

There and back again: Callimachus *Epigr.* 31 and the (Greek) Renaissance

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THE PRESENT PAPER investigates the history of a famous Callimachean motif, with a view to examining the ways in which an Alexandrian theme returns to Greek poetry, almost unchanged, after seventeen centuries, through the medium of Roman poetry and Renaissance Italian literature. A hitherto unnoticed intertextual relationship between Cretan Renaissance drama on the one hand and Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* (1532) on the other is identified, thus adding one more piece to the elaborate mosaic which is Italian influence on the literature of the Cretan Renaissance.¹ Last but not least, the literary function of the motif in various contexts, literary genres, and historical periods is evaluated.

The island of Crete became a Venetian colony in 1211 as a result of the Fourth Crusade, and remained in Venetian possession until 1669, when its capital city, Chandax/Candia, modern Herakleion, fell to the Ottoman Empire after a long

¹ On the nature of this literature in general cf. esp. D. Holton (ed.), *Literature and Society in Renaissance Crete* (Cambridge 1991: henceforth 'Holton'); relevant material can be found through the index s.v. Ariosto. Basic information (dating, manuscripts, editions, authorship, etc.) on the works of Cretan literature is listed in A. van Gemert et al. (eds.), *Οδηγός έργων της Κρητικής Λογοτεχνίας (1370–1690)* (Herakleion 2002), and an easily accessible English-language overview is offered by S. Kaklamanis, "Cretan Literature," in *Greece: Books and Writers*, published by the National Book Centre of Greece, Ministry of Culture, <http://www.greece2001.gr/12.html>, 39–55.

drawn-out war. The four centuries of Venetian rule provided a unique cultural environment, allowing direct access to Italian culture, and the opportunity for the development of a local literature in the spirit of the Renaissance.² The ruling classes of the island were constituted by Venetian nobles, well-versed in Latin and Italian literature, but also bilingual in Greek.³ Outside the Venetian-occupied lands (Crete, the Heptanese, and other islands) access to and knowledge of Latin and Italian literary production was extremely limited.

Fortounatos is a Cretan Renaissance comedy by a Venetian noble, Markos Antonios Foskolos, dated 1655. The plot is in the New Comedy style: a young woman is to be married off to an old but rich merchant, and her lover despairs, until it is revealed that he is the long-lost son of rich merchants, abducted by pirates when a child, and so there is a happy ending with the marriage of the lovers.⁴ At one point in the story, the heroine complains to her lover about the fickleness of men (3.5.451–460):⁵

Οἱ ἄντρες πάσκου καὶ κοπιοῦ, ξετρέχου νὰ μπερδέσου
μὰ κορασὰ στὰ βρόγια τως, καὶ ὥστε νὰ τὴν κερδέσου
τρέμουσι καὶ λιγώνουνται, δείχνου πὼς τὴν ποθοῦσι,
καὶ ὡσὰν τήνε κερδέσουσι, ζιμιὸ τήνε μισοῦσι.

² “The Cretan Renaissance is no more nor less than the reception and creative exploitation of aspects of Italian Renaissance culture from the fourteenth century to the Baroque on the island of Crete” (Holton viii).

³ On the ethnic constitution of the island during this period see S. McKee, *Uncommon Dominion: Venetian Crete and the Myth of Ethnic Purity* (Philadelphia 2000).

⁴ On the *Fortounatos* see A. Vincent, “Comedy,” in Holton 109–128, and the edition itself, A. Vincent (ed.), *Μάρκου Ἀντωνίου Φόσκολου Φορτουνάτος, Κριτικὴ ἔκδοση, σημειώσεις, γλωσσάριο* (Herakleion 1980).

⁵ For further information on the linguistic form of this text, i.e. on the Medieval and Modern Cretan dialect, see G. N. Hatzidakis, “Περὶ τῆς γλώσσης καὶ τῆς γραμματικῆς τοῦ Ἐρωτοκρίτου,” in *Γλωσσολογικαὶ Ἔρευναι Β΄* (Athens 1977) 197–207, and G. Anagnostopoulos, “Περὶ τῆς ἐν Κρήτῃ ὁμιλουμένης καὶ ἰδίως περὶ τοῦ ἰδιώματος Ἁγ. Βαρβάρας καὶ περιχώρων,” *Ἄθηνά* 38 (1926) 139–193.

ἴδια καθὼς τὸ κάνουνσι στὸν κόσμον οἱ κυνηγάρου,
 ἀπὸ ζυγῶνον τὸ λαγὸ εἰς τὰ βουνιὰ καὶ εἰς τὰ ῥη,
 στὴν κάψα καὶ εἰς τὰ κρούσταλλα, καὶ δὲ βαριοῦνται κόπο,
 βάσανο μηδὲ κι ἔξοδο σκυλῶ καὶ τῶν ἀθρώπων.
 Σὰν τότε πιάσου, εἰς μιὰ μερὰ τὸ ρίχτου καὶ ξαπλῶνον,
 κι ἐκείνους ἀπὸ φεύγουσι πάλι ζιμιὸ ζυγῶνον.

Men work and toil, go to a lot of trouble in order to enmesh
 a girl in their nets, and until they have won her
 they tremble and faint, they pretend they desire her,
 and when they have won her, at once they hate her.
 Exactly as in this world hunters do,
 who stalk the hare in the mountains and in the heights,
 in the heat and in the ice, and they do not think it a great trouble,
 nor a toil, nor an expense of dogs and men.
 When they have caught it, they throw it aside and leave it lying,
 and they stalk again those that run off.

The simile is in fact an almost verbatim quotation of Callimachus, *Anth.Gr.* 12.102 (= epigr. 31 Pf. = 1 Gow-Page):

ὄγρευτῆς, Ἐπίκυδες, ἐν οὔρεσι πάντα λαγῶν
 διφῶ καὶ πάσης ἵχνια δορκαλίδος
 στείβῃ καὶ νιφετῶ κεχρημένος· ἦν δέ τις εἴπη
 “τῆ, τόδε βέβληται θηρίον,” οὐκ ἔλαβεν.
 χούμους ἔρωσ τοιόσδε· τὰ μὲν φεύγοντα διώκειν
 οἶδε, τὰ δ’ ἐν μέσσω κείμενα παρπέτεται.

On the mountains, Epikydes, the hunter pursues every hare
 and the tracks of each deer,
 enduring frost and snow; but if someone says
 “Look! This animal’s been hit,” he does not take it.
 This is how my love is: it knows how to pursue what flees,
 but it flies past anything which lies ready and waiting.⁶

Could a poet of the Cretan Renaissance have read this epigram? It lay dormant in the Palatine Anthology, until the French scholar Salmasius discovered it in 1606. The poem

⁶ Transl. R. Hunter, *The Shadow of Callimachus* (Cambridge 2006) 109.

must have travelled a much longer indirect road to get back into Greek literature.

Alfred Vincent, the editor of *Fortounatos*, identified the source of Foskolos' verses⁷ as an earlier Cretan Renaissance play, the *Panoria* (a pastoral love story with a happy ending) written by Georgios Chortatzis,⁸ in all probability in the last decade of the sixteenth century. And indeed, the hare is to be found in *Panoria* Act 4, vv. 29–38, again in the mouth of a woman, this time advising the heroine to be cautious with her suitor:

σαν το λαγό π' ολημερνίς ο κυνηγός ζυγώνει
στο περιβόλι, στα βουνιά, στην κάψα κι εις το χιόνι,
και δε βαριέται κούραση, δε θέλει να σκολάσει,
μα παραδέρνει και κοπιά, ώστε να τότε πιάσει,
κι ωσάν τον πιάσει, ρίχνει τον και δεν τότε χρειάζει,
κι εις τσ' άλλους απού φεύγουσι τα πόδια του σπουδάξει,
έτσι το κάνουσι κι αυτοί: κοπιού και παραδέρνου
κι ολημερνίς για λόγου μας σε χίλια πάθη μπαίνου,
ώστε να μας κομπώσουσι. καὶ τότε λησμονούσι
τὸν πόθο μας κι εις άλλη νια γυρεύγουσι να μπουσι.

Like the hare that the hunter stalks all day long
in the gardens, in the mountains, in the heat and in the snow,
and he does not spare himself trouble, he does not want to stop,
but he toils and tires, until he catches it,
and when he has caught it he throws it aside and needs it no more,
and to others, that run off, turns his feet,
that's how they act too. They toil and trouble,
and all day long for our sakes they get into a thousand tribulations,
until they have fooled us. And then they forget
their desire for us and try to take up with another young woman.

Emm. Kriaras, in his edition of *Panoria*, does not comment on these verses, and is also silent about them in his extensive discussion of the Italian sources for the poem.⁹ He provides an

⁷ Vincent, *Φορτουνάτος* μ.ε'.

⁸ Cf. R. Bancroft-Marcus, "The Pastoral Mode," in Holton 84–89.

⁹ E. Kriaras (ed.), *Γεωργίου Χορτάτση, Πανώρια, κριτική έκδοση με*

exhaustive comparative table¹⁰ where direct verse equivalences between *Panoria* and Italian pastoral drama (*Aminta* by Torquato Tasso [1580], *Pastor Fido* by Giovanni Battista Guarini [1590], *Alceo* by Antonio Ongaro 1582], and *Amorosa Fede* by Antonio Pandimo [1620]) are identified and listed, but vv. 4.29–38 do not figure in it. Another source of the *Panoria*, identified later, the pastoral *La Calisto* by Luigi Groto (1583) also does not contain the verses in question. However, it is quite probable that the hare motif was used by other (Italian?) poets in the intervening centuries between the Hellenistic poet from Cyrene and his late Renaissance Cretan imitators.

The first extant re-use of the Callimachean motif is the direct imitation of Callimachus' verses by Horace, as he mocks the pretensions of the choosy lover:¹¹

*leporem uenator ut alta
in niue sectetur, positum sic tangere nolit,
cantat et adponit "meus est amor huic similis; nam
transuolat in medio posita et fugientia captat."
hiscine uersiculis speras tibi posse dolores
atque aestus curasque grauis e pectore pelli?*

How the hunter pursues the hare through the deep snow and does not want to touch what lies ready is the subject of the lover's song, and he adds "My love is like this, for it flies past what lies ready and waiting and goes after what flees".

Do you hope that with these little verses you will be able to drive grief and passions and deep anxieties from your heart?

The image found further success in Roman literature, for

εισαγωγή, σχόλια και λεξιλόγιο, αναθεωρημένη με επιμέλεια Κ. Δ. Πηδώνια (Thessaloniki 2007) 45–48.

¹⁰ The table figures in the first edition of *Panoria*, E. Kriaras (ed.), *Γύπαρις, Κρητικὸν δράμα, πηγαί-κείμενον* (Athen 1940) 112–114.

¹¹ *Sat.* 1.2.105–110, transl. Hunter. On Horace's adaptation here see Hunter, *Shadow of Callimachus* 109–112, and J. Zetzel, "Dreaming about Quirinus. Horace's Satires and the Development of Augustan Poetry," in T. Woodman & D. Feeney (eds.), *Traditions and Contexts in the Poetry of Horace* (Cambridge 2002) 38–52, at 44–45.

example in Ovid and Petronius, but nowhere else as a direct word-for-word quotation.¹² It seems however rather unlikely that a Cretan poet of the Renaissance would directly incorporate Horatian verses in a comedy. A more normal course of events would have been to copy an Italian author who had copied Horace who had copied Callimachus. Out of the dozens of Italian poets' names that appear in Horace's *Nachleben* in the *Enciclopedia Oraziana*, the one that crops up most often is Ariosto, and indeed the Callimachean hare appears in *Orlando Furioso*, Canto 10 strophe 7:¹³

Guardatevi da questi che sul fiore
de' lor begli anni il viso han sì polito;
che presto nasce in loro e presto muore,
quasi un foco di paglia, ogni appetito.
Come segue la lepre il cacciatore
al freddo, al caldo, alla montagna, al lito,
né più l'estima poi che presa vede;
e sol dietro a chi fugge affretta il piede.

Be specially careful of those whose cheeks are still
downy: in them, as in conflagrations of straw,
the fires of appetite kindle quickly but will
as quickly die out. Or think of a hunter who saw
a hare and now chases it eagerly up a hill
to the top and down again, through gully and draw.
He catches it, then is indifferent, for the pursuit

¹² Cf. F. Citti, "Come segue la lepre il cacciatore...: sulle tracce di una immagine da Callimaco a Petronio," *Aevum(ant)* 9 (1996) 249–268, and J. A. Bellido Díaz, "Desde Calímaco a Cervantes: una imagen venatoria en contexto amoroso" *Anales Cervantinos* 40 (2008) 133–143.

¹³ Cf. K. O. Murtaugh, *Ariosto and the Classical Simile* (Harvard 1980) 104–105, 166, who comments on the re-use by Ariosto of this specific Horatian passage. On the influence of Horace on Ariosto see in general S. Mariotti (ed.), *Orazio: Enciclopedia oraziana III La fortuna, l'esegesi, l'attualità* (Rome 1998) s.v. "Ariosto, Ludovico," and M. McGann, "The Reception of Horace in the Renaissance" in S. Harrison (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Horace* (Cambridge 2007) 305–317, where further references are provided.

itself is the prize: they are easy to confute.¹⁴

So the hare motif appears in five authors and three languages (or four, if Ancient and Modern Greek are to be treated as different languages, as Latin vs. Italian): Callimachus to Horace to Ariosto to Chortatzis to Foskolos. The shared details make it clear that we are here dealing with literary borrowings by one writer from one or more of their predecessors, rather than with the polygenesis of a motif, or with the kind of motif-transference possible in oral traditions.¹⁵ More than one scenario is of course possible:

- (a) that Chortatzis and Foskolos imitated Ariosto independently
- (b) that some other Italian poet imitated Ariosto and was in turn imitated by Chortatzis
- (c) that some other Italian poet imitated Horace independently of Ariosto and was in turn imitated by Chortatzis
- (d) a combination of the above: Chortatzis may have imitated Ariosto directly, whereas Foskolos may have imitated some other Italian poet who imitated Ariosto, or vice versa.

Nevertheless, we can hardly take Ariosto out of the picture completely. Hare-hunting in Horace takes place only in the mountains, and in the snow. However, in Ariosto the hunt is going on both in the cold, in the mountains, and in the heat, by the shore. The two Cretan hunts are also double: in the heat and in the cold, in the gardens and the mountains (Chortatzis) or in the heat and in the cold, in the hills and in the mountains (στὰ ὄρη στὰ βουνιά Foskolos). It is unlikely that an unknown imitator of Horace would embellish his imitation with the same additional hunting grounds, independently of Ariosto. Also, the

¹⁴ Transl. D. R. Slavitt, *Orlando Furioso* (Cambridge [Mass.] 2009) 175.

¹⁵ For a helpful introduction to the whole subject see S. Hinds, *Allusion and Intertext* (Cambridge 1998). Recent scholarship has become particularly interested in motif transference within and between oral traditions: e.g. J. S. Burgess, *The Death and Afterlife of Achilles* (Baltimore 2009) 56–71, and “Neo-analysis, Orality, and Intertextuality: An Examination of Homeric Motif Transference,” *Oral Tradition* 21 (2006) 148–189.

context of the simile is identical in Ariosto and the two Cretan poets (the fickleness of men, of which women should be wary), whereas in Horace it is somewhat different (be satisfied, in matters of love and sex, with what you can have easily: don't try to reach for the unreachable). The original Callimachean context (cool and sophisticated pederastic love) is of course worlds apart from all the subsequent unconscious imitators of the motif.

One further phraseological similarity between Chortatzis and Ariosto must be noted: the hunter's turning to new victims is described by Ariosto as "a chi fugge affretta il piede" and by Chortatzis as ὁποῦ φεύγουσι, τὰ πόδια του σπουδάζει, a word-for-word correspondence. On the basis of these two similarities, then, we would be inclined to rule out alternative (c).

There is something to be said for alternative (a), i.e. that Foskolos imitated Ariosto directly, independently of *Panoria*: in his poem there are at least two other intertextual references to *Orlando Furioso*, which Alfred Vincent (159, 185) notes and considers as evidence that Foskolos had read *OF*: *Fortounatos* 5.225 "Deh, ferma un poco il piede" = *OF* 1.32.3 "Ferma, Baiardo mio, ferma il piede," and *Fortounatos* 2.58, where there is mention of the characters of Rodomonte and Nimrod from *OF*.

But it is still impossible to assess the probability of alternatives (b) or (d), i.e. to know whether there was one more intermediate step, an unknown Italian poet intervening between Ariosto and Cretan drama. James Hutton does not mention any imitators of Callimachus' epigram 31,¹⁶ but of course one can never be sure: Horace, and Ariosto, had very many imitators. As the situation stands, however, the hare hunt has given some interesting results:

We have seen a motif of Greek poetry returning, Odysseus-like, to the Greek language, almost unchanged, after about seventeen centuries.

We have a new use, almost verbatim quotation, of *Orlando*

¹⁶ James Hutton, *The Greek Anthology in Italy* (Ithaca 1935).

Furioso in two works of the Cretan Renaissance; this is the longest one noted until now, and one which escaped, hare-like, the authors of the excellent modern commentaries on these works.

We have a case where we can plot the transformations of a motif across genres and across languages.¹⁷

We have further confirmation of something well known in late Medieval Greek literature: the ancient Greek world is often forgotten, and returns to Greece only through the intermediary of the Western, Latin, tradition: cf. e.g. *La Guerre de Troie* by Benoit de St. Maure translated (14th cent.) as the huge vernacular Medieval Greek romance *Ὁ Πόλεμος τῆς Τρωάδος*, and Boccaccio's *Teseida* translated (ca. 1500), again in vernacular Medieval Greek, as *Θησέος καὶ γάμοι τῆς Ἐμίλιας*, known as the Greek *Theseid*.¹⁸

Finally, we may ask why the motif was so popular. Was this simply a matter of chance, or did this variation on the theme of pursuit and flight, the hunt of love, a theme which entered western literature at an early date (cf. particularly Sappho fr.1) and never left, capture something essential about the nature of

¹⁷ One could follow the fate of the hare simile through alternative routes as well, tracing hitherto unnoticed intertextual echoes between the Cretan Renaissance and major European Renaissance authors. A characteristic example is the repetition of the motif in Miguel de Cervantes' *La gitanilla*, one of the *Novelas ejemplares* (1613), uttered, as in the case of *Fortunatos*, by a gypsy girl who demands faithfulness from her lover: "los ímpetus amorosos corren a rienda suelta, hasta que encuentran con la razón o con el desengaño, y no querría yo que fueses tú para conmigo como es el cazador, que en alcanzando la liebre que sigue, la coge, y la deja por correr tras otra que le huye" (Bellido Díaz, *Anales Cervantinos* 40 [2008] 138). Less interesting, as it is a direct quotation and not a literary adaptation, is Michel de Montaigne's repetition of Ariosto's lines in his *Essays* (1580), in order to contrast friendship, "une chaleur generale et universelle" with love, "un desir forcené après ce qui nous fuit" (*Essais* 1.28). To the long list of genre transformations of the hare motif (epigram, satire, epic, pastoral drama, comedy) one may thus add prose novelistic and philosophical writing.

¹⁸ On these works see R. Beaton, *The Medieval Greek Romance*² (London 1996), esp. ch. 9 "Translations and Adaptations of Western Romances."

erotic desire, which is ever renewed and never satisfied, and thus appeal across the centuries, even as the meaning of love and desire was reconfigured? Be that as it may, Callimachus would no doubt have appreciated the irony that his hunter and hare, figures for a very discriminating and élite poetic persona, became across the ages a very promiscuous simile indeed.

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