

Some Aesopic Fables
in Byzantium and the Latin West
Tradition, Diffusion, and Survival¹

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In an interesting paper on Byzantine folktales, beast-fables, and facetious stories the late distinguished student of Byzantine private and public life Ph. I. Koukoules presented five Aesopic² fables (on pp. 223-25), which are narrated by various Byzantine authors. The material presented by Koukoules invites further study from several points of view. Our primary concern will be to study the relation of these fables with the Greek and Latin fable tradition, their diffusion, and when relevant their survival, chiefly in Modern Greek folklore. In the process of this investigation we shall have occasion to explore a few more fables, proverbs and "fable-proverbs."³

The first fable is culled from an oration of Nicephoros Chrysoverges.⁴ Koukoules identifies the fable correctly with no. 361,

¹In addition to the standard abbreviations of Journal titles (see *L'année philologique*) those used most frequently are listed at the end of this study.

²The term "Aesopic" is used to indicate all fables that have the same characteristics as those attributed to Aesop, whether they have reached us under Aesop's name or not. In contrast, the term "Aesopian" is reserved for fables which have come down to us under Aesop's name.

³I am translating thus the Mod. Greek term "παροιμιόμυθος," coined by D. Loukatos to describe the type of proverb that puts a fable or other folk-narrative in capsule form. See Δ. Σ. Λουκάτος, *Νεοελληνικοί Παροιμιόμυθοι*, 1st reprint (actually second edition with substantial additions), Athens 1978, pp. ιθ' - κ'.

⁴See M. Treu, *Nicephori Chrysovergae ad Angelos orationes tres* (Program des Königl. Friedrichs-Gymnasiums zu Breslau, II. *Wissenschaftliche Abhandlung*), Breslau 1892, *Orat.* I, p. 5, 12-31.

“Πίθηκοι πόλιν οϊκίζοντες,” in Halm’s edition (= Perry 464, Coraës 367) and cites it in its entirety. The fable as narrated by Chrysoverges is about four times longer and displays much rhetorical adornment in comparison with the short and simple text printed in the fable editions mentioned above. It is remarkable, however, that, though verbiage abounds, no new narrative element is introduced into the fable. Koukoules does not note that the same fable was printed earlier by two other scholars independently, Sp. Lambros and S. Eustratiades. Lambros found the fable outside the manuscript fable collections, namely, in codex *Monacensis Graecus* 201, fol. 61 (dated to the 14th century by Lambros, but to the 13th by Ign. Hardt⁵), but he in turn did not connect it with the fable in Chrysoverges, and edited it in 1910 as an anonymous text.⁶ The version edited by Lambros, however, was composed by Patriarch Gregory of Cyprus⁷ (see next note). In the same year, S. Eustratiades edited the fables composed by Gregory on the basis of a single but complete manuscript.⁸ In Gregory’s version the text of the fable has again undergone rhetorical expansion and adornment, but its wording is independent of the text of Chrysoverges. This is another example of the widespread habit of expansion and adornment of the text which is characteristic of the later Byzantine versions of fables.⁹

⁵*Catalogus codicum manuscriptorum Graecorum Bibliothecae Regiae Bavaricae*, vol. 2, Munich 1806, p. 336.

⁶See Σπ. Π. Λάμπρου, “Συλλογαὶ Αἰσωπέων μύθων,” *Νέος Ἑλληνομνήμων* 7 (1910), pp. 49-74 (especially pp. 53 and 73-74 for this fable). In the same study (pp. 54-59) Lambros also edits fifteen fables found in codex 268 of the Dionysiou monastery (dated to the 15th century; see pp. 49-50 and also Σπ. Π. Λάμπρου, *Κατάλογος τῶν ἐν ταῖς βιβλιοθήκαις τοῦ Ἁγίου Ὁρους Ἑλληνικῶν κωδικῶν*, vol. 1, Cambridge 1895, no. 3802). Since Lambros was not able to identify all the fables, he supposed that four of them “are entirely new and are not found in all the other collections.” In fact those four fables as well as the remaining eleven come from the fables (Παραδειγματικοὶ λόγοι) of Syntipas; see Perry, pp. 527-28.

⁷It is strange that Lambros was not able to identify the author of this fable and the next one (see immediately below), because it is clear from Hardt’s *Catalogus*, p. 339, that in the codex itself the fables are attributed to Patriarch Gregory; the information provided by the codex is repeated by Hardt in his description of it.

⁸See Σ. Εὐστρατιάδου, *Γρηγορίου τοῦ Κυπρίου, Οἰκουμενικοῦ Πατριάρχου, ἐπιστολαὶ καὶ μῦθοι*, Alexandria 1910, pp. 216-17, no. 4. Eustratiades’ edition is based on codex *Vindobonensis philologicus Graecus* 195, fols. 85/1^r - 93^v; see H. Hunger, *Katalog der griechischen Handschriften der Oesterreichischen Nationalbibliothek*, I, Wien 1961, p. 306.

⁹Concerning this tendency of the Byzantines see J.-Th. A. Papademetriou, *Studies in the Manuscript Tradition of Stephanites kai Ichneutes* (Ph.D. dissertation), Urbana, Illinois, 1960, p. 177.

It should be noted that this fable is found also in Syriac and Latin versions. It is incorporated into the Syriac version of the *Fables of Sinbad*¹⁰ and it was translated into Latin by Priscian.¹¹ Finally, the editors of the Aesopic fables¹² relied on only one Greek source, namely, Hermogenes,¹³ but did not note its presence in the Byzantine authors mentioned above, who are about ten centuries later than Hermogenes. In the motif-indices, on the other hand, the motif of the fable is noted,¹⁴ but there is no direct or indirect reference to the above mentioned versions (Byzantine, Syriac and the Latin translation).

On the same page of the Munich codex, another fable of Gregory of Cyprus is included¹⁵ (= Perry 83: Πίθηκος καὶ κάμηλος ὀρχοῦμενοι,¹⁶ Chambry 307, Hausrath/Hunger 85). Its text displays again the same features noted in the other Byzantine fable (= Perry 464). Lambros has also edited this fable (pp. 72-73) as an anonymous text.¹⁷

The second fable in Koukoules' study comes from the *Commentarii* on the *Odyssey*, p. 1769 (not 1679), by the celebrated Archbishop Eustathios of Thessalonike. The text cited by Koukoules is brief and runs as follows: πίθηκος ἦει θηρίων ἀποκριθεὶς μῦθος ἀν' ἐσχατιῆν τῷ δ' ἄρ' ἀλώπηξ κερδαλέη συνήντητο πυκινὸν ἔχουσα νόον. With some reservations (p. 224) Koukoules identifies the text with Aesop's fable Halm 43 (= Perry 14: Ἀλώπηξ καὶ πίθηκος περὶ εὐγενείας ἐρίζοντες,¹⁸ Chambry 39, Hausrath/Hunger 14, = Babrius

¹⁰See the list of the Syriac codices of the fables of Syntipas in Perry, p. 526.

¹¹See Prisciani, *Praeexercitamina, de Fabula* 3, ed. by M. Hertz in H. Keil, *Grammatici Latini*, vol. 3, Leipzig 1859 (photo-reprint 1961), p. 430 and Coraës, p. 439. Priscian drew on Hermogenes (see below, note 13).

¹²Perry, Halm and Coraës. The fable is not included in the editions of Chambry and of Hausrath/Hunger.

¹³Προγυμνάσματα 1 (Περὶ μύθου), pp. 2,14 - 3,4, ed. H. Rabe, *Hermogenes*, Leipzig 1913 (photo-reprint, Stuttgart 1969).

¹⁴See Thompson, J648.1. and Wienert, pp. 61 (ET 240) and 108 (ST 200).

¹⁵Fable 10 in the edition of S. Eustratiades, p. 221.

¹⁶The motif of the fable is noted in Thompson, J512.3. See also Wienert pp. 46 (ET 47) and 90 (ST 20).

¹⁷See above, note 7. In the other editions of Aesopic fables mentioned so far the version of Gregory is not noted, while in the edition of Eustratiades the text of the Munich codex is not utilized.

¹⁸The fable is also found in the *Παραδειγματικοὶ λόγοι* of Syntipas (= Perry 14, p. 533, Hausrath/Hunger 14, fasc. 2, pp. 160-61). Concerning the motif of the fable and its classification see Thompson, J954.2. and Wienert, pp. 44 (ET 17) and 100 (ST 140).

81¹⁹). The text of Eustathios, however, does not come from a prose fable, as Koukoules thought; it is part of an epode by Archilochos of Paros (81 Diehl²⁰ = 185 West,²¹ vv. 3-6). The subject of this epode is a beast-fable, and its presence in Eustathios is well known to the editors of Archilochos.²² The epode of Archilochos and its fable were renowned in antiquity as evinced by the numerous ancient references to it, which are, however, almost always merely allusive.²³ As a result, and despite the wealth of ancient evidence, only six verses of the epode have come down to us, which contain too few elements from which the narrative of the fable might be safely deduced. Thus, the identification of the fable with one of those preserved in the fable collections has been a challenge to scholars for a long time,²⁴ and their opinions are divided between two fables, namely Halm 43 and Halm 44 (= Perry 81: Πίθηκος βασιλεὺς αἰρεθεὶς καὶ ἀλώπηξ,²⁵ Chambry 38, Hausrath/Hunger 83).

The third fable comes from *Letter* 116 of Michael Choniates²⁶ and narrates the story of a weasel that became human. When, however, she was a bride, she happened to see a mouse and she immediately

¹⁹References to Babrius' text are to the edition by B. E. Perry, *Babrius and Phaedrus*, London-Cambridge, Mass., 1965.

²⁰E. Diehl - R. Beutler, *Anthologia lyrica Graeca*, fasc. 3: *Iamborum scriptores*, 3rd ed., Leipzig 1952.

²¹M. L. West, *Iambi et elegi Graeci ante Alexandrum cantati*, vol. I, Oxford 1971.

²²See, e.g., the editions of Diehl and West cited above.

²³See, e.g., Plato, *Republic* 365c (ed. J. Burnet) τὴν... τοῦ σοφωτάτου Ἀρχιλόχου ἀλώπεκα ἐλκτέον ἐξόπισθεν κερδαλέον καὶ ποικίλην and the parody by Aristophanes in *Acharnians* 119-20. See also the abundant ancient *testimonia* cited by the editors of Archilochos (e.g., the passages cited in West's edition for fragments 185-87 or for the fragments 188-89 and 192 in the edition of G. Tarditi, *Archiloco. Introduzione, testimonianze sulla vita e sull' arte, testo critico, traduzione* (*Lyricorum Graecorum quae extant*, II), Roma 1968.

²⁴See, e.g., the "Dissertatio de fabulis Archilochi" of I. G. Huschke in the edition of Fr. De Furia, *Fabulae Aesopicae...*, Leipzig 1810, pp. 224 ff., Fr. Lasserre, *Les épodes d' Archiloco*, Paris 1950, pp. 110 ff. and the recent bibliography in I.-Θ. Α. Παπαδημητρίου, Ἀρχαῖοι Ἑλληνες Λυρικοί, 2nd ed., Athens 1979, p. 189.

²⁵Although the fact is not noted in the international motif-indices, the fable has survived in Mod. Greek folk-tradition; see Γ. Α. Μέγα, Τὸ ἑλληνικὸ παραμῦθι, fasc. I: Μῦθοι ζώων, (Ἀκαδημία Ἀθηνῶν, Δημοσιεύματα τοῦ Κέντρου Ἐρεῦνης τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς Λαογραφίας, XIV), Athens 1978, p. 34, no. *45. For the motif and the classification of the fable see Thompson, K730.1. and Wienert, pp. 47 (ET 59), 90 (ST 23), 94 (ST 73), 97 (ST 114). Thompson, however, does not note that the fable is found also in La Fontaine, *Fables* VI, 6 as well as in other French writers discussed in R. Jasinski, *La Fontaine et le premier recueil des "Fables"*, vol. 2, Paris 1966, pp. 292-97.

²⁶Σπ. Π. Λάμπρου, Μιχαὴλ Ἀκομινάτου τοῦ Χωνιάτου, Τὰ Σωζόμενα, vol. 2, Athens 1880 (photo-reprint Groningen 1968), p. 239, 5-18 (not 339, 5 ff.).

attacked and devoured it. Koukoules also notes the presence of the fable in the *Chiliades* of J. Tzetzes,²⁷ in the *Tetrasticha* of Ignatios Diaconos,²⁸ and in Gregory Nazianzen,²⁹ where he also finds a kind of moral: τὸ γὰρ πεφυκὸς οὐ ταχέως μεθίσταται.³⁰ It should be added that the fable is also found in a letter of Emperor Julian the Apostate.³¹ Thus, again the sources that preserve the fable cover an impressively long span of time. According to Koukoules, some distinguished modern Greek scholars have dealt with the fable, namely, Sp. P. Lambros, N. G. Politis, and P. N. Papageorgiou, who believed that the fable was not ancient (Lambros and Papageorgiou), that "it is otherwise unknown" (Papageorgiou) and that "it was composed during Byzantine times" (Politis).³² The fable, however, is neither unknown nor Byzantine; it is certainly ancient and this becomes evident from the Byzantine sources themselves. Julian attributes the fable to Babrius, Tzetzes mentions Aesop explicitly (v. 937: ὡσπερ που γράφει τὴν γαλῆν ὁ Αἴσωπος ἐν μύθοις) and Choniates calls the fable "Aesopian." Indeed, this is the well known ancient fable Γαλῆ καὶ

²⁷P. A. M. Leone, *Ioannis Tzetzae Historiae (Pubblicazioni dell' Istituto di Filologia Classica, I)*, Naples 1968, IV, 939-44.

²⁸Number 39 in the edition of K. F. Müller, *Ignatii Diaconi aliorumque tetrasticha iambica*, which is included in the edition of O. Crusius, *Babrii fabulae Aesopeae*, Leipzig 1897. As Koukoules notes, Sp. Lambros has edited the poem on the basis of codex 13 of the monastery of Vatopedi in *Νέος Ἑλληνομνήμων* 7 (1910) 448, no. 14. There is, however, another edition of the same *tetrastichon* by Sp. Lambros on the basis of cod. 287 (16th cent.) of the Docheiariou monastery in his "Συλλογαὶ Αἰσωπέων μύθων (see above, note 6), pp. 50 and 59, no. 3; see also his *Catalogus*, vol. 1, no. 2961.

²⁹"Ἐπη ἱστορικὰ Α'. Περὶ ἑαυτοῦ IB' (Ἐἰς ἑαυτὸν καὶ περὶ ἐπισκόπων), vv. 701-708, *Patrologia Graeca* (Migne), XXXVII, col. 1217.

³⁰Instead of this moral, in the text of M. Choniates (239, 15-18) we find a reference to Pindar and a quotation (not identified by Lambros) from his *Olymp.* 11, 19-21 (noted by the editors of Pindar).

³¹Number 82 (Ἰουλιανὸς κατὰ τοῦ Νείλου) in the edition J. Bidez, *L' Empereur Julien; oeuvres complètes*, vol. 1, 2, 3rd ed., Paris 1972. Julian depends in part on the Babrian version of the fable (see below, note 34).

³²See Koukoules, p. 224 and note 6 and p. 225 and note 1. Koukoules himself displays some doubts regarding these conclusions (p. 225), because Choniates calls the fable "Aesopian." Papageorgiou cites this fable in his *Συμβολῆς εἰς τὴν Ἑλληνικὴν παροιμίαν κεφάλαια τέσσερα*, Athens 1901, p. 67, no. 173, and on page 36 states that the fable is "unknown." Lambros and Politis, however, do not seem to have maintained the views attributed to them by Koukoules (see Lambros' relevant publications above, notes 6, 26, and 28). Koukoules was probably led astray by what Lambros says in one of his studies (above, note 6) with reference to some other fables. With regard to Politis the remark attributed to him refers to another fable, which will be discussed below (the fourth fable in Koukoules' study); see N. Γ. Πολίτου, *Μελέται περὶ τοῦ βίου καὶ τῆς γλώσσης τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ λαοῦ. Παροιμίαι*, vol. 3, Athens 1901 (photo-reprint 1965), pp. 565-66.

'Αφροδίτη (Perry 50, Chambry 76,³³ Hausrath/Hunger 50) of which we also have an ancient rendition in Babrius' *Mythiambis*.³⁴ Furthermore, the fable is found in several vernacular literatures and has been widely studied.³⁵ It has also survived both in the Greek Paroemiographers³⁶ and in Modern Greek folk tradition.³⁷

Michael Choniates is the source, too, of the fourth fable studied by Koukoules.³⁸ It is a fable that Choniates himself calls

³³In Chambry's edition there is also a verse rendition of the fable, different from the ones in Babrius, Gregory and Ignatios.

³⁴Fable 32 in Perry's *Babrius and Phaedrus*.

³⁵See Thompson, J1908.2. and Wienert, pp. 45 (ET 34) and note 6 therein for bibliography, 71 (ET 351), 78 (ET 444) and also pp. 86-87 (ST 1) for a rich commentary. The motif is found also in Italian and Spanish texts as Thompson notes, but its survival in Mod. Greek tradition should also be noted (see below, note 37) as well as its occurrence in French Literature (La Fontaine, II, 18; see also C. R. Jasinski *La Fontaine*, vol. I, Paris 1966, pp. 382-92). The fable, the ancient references to it, and the relevant questions in world literature, have been studied extensively. See, e.g., E. Rohde, "Ein griechisches Märchen," *RhM* 43 (1888), pp. 303-05 = *Kleine Schriften*, vol. 2, Tübingen - Leipzig 1901, pp. 212-15; O. Crusius, "Ueber eine alte Thierfabel," *RhM* 49 (1894), pp. 299-308 (especially, pp. 302-05) and Joh. Hertel, "Altindische Parallelen zu Babrius 32," *ZVZ* 22 (1912), pp. 244-52 and the "Nachschrift" on p. 301. See also our next note.

³⁶See E. L. v. Leutsch and F. G. Schneidewin, *Corpus Paroemiographorum Graecorum*, vol. I, Göttingen 1839, Ζηροβιον, Ἐπιτομή II 93 (see also the relevant note therein) and vol. 2 (1951), M. Ἀποστολίου, Συναγωγή V 21 and 25, XI 89a, where similar proverbs are recorded (see the relevant notes therein). See also D. K. Karathanassis, *Sprichwörter und sprichwörtliche Redensarten des Altertums in den rhetorischen Schriften des Michael Psellos, des Eustathios und des Michael Choniates sowie in anderen rhetorischen Quellen des XII Jahrhunderts*, Lamia [Greece] 1936, pp. 108-09, nos. 228 and 229.

³⁷See Δ. Σ. Λουκάτου, *Παροιμιόμυθοι*, p. 39, no. 147 (cf. also p. 54, no. 195 and the fable Ὁ Γάτος Χατζής: Δ. Σ. Λουκάτου, *Νεοελληνικά λαογραφικά κείμενα*, [Βασική Βιβλιοθήκη, XLVIII], Athens 1957, p. 25, no. 2) and his *Κεφαλοῦτικά Γνωμικά* Athens 1952, p. 93, no. 613. Fables and proverbs that express the same idea are abundant both in Greek and in other literatures; see, e.g., Perry 107 (Chambry 120, Hausrath/Hunger 109), and the fable-proverbs about the wolf discussed below; also Loukatos' *Παροιμιόμυθοι*, p. 33, no. 124, p. 36, no. 138 (also his *Κεφαλοῦτικά Γνωμικά* p. 93, no. 614) and p. 40, no. 149. Numerous references are also found in Thompson, entry U120. ("Nature will show itself") and under the same entry (= motifs 1195-1229) in L. Bódker, *Indian Animal Tales: A Preliminary Survey (FF Communications*, no. 170) Helsinki 1957. Closely akin to Perry 50 is the fable of the Cat and the Candle; see Thompson, J1908.1. and Aarne/Thompson, 217 (cf. also 111) and Bódker, *op. cit.*, no. 1233. In Aarne/Thompson several versions of the fable are not noted: Medieval Latin (in Odo Cheritonensis; see Hervieux, p. 296, no. 79), Armenian (see Perry, p. 743, entry "*Catus ferens...*") and Mod. Greek (see Γ. Α. Μέγα, *Μῦθοι ζώων*, p. 94, no. 217, but the fable is not identical with Perry 50, as Megas seems to imply).

³⁸See the letter cited above (note 26), p. 239, 20-30 in Lambros' edition.

“νεώτερον,”³⁹ and he uses it to reiterate the point he made with the previous fable (i.e., Perry 50). The connection between the two fables is valid, because both express the conviction that the true nature of an animal does not change even when it assumes a new form or way of life. Such changes are either superficial or a cover for hypocrisy. The analogies with human society and behavior are all too obvious, and this explains the creation of the many variations on this motif which will be examined below. In Choniates’ fable the main hero is a wolf who is baptized and becomes a Christian. Although Koukoules considers the fable “Aesopian,” it is not found in any of the editions of Greek fables mentioned above. Thus, it is useful to summarize here its plot. The wolf is baptized and becomes a Christian. He now vows *μηκέτι τοῖς θρέμμασι τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ ὑποζυγίοις ἐπιέναι καὶ διαλυμαίνεσθαι*. But as he was being led into town with honors and in a *λαμπροφορία*, he saw a pig lying by the side of the road. The animal’s true nature sprang to life immediately, and the wolf attacked and devoured the pig. After all, as the wolf explained, the pig did not stand up, when it saw a neophyte Christian come by.

The fable has left many traces in Modern Greek folklore. P. Papageorgiou⁴⁰ and subsequently Koukoules have already called attention to a Mod. Greek proverb that might be considered a summary of the fable: ‘Ο λύκος κι ἂν βαφτίστηκε Χριστιανὸς δὲν ἔγινε (“even if the wolf was baptized, he did not become a Christian”).⁴¹ Moreover, there are several fables and proverbs in which a wolf (or some other predatory animal) becomes a Christian or repents, and they are found both in Mod. Greek and in Medieval Latin narratives. Here belong, e.g., two fables conventionally ascribed to Romulus (Perry 655 and 655a).⁴² Closely connected with them and more immediately with the

³⁹Papageorgiou, *Συμβολῆς εἰς τὴν Ἑλληνικὴν παροιμίαν*, p. 36, comments on the fable and maintains that it was invented at the time of Choniates. The Byzantine author, however, simply states that he learned the fable from one of his contemporaries and that it was “νεώτερος,” which probably means simply not found in the ancient collections, in contrast to the one that he had narrated previously (= Perry 50).

⁴⁰See Papageorgiou, *loc. cit.*

⁴¹The proverb would fit just as well other fables on the wolf’s conversion to Christianity.

⁴²In the two fables we actually have the same narrative in prose and in verse. The wolf vows to fast, but in the end he eats his usual prey after giving it a different name. The object of the satire is the circumvention of the rules of fasting under various pretexts. A version of the fable is found in the English collection of fables culled from various sources by R. L’Estrange, *Fables of Aesop and Other Eminent Mythologists with Morals and Reflexions*, 6th ed., London 1714, p. 507, no. 469. Another version is found in E. du Ménil, *Poésies inédites du moyen âge, précédées d’une histoire de la fable ésoquie*,

one in Choniates are two other Latin fables: one is narrated by Odo of Cheriton (Perry 595: *Isengrimus*⁴³ *monachus*)⁴⁴ and the other is found in the mss. along with Odo's fables (Perry 641: *Lupus et sacerdos*).⁴⁵ In the first fable Isengrim wanted to become a monk. After many entreaties he was admitted to the ranks and assumed a monk's habit. Now he was expected to learn Christian prayers. However, when he was taught to say by heart *Pater noster*, he could only utter *agnus* or *aries*. Next, *docuerunt eum ut respiceret ad crucifixum, ad sacrificium, et ille semper direxit oculos ad arietes*. The substance of Odo's fable appears earlier in *Ysengrimus*, the celebrated Medieval Latin *Tierepos* composed by Nivardus of Ghent.⁴⁶ Here, Isengrim becomes a monk and enters a monastery, where the other monks *docent* [sc. *Ysengrimum*], "*amén*" *quasi grecum, accentuat "agne"* (v. 559). In the other fable (Perry 641) the wolf once *venit...ad penitentiam et uno oculo respiciebat sacerdotem et cum alio oves super montem*.⁴⁷

Identical in substance with the first Latin fable (Perry 595) is a Byzantine (and Mod. Greek) fable-proverb included in the collection compiled by Maximos Planudes: *μουμένω τῷ λύκῳ ἐκέλευον εἰπεῖν "ἀμήν," ὁ δ' ἔλεγε "ἀρνίον"*⁴⁸ (= "when the wolf was being baptized, they kept asking him to say 'amen', but he kept saying 'lamb'.") It is clear that this is the same story which we read in the Latin fable in an expanded form. Is this a loan to the East from the West or the reverse? Although in the Latin fable a fuller text is found, the word-play around which the story is built *Pater noster/agnus* (or *aries*) and

Paris 1854, pp. 27-28, who also gives references to still more versions. The first three versions mentioned here are summarized by B. E. Perry, *Babrius and Phaedrus*, pp. 569-70.

⁴³*Isengrimus* (or *Ysengrimus*) is the wolf's name in the Medieval Latin poem by the same title (see next note), the *Roman de Renart*, and several Medieval fables and sayings.

⁴⁴Also in Hervieux, pp. 195-96, no. 22: *De Lupo qui voluit esse monachus*.

⁴⁵Also in Hervieux, p. 406, no. 2 [37]: *De Lupo et sacerdote*.

⁴⁶See the ed. by E. Voigt, *Ysengrimus*, Halle 1884, V, 541 ff. and the reference therein (p. 290) to W. Wackernagel; see also E. Kurtz, "Zu den παροιμίαι δημώδεις," *Philologus* 49 (1890), pp. 465-66.

⁴⁷The motif of the fable is recorded in Thompson, U125. together with references to versions in Arabic and Spanish, but no mention is made of the Latin and Byzantine fables discussed here or of the Mod. Greek fable-proverbs mentioned below. K. Krumbacher, *Mittelgriechische Sprichwörter* (SBAW II, 1), Munich 1893 (photo-reprint Hildesheim 1969), p. 211, cites in German a corresponding Arabic proverb (*Man brachte den Wolf in die Leseschule und sprach ihm vor "a b c"; er aber sagte: "Lamm, Ziege, Böckchen"*) published by Alb. Socin, *Arabische Sprichwörter und Redensarten*, Tübingen 1878, p. 21, no. 282.

⁴⁸See E. Kurtz, *Die Sprichwörtersammlung des Maximus Planudes*, Leipzig 1886, p. 36, no. 179 and also Δ. Σ. Λουκάτου, *Παροιμιόμυθοι*, p. 41, no. 154.

ἀμῆν (with Byzantine or Mod. Greek pronunciation)/ ἀρνίον is much better in the Greek text. The corresponding Latin pair (*Pater noster/agnus*) could hardly be called word-play in terms of the sound of the words. Indeed, the use of *agnus* in the text can be understood only as a translation of the Greek ἀρνίον. In the alternate Latin pair (*Pater noster/aries*) one may see a freer and somewhat more successful adaptation of the Greek pair into Latin. The most successful Latin word-play, however, is found in the *Ysengrimus (amen/agne)*, where we also find traces of Greek influence, because the wolf is taught to pronounce "amén" quasi grecum. The adoption in the story of the Greek rather than the Latin pronunciation of "amen" (amín) can only be attributed to the influence of a Greek version, because it does not bring the sound of "amen" closer to the sound of Latin *agne*, but on the contrary diminishes the similarity in the accent of the two words. Be that as it may, even in its best form the word-play in Latin remains less successful than the one used by Planudes. Thus, if we are to consider one version as the source of the other, we have to accept that only in the Greek can we find an apt satirical starting-point for the story. Of course, the Latin versions are found in authors a little earlier than Planudes, but the Byzantine scholar included in his collection older proverbs also.

It may also be noted here that the Byzantine fable-proverb has survived in Mod. Greek folk-tradition. A version recorded in 1963 from Skopi of Seteia (in Crete) is almost identical with the Byzantine one: "Τὸ λύκο ἐβαφτίζανε νὰ πῆ ἀμῆν κῆλεγε ἀρνί" (= they were baptizing the wolf and teaching him to say "amen," but he said "lamb").⁴⁹

There is a second, satirical motif in the Latin fable, which also occurs in the other fable mentioned above (Perry 641). It centers on the wolf's inability to concentrate piously on the cross or the priest; he

⁴⁹See N. Ρουσομουστακάκη, ms. 2808, p. 25, no. 185, of the *Research Center for Greek Folklore of the Academy of Athens* (hereafter *Folklore Center*). Another version in which the religious context is removed, while the wolf is subjected to a form of torture, was recorded in 1938 from Ierapetra (again in the province of Seteia) by M. Λιουδάκι, *Folklore Center* ms. 1162B, p. 98: "Τὸ λύκο μιὰ φορὰ τὸν ἐγδέρνανε [were skinning him] καὶ τοῦ λέγανε νὰ πῆ ἀμῆ, γιὰ νὰ τὸν ἀφήσουνε, κι αὐτὸς ἔλεγε ἀρνί ἀρνί ἀρνί." According to N. G. Politis the fable-proverb occurs also in the folk-tradition of other peoples; see entry "Λύκος, 38" in his notes (for the volumes of *Παροιμίες* that he was not able to finish) preserved in the *Folklore Center*. I am indebted to my colleague and director of the *Folklore Center* St. Imellos for allowing me access to the rich unpublished folkloric materials of the Center.

cannot conform, because his true nature makes him look at the sheep.⁵⁰ The same motif re-emerges in two Mod. Greek fable-proverbs. In the first one, the story has undergone no change. While the wolf was being tonsured to become a monk, he asked "where are the sheep going?" ("Τὸ λύκο τὸν κουρεύανε, κι' ἐκεῖνος ἔλεγε, Ποῦ πᾶν τὰ πρόβατα;")⁵¹). The scene is slightly altered in the second fable-proverb (recorded from Pontos), which is said either about the wolf or the bear.⁵² They were reading to the wolf passages from the Gospels when he asked "wherever are the priest's sheep climbing?" ("Τὸ λύκον ἐτραβαγγέλιζαν κι' ἐκεῖνος ἐρώτανεν, τί ποπᾶ τὰ πρόγατα

⁵⁰What led the wolf to religion? Neither the texts mentioned so far, nor the relevant Mod. Greek fable-proverbs offer an explanation. The wolf's motivation might be deduced from another medieval Latin fable-proverb: *Lupus languebat, tunc monachus esse volebat / Postquam convaluit, lupus, ut ante fuit.* See H. Walther, *Proverbia sententiaeque latinitatis Medii Aevi (Carmina Medii Aevi Posterioris Latina, II, 2)*, vol. 2, Göttingen 1964, no. 14117. Walther records also a similar fable-proverb under no. 27977 (vol. 4 Göttingen 1966). The same motif, however, is used also with reference to the devil: *Demon languebat, monachus bonus esse volebat / Postquam convaluit, mansit, ut ante fuit...* (Walther, vol. 1, Göttingen 1963, no. 4871). From the number of sources cited by Walther it becomes evident that the latter version was far better known in the Middle Ages. Well known was also another fable-proverb built around the same motif. It refers to sick people, who turn to religion until they get well, but subsequently continue their old bad ways (see *ibid.*, no. 6518 and also Thompson U236, "False repentance of the sick").

⁵¹The fable-proverb and several variants are widely known in Greece, but only a sample is given below. The text was recorded from Sparta by M. Λιουδάκι in 1939, *Folklore Center* ms. 1372, p. 184. A variant was printed by Π. Ἀραβαντινός, *Παροιμιαστήριον ἢ Συλλογὴ παροιμιῶν. Ἐν χρήσει οὐσῶν παρὰ τοῖς Ἡπειρώταις, μετ' ἀναπτύξεως τῆς ἐννόιας αὐτῶν καὶ παραλληλισμοῦ πρὸς τὰς ἀρχαίας*, Ioannina [Greece] 1863, p. 125, no. 1357. In Aravantinos' text the interrogative "ποῦ" is omitted and this omission might account in part for his misunderstanding the fable-proverb, which he takes to mean (unlike Loukatos, *Παροιμιομύθοι*, p. 41, no. 154) "ὅτι οἱ κακοῦργοι καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἐσχάταις τῆς ζωῆς τῶν στιγμαῖς δυσαρεστοῦνται, διότι οὐ δύνανται κακοεργῆσαι." A similar mistaken interpretation was advanced by K. Krumbacher, *Mittelgriechische Sprichwörter*, p. 211 ("Der Wolf selbst in der Todesstunde noch an die Schafe denkt"), who knew the fable-proverb from the collection of Aravantinos and also from the one by I. Βενιζέλος, *Παροιμῖαι δημώδεις συλλεγείσαι καὶ ἐρμηνευθεῖσαι*, 2nd ed., Ermoupolis [Greece] 1867, p. 311, no. 389. Venizelos also omits the interrogative "ποῦ" and offers another mistaken interpretation "εἰς τοὺς φύσει κακοποιούς οὔτινες καὶ δυστυχοῦντος [sic] δὲν μεταβάλλονται." A variant without religious overtones (cf. also above, note 49), was recorded from Patras: "Τὸ λύκο γδέρναν γιὰ πετσὶ σταθῆτε τὶ πᾶν τὰ πρόβατα" (see X. Κορύλλου, *Folklore Center* ms. 2268B, p. 579).

⁵²The substitution of one animal in place of another is frequent in fables, proverbs etc., without necessarily affecting their meaning; see J.-Th. A. Papademetriou, "The Mutations of an Ancient Greek Proverb," *REG* 83 (1970), p. 101 and note 36 therein.

μερκᾶν πάγνε;”).⁵³

Last in Koukoules' study comes a charming fable narrated by Gregory Nazianzen.⁵⁴ The editors of Greek fables have been aware of the occurrence of Greek fables in Gregory's works,⁵⁵ but this particular fable is not included in any of the critical editions that we have mentioned above. Hence, it would be useful to summarize it here. Somebody was mocking the owl for her uncomely features: her large head, "the greyishness of her eyes," her ugly voice, her thick legs. The owl, however, was able to counter each derogatory remark. She did so by referring to someone else who had the same individual feature and yet was not considered ugly.⁵⁶ Nevertheless, in the end the owl is defeated in this *agon*, because she cannot rebut the final jeer: each one of those she had invoked to defend herself had only a single ugly feature, while she had all of them and in each instance to a high degree (ἅπαντα καὶ λίαν).

The first reaction of a reader of the fable is surprise, for Athena's bird, the symbol of wisdom, is presented as an object of mockery and, moreover, despite her presumed intelligence, she does not manage to defend herself successfully to the end. There are very few ancient fables in which the owl has an important role, and in most of them her presence does not constitute a permanent element or one indispensable to the development of the plot.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, in these fables the owl

⁵³See A. A. Παπαδοπούλου, "Τοπικά ἐπιρρήματα τῆς Ποντικῆς διαλέκτου," Ἀθηνᾶ 29, Λεξικογραφικὸν Ἀρχεῖον Δ', (1917), p. 146 and his "Παροιμίαι," Ἀρχεῖον Πόντου 2 (1929), p. 129, no. 852, where he prints the variant "Λύκον ἐτραυαγγέλιζαν κι ἀτὸς τ' ἀρνία τέρνευ [= was looking at]." Another variant is found in Ξ. Κ. Ἀκογλου, Λαογραφικὰ Κοτυώρων, Athens 1939, p. 496, no. 319 and in Loukatos' Παροιμιόμυθοι, p. 41, no. 154. The proverb is recorded also in many unpublished mss. of the *Folklore Center*. The idea in this fable-proverb is essentially the same as the one expressed in the fable Γαλή καὶ Ἀφροδίτη and its variants. See above, note 37.

⁵⁴"Ἐπη θεολογικά Β': Ἐπη ἠθικά ΚΗ' (Κατὰ πλουτούντων), νν. 232-46, *Patrologia Graeca* (Migne) XXXVII, cols. 873-74.

⁵⁵See, e.g., O. Crusius, *Babrii fabulae Aesopeae*, p. 6, paragraph 7, and Coraës p. 247, no. 386, where he edits a fable from Gregory's Ἐπη ἠθικά

⁵⁶To justify the first two defects the owl sagaciously invokes the similarity with Zeus and Athena. For the last two defects, however, she can only point out her similarity to two other rather unpopular birds, the jay (κίττα) and the starling (ψήρ).

⁵⁷These fables are: *Cicada et Noctua* (Perry 507 = Phaedrus III, 16, the motif in Thompson, K815.5.); Γλαῦξ καὶ Ὀρνεια (Perry 437 and 437a, the motif in Thompson, J621.1.), but the owl plays a role only in one branch of the tradition, while in the other two branches the swallow appears in her place (see B. E. Perry, "Demetrius of Phaleron and the Aesopic Fables," *TAPA* 93 [1962], pp. 315-18); one of the many versions of the fable (Perry 101) Κολοῖος καὶ Ὀρνεια (the motif in Thompson J951.2.), which bears the title Κολοῖος καὶ Γλαῦξ = Halm 200, 3rd version in Coraës no. 188; this version is re-

displays wisdom, intelligence, or at least cunning. Yet, already in antiquity there had been doubts concerning the bird's intelligence. Dio Chrysostomos (72, 14-15) narrates one of the fables in which the owl appears intelligent (Perry 437a), but at the end he adds (72, 15-16): ἡ μὲν γὰρ ἀρχαία γλαῦξ τῷ ὄντι φρονίμη ἦν καὶ ξυμβουλευεῖν ἐδύνατο, αἱ δὲ νῦν [sc. γλαῦκες] μόνον τὰ πτερὰ ἔχουσι ἐκείνης καὶ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς καὶ τὸ ῥάμφος, τὰ δὲ ἄλλα ἀφρονέστεραί εἰσι τῶν ἄλλων ὀρνέων. οὐκοῦν οὐδὲ ἑαυτὰς δύνανται οὐδὲν ὠφελεῖν.⁵⁸

Dio's view is in keeping with the picture of the owl in folk-literature in general and in literary works drawing on it. Here the owl is frequently mocked for her ugliness and her ludicrous claim to beauty. In a medieval Latin fable (Perry 614: *Bubo et alia volatilia*)⁵⁹ a beauty contest of the birds is reported. The prize for the victor is a rose: *Venit bubo et dixit se esse pulcherrimam et quod debuit habere rosam. Omnes mote sunt in risum, dicentes "Tu es avis pulcherrima per antiphrasim, quoniam turpissima."*⁶⁰

The owl claims beauty once again, but this time on behalf of her children⁶¹ in a fable of Abstemius⁶² and in its derivative fable V, 18 (*L'*

cast and narrated also by Libanius (Coraës' 6th version, p. 118, Hausrath/Hunger, fasc. 2, pp. 131-32), Theophylactos Simocattes (= Hausrath/Hunger, *ibid.* 2, pp. 153-54), Ignatios (= Coraës' 5th version, p. 118) and I. Tzetzes (= Coraës' 4th version, p. 117). A corresponding narrative is found in Babrius 72, where the swallow replaces the owl and in Phaedrus I, 3, where the owl is left out. Phaedrus' version is the model for La Fontaine IV, 9 (not cited by Thompson under motif J951.2.).

⁵⁸The findings of modern ornithologists confirm Dio's estimate of the bird's low degree of intelligence; see H. Duda, *Animal Nature in the Aesopic Fables* (diss., Urbana, Illinois 1948), pp. 49-50. Ancient lore and observations on the owl are conveniently gathered together in D' Arcy W. Thompson, *A Glossary of Greek Birds*, London - Oxford 1936 (photo-reprint Hildesheim 1966), entry "γλαῦξ."

⁵⁹Also in Hervieux, pp. 226-27, no. 55: *De rosa et volatilibus*. The motif in Thompson, K98. ("Beauty contest won by deception"), who does not refer to this fable.

⁶⁰Nevertheless, the owl wins the prize through guile, because she steals the rose during the night, while the other birds are asleep.

⁶¹The owl's claims of beauty for herself and her children are combined and attributed to the frog in an amusing fable of Odo, *De filio Bufonis et sotularibus*, Hervieux, pp. 187-88, no. 14; the transference from the owl to the frog may have been facilitated by the similarity of their medieval names (*bubo/bufo*). Here, the hare asks the frog how he would recognize the latter's son, which the frog had described simply as *pulcherrimum...inter omnia animalia*. The frog's answer is *qui tale habet caput quale est meum, talem ventrem, tales tibias, tales pedes*. As the lion observes at the end, *si quis amat Ranam, Ranam putat esse Dianam*.

⁶²I was able to consult the edition of 1505 (Grunii Corocoetae, *Porcelli Testamentum. Laurentii Abstemii Maceratensis, Hecatomythium secundum. Eiusdem libellus de verbis communibus*), in which the relevant fable is the fourteenth and bears the title *De Bubone dicente Aquilae filios suos caeterarum avium filii esse formosiores*. Concerning the work of

aigle et le hibou) of La Fontaine (we cite the latter's text). The eagle is a friend of the owl and he wishes to ensure that he will not kill his friend's children by mistake. For this reason he asks her how he will recognize them. She informs him (vv. 15-16):

"Mes petits sont mignons,
Beaux, bien faits, et jolis sur tous leurs compagnons."

One day, the eagle finds on a rock the owl's children, which are (vv. 27-28):

De petits monstres fort hideux,
Rechignés, un air triste, une voix de Mégère.

Reassured that these could not be the owl's children, the eagle devours them. The same motif in substance, but cast into a much milder form, appears also in Mod. Greek tradition. The owl gives the partridge bread to take to her children at school and wants to be sure that the partridge makes no mistake. She tells her how to recognize her children: they are the most beautiful ones. The partridge, however, comes back with the bread, because she found that her own were the most beautiful children and not the owl's.⁶³

The motif in these stories is found both in antiquity and Byzantium⁶⁴ and also in the folk-tradition of many peoples. In antiquity, however, we find the ape in the role of the owl.⁶⁵ In the international folk-tradition the role of the ugly animal is assumed sometimes by the ape or the owl, but also by other birds and animals, or even insects.⁶⁶ Mocking stories on the owl's excessive claim to having beautiful children constitute the more widespread category, but in other fables, fable-proverbs, or narratives we also find mockery of either the owl or

Abstemius (= Lorenzo Bevilaqua), see C. Filosa, *La favola e la letteratura esopiana in Italia dal Medio Evo ai nostri giorni* (*Storia dei generi letterari italiani*, without a series number), Milano 1952, pp. 83-86 and the bibliographical note 25 therein.

⁶³Our summary of the Mod. Greek fable is based on the texts published by N. Γ. Πολίτης, (*Ἡ πέριδικα καὶ ἡ χουχουβάγια*), "Σύμμικτα," *Λαογραφία* 5 (1915), p. 620 and Δ. Σ. Λουκάτος, (*Ἡ πέριδικα καὶ ἡ κουκουβάγια*) *Νεοελληνικά λαογραφικά κείμενα*, pp. 47-48, no. 4. The fable is the source of several Mod. Greek proverbs; see N. Γ. Πολίτου, "Σύμμικτα," pp. 621-22. The myth is listed also by Γ. Α. Μέγας, *Μῦθοι ζώων*, pp. 100-101, no. 247.

⁶⁴Echoes of the fable in Byzantine authors are noted by N. G. Politis, "Σύμμικτα," p. 622 and especially note 10.

⁶⁵See Perry 364 (= Babrius 56) and Avianus 14.

⁶⁶See Thompson, T681. ("Each likes his own children best"), Aarne/Thompson 247, and N. Γ. Πολίτου, "Σύμμικτα," pp. 621-22. Abundant references are found in the above works, but the texts of La Fontaine and Avianus are not mentioned in either work, while the Mod. Greek versions are listed only by Politis.

her children.⁶⁷ Specifically, in a Mod. Greek fable-proverb the large head and the tail of the bird are objects of satire,⁶⁸ while in a Mod. Greek fable the bird's head and her longevity receive the same treatment.⁶⁹

The preceding examination of the various texts and traditions about the owl makes it clear that the close connection between the bird and wisdom in fables etc. does not extend beyond antiquity. On the contrary, Athena's bird was very early reduced to an object of mockery. It is also clear that the fable of Gregory Nazianzen occupies an important place in this process, since it is the first text based on popular tradition in which the owl is reduced to her new role.

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⁶⁷See Aarne/Thompson 247B*, 247B**, 247B***, Thompson T681.1. and also Aarne/Thompson 230 and Thompson K1985.

⁶⁸See Δ. Σ. Λουκάτου, *Παροιμιόμυθοι*, p. 80, no. 281.

⁶⁹Η κουκουβάγια καὶ τὸ γεράκι: see Δ. Σ. Λουκάτου, *Νεοελληνικὰ λαογραφικὰ κείμενα*, p. 47, no. 3; see also Aarne/Thompson 230 (the motif in Thompson K1985.), and Γ. Α. Μέγα, *Μῦθοι ζώων*, p. 98, no. 230.

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