Several MSS that contain the tetrasticha of Ignatius Diaconus and his imitators also preserve a fable of Babrius (Fab. 12) in abridged form. (Incidentally, this is how Babrius first got into print, via the Aldine Aesop of 1505.) A previously unnoticed MS, Vaticanus Barberinianus graecus 354 (henceforth "Vb"), contains another recension of the tetrasticha, which here yields up a version of Babrius, Fab. 78.¹ Unlike the case of Fab. 12 and that of another fable (no. 58), separately and uniquely attested in two MSS,² Vb offers evidence useful in sorting out the text of its fable.

That fable (no. 78) is also attested by the principal MS (A) and by T, a set of wax tablets dated to the third century A.D.³ To this is added a version of the paraphrase (Fabb. 169c–d Chambry).⁴ The texts follow with minor corrections—that of T is partly restored.

κόραξ νοσήσας εἶπε μητρί κλαιούσῃ
“μή κλαίει, μήτερ, ἀλλὰ τοῖς θεοῖς εὐχοῦ
νόσου με δεινῆς καὶ πόνων ἀνασφῆλαι.”
“καὶ τίς σε” φησί “τῶν θεῶν, τέκνων, σῶσει;
τίνος γὰρ ὑπὸ σοῦ βωμὸς σὺν ἐσυλῆθη;”

¹ The Aesopica follow a fragment of a Greek grammar copied in 1479. Babr. Fab. 78 is in fact inserted between the general title of the tetrasticha and the promythium of the first tetrastichon. This part of the MS (ff. 119v–23) may be dated to the last quarter of the 15th cent., not long after 1479; see the authorities cited by P. Canart and V. Peri, Sussidi bibliografici per i manoscritti greci della Biblioteca Vaticana (Vatican City 1970) 146. The reports given here and below of MSS A, T and Vb are based on autopsies. On the MSS of the tetrasticha, see C. F. Müller in Babrii fabulae Aesopeae, ed. by O. Crusius (Leipzig 1897) 251–63.

² On Fab. 58 see J. Vaio, Emerita 48 (1980) 1–3. The variants of the abridged version of Fab. 12 are not reported in Babrii Mythiambi Aesopei, ed. by M. J. Luzzatto (Fabb. 1–80) and A. La Penna (Fabb. 81–144), (Leipzig 1986) 14–16; for these variants see Crusius (previous note) 19 f.


⁴ Aesopi Fabulae, ed. by E. Chambry (Paris 1925–26) II 290.
κόραξ νοσησας ελεγε μητρει κλεουση
μη κλαε μητερ αλλα τοις θεοις ευχου
η δ ειπε τεκνον και τις6 σε των θεων σωσει
ποιοσ γαρ βιος μοις7 υπο σου ουκ εσυληθη

κόραξ νοσησας τη μητρι κλαιουση ειπεν: "ευχου τοις
θεοις, μητερ, και μη κλαιε.” η δε ειπεν: "τις σε των
θεων, τεκνον, ελεησει; τινος γαρ αυτων βωμος υπο
σου ουκ εσυληθη;" paraphr.

Vb’s uncorrected text of lines 1–3 reads as follows:
κόραξ νοσησας(ας) ειπε μ(ητ)ρι κλεουση:
μη κλαε μ(ητ)ερ, αλλα τοις θεοις ευχου:
νοσου με δεινης κ(αi) πο(νων) ανασφηλαi:

In line 1 Vb agrees with A against T (ειπε: ελεγε).8 In line 2 all
witnesses are in essential agreement. Line 3 is missing in T and the
paraphrast, and this omission led Hesseling, who first published T,
to consider the line spurious.9 The evidence of the new MS (Vb) is further
vindication of this line, if such be needed, since like A it contains line 3, but
agrees substantially with T in line 4. T’s version may have been abridged
arbitrarily by the schoolmaster who apparently dictated it.10 That the
paraphrase also omits this verse is of little or no value as evidence, since it
frequently abbreviates its source.11

A more serious textual difficulty occurs in line 4, partly metrical, but
mainly due to disagreement among the witnesses, whose texts follow:

"και τις σε" φησι “των θεων, τεκνον, σωσει;
η δ ειπε τεκνον και τις12 σε των θεων σωσει
η δε ειπεν: "τις σε των θεων, τεκνον, ελεησει;

5 The fable is written twice in T, once in uncial (2') and once in cursive (3'). The
combination of both versions yields a complete text for line 2. Contrast Hesseling (above, note
3) 305 and Luzzatto (above, note 2) ad loc.
6 Luzzatto (above, note 2) ad loc. reads καςετων for Hesseling’s κατ... σετων (above,
note 3) 305. In the uncial version (on 2') κατ occurs near the end of line 16 and is followed by
space enough (9 cm) for, and traces of, three letters. In the cursive version (3'), line 4 τις may
be clearly read between κα... και σετων. Thus T reads κατισετων.
7 The syllable missing on 2' may have been on 3'; sc. βομ... ου... σου.
8 Vb here supports A against T. Luzzatto (above, note 2) 77 sides with T; contrast La
Pennà (above, note 2) ad loc.
9 Hesseling (above, note 3) 305; contrast Crusius, Philologus 53 (1894) 235.
10 Cf. Crusius (previous note) 232 ff., esp. 238; idem (above, note 1) xi.
11 Cf. Crusius (above, note 1) xix.
12 On T’s reading, see above (note 6).
13 On the text of the paraphrast’s source, see below (note 23).
Here Vb reads:

\[ \delta \varepsilon \varepsilon \nu \nu \tau \varepsilon \kappa \nu \nu, \tau \zeta \varsigma \varepsilon \tau (\bar{o} \nu) \theta \varepsilon \omega \nu \sigma \omega \sigma \varepsilon : (\text{sic}) \]

and goes back to a source common to itself and T, but varying considerably from A.\(^{14}\) We then have two versions of the line with different word order and narrative style.

Luzzatto\(^{15}\) following Hesseling\(^{16}\) adopts T’s version (T’s καί is deleted) and offers:

\[ \delta \varepsilon \varepsilon \nu \nu \tau \varepsilon \kappa \nu \nu, \tau \zeta \varsigma \varepsilon \tau \nu \theta \varepsilon \omega \nu \sigma \omega \sigma \varepsilon ; \]

The new Teubner thus offers the reading of our MS (with slight corrections) as the result of independent conjecture.

But what are we to make of this reading in contrast to A’s variant, adopted by Crusius and Perry\(^{17}\) in preference to T? One point in favor of A is its style. The reading based on T/Vb makes the change of subject explicit, but at the cost of the lively and idiomatic καί,\(^{18}\) whose effect is sharpened by its position at the beginning of the verse. Moreover, the fact that καί is hypermetrically retained in T strongly suggests that the source of A and T/Vb had the particle, and that A is closer to that source.\(^{19}\) Vb has taken the process one step further and removed the καί.

On the other hand, A presents a metrical difficulty: τέκνον in elements 9–10 of the trimeter, which either yields an impossible long in element 9 or exhibits a form of corruption rare for Babrius.\(^{20}\) This difficulty can be removed by adopting the following transposition, proposed by Nauck\(^{21}\) and adopted by Crusius and Perry:

καί τίς σε, τέκνον, φησί, τῶν θεών σώσει;

“transposuit Nck adstipulante FT” (Crusius [above, note 1] ad loc.)

But if A’s is the primary reading here, then the position of τέκνον in T (and Vb), i.e., in elements 4–5, could be merely the result of a reviser’s wish

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\(^{14}\) The paraphrase agrees with T/Vb in the introductory phrase, but has the vocative like A directly before the verb. The latter is the more telling index of affinity linking the paraphrase with A in this pair of variants, especially if the source of the paraphrase read καί τίς σε, as argued below (note 23).

\(^{15}\) Luzzatto (above, note 2) 77.

\(^{16}\) Hesseling (above, note 3) 305. Note (pace Luzzatto) that Hesseling does not conjecture τίς for καί in T. He reads καί [τίς] and deletes the conjunction; see above (note 6).

\(^{17}\) Cf. Crusius (above, note 1) 70; B. E. Perry, Aesopica I (Urbana, IL 1952) Fab. 324; idem, Babrius and Phaedrus (Cambridge, MA and London 1965) 98. Both Crusius and Perry adopt Nauck’s transposition of A’s text discussed below.

\(^{18}\) On this use of the particle, see Denniston, GP\(^2\) 309 f.

\(^{19}\) Cf. Hesseling (above, note 3) 305. Note that καί may also have been in the source of the paraphrase; see below (note 23).

\(^{20}\) Cf. Luzzatto (above, note 2) c, civ; contrast Crusius (above, note 1) lvii–lvix, and see discussion below.

\(^{21}\) Philologus 6 (1851) 407.
to begin the mother's reply with the vocative. As regards F (= Fab. 169b
Chambry), the matter is more complex. This version in dodecasyllabic
verse derives from the paraphrase (or its source), but has καὶ before
tίς, sc. η δὲ ... ἐφετ. / “καὶ τίς σε, τέκνον, τὸν θεόν ἔλεη-
σει;” (3-4). Here the vocative may have been transposed from its
position in the paraphrase in order to achieve a regular Byzantine Zwölfsilber (x x x - ο ≤ x x x x x x - ο), that is, in order to avoid word-end after the
sixth syllable with neither B5 nor B7.

Thus the evidence of T/Vb and the dodecasyllabic fable is neutral
regarding Nauck’s transposition. Nor is the prosody a certain index of
corruption. For if one follows Crusius in keeping A’s reading at Fab. 70. 6
(μὴ γοῦν ἔθυνη πού in elements 1-5) and adopting C. E. Schneider’s
correction at 129. 8 (παρὰ φάτναισι in elements 6-9), then these
“correctiones satís singulares . . . altera alteram defendunt neque a Babrio
abidicanda videntur.” And with A’s version of 78. 4 they add up to
three, an even stronger confirmation of this prosody. Nevertheless, one
must always reckon with transposition as a type of corruption in the Babrian
MSS, and here it could be explained as an attempt effectively to join τὸν
θεόν with τίς. The best procedure would be to print A and record
Nauck’s conjecture in the apparatus.

In line 5 Vb reads τίνος γ(αρ) δε υπὸ σου βόμος οὐκ ἐσυλθη (sic). Except for the intrusive δε it stands with A against T’s ποιος γαρ
βω<μος> υπο σου ουκ ευληθη.

In sum, the evidence of Vb supports adoption of A against the
innovations of Luzzatto, based on T. Here Loeb has the advantage over
Teubner.

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22 On these fables, see F. Fedde, Ueber eine noch nicht edirte Sammlung Aesopischer
Fabeln . . . (Progr. Breslau 1877) 15 ff., esp. 16 f.; U. Ursing, Studien zur griechischen Fabel
(diss. Lund 1930) esp. 89-90; B. E. Perry, Studies in the Text History of the Life and Fables of
Aesop (Haverford, PA 1886) 183 ff., esp. 195 f. (with n. 33), 204; Luzzatto (above, note 2)
lxxvii ff.; F. R. Adrados, Historia de la fábula greco-latina (Madrid 1985) II 427 ff.; J. Vaio,
“Babrius and the Byzantine Fable,” in La fable, Entretiens Fond. Hardt 30 (Vandœuvres-

23 All the witnesses except Vb and the principal MSS of the paraphrase have καὶ τίς σε, and
the conjunction may have been in the latter’s source. The dodecasyllabic version and Bd, a
lesser MS in the paraphrastic tradition, have καὶ. True, Bd adds ὦ before τέκνον and could
have added καὶ, but the evidence of the dodecasyllabic fable suggests otherwise.

24 For theory and notation see P. Maas, BZ 12 (1903) 278 ff., esp. 287 ff. (= Kl. Schr. 242
ff., esp. 251 ff.); for the meter of these fables, see Ursing (above, note 22) 7-14.

25 Cf. Crusius (above, note 1) liviii-lxiv; contrast Luzzatto (above, note 2) civ. Fab. 29. 5
(ἀχυμῆς in elements 9-10) would be an exact parallel, but the verse is otherwise corrupt, and its
text uncertain. Moreover, the authenticity of the epimythium in which it occurs is still in
question, as is that of individual epimythia generally, despite Luzzatto’s discussion (fabove,
ote 2) χιτ-χει).