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PHAMB GRAEC 704-FRAGMENT OF PROSE FABLES
(*PROGYMNASMATA?*)*

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Abstract

This paper proposes the first edition of a 2nd/3rd-century papyrus fragment containing remnants of two prose fables.

Keywords

Prose fable, papyrus, education

Twelve lines from the top of two columns from a papyrus roll written along the fibers. The extant upper margin measures c. 1 cm, and the intercolumnar space is c. 1 cm wide¹. The verso is blank.

The text was written by a competent but not calligraphic hand. The script is a thick and angular formal mixed bookhand, slightly inclined to the right, that can be ascribed to the Severe style². Bilinearity is broken by φ and υ, but also by the descenders of τ and ι, the right-left diagonal of χ, and the top of κ. The hand should be dated to the 2nd or 3rd century AD. Comparable scripts – all dated solely through paleography – are seen in PSI 12.1283 (higher degree of formality, but similar letter shapes), dated to the 2nd century³; and in POxy 7.1016 (upright), dated to the 3rd century⁴.

The scribe is responsible for the sigla and corrections. Inorganic tremas are seen on the *ypsilon* of ενϋβριζοι (col. I, l. 9), and the *iota* of ἱχθυ[(col. II, l. 8). A single one dot is visible, on the *ypsilon* of] . οαὐτη (col. I, l. 8), which could be an inorganic *trema* but also an unintentional spot⁵. The *ypsilon* of ὕc in col. I, l. 3 carries a tack-shaped rough breathing (Turner's form 1)⁶. A *diple obelismene* (or «forked *paragraphos*», >) is in the space between lines 6 and 7 in

¹ The upper margin and the intercolumnium have been measured on a digital image.

² On the Severe style, see L. DEL CORSO, *Lo 'stile Severo' nei POxy: una lista*, «Aegyptus» 86 (2006) pp. 81-106, and G. CAVALLO, *La scrittura greca e latina dei papiri. Un'introduzione*, Pisa-Roma 2008, pp. 105-111.

³ Philistus or Antiochus of Syracuse, *De Sicilia?* MP³ 89.11.

⁴ Plato, *Phaedrus*, MP³ 1400.

⁵ For the distinction between organic and inorganic tremas, see E.G. TURNER, *Greek Manuscripts of the Ancient World*. Second Edition, revised and enlarged by P.J. PARSONS, London 1987, pp. 10 f.

⁶ TURNER, *Greek Manuscripts* cit., pp. 11 s.

column II, separating the end of one fable and the beginning of the next⁷. *Diplai* (>) are used as space-fillers at the end of col. I, l. 8 (two *diplai*), and l. 11 (a single *diple*)⁸. In Col. II, l. 10 an omitted letter was added as a correction above the line.

The papyrus contains portions of at least two prose tales, possibly fables (called αἶνοι, μῦθοι or λόγοι)⁹, as suggested by the presence of a pig or sow mentioned in col. I, l. 3¹⁰. The *diple obelismene* in col. II, l. 7 clearly introduces a new story, but it cannot be said with certainty that what was before was a single tale, even if it seems to be likely.

The composition of fables was a staple exercise in ancient rhetorical education, and both papyri and the manuscript tradition preserve numerous examples of fables as προγυμνάσματα, preparatory exercises, either written by students or as models for students¹¹. Our papyrus might have originally been an anthology of fables (or fables *and* other progymnasmata) intended for education. However, the formal and well-executed hand suggests that we are dealing with a standard, professionally made bookroll, copied by a professional scribe, and not a school-book, understood as an informal, “amateurish” copy produced by a teacher, or as an exercise by a student.

We propose the following interpretation for the preserved lines:

⁷ R. BARBIS, *La diplè obelismenè: Precisazioni terminologiche e formali*, in V.G. MANDELARAS (ed.), *Proceedings of the XVIII International Congress of Papyrology: Athens, 25-31 May 1986*, Athens 1988, pp. 473-476.

⁸ The use of *diplai* as line-end fillers in prose texts is well-attested, see e.g. POxy 62.4321 (MP³ 260.03, Demosthenes, *In Philippum*), POxy 69.4724 (MP³ 1258.04, Isocrates, *Nicoles*), POxy 2.229 (MP³ 1392, Plato, *Phaedo*).

⁹ On the ancient terminology of fables, see G.-J. VAN DIJK, *AINOI, AIOI, MYΘOI. Fables in Archaic, Classical, and Hellenistic Greek Literature. With a Study of the Theory and Terminology of the Genre*, Leiden-New York-Köln 1997, pp. 79-97.

¹⁰ Animals are attested as characters already in the earliest known Greek fables, such as the tale of the hawk and nightingale in Hes., *Op.* 202-212, mentioned by Roman rhetor Aelius Theon as an example of fable (*Progymnasmata*, 74). Ancient theories categorize fables featuring rational (humans) animals, non-rational animals or both, and some sources allow only for non-rational animals in the genre. See VAN DIJK, *AINOI* cit., pp. 38-78.

¹¹ Papyri with Greek prose fables: PKöln 2.64 (MP³ 1995.1), PKöln 6.250 (MP³ 2528.01), PSI 11.1220 (MP³ 2625), PLugdBat 25.5 (MP³ 2652.01), POxy 3.441 (MP³ 1995). On anthologies of prose *progymnasmata* on papyri, see A. STRAMAGLIA, *Amori impossibili. PKöln 250, le raccolte proginnasmatiche e la tradizione retorica dell' 'amante di un ritratto'*, in B.-J. / J.-P. Schröder (Hrsg.), *Untersuchungen zu Schulübungen und Prunkreden von der Antike bis zur Neuzeit*, München-Leipzig 2003, pp. 213-239.

Col. I, l. 1-col. II, l. 6

In Col. I, l. 3 a swine begins to do something, perhaps talking. The next line refers to a night or nights, and then in l. 5 we read τῆι φωνῆι which could refer to the voice of the pig or someone else. References to feeding or breeding (l. 7 τραφεῖς), maltreating or neighing (col. I, 9 ὑβρίζου) and of a master (col. I, l. 10-11 δεσπό[-του]) follow. At the beginning of col. II, the mention «my blood» (col. II, ἐμοῦ αἵματο[ς]) l. 1 indicates that we are in a direct speech. The remaining part of the column before the *diple obelismene* continues the direct speech with infinitive constructions. The character (pig?) speaking seems to claim that he ignores (ἄγνοεῖν, col. II, l. 3) something (or the contrary, since a double negation may be hidden in the lacuna), then we read of tasting (col. II, l. 2 γεύεσθαι), of «taking care» (col. II, l. 5, προονουμεν[]), and finally of «thickness» (col. II, l. 6 πάχος). The subject seems to be the slaughter of an animal for meat. On the whole, the plot remains obscure, but it seems that we are at the ἐπιμύθιον, *i.e.* the final portion of a fable conveying the moral. Here, it seems to be delivered by the pig in a monologue or dialogue (perhaps with another animal). Mentions of the master and to insults may refer to the unjust treatment of animals by humans.

Pigs, hogs or sows appear as a character in five Greek and Latin fables from Antiquity, none of which shows strictly relevant lexical correspondances with our papyrus¹². We can tentatively draw a parallel, in terms of content, with fable 87 (Δέλφαξ καὶ πρόβατα) in the Aesopic corpus, which tells of a piglet who complains that it is not raised for milk and wool like the sheep it is raised with, but for its meat. A slightly different version is in 189 (Δέλφαξ καὶ ἀλώπηξ) where the pig is taken alongside sheep and a goat on an ass. When a fox asks why he is squealing, he explains that he is going to be sacrificed.

A lexical comparison can be made with the Latin fable *De asino et porco. Contra pigros et carnem foventes*, by the English preacher Odo of Cheriton (1180/90 – 1246/47)¹³. The ass is envious of the pig who only eats and drinks, whereas it works all day and eats little. He then decides to pretend to be sick so that the master (*dominus* ~ δεσπότης) and mistress (*domina*) starting feeding him. When the pig grows fat (*inpinguatus* ~ πάχος), a butcher kills him by hitting him on the head and then draws its blood (*sanguinem* ~ αἷμα). Terrorized, the

¹² Aesop 87, 189, 250, 251, and Phaedrus V 4 (12). An inventory of Graeco-Latin fables is given by F. RODRÍGUEZ ADRADOS, *History of the Graeco-Latin Fable*, vol. 3: *Inventory and Documentation of the Graeco-Roman Fable*. Translated by L.A. REY-F. ROJAS DEL CANTO, revised by F.R. ADRADOS / G.-J. VAN DIJK, Leiden-Boston 2003.

¹³ Odo, *Fabulae*, XXX, edited by L. HERVIEUX, *Les fabulistes latins depuis le siècle d'Auguste jusqu'à la fin du Moyen Âge. Vol. IV: Eudes de Cheriton et ses dérivés*, Paris, 1896, 207-208. 600 Perry. RODRÍGUEZ ADRADOS, *Graeco-Latin fable cit.*, M. 55 (p. 600).

ass realizes it is better to work and live as he used than to be killed. The moral explains that the pig symbolizes clergymen (called *porci diaboli*), while the ass is compared to Christ. Odo's fable is likely derived from Phaedrus V, 4 (12) *Asinus et porcelli hordeum*¹⁴. It tells of an ass who refuses to eat the leftover barley from a pig that was sacrificed to Hercules. However, no lexical parallel can be drawn between the Roman fable and that of PHamb graec. 704. If our papyrus tale does indeed go back to the same core material as Phaedrus, it would be the only Greek testimony of this particular fable motif, which most likely harkens back to the Greek Aesopic tradition. Adrados indeed recognizes elements from Aesop fables H 87, 189, and 272 (ὄνος καὶ ἵππος) in Odo's tale¹⁵.

Col. II, l. 7-12

The second story beginning in col. II, l. 7 seems to be centered around a young man who was probably sitting fishing on the seashore. He is then covered by waves. When the land is uncovered, the young man is dead. At the end of the preserved portion, his mother appears, probably searching for her son. We have not been able to find a close parallel for this fable. An Aesopic fable transmitted by Lucian (*Hermotimus* 84), begins with a man sitting on the beach and counting the waves, but the story clearly takes a different turn¹⁶.

Text and translation

	PHamb graec. 704 provenance unknown	H × W = 5.2 cm × 6.3 cm	2nd/3rd c. AD
Col. I			
	]ῥαιπροστον	]ῥαι πρὸς τὸν	"... to the ...
	]μεραεελ	]μεραε ελ	... day(s) (?) ...
	]ῦσηρξατο	] ῦς ἤρξατο	... the pig started ...
	] κτασκα	ν]ύκτας καὶ	... nights and ...
5	] ιτηφωνη	] ι τῆι φωνῆι	... with the sound ...
	]τοσδαντω	]τοσ δ' αὐτῶ	... but to him ...
	]τιτραφεισ	]τι τραφεισ	... having been bred/fed ...
	] . οσαυτη>>	] . οσαυτη>>	...
	]ενῦβριζοι	]εν ὑβρίζοι	... insults/neighs ...

¹⁴ 526 Perry, RODRÍGUEZ ADRADOS, *Graeco-Latin fable* cit., not-H 51 (p. 409).

¹⁵ RODRÍGUEZ ADRADOS, *Graeco-Latin fable* cit., p. 600. A later Latin version of the story, relatively close to that of Odo, is included in Laurentius Abstemius' (c. 1440-1508) fable collection *Hecatomythium* published in 1495 (fable 121 *De asino, qui porco invadebat*).

¹⁶ RODRÍGUEZ ADRADOS, *Graeco-Latin fable* cit., not-H 24 (p. 393).

10	]υτουδεπο]εεκτρα>]. [ca.3] ... -----	]υτου δεεπό- [του]ε εκτρα> ...]. [ca.3] ... -----	... master”
Col. II			
5	εμουαιματο[κων γευεσθαι . [αγνο . . νμεστ[. ινεμουτου . [προνοουμεν[μεπαχουετι[> νεανιασεπιτ . [καθητοϊχθυ[κυματο . εις . [10 τηςαποκαλ'υ . [αποθνησκει[. εσημητηρ[	έμοῦ αἵματο[ε κῶν γεύεσθαι η[ἀγνοεῖν με ὅτι[ι εἰν ἐμοῦ του . [προνοοῦμεν[με πάχους ἔτι [νεανίας ἐπὶ τ . [καθῆτο ἰχθυ[κυματοθεῖς . [της ἀποκαλ'υφ[θ- ἀποθνήσκει [. ες ἡ μήτηρ [	... of my blood to taste that I do not know that... ... to ... of my taking care I ... of the thickness ... yet... A young man on the was sitting fish(ing?) ... having been covered by waves uncovered die(s?) the mother ...”

Col. I 2: the last character could be a λ or α. Col. I 5: the first letter of the line could be an η or perhaps a c. Col. II 12: the first letter could be a θ.

Commentary

Col. I

2]μεραεελ : palaeographically, the last letter seems to be λ, which would give ἡ]μέρα εελλ- or ἡμέραc ελλ-. From these, the latter option seems more likely, since there are only very few words starting with εελλ- and none of them seems to fit the putative context. Both readings are however problematic, as the line-break at εελλ- is unusual. The reading]μεραεελα is textually more coherent, even if palaeographically unsatisfying. The sequence εελα- could be the beginning of an augmented verb form, such as ἔλαβεν, ἔλαθεν, or ἔλακε, but other options are possible, for instance a form of ἐλαφρός, ἐλάχιτος or ἐλαθεῖς.

8]οσαῦτη: if the dot above υ is indeed a trema, the word-break would be after -oc, which would be followed by αῦτή, though such a poetical term seems unlikely. If there is no trema, possible readings would be] τοσαῦτη and]τοσαῦτή (or αῦτή).

9]ενῶβριζοι: the most common meaning of ὑβρίζω is «to insult» or «maltreat», but it can also refer to neighing or braying of horses, asses, and other animals, cf. LSJ, s.v. I. 2.

10-11]υτουδεσπο[: either]υ τοῦ δεσπό-[του or perhaps τοῦ ἑα]υτοῦ/α]υτοῦ δεσπό-[του.

11]ξεκτρα: perhaps ἐκτρα-[φείε or ἐκτρα-[φέντ-, cf. τραφείε in l. 7., or a form of ἐκτραχηλίζω «break someone's neck», cf. Odo, *Fabulae* 33: ... *percussit porcum in capite*.

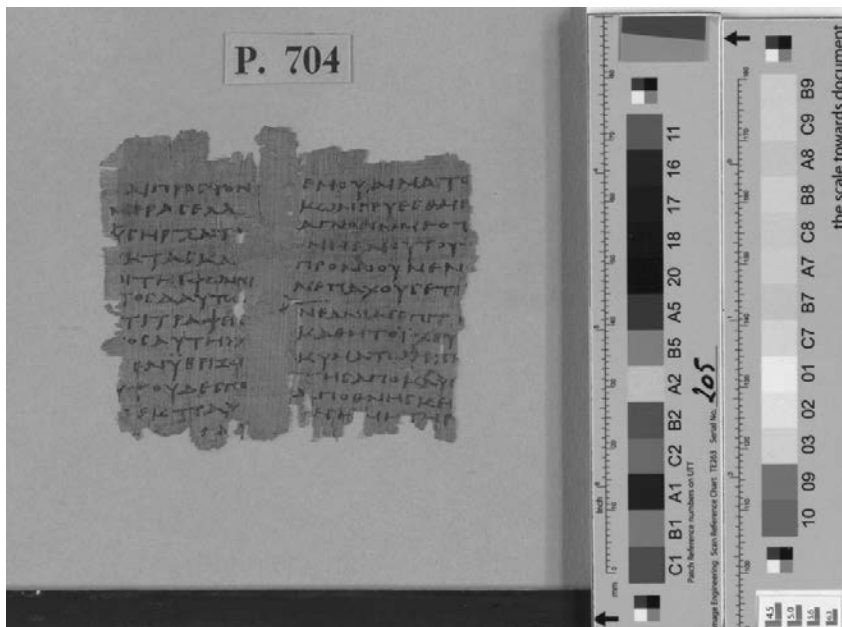
Col. II

1-2 κωνγευεσθαι .[: perhaps καρ]-κῶν γεύεσθαι, cf. H 250, 3 τὸν τῶν σῶν ἀκαθάρτων σαρκῶν γεύομενον, as suggested by D. Colomo.

5 προνοουμεν[: the context would suggest that a participle in an infinitive construction is more likely than the first person plural προνοοῦμεν.

10 τησαποκαλῦ .[: the interpretation ἀποκαλῦφ[θ- would imply a participle, perhaps a genitive absolute. The verb ἀποκαλύπτω can specifically refer in the passive to land being «uncovered» and thus «left» by water, see LSJ, s.v. The preceding -της could be the end of a feminine (pro)noun or even the article, perhaps in accordance with the following participle form (ἀποκαλῦφ[θείσης). Another option would be to consider a masculine noun ending in -της either in accordance with the participle or independent of it.

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