical content from this mythological message is not difficult. In a metaphysical sense, God is the efficient cause of all things. His causative action never ceases, which is manifested by the existence of the world and metaphysical laws that are the skeleton of natural and ethical laws, according to which all creatures function. God Himself was called this (metaphysical) law – it is somehow a way of his activity (and for the world a way of its existence). God expresses himself through the world that he created in a way and through these laws. Ethical rights play a special role here. Apuleius emphasizes their inevitable nature and the necessity of surrendering to them citing Plato, who in fact expresses in the *Leges* his thought that man’s personal happiness depends on submission to these ethical laws (Plato, *Leges*, IV 715 c, 716 a). By the laws by which everything that exists in the world functions, God is present in it, although he remains transcendent to it.

¹⁶ Cf. Harrison 2000, 174; Regen 1977, 194.

It is worth paying attention to one more characteristic feature of God presented by Apuleius. Apuleius says that God is a constant Creator (*auctor originis*) of the world, creating without difficulty and the Saviour (*sospitator*) saving without effort. In short, God's creative activity is not a one-time event, but a continuous process. Apuleius points out that this activity does not require any effort from God. It can be supposed that by this he means that God's creative activity is somehow a way of his existence and life. God creates by the power of his thoughts, or his providence (Apuleius, *De mundo*, XXIV 343). It sounds quite mysterious to call God the Saviour (*sospitator*). On this basis, one might think that this expression appearing in the *Apologia* and the *De mundo*, in the works where religious accents and tones appear pretty frequently (e.g. in the *De mundo* the religious mood from chapter XXIV is undeniable) has a religious meaning. Apuleius gave the same term to Isis in the *Metamorphoses* (Apuleius, *Metamorphoses*, XI, 15). In this case, this concept is certainly religious. It can be assumed that the religiously disposed Apuleius, an expert and participant in numerous mystery cults, who very carefully stores souvenirs from all rites (Apuleius, *Apologia*, 55, 56), uses the term "the Saviour" (*sospitator*) in the religious sense also in the *Apologia* and in the *De mundo*. Therefore – if this supposition is correct – God, Creator and Father of all things is the Saviour of what he created. The unanswered question is why God's work require salvation and what does salvation involve. Apuleius does not develop this issue. The Greek author of the *De mundo* again gives the name "the Saviour" to God, this time with undoubtedly religious meaning since it is clearly used in a mysterious (orphic) context (Aristoteles, *De mundo*, 401 a). This suggests that the saving attribute of God, however, has a religious dimension in both Greek and Latin texts, despite the fact that in the latter, in parallel to the Greek text just presented, this concept does not exist (Apuleius, *De mundo*, XXXVII 370–371). It can be assumed that the term "Saviour" expresses the religious aspect of God's activity in relation to his creatures and supplements his metaphysical function of the efficient cause. In other words, God, in a metaphysical sense, creates and maintains the world in existence, which in this way lasts forever, although its individual structures are mortal. The religious aspect of God's activity most probably refers mainly to rational creatures, and above all to people. It has probably the same meaning here as in soteric cults. It is possible that this attribute reveals the role of God expressed in Plato's *Politicus* as a restorer of order in space, which is periodically shaken due to the presence of matter in it, which in Platonic concepts is itself a destructive element (Plato, *Politicus*, 173 B – 174 A). Salvation would consist in overcoming this destructive action of matter and restoring order in space.

Conclusion

It seems obvious that the theology of Apuleius, in its significant content, is very Platonic. It coincides with Plato's theories in the *Timaeus*. It is also close to the main theses of Alcinous (Alcinous, *Didaskalikos*, X).¹⁷ As in Plato's *Timaeus*, in Apuleius' lecture God is the metaphysical cause of the universe. His deeds are eternal. The manifestation of these actions is the world harmony. The essence of God is Reason. That is why His actions are rational. God is absolutely perfect. He is incorporeal and has no shortcomings because he has no trace of matter. He is happy. His works are endowed with rationality (order) and happiness. The process of creation is mathematical in nature and consists in giving what is indefinite by itself specific features, i.e., in forming (giving forms). The mathematical nature of this forming is revealed in the fact that what a formed being is (and thus and what it is) depends entirely on the geometrical structure of the basic elements from which it is built. An important attribute of God is his inaccessibility to common minds. Only the wisest of philosophers, i.e. those who managed to free their souls from the bonds of the senses, are able to know God. God eludes ordinary cognition. It becomes known only through illumination, i.e. a sudden, most probably mystical illumination of the soul (the soul freed from sensual desires). God is ineffable – he cannot be described in words of his nature. Here, human language is as inept as reason wishing to know the essence of God hidden from it.

The term Saviour (*sospitator*) occupies a special place among God's attributes. This attribute expresses the religious aspect of God's activity towards the world. In a metaphysical sense, God creates and keeps the whole world in existence and order, although individual beings in this world are mortal. This attribute reveals the role of God expressed in Plato's *Politicus* as a restorer of order in the world space,

¹⁷ See also: Snko 1905, 1-39; Dillon 1996, 280-287. The doctrinal agreement between Apuleius' *De Platone et eius dogmate* and Alcinous' *Didaskalikos* was one of the arguments for the existence of the so-called „school of Gaius”. Cf. Dillon 1996, XIV, XV, 266-267, 317, 337-338; Fletcher 2014, 33-37; Gersh 1986, 222-227; Moreschini 1978, 51-132; Sandy 1997, 215; Sinko 1905; Praechter 1916, 510-529; Theiler 1930, 1-60. Moreschini also emphasizes the clear similarity of Middle Platonic theology with the theology of Philo of Alexandria (Moreschini 1978, 71-75; See also: Dillon 1996, 139-183; Mrugalski 2019, 37-51). As John Dillon writes, Philo of Alexandria “is plainly good evidence for the state of Platonism at Alexandria in the first decades of the Christian Era” (Dillon 1996, 182). Dillon emphasizes the influence of Pythagorean transcendentalism and mysticism on the Middle Platonism theology. According to the outstanding Platonism (and Middle Platonism) expert, “Eudorus and Philo seem to constitute adequate evidence of type of Platonism, heavily influenced by Pythagorean transcendentalism and number mysticism, which, rather than the Stoicizing materialism of Antiochus, is true foundation of Middle Platonism” (Dillon 1996, 182-183).

which is periodically shaken due to the presence of matter in it, which in Platonic concepts is a destructive element (Plato, *Politicus*, 173 B – 174 A). Salvation would consist in overcoming this destructive action of matter and restoring order in world.

It is worth adding here that one of the hallmarks of Platonic philosophy, in Apuleius works, is piety. Apuleius values piety very much (Apuleius, *Apologia*, 56, 61-65).¹⁸ This is particularly clearly expressed in his *Apology*, where he shows his piety and godlessness of his prosecutors (Ibid. 56). Apuleius contrasts superstition and true religiosity. Similarly, in the *De deo Socratis*, he opposes superstition, which causes people to fear almost everything. Superstition, according to Apuleius, is worse than atheism (Apuleius, *De deo Socratis*, III 122-123). According to him, superstition is where people neither know nor care for gods. Some of them are overwhelmed by fear of the supposed gods, from the point of view of Apuleius, unjustified. That is why they are devoted to meticulous, purely ritual worship. Others despise the gods at all. In the first case, Apuleius could even refer to the Roman religion, in which a meticulous and rigorous ritual prevails. It is difficult to say who Apuleius in particular means in the second case. Similarly, it is not known who the few are who deny the existence of the gods.¹⁹

¹⁸ Cf. Boys-Stones 2016, 332. According to Boys-Stones, “Platonism systematically vindicates religious observance: it recognizes the traditional gods and approves their worship (with only one significant correction, perhaps, to traditional sensibility, which is that all divinities, at least all whose worship is approved, are beneficent, and none in malign)”.

¹⁹ Similarly, it is not known who the few are who deny the existence of the gods. In the second century after Christianity there is a fairly large and well-known community of Christians, and earlier Jews. It cannot be ruled out that Apuleius noticed those Christians who not only shunned polytheistic worship, but even flinched before him. Trajan in his letter to Pliny the Younger, his legate in Bithynia, calls Christians atheists and as such orders to severely punish them. During the time of Apuleius (during the reign of Hadrian, Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius) there is no mass persecution of Christians. Nevertheless, here and there flames of religious antagonisms explode, and Christian martyrs die. People generally hate Christians and accuse them of all the worst things, including atheism and godlessness. It cannot be ruled out that these opinions were not unknown to Apuleius. Nowhere, however, does Apuleius write openly about Christians. Christianity, like Judaism, was probably not attractive to the Platonist of Madauros. He was too devoted to Plato’s philosophy, which he considered the highest rise of the human mind, and which also met his sophisticated spiritual needs. It is hard to suppose, however, that he was particularly hostile to Christianity, because his personal religious experiences testify rather to his understanding and tolerance for religious beliefs. Most likely, it was outside the strict interests of this philosopher and “magician”. Leon Hermann put forward the unlikely thesis that Apuleius was a Christian (Hermann 1952, 339-350; Hermann 1953, 188-191; Hermann

In religious terms, Apuleius of Madauros, the philosopher and magician, was a very complex personality. Various threads intertwined in it, including polytheism and Mystery cults, but Platonism was the strongest and dominant trend in it, both at the theoretical (doctrinal) level as well as spiritual and ethical. The dearest to him were Platonic spiritual and ethical ideals, such as the ideal of “likeness to God” (*homoiosis theoi*), and the belief in the spiritual character of the human soul, with all the ethical and spiritual consequences that flow from this belief.²⁰

REFERENCES

Primary sources:

- Apulei Platonici Madaurensis *Opera quae supersunt*, III, recensuit Paulus Thomas, Stuttgartiae in Aedibus B.G. Teubneri, Stuttgart 1970.
- Apulei Platonici Madaurensis *Opera quae supersunt*, vol. III, *De philosophia libri* edidit Claudio Moreschini, Stuttgartiae in Aedibus B.G. Teubneri, Stuttgart 1991.
- Apuleio, *Il demone di Socrate*, a cura di B.M. Portogalli Cagli, Venezia: Marsilio Editori, 1992.
- Apulei Opera Philosophica, recognovit brevisque adnotatione critica instruxit Josephus Magnaldi, Oxoni e Typographeo Clarendoniano, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2020.

Secondary literature

- Barra, G., Pannuti, U. (1962-1963) Pannuti, “Esperienza filosofica e religiosa di Apuleio”, *Annali della Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia dell'Università di Napoli*, X, 1962-1963, 81-141.
- Boys-Stones, G. (2016) “Providence and Religion in Middle Platonism”, in: E. Eidinow, J. Kindt, R. Osborne (Edited by) *Theologies of Ancient Greek Religion*, Edited by E. Eidinow, J. Kindt, R. Osborne, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 317-338.
- Brenk, F. (2009) „Great Royal Spouse Who Protects Her Brother Osiris’: Isis in the Isaeum at Pompeii”, in: *Mystic Cults in Magna Graecia*, Edited by Giovanni Casadio and Patricia A. Johnston, Austin: University of Texas Press, 236-250.
- Burkert, B. (2001) *Starożytny kultury misteryjne*, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Homini.

1959, 110-116). The trial for magic that he had been given in 158 was supposed to be, he maintains, a Christian trial. The “secret statue” worshiped by the accused Apuleius was to be a Christian crucifix (for the process itself, see: Winter 1968). Hermann’s thesis is based on incorrect premises. The crucifix cannot be considered the mysterious statue of Apuleius, for he clearly says that it is a statue of Hermes (Mercury), Greek deity carved in precious wood (Apuleius, *Apologia*, 61 and 63). In addition, Apuleius had many other such cult figures representing various gods, one of which he always carried with him and which he used to make sacrifices. Anyway, just a few months after the trial for magic, Apuleius sits in Carthage on the stool of the high priest of the emperor’s worship, which clearly contradicts his alleged Christianity.

²⁰ See also: Barra 1962-1963, 83; Mantenero 1970, 63-111. Cf. fn. 8.

- Casadesús, F. (2016) "The transformation of the Initiation Language of Mystery Religion into Philosophical Terminology", in: María José Martín-Velasco and María José García Blanco (eds.), *Greek Philosophy and Mystery Cults*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle upon Tyne, 1-26.
- Constantini, L. (2021) "Apuleius on divination: Platonic daimonology and child-divination", in: C. Addey (ed.), *Divination and Knowledge in Greco-Roman Antiquity*, London: Routledge, 248-269.
- Dillon, J. (1996) *The Middle Platonists 80 B.C. to A.D. 220*, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press.
- Dilman, I. (1992) *Philosophy and the Philosophic Life. A Study in Plato's Phaedo*, New York: ST. Martin's Press.
- Dinkelaar, B.M. (2020) "Plato and the Language of Mysteries. Orphic/Pythagorean and Eleusinian Motifs and Register in Ten Dialogues", *Mnemosyne* 73 (2020), 36-62.
- Ebrey, D. (2017) "The Asceticism of the Phaedo: Pleasure, Purification, and the Soul's Proper Activity", *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 2017; 99 (1), 1-30.
- Ferrari, F. (2015) *Metafisica e teologia nel medioplatonismo*, "Rivista di storia della filosofia", n.2. 2015, pp. 321-337.
- Fletcher, R. (2014) *Apuleius' Platonism. The Impersonation of Philosophy*, Cambridge 2014: Cambridge University Press.
- Gaiser, K. (1990) *L'oro della sapienza. Sulla preghiera del filosofo a conclusione del „Fedro” di Platone*, Introduzione e traduzione G. Reale, Milano: Vita e Pensiero.
- Gersh S. (1986) *Middle Platonism and Neoplatonism. The Latin Tradition*, Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press.
- Gómez Iglesias, M.R. (2016) "The Echoes of Eleusis: Love and Initiation in Platonic Philosophy", in: María José Martín-Velasco and María José García Blanco (ed.), *Greek Philosophy and Mystery Cults*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle upon Tyne, 61-102.
- Göransson, T. (1995) *Albinus, Alcinous, Arius Didymus*, Göteborg: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis.
- Harrison, S.J. (2014) *Apuleius: A Latin Sophist*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hermann, L. (1952) "Le procès d'Apulée fut-il un procès de christianisme?", *Revue de l'Université libre de Bruxelles*, N.S. IV, 1951-1952, 339-350.
- Hermann, L. (1953) "L'Ane d'or et le christianisme", *Latomus*, XII 1953, 188-191.
- Hermann, L. (1959) "Le Dieu-Roi d'Apulée", *Latomus*, XVIII 1959, 110-116.
- Hijmans, B. (1987) "Apuleius, Philosophus Platonicus," in: *ANRW*, Part II, Volume 36. 1. (1987), 395-475.
- Invernizzi, G. (1976) *Il Didaskalikos di Albino e il medioplatonismo, Saggio di interpretazione storico-filosofica con traduzione e commento*, Roma: Edizioni Abete.
- Kawczyński, M. (1900) *O pismach filozoficznych Apulejusza Platończyka z Madaury*, Kraków 1900: Akademia Umiejętności.
- Kawczyński, M. (1899) *Życie Apulejusza Platończyka z Madaury*, Kraków: Rozprawy Wydziału Filologicznego Akademii Umiejętności w Krakowie.

- Krokiewicz, A. (1971) *Zarys filozofii greckiej. Od Talesa do Platona*, Warszawa: Instytut Wydawniczy PAX.
- Krokiewicz, A. (1958) *Sokrates*, Warszawa: Instytut Wydawniczy PAX.
- Mantenero, T. (1970) "Enciclopedia e misteriosofia in Apuleio", *Quaderni del Teatro Stabile di Torino*, 20, Torino 1970, 63-111.
- Meiss, Ph. (1886) *Apuleius 'Peri hermeneion'*, Lörrach 1886: Buchdruckerei von C.R. Gutsch.
- Milhaven, J.G. (1962) *Der Aufstieg der Seele bei Albinus*, München: Inaugural – Dissertation zur Erlangung des Doktorgrades der Philosophischen Facultät der Ludwig-Maximilian-Universität zu München.
- Moreschini, C. (1978) *Apuleio e il platonismo*, Firenze: Leo S. Olschki Editore.
- Moreschini, C. (1994) *Il mito di Amore e Psiche in Apuleio*, Napoli: M. D'Auria Editore.
- Morgan, K. (2010) "Divination and Plato's *Phaedo*", *Classical Quarterly* 60.1. (2010), 63-81.
- Morgan, M.L (1992) "Plato and Greek Religion", in: *The Cambridge Companion to Plato*, Edited by Richard Kraut, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 227-247.
- Mortley, R. (1972) *Apuleius and Platonic Theology*, "The American Journal of Philology" Vol. 93. No. 4 (Oct., 1972). s584-590.
- Mrugalski, D. (2019) "Agnostos Theos. Relacja między nieskończonością a niepoznawalnością Boga w doktrynach mediopltoników", *Roczniki Filozoficzne*, Tom LXVII, numer 3 – 2019, 25-51.
- Pawłowski, K. (2013) "Middle Platonism and the Philosophical Theology of Plutarch of Chersonesa. An Introductory Study", *Eos* C 2013, 327-347.
- Pawłowski, K. (2020) "The Philosophical Initiation in Plato's *Phaedrus*", *ΣΧΟΛΗ (Scholē)*, 14.2. (2020), 417-429.
- Pawłowski, K. (2021) "Socrates "Swan Song" in Plato's *Phaedo*. Socrates' "Secret Doctrine" about Death and Eternity", *ΣΧΟΛΗ (Scholē)*, 15.2 (2021), 595-610.
- Praechter, K. (1916) „Zum Platoniker Gaios”, *Hermes*, LI, 1916, 510-529.
- Rathke, T. (1911) *De Apulei quem scripsit De deo Socratis libello*, Berlin: Typis G. Schade.
- Reale, G. (1978) *Storia della filosofia antica*, vol. IV, Milano: Vita e Pensiero – Largo Gemelli.
- Redfors, J. (1960) *Echtheitskritische Untersuchung der apuleischen Schriften 'De Platone' und 'De mundo'*, Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup.
- Regen, F. (1971) *Apuleius philosophus Platonicus. Untersuchungen zur Apologie (De magia) und De mundo*, Berlin: De Gruyter.
- Regen, F. (1977) "Rec. di J. Beaujeu, Apulée, Opuscules.", *Göttingische Gelehrte Anzeigen*, CCXXII, 1977, 186-227.
- Roubekas, N.P. (2014) "Lucius' Lucid Dream: Book 11 of the *Metamorphoses* and Religious Conversion", *Journal of Cognitive Historiography*, April 2014, 1(2), 171-185.
- Sandy, G. (1997) *The Greek World of Apuleius. Apuleius and the Second Sophistic*, Leiden-New York-Köln: Brill.
- Sattler, B. (2013) "The Eleusinian Mysteries in Pre-platonic Thought. Metaphor, Practise and Imagery for Plato's Symposium", in: Vishwa Adluri (ed.), *Greek Religion, Philosophy and Salvation*. Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten, Bd 60, De Gruyter, 151-190.

- Schefer Ch. (1996) *Platon und Apollon. Vom Logos zurück zum Mythos*, Sankt Augustin: Academia Verlag.
- Sinko, T. (1905) *De Apulei et Albini doctrinae Platonicae Adumbratione*, Cracoviae: Accademia Litterarum Cracoviensis.
- Sullivan, M.W. (1967) *Apuleian Logic. The Nature, Sources, and Influence of Apuleius's Peri Hermeneias*, Amsterdam 1967: North-Holland Publishing Company.
- Suk Fong Jim, Th. (2017) "Salvation (*Soteria*) and Ancient Mystery Cults", *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte*, 18-19 (2017), 255-281.
- Szarmach, M. (1985) *Maximos von Tyros. Eine Literarische Monographie*, Toruń: Uniwersytet Mikołaja Kopernika.
- Szarmach, M. (2021) "Maksymos z Tyru. O istocie Boga według Platona (XI)", *Symbolae Philologorum Posnaniensium Graecae et Latinae*, XXXI/I – 2021, 315-322.
- Theiler, W. (1930) *Die Vorbereitung des Neuplatonismus*, Berlin: Weidmann.
- Theiler, W. (1966) *Forschungen zum Neuplatonismus*, Berlin: De Gruyter.
- Ulrich J. (2023) "Apuleius and Roman Demonology". In: *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Philosophy*, Edited by Myrto Garani, David Konstan, and Gretchen Reydams-Schils, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2023, 87-107.
- Witt, R.E. (1937) *Albinus and the History of Middle Platonism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Zintzen, C. (1981) *Der Mittelplatonismus*, Darmstadt: Darmstadt Wissenschaftliche Buchges.