



Cephalus and Procris: Underground Transformations

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CEPHALUS AND PROCRIIS:
UNDERGROUND TRANSFORMATIONS

Toward the end of the twelfth century (1181-1192/3) a very peculiar version of the Cephalus and Procris myth occurs in the enigmatic *De nugis curialium* of Walter Map.¹ The work is divided into five "distinctions," each with several chapters devoted to a great variety of stories.² The fourth chapter of the third *distinctio* contains the story of Raso and his wife, for which there can be no doubt that the Cephalus and Procris myth provided the main narrative elements.³ The faithless wife, the precious possession, the disguise—all unmistakable marks of the Cephalus and Procris complex—make their appearance, though they are changed and jumbled about with utter abandon.⁴ The sources of Map's variations on the classical narrative cannot be definitely determined,⁵ but they were surely

¹ The work, a collection of amusing stories, reminiscences, and invectives against contemporary court life, exists in a unique manuscript in the Bodleian Library (Bodley 851, end XIV c.) from which it was first edited by T. Wright, *Gualteri Mapes De nugis curialium*, London, 1850, and again more accurately by M. R. James, Oxford, 1914 (*Anecdota Oxoniensis*, Mediaeval and Modern series, pt. XIV).

² For the date cf. James, *ed. cit.*, p. xxvii.

³ The story is briefly as follows:

Raso had a bitter enemy nearby, a Saracen Emir, who attacked Raso's fortress one day, but was defeated and taken captive. After a time Raso's wife became enamoured of the handsome young prisoner, and while her husband was away ran off with him, giving him Raso's favourite horse to ride. In order to recover the wonderful steed, the loss of which disturbed him far more than that of his wife, Raso disguised himself as one of his wife's lovers in the Saracen city, and at a nocturnal rendezvous induced her to swap horses with him. The real lover now appears; but in the ensuing battle Raso emerges victorious, and thereupon rides home in triumph, with his wife's head as a trophy.

⁴ Apparently the *De nugis* as it is preserved may be rather more of a hodge-podge than intended. Map left only a number of fragments written at different times, which were put together as we have them by some later compiler. There is no evidence, however, that it was ever meant to have a really coherent plan. Cf. J. Hinton, "Walter Map's *De nugis curialium*; its plan and composition," *Publication of the Modern Language Association*, XXXII, 1917, pp. 81-132.

⁵ The connexion with the Ovidian myth, and at the same time the complete divergence from the usual treatments of it, are indicated by the moralization which Map includes in the story, itself drawn directly from the classical tale. After his marriage Raso determines to give his new wife complete freedom, being of the optimistic opinion that voluntary chastity is more desirable and effective than forced restraint. He is led to this decision by the example of Cephalus and Procris

based on folklore tradition. The *De nugis* in general is largely important for its very early recensions of many European folk stories,⁶ and striking parallels for most of the unusual motives can be shown in Slavic, Polish, and Servian folk literature.⁷

These folk-tale associations of Walter Map's Raso story indicate that besides their preservation in the written literature of the Middle Ages, the classical myths were also transmitted "underground," in the realm of popular fables. The individual myth, abstracted from its context in continuous narratives such as Ovid's, loses its identity and becomes part of the anonymous body of folk-stories. This tradition is of course, by its very nature, extremely difficult to trace and practically impossible to chronologize. But there can be no doubt that, although only rarely appreciated, its historical significance for the continuity of classical ideas was enormous.

Probably the process of popularization began at a very early period, and the Cephalus and Procris motif (the actual classical myth is so transformed that it has become a form rather than a specific narrative) appears, for example, in an Armenian fable which the German collector calls *Die Goldschale*.⁸ Here again the essential elements

who, following this method, were blissfully happy! Map thus completely reverses the implications drawn from the myth:

. . . zelotipie (Raso's) causa se graui diu et ancipiti deliberacione suspenderit . . . ; Procrim illectam Cephalo laudat amoribus, uxoriumque sapienter ei liberat fecisse licencias ait, et utrumque felicem, ipsam quod ipse uxorius illum quod illa inde pudica, .i. merito et retributione.

⁶ Cf. S. Hartland's introductory note to the Cymmrodorion edition (No. IX, London, 1923), p. xvi.

⁷ The folklore background of the *De nugis* is analysed by F. Liebrecht, *Zur Volkskunde*, Heilbronn, 1879, pp. 25-52; also James, *ed. cit.*, note p. 266.

⁸ Joh. G. von Hahn, *Griechische und albanesische Märchen*, Leipzig, 1864, II, p. 149 ff., no. 109:

One day a fisherman finds a golden cup which has the property of refilling itself with gold each time wine is drunk from it. Using the cup as inducement the fisherman persuades the local Princess to spend one night with him. But she becomes pregnant and the king disowns her, so that the couple is forced to flee into exile. After a time the Princess desires to be reconciled with her father. She disguises herself as a man and returns to the royal palace, bringing the cup with her. The King becomes covetous of the cup, and upon his disguised daughter's demand agrees to give himself in perversion. The daughter thereupon reveals her true identity, and scolds the King for sacrificing himself for mere material gain, after he had disowned her for following the true

of the tale are those of the Cephalus and Procris myth, including the peculiar homosexual twist known in the west only through Hyginus. It is unlikely that Hyginus was the prototype for the Armenian fable; rather, some early Greek narrative probably provided the common source for both Hyginus and the fable. Presumably the same Greek narrative was also the origin of another fable which appears still farther afield, in the latter part of an Arabic tale entitled *Histoire de la Dame des Arabes Jasmin*.¹

It does not seem to have been observed that the original version of the Cephalus and Procris myth which provided the source for these eastern fables is still preserved to us, in the writings of several Greek mythographers. The earliest is Antoninus Liberalis, whose account of the Cephalus and Procris myth contains one of the most essential elements that reappears in the fables, the temptation to homosexuality by which the couple is reconciled:

Και ἡ Πρόκρις δεξαμένη ἀφίκετο εἰς Θορικόν τῆς Ἀττικῆς, οὗτου φκει ὁ Κέφαλος καὶ σὺν αὐτῷ ἔκυνη- γέτει, ἐξαλλάξασα τὴν ἐσθῆτα καὶ τὴν κουράν τῆς κεφαλῆς εἰς ἀνδρα, καὶ οὐδεις αὐτὴν ἰδὼν ἐγνώ- ρισε. Κέφαλος δὲ ἰδὼν, ὅτι αὐτῷ μὲν οὐδὲν ἐπε- τύγχανε τῶν πρὸς τὴν θήραν, ἅπαντα δὲ συνέφερε

bidding of her heart. The King duly forgives his daughter, and makes her and her fisherman husband rulers of the land.

¹ Guillaume Spitta-Bey, *Contes arabes modernes*, Leiden-Paris, 1883, no. 3, p. 30 ff.:

At the price of a kiss the beautiful Dame des Arabes Jasmin, wife of the Sultan, obtains a certain flask from a fisherman who has brought it up in his net. However, the transaction is discovered by the Sultan, who promptly drives Jasmin away. Thereupon Jasmin discovers that the flask is quite unusual; when she turns the cover ten slaves appear, each of whom does a dance, throws ten purses of silver at her feet, and then disappears. Meanwhile, the Sultan has grown lonely for his wife and goes in search of her. Coming at length upon a fabulous palace, the Sultan is invited to dine with the unknown king (Jasmin in disguise). At dinner the "King" demonstrates the wonders of the flask, and the Sultan, in order to acquire it, agrees to give himself to the King. As they repair to another room, Jasmin drops her disguise and roundly scolds the Sultan—she, at least, had only given a kiss for the flask. The Sultan and Jasmin are thereupon reconciled and live happily ever after.

Cephalus and Procris wandered even to India, where they appear in an ancient Hindu fable, preserved in a Persian and Hindustani translation; cf. W. Francklin, *The Loves of Camarūpa and Cāmelatā*, London, 1793, p. 110; J. H. Knowles, *The Folk-tales of Kashmir*, London, 1888, p. 272.

πρὸς τὴν Πρόκριν, ἐπεθύμησεν αὐτὸς τὸν ἄκοντα τοῦτον λαβεῖν. Καὶ προσυπέσχετο δῶσειν, εἰ αὐτῇ τῆς ὥρας ἐθελήσαι τῆς ἑαυτοῦ χαρίσασθαι. Ὁ δὲ Κέφαλος παρέχεται τὸν λόγον, καὶ ὅτε κατεκ- λίνησαν, ἐξέθηνεν ἑαυτὴν ἢ Πρόκρις. . . .²

Antoninus also has in common with the fables the detail of Procris' reproach to Cephalus for having done worse than she herself:

καὶ ὠνείδισε τὸν Κέφαλον, ἢ αὐτὸς πολὺ βίσιον ἐξαμάρτοι.³

There are still other features in the Greek versions of the story which, together with those already discussed, establish a purely eastern literary tradition which is reflected in the fables. For example, in Apollodorus's account Cephalus does not himself tempt his wife but, as in the fables, she is actually seduced by someone else, to whom he gives the name Pteleus:⁴

Πτελέοντι συνευνάζεται.⁵

Pteleus' name is omitted by Antoninus Liberalis, who substitutes merely an "unknown servant" (οὐκίτην ἀγνώστα), but it is included by Tzetzes, who mentions Apollodorus specifically as his source (λαθροκοιτεῖ Πτελέοντι).⁶

Also, in the Greek versions the spear becomes a golden crown, with the added irony that Cephalus himself is tempted by it, as well as Procris. Thus, in Apollodorus:

λαβοῦσα χρυσοῦν στέφανον.⁷

Antoninus changes it simply to "much gold" (χρυσὸν πολὺν),⁸ and in the *Violarium* of the Empress Eudocia golden ornaments are the temptation to which Procris succumbs,

καὶ κόσμον χρυσοῦν εἰς πειθῷ προσβαλόμενος, πειθεὶ τὴν Πρόκριν μιγῆναι αὐτῷ.⁹

² *Transformationum Congeries*, no. 41, ed. G. A. Koch. Leipzig, 1832, pp. 51-53 (ΑΛΩΠΙΞ), p. 52, II. 12-24. Antoninus' source, whatever it was, probably also provided Hyginus with this same motif; however, Antoninus' dates are not definitely established.

³ *Ed. cit.*, p. 52, I. 24-25.

⁴ This is in contrast to the Latin versions such as Ovid's in which, originating as early as Pherecydes, Cephalus himself is the culprit.

⁵ *Bibl.*, *loc. cit.*

⁶ *Ant. Lib., Transf.*, *loc. cit.*; John Tzetzes, *Historiarum Variarum Chiliades*, I, 11. 542-552, ed. Theo Kiessling, Leipzig, 1826, pp. 23-24: Γράφει μὲν Απολλόδωρος ταύτην τὴν ἱστορίαν. (557)

⁷ *Bibl.*, *loc. cit.*

⁸ *Transf.*, *loc. cit.*

⁹ *Eudociae Augustae Violarium* (Ἰωνιὰ), ed. Flach, Leipzig, Teubner, 1880, DCCLXXIII, p. 576.

However, the golden crown returns again in Tzetzes,

χρυσοῦν λαβοῦσα στέφος¹

and the eastern fables make it a golden cup, just as they introduce variations on the occupation of the gentleman who succeeds in winning the unfortunate wife.²

It has been suggested that the original Greek version which was the ancestor of the Armenian and Arabic tales, also provided the material for a later Welsh fable. Whatever the intermediary, the eastern fables somehow came to the west, for precisely the same narrative elements appear in a Middle High German poem by one Dietrich von Glaz.³

Nothing is known of the author beyond the little that can be gathered from the internal evidence in the 444 rhymed couplets of his only known work, *Der Borte*. We learn that Dietrich

was the author,⁴ that he was always ready with praise for the fair sex,⁵ and that he wrote the poem at the behest of Wilhelm (also devoted to women), whose father lived in Widená.⁶ The story of *Der Borte* generally follows that of the ancient myth, but the details show a curious intermingling of the classical elements with features from the eastern fables discussed above.⁷ The golden cup and the flask of the Armenian and Arabic fables are missing, but they are replaced by still more wonderful objects, among them the horse which appeared in Map's *De nugis curialium*, and the dogs of the ancient myth. Dietrich's dogs even have the same property of inescapable speed as does the classical Laelaps:

. . . zwêne winde,
Daz neiman möhte vinden
kein tier ûf der erde kreiz,
Der si hezte, Gote weiz,
der snelle oder der sterke wern
Möhte vor in ernern.

(234-238)⁸

¹ *Hist. Var. Chil., ed. cit., 444.*

² Hyginus curiously combines the eastern and western traditions in this respect by retaining the classical spear, but making it the means whereby Procris succeeds in obtaining Cephalus' downfall.

³ F. H. von der Hagen, *Gesamtabenteuer*, Stuttgart and Tübingen, 1850, I, no. 20, p. 449 ff. The Welsh source for the poem of Dietrich von Glaz was first hypothesized by von Hagen (p. 445) who, without realizing the ultimate beginnings in the classical Cephalus and Procris myth, intuitively suspected that it was not German in origin. The association of Dietrich von Glaz's poem with the classical myth was first made by F. Liebrecht, "Beiträge zur Novellenkunde," *Germania*, I, 1856, p. 261 ff., and in his review of von Hahn's book in *Heidelberger Jahrbücher der Literatur*, 1864, no. 109, p. 219 ff.

The theory of the Welsh source is further substantiated by the fact that Map used a great deal of Welsh folk-tale material in his *De nugis curialium*. Most of the stories in *Dist. II* are of Welsh origin (James, *ed. cit.*, p. xxviii). Thus, the Welsh version might have been the common source for both Map and, much later, Dietrich von Glaz, both of whom of course altered the story to suit themselves. Even something of the ancestral Greek version may be preserved in both Map and Glaz: Map was doubtless acquainted with eastern folk-lore, probably brought to Europe by returning Crusaders, as is indicated by the stories of Byzantine Emperors in *Dist. II* (James, *loc. cit.*), and there may be a hint of the Greek source in the Greek stone mentioned by Glaz as being the feature decoration of his fabulous girdle (see below).

It is also possible that the Arabian versions were the means of transmission to the West. The importance of Arabic sources in the transmission of classical Greek mythology to the western Middle Ages, via astronomy and astrology, is well known; cf. for astronomy and astrology, Neugebauer, *The Exact Sciences in Antiquity*, Princeton, 1952, *passim.*, and for "astro-mythology," Panofsky and Saxl, "Classical mythology in medieval art," *Metropolitan Museum Studies*, IV, 1932/33, pp. 228-280, esp. p. 239 ff.

⁴ Von der Glezze Dietrich
hât mit sînen sinnen mich
Hübschen liuten getihtet
(827-829, von Hagen, *ed. cit.*, p. 477)

⁵ in vrouwen dienst stuont ie sîn sîn,
Ze allen zîten was er bereit
ze spreken von der reinikeit,
Diu an schoonen vrouwen liget:
des man nû leider selten pfliget.
(836-840, *ibid.*)

⁶ Wilhelm, der vrouwen kneht,
gevlizzen an der tugende reht,
Der schouf, daz ich getihtet wart;
Kein tugent wart nie von im gespart;
Sîn vater saz ze Widená,
gewaldik voget was er dâ.

(879-884, *ibid.*, p. 487)

⁷ One day while Konrad is away his beautiful wife allows herself to be seduced by a strange knight who offers her his horse, his falcon, two fine dogs, and a girdle richly decorated with fifty precious gems, one of which, from Greece, has healing properties and renders the owner invincible. However, a servant who has witnessed the affair goes to Konrad and tells him of his wife's infidelity. In an effort to regain her husband, the lady disguises herself as a knight, and demonstrates the power of her accoutrements in a tournament at which Konrad is present. In vain Konrad offers ever increasing amounts for the wonderful possessions. At length the strange knight admits that he loves men rather than women and offers the gifts to Konrad if he will submit. Reluctantly Konrad agrees; they go off to a bush and as the act is about to be consummated the knight reveals himself to be Konrad's wife, and scolds him for having been willing to do something unnatural for the gifts, whereas she had only done what was natural to her sex. They are thereupon reconciled; she gives him the falcon, dogs, horse, and girdle, and they live their lives out happily together, fully a hundred years.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 461. When the strange knight offers the lady the dogs, she replies indignantly:

The element of disguise being essential to the original myth, it is of course common to all the versions in one form or another; but the homosexual twist plainly follows the eastern fable tradition. Especially indicative is the manner in which, in the Armenian and Arabic fables and then in *Der Borte*, the ladies give their sanctimonious little scoldings after revealing their deception:

Vil untugenhafter lip!
ich bin iuwer êlich wip.
Durch habech und durch winde
und durch daz ros geswinde
Und durch minen borten guot,
der mir gibet hôhen muot
Ze strîten end ze tschuste,
einen ritte ich kuste
Und liez in bi mir slâfen,
daz ir mit dem wâfen
Waeret, mit des borten kraft,
werder in der ritterschaft:
Nû welt ir ein kezzer sîn
vil gerne durch den havech min,
Und rûmet ir vor mir diu lant;
ir habt iuch selben geschant;
Daz ich tet, daz was menschlich:
sô woltet ir unkristenlich
Vil gerne haben getân;

(779-797)¹

In general, Dietrich's poem stands on a level midway between the popular folklore traditions which absorbed the pagan myths, and the literary traditions which preserved them more directly. It is interesting that both these traditions should be combined in a work written strictly for courtly consumption; indeed, Dietrich feels quite strongly on this point:

Ich bin der borte genant,
hovischen liuten sol ich [sîn] bekant,
Den argen sol ich vremde sîn,
si sullen immer liden pin
Duch ir missewende
unz an ir bitter ende.
Man sol mich hovischen liuten lesen,
die suln mit mir vrôlich wesen
Durch ir tugent manikvalt;
was nieman siner tugent engalt.
(1-10)²

Moreover, in keeping with many mediaeval courtly romances, *Der Borte* has no didactic purpose; the moralizing interpretations of the academic tradition are all but eliminated.

Es sol nimmer werden kunt,
daz mir mîn êre naem' ein hunt.
(245/6)

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 475-6. Italics are mine. Hyginus does not have this detail, nor do the precious gifts play the double role of seduction in his version.

² *Ibid.*, p. 455.

Dietrich remarks only that he is upset by the sad observation of the complete reversal in the world's values; people prefer mere wealth to love:

Diu werlt sich verkêret hât,
ir muot wan nâch dem guote stât;
Si antent nint ûf die minne,
nur nâch dem pfenninge
Stêt aller liute gedank.
dâvon ist diu minne krank,
Die man ze den vrouwen haben sol.
daz gevellet mir niht wol;
(841-848)³

Thus, through the entire Middle Ages the classical tradition developed more or less simultaneously on two levels, one pure, written, and elevated, the other capricious, almost always oral, and popular.

The two streams converge in the early sixteenth century, when the importance of Niccolo da Correggio's revival of the classical Cephalus and Procris myth during the Ferrarese Renaissance reaches an apogee with its influence on the greatest poet of that age, Ariosto. It was the interest in the story aroused by Niccolo's play that inspired Ariosto to make use of it in *Orlando Furioso*. Ariosto was twelve years old when *Cefalo* was first presented; his precocious interest in poetry is well known, and it is entirely possible that he was present at the production. Moreover, Ariosto always maintained a deep respect for Correggio, and at the end of Canto XLII mentions him as one of the two eulogizers of Beatrice d'Este sculptured below her figure on the fountain in the court of the palace of the Ospite Cispadano:

Un Signor di Correggio di costei
Con alto stil par che cantando scriva,
E Timoteo, l'onor de' Bendedei.
(XLII, 91-92)⁴

As a result, the myth provided Ariosto with materials for two variations which appear in Canto XLIII.⁵ The first of these is the tale

³ *Ibid.*, p. 477.

⁴ Quotations are from the edition of Nicola Zingarelli, Milan, 1949. For Timoteo Bendedei, cf. Bertoni, *L'Orlando Furioso e la Rinascenza a Ferrara*, Modena, 1919, p. 294.

⁵ There had perhaps been an initial reference to the myth, through the spear of Cephalus, in the second canto of Boiardo's *Orlando Innamorato*:

E non aveva lancia il paladino,
Ché la sua nel cadere era spezzata.
Guardasi intorno, ed al troncon del pino
Quella de lo Argalia vidde appoggiata.
Bella era molto, e con lame d'ôr fino,

of Rinaldo's host on the other side of the Po (st. 1-49).

The enchantress Melissa possessed a magical golden cup from which no man whose wife had betrayed him could drink without spilling the wine. The host tried the cup, spilling not a drop. But Melissa, who was enamoured of him, induces him to test his wife's fidelity. In the guise of a former suitor of his wife, and accompanied by Melissa appearing as his servant, he tempts his wife with rubies, diamonds, and emeralds, finally succeeding in the effort. Upon discovering the trick the wife's shame quickly turns to anger and scorn, and she runs off to live, in great happiness, with the very cavalier whom he had feigned. He always regretted the loss of his beloved wife, and was consoled only by the fact that every husband to whom he had given the golden cup spilled the wine. Only Rinaldo has been wise enough not to try.

The main lines of the story are those of the Cephalus and Procris myth. While Ariosto plainly made use of the ancient versions,¹ there is abundant evidence that it was Correggio's play which originally called the story to his attention. *Cefalo* is directly reflected in many of Ariosto's verses. For example, upon offering the precious gifts the disguised husband gallantly belittles their value when compared with the reward he hopes to receive from the lady; the same idea similarly expressed is found in *Cefalo*:

CEFALO	ORLANDO
Ma che bisogna dir tante parole	E le dico che poco è questo dono
Questo e vil dono a quel chio spo anchora.	Verso quel che sperar da me dovea;
(D. vii. <i>recto</i>)	(St. 37)

Especially interesting are Rinaldo's remarks in refusing to try the magical cup; he is afraid he might find something he is not looking for:

Tutta di smalto intorno lavorata;
Prendela Astolfo quasi per disaggio,
Senza pensare in essa alcun vantaggio.
(St. 18)

¹ As in Ovid, the protagonist himself is the narrator of the story, and the wife is tempted by her own husband in disguise. Cf. also the parallel passages from the *Metamorphoses* quoted in the fundamental work by Rajna, *Le fonti dell' Orlando Furioso*, Florence, 1872 (2nd edition 1900), p. 571, n. 5.

CEFALO

Che bisogni aua a me
paccio cercare
Nèl gionco il nodo o nela
harena el grano
Trouato io ho quel chio
non voleua trouare
Hoime come fui mai co-
tanto insano
Che voleuo io di questo
proua fare.

and again.

ORLANDO

. . . : Ben sarebbe folle
Chi quel che non vorria
trovar cercasse:
(St. 6)

Ma non vo piu saper, che
mi conuegna:

mal consiglio ti diè Melissa
in vero,
Che d'attizzar le vespe ti
propose;
E tu fusti a cercar poco
avveduto
Quel che tu avresti non
trovar voluto.
(St. 47)

This is the same idea that Correggio got from Boccaccio, who had in turn derived it from Bersuire. The reflection of the mediaeval moralizing tradition contained in this passage is an index to the quality of mediaeval revivalism which characterizes *Orlando* as a whole. Ariosto's adoption of the forms, traditions, and many of the stories of the mediaeval courtly poets involves a curious kind of reversal of the process of purification which had culminated in Correggio. Niccolo was unable entirely to eliminate all traces of the moralizing interpretations, but he did attempt to integrate them as thoroughly as possible with the studied classical atmosphere of his play. Ariosto, on the other hand, makes use of the classical story, but completely reworks it in the manner of a mediaeval courtly romance.²

The extent to which Ariosto revives the mediaeval traditions is only revealed fully in the story of Anselmo and Argia which immediately follows in Canto XLIII (St. 69-144).

The Fate Manto rewards the young Adonio for having saved her life by helping him

² Ariosto's revival of the mediaeval tradition, not an isolated instance in early sixteenth-century art, must be differentiated from the "survival" of that tradition which can be recognized in the preceding century. The latter, as in Correggio's play, was for the most part unconscious, while in Ariosto it is completely deliberate. This very deliberateness implies a kind of historical perspective, an ability to distinguish between "antique" and "mediaeval" that was a main prerequisite for the conscious, and often quite incongruous intermingling of the two which is one of the fundamental elements of "Mannerist" style.

obtain the favours of Argia, the beautiful wife of Anselmo, for one night. She disguises him as a mendicant pilgrim and turns herself into his tiny companion dog. Adonio goes to Argia's villa and demonstrates to her the dog's remarkable capacity for dancing and spewing out precious gems on command. Argia becomes so covetous of the dog that she ultimately agrees to his price. Returning home, Anselmo learns of the affair from Argia's maid. In his fury, Anselmo commands a henchman to take Argia to a secluded spot and do away with her. As the homicide is about to be carried out, Argia disappears. Upon hearing the story Anselmo repents his hasty action and goes to the spot in search of her. He finds there now a fabulous palace, all covered with gold and precious gems. The palace belongs to a black and ugly Moor, who offers it in exchange for Anselmo's love. Reluctantly Anselmo consents. Now Argia rushes forward and chastizes him for his evil submission. The pair is then reconciled and they live together ever after in peace and harmony.

In the case of the story of Anselmo and Argia traces of the Ovidian Cephalus and Procris myth have all but disappeared.¹ Instead, Ariosto has made use almost exclusively of the popular mediaeval literary adaptations of the myth,² particularly Dietrich von Glaz's *Der Borte*. Widely separated as the two works are, the similarities are certainly too great to be merely coincidental.³ The wife is really se-

duced by another man, not merely tempted by her own husband in disguise. In both cases it is a servant who reveals the wife's infidelity to the husband. The jewels which the magical dog produces recall those that decorate and make so attractive Dietrich's magic girdle.⁴

When we now consider both of Ariosto's tales together it becomes evident that they are even more intimately related to the eastern fables discussed in connexion with Dietrich. The wife of the Ospite Cispadano, like the eastern ladies, is truly an adulteress. The temptation to homosexuality by which the score is more than settled between Anselmo and Argia is common to all the earlier versions, as is Argia's argument that her husband's crime was much worse than hers:

. . . Come te punir bisogna
 Di quel che far con s'vil uomo ti vidi,
 Se per seguir quel che natura agogna,
 Me vinta a prieghi del mio amante uccidi?
 Ch'era bello e gentile; e un dono tale
 Mi fe'ch'a quel nulla il palagio vale.

S'io ti parvi esser degna d'una morte,
 Conosci che ne sei degno di cento;

(St. 141-142, see above.)

The golden cup in the eastern fables becomes Melissa's magical testing cup, while the eastern cup's tendency to produce gold and precious gems Ariosto transfers to the dog Manto.⁵ Peculiar to Ariosto and the Arabic fable is the wondrous palace acquired by the wife, which first arouses the husband's envy.

Dietrichs von Glezze Gedicht *Der Borte*," *Germania*, N. R., XIX, 1886, pp. 49-51, and *Kleinere Schriften zur erzählenden Dichtung des Mittelalters*, Berlin, 1900, p. 471 ff., with the concurrence of Rajna, *loc. cit.*

⁴ There was already a reminiscence of Dietrich in Ariosto's previous story, where the cavalier possesses a falcon (St. 33), as does the strange knight in *Der Borte*. Probably, both Correggio and Ariosto in the previous story reflect Dietrich with the idea that the lady's love is well worth the precious gifts paid for it (cf. the passage quoted on p. 370); in *Der Borte*, the lady questions the knight:

Irn 'sît niht wol gemuot,
 daz ir sô tórlîch iuwer guot
 Habt geworfen ze verlust
 durch einen kleinen wol lust
 Der ritter der sprach: vrouwe mîn,
 lâzet solhe rede sîn,
 Daz ir achter (mir) ze schaden,
 daz wil ich ze gelücke laden;
 Nie geschach sô liebe mir,
 Alsô vrouwe, hie bi dir.

(365-374)

⁵ The peculiar property of Ariosto's cup for revealing the cuckoldom of husbands is borrowed from an episode in the *Tristan* romance (I, 77 vo.); cf. Rajna, *op. cit.*, p. 573.

¹ The death of Procris in the classical myth is perhaps recalled by the fact that Anselmo wishes to do away with his wife; also, there may be some reference to Correggio's *Cefalo* in the servant whom Anselmo sends on the homicidal mission, and whom he refers to as his "fameglio" (St. 124) recalling Cefalo's "fameglio."

² Possibly the only trace of a mediaeval account which retained the classical characters is the remark in St. 128 concerning the habit which such sins have of becoming public:

L'error che sapean pochi, or sí aperto have
 Che senza indugion sí palesi, teme;

Compare Christine de Pisan's comment in her *Texte* 56,

Et dit un sage, a peine est il chose si
 secrete que d'aucun ne soit apperceue,

which she had taken from the *Dis des Philosophes*:

car tielles choses ne puent estre muciees qu'on
 ne les cognoisse en la fin.

But even in this case it is the mediaeval (i.e., the moralization), rather than the classical aspect of the source that interests Ariosto.

³ The relation between *Der Borte* and Ariosto's stories was pointed out twice by R. Köhler, "Zu

Plainly, by the time Ariosto finishes with his intermixture of the various mediaeval traditions it becomes almost impossible to extricate the specific sources. However, one feature is common to all the later versions, including Ariosto's—the happy ending.¹ It would seem that almost at any point in the Christian tradition, eastern or western, when the ancient myth is varied upon at all, there is a tendency to make the story end on a non-tragical note of harmony.²

IRVING LAVIN

COSÌ FAN TUTTE (PROCRIS INCLUDED)

Mozart's *Così fan tutte* has been more frequently abused and ridiculed for its libretto than any of his other operas. Nineteenth-century critics were shocked by the cynicism with which da Ponte's two lovers test the faithfulness of each other's brides and by the libertine philosophy that is proclaimed in the title.³ The Vienna Court Opera even introduced a bowdlerized version in which the brides do not really yield but only pretend to do so after they have seen through their lover's disguise. The revival of the opera at Glyndebourne and Edinburgh prompted critics to re-examine this verdict; but even they stalled at the moral issue. Walter Legge, in the booklet that accompanies the recording of the Mozart Opera Society,⁴ takes refuge in the view that the "artificiality" of the comedy "and exaggeration of the normal formulae of excitement, passion and sorrow are the heart of the play." He regards these outbursts of feeling mainly as parodies of the grand style in opera and considers it "unlikely that the subject pleased Mozart." On this point E. J. Dent alone takes a different stand. He extols

the libretto as "about the nearest approach to perfection that any musical dramatist has ever perceived"⁵ despite the fact—or rather because—to him "Così fan tutte is the apotheosis of insincerity."⁶ Its figures are but marionettes, caricaturing the arias of opera seria. C. Benn, finally, praises the "delicate unreality of the plot" on similar grounds. "Its characters are too superficial to be called human . . . love in a real sense has no meaning for such people as these."⁷

Neither the defenders nor the detractors of the libretto appear to have recognized its venerable ancestry. The motif of the suspicious lover who returns in disguise to test the fidelity of his beloved with presents and blandishments is, of course, prefigured in the myth of Cephalus and Procris.⁸ There is the same fervour of rejection, the same insistence just to the point when fidelity gives way.

"Quid referam, quoties tentamina nostra pudici
Repulerint mores? quoties, Ego, dixerit, uni
Servor, ubicumque est: uni mea gaudia servo . . .
Muneraque augendo tandem dubitare coegi . . ."

All da Ponte has done is to enrich the plot by the simple device of doubling the pair and replacing Aurora, who, in Ovid, incites Cephalus to this stratagem, by the philosopher Alphonso who makes it the object of a wager. The cynicism of the text, then, is not da Ponte's. What is his own is the flair with which he has seized on the old story as an opera subject for the greatest interpreter of human emotion. To introduce here the issue of "sincerity" is to misjudge the function of music in eighteenth-century thought. To the

⁵ E. J. Dent, E. Blom and C. Dane, *Mozart's Così fan tutte*, London, 1945, p. 18.

⁶ E. J. Dent, *Mozart's Operas*, London, 1947, p. 192.

⁷ C. Benn, *Mozart on the Stage*, London, 1946, p. 112.

⁸ Cf. Irving Lavin, "Cephalus and Procris: Transformations of an Ovidian Myth," this *Journal*, pp. 260-287, and "Underground Transformations" *ibid.* pp. 366-372.

The gossip related by F. Heinse, *Reise-und Lebens-Skizzen*, Leipzig, 1837, p. 184, according to which this most implausible of plots was based on an actual scandal story circulating in Vienna, may safely be disregarded. It may have been responsible, however, for the source of the motif having remained unnoticed for so long. Judging by the evidence of Stith Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*, Bloomington, Ind., 1932, and D. P. Rotunda, *Motif-Index of the Italian Novella in Prose*, Bloomington, 1942 (neither of which lists any European versions of the story), the motif of the disguised lover testing his beloved is not as frequent as one might expect. Since da Ponte gained his entry into Viennese society with a poem on the Ovidian theme of Philemon and Baucis, Ovid may well have been his direct source.

¹ Così a pace e concordia ritornano,
E sempre poi fu l'uno all'altro caro.
(Orlando, St. 143)

Si lebten ân 'alle sorgen
beidiu, abent und morgen,
Unz an ir beider ende,
ân 'alle missewende,
Dar nâch wol hundert jâr,
daz ist sicherlîchen wâr.
(*Der Borte*, 821-825)

² See above, note 1.

Curiously enough, the cycle of the old folk-tales based on the Cephalus and Procris myth from which Ariosto drew so much material, is completed when the Anselmo and Argia story itself is transformed into a local folk-fable, cf. G. Nerucci, *Sessanta novelle popolari montalesi*, Florence, 1880, novella X, p. 498. On the other hand, the Ospite Cispadano story was adapted by La Fontaine for *La coupe enchantée* (*Contes et nouvelles*, part III).

³ A. Schurig, *W. A. Mozart*, Leipzig, 1923.

⁴ Published by His Master's Voice, March 1936.