

## Eucheria's Adynata

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I<sup>1</sup>*A. L.* 390 Riese = 386 Shackleton Bailey reads:

Aurea concordi quae fulgent fila metallo  
 setarum cumulis consociare volo;  
 Sericeum tegmen, gemmantia texta Laconum  
 4 pellibus hircinis aequiperanda loquor.  
 Nobilis horribili iungatur purpura burrae;  
 nectatur plumbo fulgida gemma gravi.  
 Sit captiva sui nunc margarita nitoris  
 8 et clausa obscuro fulgeat in chalybe.  
 Lingonico pariter claudatur in aere smaragdus;  
 conpar silicibus nunc hyacinthus eat.  
 Rupibus atque molis similis dicatur iaspis.  
 12 Eligat infernum iam modo luna chaos.  
 Nunc etiam urticis mandemus lilia iungi,  
 purpureamque rosam dira cicuta premat.  
 Nunc simul optemus despectis piscibus ergo  
 16 delicias magni nullificare freti:  
 auratam craxantus amet, saxatilis anguem,  
 limacem pariter nunc sibi tructa petat.  
 Altaque iungatur vili cum vulpe leaena,  
 20 perspicuam lyncem simius accipiat.  
 Iungatur nunc cerva asino, nunc tigris onagro,  
 iungatur fesso concita damma bovi.  
 Nectareum vitient nunc lasera tetra rosatum,  
 24 mellaque cum fellis sint modo mixta malis.  
 Gemmantem sociemus aquam luteumque barathrum,  
 stercoribus mixtus fons eat inriguus.

<sup>1</sup> Part I is by M. Marcovich, part II by A. Georgiadou.

28 Praepes funereo cum vulture ludat hirundo,  
cum bubone gravi nunc philomela sonet.  
Tristis perspicua sit cum perdice cavannus,  
iunctaque cum corvo pulchra columba cubet.

32 Haec monstra incertis mutant sibi tempora fatis:  
rusticus et servus sic petat Eucheriam.

3 texta *Heinsius* : tecta *codd.* | 5 burrae *codd.* : byrro *coniecit Vollmer* | 13–14 *respicit A. L. c. 729. 5–6* | 15 *despectis Monacensis 22227, Meyer* : *despectus cett.* | 16 *dilicias Parisini 8071 et 8440* : *diuitias Valencensis 387* | 17 *craxantus Parisinus 8440* : *crassantus cett.* | 21 *respicit A. L. c. 729. 7* | 23 *lasera Ducange* : *lausera codd.* | 26 *mixtus Marcovich* : *mixtis codd.* | 31 *hic versus a Iuliano Toletano citatur (Anecd. Helv. ed. Hagen: Gramm. Lat. Suppl. p. CCXXXI. 6)* | 32 *sic codd.* : *si Shackleton Bailey*

The threads of gold, shining with the glitter of the concordant metal, I want to put together with the heaps of bristles; a silken garment, a Spartan cloak wrought with gems, I want to put on the same level with goatskins. Let a noble purple tunic be attached to an awful shaggy rag. (6) Let a shining gem be affixed to a piece of heavy lead. Let now a pearl be deprived of its luster, let it shine being shut in the darkness of a box made of steel. Similarly, let a smaragd gem be hidden in a box made of Lingonic copper; let a hyacinth gem pass for a match to a pebble stone. Let a jasper stone be likened to a piece of rock, to a millstone. (12) Let the moon prefer to abide in the hellish chaos.

(13) Let us now order the lilies to join the nettle in company; let the ill-omened hemlock embrace the crimson rose. (15) In the same vein, let us now disdain the fish and engage in vilifying the precious gifts of the deep sea: let a toad fall in love with a gilthead, a rock bass with a snake; and let a trout woo a snail. (19) Let now the noble lioness be united in love with the base fox; let the monkey take in marriage the pretty lynx. Also let a hind be united in love with a donkey, a tigress with a wild ass, the nimble doe with the sluggish bull.

(23) Let now the loathsome asafetida spoil the rose wine sweet as nectar; let the honey be mixed with the terrible gall. Let us pour together the crystal clear water taken from a spring and the muddy water taken from a pit; let the irriguous fountain flow down while being mixed with dung. (27) Let the swift swallow play with the ill-fated vulture; let the nightingale sing together with the grievous horned owl. Let the somber night owl join the pretty partridge in love, let the beautiful dove lie down in love with the raven.

(31) Let all these beasts exchange their way of life for an uncertain fate: then only may a countryman, and a servant to that, come to woo Eucheria.

Apparently, Eucheria's striking but playful elegy has escaped the attention of scholars. Back in 1891, Max Manitius suggested that the poetess might have been the wife of the poet Dynamius from Marseille, a friend of Venantius Fortunatus (second half of the sixth century).<sup>2</sup> In his turn, Franz Skutsch (in 1907) was unable to give a more favorable verdict about Eucheria's poem than this one: "Die Form ist teils gesucht teils plump."<sup>3</sup> The poem, however, must have been known enough in late antiquity to allow an anonymous poet from *Latin Anthology* (No. 729) to imitate it,<sup>4</sup> while Julian, the archbishop of Toledo (642–690), found line 31 of the poem worthwhile quoting in his *Grammar*.

I think the poem deserves a closer look for at least three reasons. First, apparently this is the longest extant catalogue of *adynata* in the entire Latin poetry: no less than twenty-seven *adynata* are comprised in fifteen elegiac couplets (1–30).<sup>5</sup> That leaves Licentius (end of the fourth century) as a distant second (with a list of eleven *adynata*),<sup>6</sup> and the anonymous poet of No. 440 from *Latin Anthology* as a third (with a list of nine *adynata*). Second, Eucheria's poem displays a carefully conceived design. For one thing, the reader is left in suspense about the reason for such a huge catalogue of *adynata*, and will learn the *fiat applicatio* only in the closing

<sup>2</sup>Max Manitius, *Geschichte der christlich-lateinischen Poesie bis zur Mitte des 8. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart 1891) 471 f.

<sup>3</sup>RE VI (1907), 882. 19, s.v. *Eucheria*.

<sup>4</sup>A. L. No. 729 Riese is a clear imitation of Eucheria's poem (sure borrowings are italicized):

#### RESPONSUM PUELLAE

	Conspicua primum specie quam fata bearunt, desine pompifero tu violare toro.	
	Absit ut albiplumem valeat calcare <i>columbam</i>	[cf. v.30]
4	inter tot niveas rustica <i>milvus</i> avis.	[cf. v.27]
	Nec rubeis <i>cardus</i> succrescat iure <i>rosotis</i> ,	[cf. v.14]
	<i>lilia</i> nec campis vana <i>cicuta</i> premat.	[cf. v.13]
	Nec miser eximiae <i>cervae</i> <i>iungatur</i> <i>asellus</i> ,	[cf. v.21]
8	quem stimulis crebris sarcina saeva domat.	

<sup>5</sup>On the figure of *adynaton* compare Ernest Dutoit, *Le thème de l'adynaton dans la poésie antique* (Thèse Fribourg, Suisse [Paris 1936] (Eucheria's catalogue is not mentioned on p. 163); H. V. Canter, "The Figure ἀδύνατον in Greek and Latin Poetry," *AJP* 51 (1930) 32–41 (Eucheria's poem is mentioned on p. 37); J. Demling, *De poetarum Latinorum ἐκ τοῦ ἀδύνατον comparationibus* (Würzburg 1898) [not available to me].

<sup>6</sup>Licentius 93–102 ap. Augustine *Epist.* XXVI (p. 92 f. ed. Goldbacher). Compare Claudian *Paneg. dictus Probino et Olybrio coss.* (l). 169–73, and Levy, in *RE* XIII (1926) 205 f., s.v. *Licentius*.

line, and the name of the poetess in the last word of the poem (32). Finally, Eucheria's lexicon seems to be of importance.

(1) *Adynata*. The richness and variety of Eucheria's *adynata* are unparalleled, as may be seen from the following synopsis.

- |       |                            |  |
|-------|----------------------------|--|
| I.    | <i>Clothing</i>            | (1) aurea fila : setarum cumuli (1-2)                          |
|       |                            | (2) Sericeum tegmen/gemmantia texta :<br>pelles hircinae (3-4) |
|       |                            | (3) purpura : burra (5)  |
| II.   | <i>Precious<br/>stones</i> | (4) gemma : plumbum (6)  |
|       |                            | (5) margarita : chalybs (7-8)                                  |
|       |                            | (6) smaragdus : aes Lingonicum (9)                             |
|       |                            | (7) hyacinthus : silex (10)                                    |
|       |                            | (8) iaspis : rupes/mola (11)                                   |
| III.  | <i>Astronomy</i>           | (9) luna : chaos (12)  |
| IV.   | <i>Flowers</i>             | (10) lilia : urticae (13)                                      |
|       |                            | (11) rosa : cicuta (14)  |
| V.    | <i>Fish</i>                | (12) aurata : craxantus (17)                                   |
|       |                            | (13) saxatilis : anguis (17)                                   |
|       |                            | (14) tructa : limax (18)                                       |
| VI.   | <i>Beasts</i>              | (15) leaena : vulpes (19)                                      |
|       |                            | (16) lynx : simius (20)  |
|       |                            | (17) cerva : asinus (21)                                       |
|       |                            | (18) tigris : onagrus (21)                                     |
|       |                            | (19) damma : bos (22)  |
| VII.  | <i>Liquids</i>             | (20) rosatum : laser (23)                                      |
|       |                            | (21) mel : fel (24)  |
|       |                            | (22) aqua gemmans : barathrum (25)                             |
|       |                            | (23) fons inriguus : stercora (26)                             |
| VIII. | <i>Birds</i>               | (24) hirundo : vultur (27)                                     |
|       |                            | (25) philomela : bubo (28)                                     |
|       |                            | (26) perdix : cavannus (29)                                    |
|       |                            | (27) columba : corvus (30)                                     |

If we now ask: What was the source of inspiration for Eucheria in composing her long catalogue of *adynata*, my answer would be: (1) most probably, the poetess did not use one single source, but rather is combining motifs deriving from many different sources. (2) While being inspired by the traditional *adynata*, she is producing new examples of her own, displaying imagination and inventiveness. This suggestion seems to be in accord both with Skutsch's remark (o.c., 882. 27), "doch kann ich ein bestimmtes Vorbild nicht angeben," and with the fact that *exact parallels* to the example of our list are not easy to find (I was able so to do only for

motifs Nos. 9 and 25). Now, I think we can see Eucheria's method at work. Here are a few examples.

Motif No. 9, "Moon residing in Hades instead of in heaven" (12, *eligat infernum iam modo luna chaos*). Most probably, it is part of this traditional *adynaton*: Eurip. Fr. 687. 2 f. N.<sup>2</sup>, πρόσθε γὰρ κάτω ἢ γῆς εἶσιν ἄστρα; Verg. *Aen.* 12. 205, *caelumque in Tartara solvat* | ; Seneca *Octavia* 222 f., *Iungentur ante . . . | . . . Tartaro tristi polus* | , et alibi. But the point is that Eucheria seems to combine this *adynaton* with the *magic* motif of *caelo . . . deducere lunam* (Verg. *Ecl.* 8. 69), worthy of a Thessalian witch.

Motifs Nos. 10 and 11 — the combinations, lilies and nettle, roses and hemlock — may well have been inspired by such *adynata* as, e.g., Theognis 537, Οὔτε γὰρ ἐκ σκίλλης (squill) ῥόδα φύεται οὐδ' ὑάκινθος; Theocritus 1. 132 f.:

Νῦν ἴα μὲν φορέοιτε βάτοι, φορέοιτε δ' ἄκανθοι,  
ἃ δὲ καλὰ νάρκισσος ἐπ' ἀρκεύθοισι κομάσαι.

Verg. *Ecl.* 8. 52 f., *Nunc et . . . | . . . narcisso floreat alnus*. Take notice that with the same ease the imitator of Eucheria, A. L. No. 729 (quoted in note 4), was able to replace the couples of our lines 12–13, *lilia-urticae* and *rosa-cicuta*, with the couples, *cardus-rosetum* and *lilia-cicuta*, respectively (729. 5–6).

Motif No. 13—the marriage between a rock bass and a snake—may have been inspired by the classical marriage between a sea-eel (*murena*) and a viper: Pliny *N. H.* 9. 76 and 32. 14; Achill. Tat. *Leucippe et Clitophon* 1. 18. 3; Aelian. *N. A.* 1. 50 and 9. 66; Oppian. *Hal.* 1. 554 ff.; Basil of Caesarea *Homil. in Hexaem.* 7. 5.

Motif No. 18—the liaison between a tigress and a wild ass—may have been inspired by such *adynata* as, e.g., Horace *Epodes* 16. 31, . . . *mirus amor, iuuet ut tigris subsidere cervis*; Verg. *Ecl.* 8. 27, *iungentur iam grypes equis*.

Motif No. 25—a singing contest between the nightingale and the owl—finds its exact parallel both in Theocritus 1. 136, κῆξ ὀρέων τοι σκῶπες ἀηδόσι δηρίσαιντο, and in Calpurnius *Ecl.* 6. 8, *vocalem superet et dirus aedona bubo*. Only that this time Vergil and Lucretius have done what our Eucheria seems to be doing throughout her poem—Vergil, by replacing the contestants *nightingale* and *owl* with the couple *swan* and *owl* (*Ecl.* 8. 55, *certent et cynnis ululae*), Lucretius, by replacing them with *swallow* and *swan* instead (3. 6 f., *quid enim contendat hirundo | cynnis?*).

Finally, motif No. 27—the marriage between a dove and a raven—may have been inspired by Horace, *Epodes* 16. 32, *adulteretur et columba milvo*.<sup>7</sup> Incidentally, the imitator of Eucheria (A. L. No. 729. 3–4) replaced *raven*

<sup>7</sup> Compare Lucretius 3. 752, . . . *accipiter fugiens veniente columba*.

with *kite* (*milvus*), as if recognizing Eucheria's source of inspiration—Horace.

In conclusion, the learned poetess Eucheria seems to have collected her *adynata* from different sources, while at the same time engaging in heavy improvisation.

(2) *Design*. It is not difficult to see why Eucheria is selecting the traditional *adynata* and creating her own ones. To suit her own purpose—to demonstrate the absurdity of a *marriage* between the noble *lioness* Eucheria (19, *altaque . . . leaena*) and a common, poor peasant (32, *rusticus et servus*).<sup>8</sup> Now, the unity of her design is reflected in the following three devices.

First, in the fact that verbs implying, "to be united in marriage," reverberate throughout the poem: *iungatur* (5, 19, 21, 22); *iungi* (13); *iuncta* (20); *nectatur* (6); *amet* (17); *petat* ("to woo, to ask in marriage," 18 and 32); *accipiat* ("to take in marriage," 20); finally, *cubet* (30).

Second, in such obvious allusions to the rustic way of life of a common countryman as are: "bristles" (2); "skingoats" (4); "a terrible shaggy rag" (*burra*, 5); "millstone" (11); "nettle" (13); "the base fox" (19); "monkey" (20); "donkey" (21); "bull" (22); "the mud of a pit" (25); "dung" (26); finally, "raven" (30). Now, from the positive opposite of each given couple it is not difficult to see how high Eucheria values herself—opening with gold, silk, purple garments and precious stones, and closing with *pulchra columba* (30). The identity of "the beautiful dove" is unmistakable.

Third, in the postponement of the very reason for the presence of such a long catalogue of *adynata* to the last line of the poem (32)—*rusticus et servus sic petat Eucheriam* (echoing *petat* of line 18). Such a device may be paralleled, for example, by Licentius (*supra*, note 6), where the *fiat applicatio* appears in the last, eleventh, line of a catalogue consisting of eleven *adynata*: (92), *Ante sub Aegeo aptabunt pia tecta palumbes* | . . . , (98), | *ante . . .*, (100), | *ante . . .*, (102), . . . *quam mihi post tergum veniant tua dona, magister* |. Or by A. L. No. 440 (*De bono quietae vitae*), where the reason for a list of nine *adynata* appears only in the last, sixth, couplet: (1), | *Ante . . .*, (3), | *ante . . .*, (5), | *ante . . .*, (7) | *ante . . .*, (11) | . . . *quam mihi displiceat vitae fortuna quietae . . .* Therefore, it is quite possible that Eucheria was following such a model from late antiquity in keeping her surprise for the closing line of the poem.

<sup>8</sup>What the expression of line 32, *rusticus et servus*, socially implies, is not clear enough to me. I have translated vaguely, "a countryman, and a servant to that." For hardly would a *colonus* and *serf* dare to come and ask the noble lioness Eucheria in marriage. I guess the suitor Eucheria has in mind is a *common and poor but free farmer*. The imitator of Eucheria (A. L. No. 729. 4) seems to allude to this rustic wooer by employing the metaphor, *rustica . . . avis*. Skutsch's suggestion (o.c., 882. 13), "Auch die Werbung des *servus rusticus* ist wohl am besten aus gallisch-germanischen Verhältnissen zu verstehen," remains enigmatic to me. Can a medievalist help us elucidate the term, *rusticus et servus*?

Still, the idea of "an impossible marriage union" is absent in our late sources to serve as a reason for the poetess to introduce such a long list of *adynata*. Consequently, I would suggest that Vergil's eighth eclogue served as the most likely source of inspiration for Eucheria's poem:

26 *Mopso Nysa datur: quid non speremus amantes?  
Iungentur iam grypes equis, aevoque sequenti  
cum canibus timidi venient ad pocula dammae.*

52 *Nunc et ovis ultro fugiat lupus, aurea durae  
mala ferant quercus, narcisso floreat alnus,  
pinguia corticibus sudent electra myricae,  
certent et cygnis ululae . . .*

Eucheria seems to share with Vergil two elements. First, Nysa weds Mopsus—what a monstrous union! What may we lovers not expect now? Just as monstrous would be the marriage between the noble Eucheria and the *rusticus et servus* (32). And second, both impossible marriages evoke a catalogue of *adynata*. In addition, two of Vergil's *adynata*—"Now griffins may as well be mated with horses" and "Now let owls compete in song with swans!"—strongly resemble Eucheria's *adynata* Nos. 18 and 25.<sup>9</sup>

(3) *Lexicon*. There are three *hapax legomena* in Eucheria's poem: 3 *Sericeus*; 5 *burra*; 17 *craxantus*. While 1 *Sericeum* (for *Sericum*) seems to be a produce of metrical necessity (just as is the irregularity of 10, *silicibus*<sup>10</sup>), the other two words are not. Being opposed to a *nobilis purpura* (5), the horribilis *burra* is best understood as "a cheap shaggy or woolen piece of rustic clothing" befitting a peasant (32 *rusticus*). Walde-Hofmann (*L.E.W.*, s.v.) bring the word in connection with *reburrus*, "with bristling hair," or "with hair brushed up," "widerhaarig,"—a word known since Augustine,—and translate *burra* as "zottiges Gewand," "Wolle." That *burra* was a cheap rustic piece of garb is attested by its metaphorical sense in Ausonius 7. 1. 4 f. (*Ausonius Drepano filio*): *At nos inlepidum, rudem libellum, 1 burras, quisquiliis ineptiasque . . .* | (compare German *Flaus* : *Flausen*).

*Craxantus* (17), or *crassantus*, "toad," is being brought into connection by Walde-Hofmann with proper names *Craxantus*, *Craxa*, *Craxanius*, and translated as "Kröte" (cf. *trucantus*).

Moving to the semantic peculiarities of Eucheria's lexicon, *captiva* (7) most probably means, "being deprived of," and is being employed with a

<sup>9</sup> Skutsch (o.c., 882. 26) refers to the *adynata* at Vergil *Ecl.* 8. 27 f., but misses the point by omitting the crucial line 26, *Mopso Nysa datur: quid non speremus amantes?*

<sup>10</sup> There is no need to change *silicibus* into *et silici*, as Heinsius had suggested; we have to live with metrical irregularities of Late Latin poetry.

*genitivus inopiae—sui nitoris*: compare *TLL* III. 375. 59 (= *priva* ?); 376. 28. — *Eat*, in lines 10 and 26, is employed in two different senses: “to pass for” (in 10), and “to flow down” (in 26). — The postponement of *ergo* (15) to the end of the line may be paralleled by Propertius 2. 32. 1; Ovid *Met.* 12. 106; Grattius *Cyneg.* 73 (cf. *TLL* V. 761. 62–72). — In line 17, *saxatilis* is rather *rock bass* than *rockfish*; and *anguis* rather a *land snake* than an *eel* (= *anguilla*, cf. Juvenal 5. 103; Pliny *N. H.* 29. 111). — *Perspicua* (*lynx*, in 20; *perdix*, in 29) does not mean, “bunt” (as Skutsch, o.c., 882. 22 has it), but rather “pretty, handsome, goodlooking.” Compare *Corpus Gloss. Lat.* Loewe–Goetz IV. 271. 35: *Perspicuus* = *splendidus, pulcher*, εὐπερίβλεπτος. — Judging by the contrasting juxtapositions of lines 5, *nobilis horribili*; 8, *obscuro fulgeat*; 27, *praepes funereo*; 29, *tristis perspicua*, we may assume that in the antithesis of line 22, *iungatur fesso concita damma bovi*, the qualifier *fessus* means rather, “sluggish,” than “weary, tired,” as being opposed to “the nimble doe.”<sup>11</sup> — In line 22, *vinum* is to be understood with *rosatum*: compare Greek ῥόδινον, ῥοδωτόν. — Finally, in line 25, the epithet, *gemmans* = *lucidus* (*TLL* VI. 1757. 73), “crystal clear,” as applied to water, can be easily paralleled (e.g., Silius 4. 350, *gemmanti gurgite*; Martial 9. 90. 2, *gemmantibus . . . rivis*). But its opposite, *luteum barathrum*, in the sense of, “a muddy well or pit,” looks strange. The best I can do is to refer to the Glossaries, which explain *barathrum* as *cenum, puteus, fossa, fovea* (*TLL* II. 1723. 51).

Speaking of Eucheria's lexicon, two words from her poem may help us in trying to determine an approximate date for our poetess—*tructa* (18), and *cavannus* (29). *Tructa* (= τρώκτης) appears first in Ambrose (*Hexameron* 5. 3. 7, *troctas*), then in Plinius Valerianus (sixth century) 5. 43, and in Isidore of Seville (*Orig.* 12. 6. 6). And *cavannus* = *noctua* occurs in *Itala* (Lugdun.), *Deut.* 14:15; *Schol. Bern.* ad Verg. *Buc.* 8. 55; Eucherius of Lyons (died ca. 455), *Instruct.* 2. 9 (p. 155. 25 Wotke); Damigeron *De lapidibus* 28 (sixth century); cf. *TLL* III. 624. 4–19. On the other hand, a positive *terminus ante quem* for our poem is provided by Julian of Toledo (seventh century), who quotes line 31. Consequently, most probably our Eucheria lived somewhere in the fifth or sixth century. That her residence was Gaul, is strongly indicated both by the Gallic word *cavannus*<sup>12</sup> (so Skutsch, o.c., 882. 6), and by the term, *Lingonicum aes* (9), probably hinting at the famous iron mines of Langres (so Manitius, o.c., 472).

<sup>11</sup> In addition to these examples of *antithesis*, Eucheria's poem abounds in examples of *alliteration*: 1 (*f*); 1–2 (*c*); 3 (*t*); 3–4 (*l*); 5 (*pur-* : *bur-*); 6 (*g*); 7 (*s*; *n*); 17 (*a*); 19 (*v*); 24 (*m*); 30 (*c*); 31 (*m*); 32 (*s*). *Versus Leonini* are present in lines 11; 16; 24; 26 (?); 31.

<sup>12</sup> French *chouan*; compare Meyer–Lübke, *R.E.W.*, s.v.

## II

Unlike the bulk of the poems with *adynata*, where this figure plays only an auxiliary role, in Eucheria's impressive elegy *adynata*—no less than twenty-seven of them—constitute the framework of the entire poetic construction.<sup>1</sup> As Professor Marcovich has pointed out, most probably Eucheria is reshaping the available traditional *adynata* so as to conform to the key idea of her poem—*mismatching*. Eucheria's originality, and even a certain exuberance, is best reflected in the way she adapts the traditional *adynata* to her specific purpose. A closer look at the *adynata* of the poem seems to reveal a deliberate effort, on the part of the poetess, to avoid repeating the stereotyped examples by experimenting with novel ideas and combinations.

Here are a few relevant examples and close parallels of the traditional, proverbial and standard *adynata* which I think may be useful in assessing Eucheria's innovations. In lines 1–5, the contrast between fine and rustic clothing has the obvious *social connotation* of *high vs. low, noble vs. common*. The proverb (Diogenian 7. 94, et alibi), Πίθηκος ἐν πορφύρα (ὅτι οἱ φαῦλοι, κᾶν καλὰ περιβάλονται, ὅμως οὐ λανθάνουσι πονηροὶ ὄντες), comes to mind (compare also Macarius 7. 12, Πίθηκος ὁ πίθηκος κᾶν χρυσᾶ ἔχη σάνδαλα).

The gap separating the *noble* from the *vulgar* is equally clearly implied by the five *adynata* of lines 6–11, dealing with gems and precious stones. Compare, for example, Lucian *Apology* 11, . . . εὐρήσεις . . . τοσοῦτον εἰκότας ἀλλήλοις τοὺς βίους, ὅσον μόλυβδος ἀργύρω καὶ χαλκὸς χρυσῷ καὶ ἀνεμώνη ρόδω καὶ ἀνθρώπῳ πίθηκος; Diog. Laert. 6. 65, Ἰδὼν [sc. Diogenes] εὐπρεπῆ νεανίσκον ἀπρεπῶς λαλοῦντα, “Οὐκ αἰσχύνῃ” ἔφη “ἐξ ἐλεφαντίνου κολεοῦ μολυβδίνην ἔλκων μάχαιραν;”; Aristaenetus *Epist.* 1, p. 142 Hercher, “Ἄλλως τε” φησὶ “Κυδίππην Ἀκοντίῳ συνάπτειν οὐ μόλυβδον ἂν συνεπιμίξειας ἀργύρω, ἀλλ’ ἐκατέρωθεν ὁ γάμος ἔσται χρυσοῦς”;<sup>2</sup> Plato *Sympos.* 219 a 1, χρυσέα χαλκείων.<sup>3</sup>

Of course, examples for an impossible *mating* between two different species of animals abound. Compare, e.g., Aristoph. *Pax* 1077, καὶ πῶς, ὦ κατάρατε, λύκος ποτ’ ἂν οἶν ὑμεναιοῖ; Horace *Odes* 1. 33. 7 f., . . .

<sup>1</sup> For the figure of *adynaton* as a dominating idea in a poem compare A. G. 5. 19 (2 *adynata*); 9. 575 (4 *adynata*); A. L. No. 729 Riese (4 *adynata*); No. 440 (9 *adynata*); App. Verg. *Dirae* 4–8; 15–24; 67–68; 72–74; 81–101.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. D. A. Tsirimbis, *Platon* 2 (1950) 25–85, esp. p. 76.

<sup>3</sup> The contrast between the lustrous pearl and a box made of steel, of lines 7–8, may be paralleled by Arnaut Daniel (XII–XIII century), *Poems* 14. 49 f.:

Ans er plus vils aurs non es fers

C’ Arnautz desam lieis ont es femanz necs.

(“Sooner will gold become cheaper than iron than will Arnaut cease to love the woman to whom he is secretly attached.”)

*sed prius Appulis ! iungentur capreae lupis . . . ; Seneca Phaedra 572, et ora dammis blanda praebebunt lupi; Paraphrase of Oppian's Hal. 4. 7, τὴν ἐρωτικὴν δὲ ἐπὶ ταῖς κίχλαις ὁ τρισάθλιος κόσσυφος . . . ; or the Modern Greek proverb, 'Ο κολιὸς (= fish κολίας) τὴν παλαμύδα ἀπ' ἀγάπην τὴν ἐπῆρε.<sup>4</sup>*

Finally, the impossible marriage between the noble Eucheria and a *rusticus et servus*, of the closing couplet of the poem, may be paralleled by this medieval couplet:

Rustice callose, cunctis populis odiose,  
vis tu formose te sociare rose?<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. N. G. Polites, *Μελέται περὶ τοῦ βίου καὶ τῆς γλώσσης τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ λαοῦ. Παροιμίαι, I-IV*, (Athens 1899-1902) II, p. 72; R. Strömberg, *Greek Proverbs*, (Götterborg 1954), p. 21.

<sup>5</sup> J. Werner, *Lateinische Sprichwörter und Sinnsprüche des Mittelalters*, Heidelberg 1912): Basel Codex 12 (IV century), No. 79, p. 86. — I am indebted to Dr. David Larmour for some valuable suggestions.