

## THE FOX AND THE HEDGEHOG

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### THE CRAFTY HEDGEHOG

Zenobius, in his collection of proverbs (II a. D.), quotes the following verse he attributes to Archilochus, and illustrates it by means of a passage in Ion (5.68, *Paroem. Gr. I.147.7*):

Fr. 201W      πολλὰ σὶδ' ἀλώπηξ, ἀλλ' ἐχῖνος ἐν μέγα

μέμνηται ταύτης Ἀρχίλοχος ἐν ἐπωδῇ, γραφεῖ δὲ καὶ Ὀμηρος τὸν στίχον (*Margites* fr. 5W). φησὶ δὲ καὶ Ἴων ὁ τραγικός (fr. 38)

Ἄλλ' ἐν τε χέρσω τὰς λέοντος ἦνεσα  
‡ καὶ τὰς ἐχίνου μάλλον σίζυράς τέχνας·  
ὅς εἶτ' ἂν ἄλλων θηρίων ὁσμὴν λάβη,  
στρόβιλος ἀμφ' ἀκανθαν εἰλίξας δέμας,  
κεῖται θιγεῖν τε καὶ δακεῖν ἀμήχανος.

λέγεται δὲ ἡ παροιμία ἐπὶ τῶν πανουργοτάτων.

Fr. 201W      “*the fox knows many things, but the hedgehog, one great one*”

Archilochus remembers this [proverb] in an epode, and Homer also writes the line (*Margites* fr. 5W). Ion, the tragic poet, also says (fr. 38):

“But on earth, I praise the lions’ crafts,  
not the painful ones of the hedgehog.  
For as soon as he scents other animals,  
Rolling his prickly body into a ball,  
He lies, impossible to touch or bite.”

This proverb is said with reference to the craftiest.”

This verse, according to Zenobius, belonged to an epode, as did apparently all of Archilochus’s fables. Besides Zenobius, others also quoted the line in collections of proverbs<sup>2</sup>. However, there is not to be found in Aesop, nor in any other Greek source known to us, a *Fox and Hedgehog* fable that could either include or be summed up by this phrase. Therefore, one may suppose a breach in the transmission of this fable<sup>3</sup>, since we know of some “Aesopic fables” that did not come down to us through the collections (cf. Aristotle, *Rh.* 1393b28). Another possibility is that such a fable never existed, and that, before Archilochus, this gnomic utterance had always circulated as an isolated proverb. However, between these two alternatives there is no sure choice, since, as van Dijk (1997) notes, it is very common for a fable’s moralizing phrase to start circulating independently as a proverb, or, on the other hand, for a proverb to develop into a fable.

According to Eustratius, Archilochus, Cratinus (fr. 368 K.-A), Aristotle<sup>4</sup> and Callimachus (fr. 397 Pfeiffer) attributed the *Margites* to Homer. As we know that this mock-epic poem was composed in hexameters and iambic trimeters (Hephaestion 60.2, 65.10 Consbruch), the verse that Zenobius reads in Archilochus (fr. 201W) and in “Homer” must be a fragment of the *Margites*<sup>5</sup> (Eustratius, *Comm. In Arist. Graeca* xx. 320.36):

2. Greg. Cypr. 3.44 (Paroem.Gr.i.371.11), Diogen. 3.69 (Paroem.Gr.ii.4747), Macar. 7.22, Apostol. 14.60, Arsen. 43.66. See also the scholia on *Ar. Eq.* 1065, *Lyc. Alex.* 1093 (ii.328.19 Scheer), and *Et. Gud., Et. Gen., Phot. and Suda* (sv. ἐχῆνος).

3. Cf. Bowra (1940: 26ss, 1970: 63) and Garcia Gual (1970: 419), who believes that a *Fox and Hedgehog* fable, in which the fox’s *polymathie* was criticised, was not transmitted by the tradition. *Contra*: Lasserre (1950: 62), Adrados (1955: 27, 1956-76: 40), and Campbell (1967-1982<sup>2</sup>: 160).

4. Aristotle attributes the *Margites* to Homer in the *Poetics* (1448b30) and the *Nicomachian Ethics* (6.7). In the *Poetics* (1448b), *Margites* stands in relation to comedy, as the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* do to tragedy. Cf. also Plato (*Al.* II.147b).

5. According to Bergk (1882<sup>1</sup>, ii.418, cf. 430: ἀλλά καὶ Ἀρχιλόχοις Κρατῖνος), the proverb was to be found in the *Margites* and in Cratinus’s *Archilochoi*. Langerbeck (1958: 57) thought that the *Margites* ended with a moral (*fabula docet*), possibly expressed by this proverb. The poem narrated the adventures of a foolish antihero called Margites, and the alternation of iambic trimetres with hexameters would have had a comic effect. *Contra*: Cf. Davison (1958: 13-14), who does not accept the attribution of the fragment (P. Oxy. 2309) to the *Margites*, believing it could have belonged to one of Cratinus’ or Pigres’ works.

παράγει δ' εἰς μαρτυρίαν τοῦ εἶναι τὸν ὄλως σοφὸν ἕτερον παρὰ τὸν  
 τινα σοφὸν καὶ τινα ποίησιν Μαργίτην ὀνομαζομένην Ὀμήρου.  
 μνημονεύει δ' αὐτῆς οὐ μόνον αὐτὸς Ἀριστοτέλης ἐν τῷ πρώτῳ περὶ  
 ποιητικῆς, ἀλλὰ καὶ Ἀρχίλοχος καὶ Κρατῖνος καὶ Καλλίμαχος ἐν  
 τοῖς ἐπιγράμμασιν, καὶ μαρτυροῦσιν εἶναι Ὀμήρου τὸ ποίημα.

Supposing the *Margites* existed only in the sixth century, it is possible (1) that Archilochus had quoted an earlier version of the poem<sup>6</sup>, (2) that the proverb was widely known and Archilochus heard it elsewhere, or (3) that Archilochus composed the verse himself<sup>7</sup>. In case the verse was part of a pre-existent fable or was known as an isolated proverb, what could have been its context and meaning in Archilochus?

Zenobius, after the quotations, says that the proverb is mentioned with reference to “the craftiest” (*tôn panougotátōn*). Although this is one of the fox’s most common epithets, in this case, however, Zenobius seems to be qualifying the hedgehog as “crafty” (*panourgōs*)<sup>8</sup>, for his comment comes after Ion’s verses (cf. Athenaeus 91d) in which the ways of the aggressive lion and the defensive hedgehog are compared. One may also note that it is under the “hedgehog” (*ekhinos*) entry that the lexicographers (cf. n.1) quote the proverb, and that Diogenianus (3.69, *Paroem.Gr.ii.47.17*) does not relate the morale to “the craftiest”, but to the “most prudent” (*epi tôn periphronountōn*), perhaps to avoid placing the hedgehog, beside the wily fox, in the class of the *panourgōi*.

Plutarch, however, in his essay on *The Intelligence of Animals* (*sollert. anim.* 16 p. 971a-e)<sup>9</sup>, does not mention the “crafts” (*panourgia*) of the fox, wolf, crane and jackdaw, since he finds these obvious. But after describing those of mules, partridges, hares, bears and hinds, he declares that (*sollert., anim.* 16 p. 971e-f):

Τῶν δὲ χερσαίων ἐχίνων ἡ μὲν ὑπερ αὐτῶν ἄμυνα καὶ φυλακὴ  
 παροιμίαν πεποίηκε

πόλλ' οἶδ' ἀλώπηξ, ἀλλ' ἐχῖνος ἐν μέγα

προσιούσης γὰρ αὐτῆς, ὡς φησιν ὁ Ἴων,

6. Hauvette (1905: 144), Bowra (1940, 1970: 65), Lasserre (1950: 62), Adrados (1955: 27, 1956-76: 40), Treu (1959: 239), Usener (1965: 112) and Campbell (1967-1982<sup>2</sup>: 160) maintain that Archilochus quotes *Margites*.

7. Bodson (1987: 56, 58) believes that Archilochus’ trimeter soon became a proverb, or that the phrase was already proverbial before him, although she also finds it possible that the author of the *Margites* quoted Archilochus. For Davison (1958: 13), however, Archilochus probably would not have taken the verse from the *Margites*. According to Langerbeck (1958: 34), following Bergk (cf. n. 4), the verse could have been in Cratinus’ *Archilochoi*.

8. There is also the possibility that Zenobius was speaking of both animals (fox and hedgehog) as the “wisest”.

9. Cf. Schol. ad Lyc. *Alex.1093* (ii.328.19 Scheer).

στρόβιλος ἀμφ' ἀκανθαν εἰλίξας δέμας,  
κεῖται θιγεῖν τε καὶ δακεῖν ἀμήχανος.

“The manner by which hedgehogs defend and protect themselves occasioned a proverb:

“*the fox knows many things, but the hedgehog, one great one*”

for when the fox comes near, as Ion says,

‘Rolling his prickly body into a ball,  
He lies impossible to touch or bite.’

Further on, Plutarch (*sollert. anim.* 16 p.971f-972<sup>a</sup>) tells us how, in autumn, the hedgehog shakes the vines with its paws and then rolls on the grapes, gathering them on his quills. When he is covered with fruit, he goes (as if he were a walking bunch of grapes) down into his hole to feed his young<sup>10</sup>. Plutarch also describes the hedgehog’s weather forecasting abilities, mentioned by Aristotle (*HA* 9.6, p.612b4ss)<sup>11</sup>. The hedgehog’s lair has two exits, one facing south, the other north. When he feels the wind will change, he runs to close one hole and to open the other. Through observation of the hedgehog’s movements, a man from Cyzicus became a renowned meteorologist<sup>12</sup>.

Plutarch does not attribute fr. 201W either to Archilochus (whose poetry he was well acquainted with, and quoted frequently), or to Homer. Like the proverb collections, Plutarch quotes Ion, although he omits three verses of the quotation, present in the paroemiographers, in order to “explain” the proverb. For the verses he left out were those in which the hedgehog is contrasted to the lion, and which would not allow him to introduce the passage saying that this is what happens when the hedgehog meets the fox (and not the lion): the “big thing” the hedgehog knows is how to defend himself from the fox. And Plutarch has no doubt that it was the hedgehog’s form of defence that occasioned the proverb.

Among the fierce animal combats in nature, Oppian (*Hal.* II.359-388) describes the fight between the hedgehog and the snake. When a hedgehog meets a snake, it rolls itself up in a prickly ball. Because of this shield, the snake is unable to bite the hedgehog, which starts to roll quickly over it, piercing

10. Cf. also in Aelian (*NA* 3.10), Pliny the Elder (*NH* 8.133), Schol. ad Lyc. *Alex.* 1093 (ii.328.19 Scheer), and *A.P.* 6.169 *infra*.

11. Pliny (*NH* 8.133, 138) says the same of squirrels.

12. In Aristotle, the man is from Byzantium, but see *sollert. anim.* (16 p. 979b), where Plutarch mentions both (“the hedgehog from Cyzicus, or Byzantium”).

its skin. Then the snake wraps itself around the hedgehog, squeezing and biting it with all its strength. Although the quills penetrate its flesh, the snake doesn't let the hedgehog loose. Sometimes the snake kills the hedgehog in its embrace, and both of them die. At other times, the hedgehog saves himself, and leaves with the snake's skin and blood still clinging to its quills<sup>13</sup>.

Besides the fox and the snake, man is also one of the hedgehog's predators. The hedgehog was hunted for its skin and quills, used for carding wool (Pliny *HN* 8.133-35), and in a Hellenistic epigram we hear that (*AP* 6.169)<sup>14</sup>:

Κώμαυλος τὸν ἐχῖνον ἰδὼν ἐπὶ νῶτα φέροντα  
 ῥᾶγας ἀπέκτεινεν τῷδ' ἐπὶ θειλοπέδῳ·  
 αὐτήγας δ' ἀνέθηκε φιλακρήτῳ Διονύσῳ  
 τὸν τὰ Διονύσου δῶρα λείζόμενον.

“Comaulus, seeing the hedgehog carrying  
 grapes on its spines, slew it in this vineyard,  
 and having dried it, he dedicated it to  
 Dionysus, who loves untempered wine,  
 the spoiler of Dionysus' gift”.<sup>15</sup>

## COMMENTARIES

The verse (fr. 201W) presents no textual difficulties<sup>16</sup>, and the generally accepted view is that, just as the poet speaks through animals in other epodes, in this case the “lyric I” (identified by most with the poet's own person) speaks through the hedgehog, the animal which the proverb favours<sup>17</sup>. But why couldn't the “lyric I” be represented by the fox, the animal with which it is identified in other epodes, and by independent testimonies (cf. Bowra 1970 *infra*)? Perhaps the critics have felt an unconscious sympathy for the oppressed hedgehog, and a grudge against the fox's *poikilia* or *polymathia* that they may associate, as Plato and others did, with the sophists<sup>18</sup>. For it may even be possible that

13. In Marlowe's *Faust* (chap.19), the devil is described as a combination of these two enemies (and a worm): a serpent with the prickly back of the hedgehog.

14. In another epigram, very similar to this one (*AP* 6.45), the hedgehog is offered alive to Dionysus. Cf. Page (1981: 326).

15. Translation by Page (1981: 326), with “porcupine” replaced by “hedgehog”.

16. Liebel (1812, 1818<sup>2</sup>), Schneidewin (1838), Edmonds (1931), Lasserre (1950, 1958), Adrados (1956-76), Treu (1959), Tarditi (1968), Gerber (1999).

17. Lasserre (1950: 75), Treu (1959: 239), Rankin (1977: 91), Bodson (1987: 58), Gerber (1999: 217 “some identify the fox with Archilochus, but it is more probably the hedgehog, unless neither refers to the poet himself”).

18. Cf. Chapt. 2 (Commentaries on the *Fox and Eagle* and the *Fox and Monkey Fables*),

Plato had this proverb (or verse) in mind when he discussed his guardians' education (*Rep.* 423e):

οὔτοι, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, ὦ γαθὲ Ἀδείμαντε, ὡς δόξειεν ἄν τις, ταῦτα πολλὰ καὶ μεγάλα αὐτοῖς προστάττομεν, ἀλλὰ πάντα φαῦλα, εἰάν τὸ λεγόμενον ἐν μέγα φυλάττωσι, μᾶλλον δ' ἄντι μεγάλου ἱκανόν. τί τοῦτο; ἔφη. τὴν παιδείαν, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, καὶ τροφήν.<sup>19</sup>

Among the more recent readings, Lasserre (1950: 51) inserts the verse (fr. 201W) in “Archilochus’ bitterest iambic epode” (Ep. 1). By means of Latin texts that he considers as more (*Catalepton* 13) or less (Horace *Ep.* 6) faithful translations of Archilochus’ poem, along with other indirect testimonies (Arist. *Or.* II.380 Dindorf; Oenomaos p. 57 Vallette, Eusebius *Prep. Ev.* 5.33), Lasserre (1950, 1958) constructs an intricate and most unlikely narrative, in which he disposes the fragments 201, 303, (246 Bergk), 269, 270, 294, 240, 43, 167, 206, 40W, in this sequence<sup>20</sup>. In this epode, Archilochus would have reproached an “effeminate” *Kheidos* and, in verse fr.201W, “being attacked by an enemy who enjoys some temporary advantage, the poet says he will know how to defend himself, and starts to counter-attack immediately (Lasserre 1950: 55, 61)<sup>21</sup>.”

Adrados (1955: 25-28, 1956-76), who generally follows Lasserre’s reconstruction of the epodes, expressed some reserve with respect to this one. For although he agrees with the comparisons made between Archilochus’s fragments, Horace (*Ep.* 6) and the 13<sup>th</sup> *Catalepton*, and the overall interpretation of the testimonies, Adrados (1955: 28, 1956-76: 40) does not accept the arguments Lasserre extracts from the 13<sup>th</sup> *Catalepton*, nor all details concerning the “imitations”. The only thing he takes as certain is that Archilochus censured a lascivious (*múklos*) horn piper (*keraiúles*). Adrados (1956-76: 40) suggests that the fragments 43, 216, 25, 67, and 210W might have also belonged to this epode.

In Fränkel’s (1975: 140) interpretation, “Archilochus only believes in the reality of direct action... Therefore, the poet rolls himself up into a ball like the

Plato (*R.* II.365) and the Schol ad Aristoph. *Eq.* 1068, where the proverb is quoted with respect to the epithet of the “much knowing” fox (*polyidrin*). In the same sense, see Langerbeck (1958: 42) according to whom, in the *Margites*, the fox stands for the eponymous protagonist while the hedgehog stands for his adversary, the former being a “*sophós*”, and Radermacher (*RE* 1705 s.v. *Margites*) who calls Margites a foolish *polyprágmon*: “Seine Besonderheit war, dass er viele Dinge betrieb, die er zu verstehen glaubte, ohne sie recht zu verstehen.” (fr.3).

19. Shorey (1937: 423 n.f) noted that Plato’s proverbial “one great thing” could have come from here (Arch. fr. 201W), quoting also Plato (*Pol.* 297<sup>a</sup>: μέγχιπερ ἄν ἐν μέγα φυλάττωσι).

20. Cf. Masson (1952: 313) for a detailed criticism of the reconstruction.

21. Lasserre (1950: 62): “S’il se compare à un hérisson surpris par le renard, c’est que l’image était déjà proverbiale.”



hedgehog and shoots his quills in all directions”. Fränkel (1975: 140), and others<sup>22</sup> compare this fragment (fr. 201W) to fr. 126W:

ἐν δ' ἐπίσταμαι μέγα,  
τὸν κακῶς <μ' > ἔρδοντα δεινοῖς ἀνταμείβεσθαι κακοῖς.<sup>23</sup>

“A great thing I know:  
to answer with terrible evils he who does me evil.”

According to them, this was the hedgehog’s and the poet’s “great art”, and in terms of morality, a norm in antiquity: harming enemies (*lex talionis*, cf. Blundell 1989). The “great” but “one thing” the poet would have used as a weapon was the iambic poems he directed against the Lycambides and other foes (Campbell, 1967-1982<sup>2</sup>: 160). However, Fränkel’s reading (1975: 140) has far-reaching implications:

“Under the strange but vivid image of the hedgehog, for the first time in European literature the ego becomes a polar opposite to the non-ego. The self whose existence is threatened with dissolution and destruction by recognition of the “ephemeral” nature of man, affirms its own being by conflict and defence against others”.

We need not resume the criticism of this romantic reading of the Greek lyric poets and of the so-called “Discovery of the self” in the poetry of Archilochus<sup>24</sup>, but one should note that the hedgehog does not “shoot his quills in all directions”. This is an erroneous notion the ancients held about the porcupine (*Hystrix*), not of the hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*)<sup>25</sup>. In its fight against the fox, the hedgehog keeps still, rolled in a ball. Therefore, there is no reason why one should compare the two fragments, 201 and 126W, in spite of the similar phrasing (*hèn méga*), because in fragment 201W the hedgehog does no harm to his enemy, but remains passive<sup>26</sup>. It is however true that if one touches the hedgehog, he may hurt himself, and that in the fight against the snake described by Oppian (*Hal.* II. 359-388, cf. *supra*), the hedgehog seems to play a more active part, and might even come out as the victor. However,

22. Bergk (1882<sup>1</sup>, ii.418), Diehl (1926<sup>1</sup>, 1936<sup>2</sup>, 1952<sup>3</sup>), Bowra (1940, 1970), Tarditi (1968).

23. Cf. Pfeifer’s correction of με δρῶντα to μ' ἔρδοντα.

24. Cf. Corrêa (1998).

25. According to Herodotus (IV.192) and Oppian (*Cyn.* II:599-600, III.391-406), the porcupine (ὑστρίγγων, *Hystrix cristata*), a relative of the hedgehog, shoots its spines like shafts against its aggressors.

26. Cf. Empédocles (31B83: αὐτὰρ ἐχίνους ὄξυβελεῖς χαῖται νώτοις ἐπιπεφρίκασι).

against the fox, the hedgehog is not only passive, but also defeated (cf. Aelian *NA* 6.24, 6.64).

Bowra examined Archilochus' verse in two articles (1940, 1970). We will take in account the second, a revised and corrected version of the first. He notes that Zenobius qualified both, the fox and the hedgehog, as “the craftiest” (*panourgótatoi*)<sup>27</sup>. If this is a common epithet for the fox (cf. Arist. *H.A.* 488b20), Bowra (1970: 60) was surprised by the use of the term (which he considers derogatory) for the hedgehog, a creature admired in antiquity for its “weather forecasting” (cf. *supra*), and for storing food for the winter<sup>28</sup>. However, as Bowra (1970: 60) himself realizes, the hedgehog's form of defence, his quills and the way he made himself impenetrable to most enemies, was also admired as a kind of “cunning” (*panourgía*). In this sense, Bowra (1970: 60) quotes the Scholium on Lycophron (*Alex.*1093, ii.328.19 Scheer) and Aelian (*NA* 6.64), that compare the fox and the hedgehog for their wily ways (*ponería*):<sup>29</sup>

ἡ ἀλώπηξ πονηρὸν ζῶον ἐστίν, ἔνθεν τοι καὶ κερδαλέην οἱ ποιηταὶ καλεῖν φιλοῦσιν αὐτήν· πονηρὸν δὲ καὶ χερσαῖος ἐχίνος ἐστίν. Καὶ ὁ μὲν εαυτὸν συνειλήσας κείται, θεασάμενος ἤκουσαν τὴν ἀλώπεκα, ἡ δὲ χανεῖν τε καὶ ἐνδακεῖν οὐ δυναμένη, κῆρα οὖρησεν αὐτοῦ ἐς τὸ στόμα· ὁ δὲ ἀποπνίγεται, τοῦ πνεύματος ἔνδον ἐκ τῆς συνειλήσεως κατεσχημένου καὶ ἐπιρρέοντός οἱ τοῦ προειρημένου, καὶ μέντοι <καὶ> τὸν τρόπον τοῦτον κακὸν κακῆ περιελθοῦσα τὸν ἐχίνον ἡ ἀλώπηξ ἤρηκεν αὐτόν.

Bowra (1970: 61) believes this is the form of defence Archilochus has in mind, and calls it “active defence”. He agrees with Lasserre regarding the comparisons with Horace (*Ep.* 6) and the 13<sup>th</sup> *Catalepton*, but declares he could not say whether “Archilochus” is the fox or the hedgehog (Bowra 1970: 62-63). As he says (Bowra 1970: 63-64), it would be natural for the poet to compare himself to the fox, since this happens in two other epodes, is attested by secondary sources (Plato *R.* 2.365c), and would not have been, according to Dio Chrysostomus (*Or.* 55.10), degrading, but on the contrary, “almost ennobling”.

Therefore, taking into account the hedgehog's *panourgía*, that is knowing how to protect itself when under attack, along with the fact that it is an “honourable and respectable creature” (unlike the treacherous eagle and presumptuous monkey), Bowra (1970: 64-66) does not choose between the alternatives, but suggests that Archilochus has traits in common with both animals and therefore combines their qualities:

27. *Contra*: West.

28. Cf. Schol. ad Lyc. *Alex.* 1093 (ii.328.19 Scheer) and Pliny (*NH* 8.37.133).

29. Bowra could have also mentioned Plutarch (*sollert., anim.* 16 p. 971e-f), on the *panourgía* of the hedgehog.



“So long as he is in pursuit of his enemies, he will behave as the Fox, but when they attack him, he will turn to the defensive like the Hedgehog (...) he proclaims both his resource in attack and his stubborn resistance in defence”

## CONCLUSION

Of the modern readings, Bowra's is the most interesting. He seems, however, to make an unnecessary effort to reconcile the sympathy the proverb expresses towards the hedgehog with the fact that “lyric I”, in other poems, enjoys the fox roles. As Bowra (1970: 65) notes, the one great thing (*hèn méga*) is what is most important in “the speaker's mind”. But then one should ask: *who* is the speaker? For if none of the sources indicate who it is, why should we suppose it must necessarily be the *poet*, or the “lyric I”? The poems, and particularly the epodes of Archilochus contain dialogues between the characters<sup>30</sup>. One may imagine that the hedgehog, when meeting the fox, brags about his skills in self-defence. This could even have been a challenge. However, we have no clues on the poem's content, neither on how it ended.

Bowra (1970: 65), like others, thought it was “natural” to read “the one great thing” the hedgehog knows, as “harming enemies” (fr. 126W). However, we have already pointed out that it is not possible to compare 201W and 126W on these grounds, since the hedgehog's skill is a form of defence, not of attack. Besides, in Ion's verses (in Zenobius and others), a contrast is drawn between the aggressive lion and the defensive hedgehog. If Bowra (1970: 65) foresaw this argument (“The contrast between the Fox and the Hedgehog is not on this scale, since the Fox lacks the heroic stature of the Lion and is the embodiment not of the offensive spirit, but of cunning”), this still does not explain why it is that in all ancient narratives concerning the strife between the fox and the hedgehog, the fox is always the aggressor who wins the fight. The hedgehog may sometimes defeat the snake, but never the fox.

Therefore, although both animals are cunning, and the proverb favours the hedgehog, one possibility is that in Archilochus' epode, as in nature, the fox comes out victorious in the end. In this case, if in the *Fox and Monkey* fable the fox's cunning outdoes pretension, and in the *Fox and Eagle* fable it exacts justice, what kind of conquest could it have obtained in its dealings with the hedgehog?

In the first place, it is difficult to believe that, in this epode, the two animals would have been friends<sup>31</sup>, in spite of the fable narrated by Aristotle

30. Cf. Arist. (*Rh.* 1418b24), the *Fox and Eagle Fable* (fr. 172-181) and the *Fox and Monkey Fable* (fr. 185-187).

31. Cf. Bowra (1970: 61), and the natural hostility between the fox and hedgehog

(*Rhet.* 1393b28) and Plutarch (*an seni gerenda resp.* 12 p.790c-d). After having declared that the elderly who are experienced and wise should not “abandon public-life as if it were a worn-out woman”<sup>32</sup>, Plutarch (*an seni gerenda resp.* 12 p.790c-d) quotes an “Aesopic fable”:

ἡ μὲν γὰρ Αἰσώπειος ἀλώπηξ τὸν ἐχῖνον οὐκ εἶα τοὺς κρότωνας ἀντὴς ἀφαιρεῖν βουλόμενον· ἄν γὰρ τούτους ἔφη, ἴμεστοὺς ἀπαλλάξῃς, ἕτεροι προσίασι πεινῶντες· Τὴν δὲ πολιτείαν αἰεὶ τοὺς γέροντας ἀποβάλλουσιν ἀνατίμπλασθαι νέων ἀνάγκη διψῶντων δόξης καὶ δυνάμεως, νοῦν δὲ πολιτικὸν οὐκ ἔχόντων.<sup>33</sup>

This fable, however, does not seem to bear any relation with the proverb in Archilochus (fr. 201W). Because the “lyric I” presents itself in another poem (according to Lucian *Pseudolog.* 1) as a cicada (fr.223W), we know he assumed other forms of disguise, besides that of the fox. But since in the two fables (fr. 172-181, 224; 185-187, 225W) the fox (identified as the “poet” by external sources) wins in the end, when in Archilochus two animals are involved and one of them is a fox, it seems to be more likely to take the fox for the “lyric I”. Who could then be the hedgehog? An interesting hypothesis was brought forward by E. Bowie, who suggests that one of Lycambes’ daughters, likening herself to a hedgehog, could have said this verse in a dialogue with the “lyric I” (=fox).

If we wish to take this hypothesis further, we may note that the term *ekhinos* bears suggestive meanings and connotations<sup>34</sup>. The hedgehog and the sea-urchin were both called *ekhinos*. According to Cherniss (1968: 439), “the ancients considered the sea-urchin<sup>35</sup> as the maritime correspondent of the hedgehog because of its spikes.” But these two animals had more traits in common. Plutarch (*sollert., anim.* 16 p. 979b) says that sea-urchins (*ekhinoi*), like hedgehogs, can foresee changes in the weather. Oppian (*Hal.* II.225), observing this same phenomenon, affirms that sea-urchins have “intelligence and cunning” (*nóos kai mētis*): when a tempest approaches, they lay rocks on their backs to avoid being overturned by the waves (for that is what they fear most).

More relevant are the sexual connotations the word involves. As Chantraine (1968, s.v.) says, “all forms derived [from the term *ekhinos*] evoke the spikes of the hedgehog/sea-urchin, or its form”. Thus, an “*ekhinos*” is also a “cavity” or “wide-mouthed vase” (Erotianos p.14.18 Nachmanson). Henderson (1975: 142)

(Plutarch *sollert., anim.* 16 p. 971e-f, Aelian *NA* 6.24, 6.64). The antagonism between the two adversaries may be also heard in the contrasting assonances of o/e: πὸλλ’ οἶδ’ ἀλώπηξ, ἀλλ’ ἐχῖνος ἐν μέγα.

32. Plutarch (*an seni gerenda resp.* 12 p.790c-d): προέσθαι καὶ καταλιπεῖν ὡσπερ γυναῖκα τὴν πολιτείαν καταχρησάμενον.

33. In Persia the hedgehog was sacred to Ormazd, because it cleansed the earth of Ahriman’ creeping creatures (Cf. How & Wells, p. 118, 140.3).

34. Cf. ἐχῖνος in *Gud., Et. Gen., Phot. and Suda.*

35. *Echinus esculentus* (cf. A. 530<sup>a</sup>34, Hesychius, s.v., Athen. 91b)

lists *ekhinos* among terms employed with a double *entendre* for female sexual organs, quoting a passage from Aristophanes (*Lysistrata* 1169ss.), where there is a play of words on the *Ekhinai* (islands), and *Lysistrata*'s pubis.

Therefore, on a purely speculative plane, we may imagine that the hedgehog in Archilochus' epode represents one of Lycambes' daughters who, at this moment of the narrative (fr. 201W), boasts of knowing how to protect herself from the fox's ("lyric I") assaults, making herself impenetrable. In this case, she would not meet a happy end, as Aelian's description of such an encounter may suggest (*NA* 6.24):

δολερὸν χρῆμα ἡ ἀλώπηξ. ἐπιβουλεύει γοῦν τοῖς χερσαίοις ἐχίνοις τὸν τρόπον τοῦτον. ὀρθοὺς αὐτοὺς καταγωνίσασθαι ἀδύνατός ἐστι. τὸ δὲ αἴτιον, αἱ ἀκάνθαι ἀνείργουσι αὐτήν. ἡ δὲ ἡσύχως καὶ πεφεισμένως <ἐχουσα> τοῦ ἑαυτῆς στόματος ἀνατρέπει αὐτοὺς καὶ κλίνει ὑπίους, ἀνασχίσασά τε ἐσθίει βράδιως τοὺς τέως φοβερούς.<sup>36</sup>

In the *Fox and Eagle* fable, the eagle was something Archilochus' fox could not reach, in this verse, the hedgehog is something he can't lay hold of. For the hedgehog is called the "unconquerable" (or "uncontrollable", *akrátetos*)<sup>37</sup>, since it is impossible to hold because of his quills, and so is money (Aelian *V.H.* 4.14, fr. 302 Gerber):

πολλάκις τὰ κατ' ὄβηλον μετὰ πολλῶν πόνων συναχθέντα χρήματα κατὰ τὸν Ἀρχίλοχον εἰς πόρινης γυναικὸς ἔντερον καταίρουσι. ὥσπερ γὰρ ἐχῖνον λαβεῖν μὲν βράδιον, συνέχειν δὲ χαλεπὸν, οὕτω καὶ τὰ χρήματα.<sup>38</sup>

And we may say the same of this fragment of Archilochus. For those who try to read it today out of context, it rolls itself up like a hedgehog, and perhaps not even with all cunning may one disclose some of its meaning without doing it violence.

36. Compare the foxes' method (ἀνατρέπει αὐτοὺς καὶ κλίνει ὑπίους) to that of the "lyric I" in fr. 196<sup>a</sup>W, who takes the girl "as a frightened hind" (v. 47), constraining her in his arms and, lying her down (fr. 196<sup>a</sup>.42-44: ...παρθένον δ' ἐν ἀνθε[σί]ν / τηλεθάεσσι λαβῶν ἔκλινα).

37. *Lex. Gud.s.v.*: ...ἐχῖνος, κατ' ἀντίφρασιν, διὰ τὸ μὴ δύνασθαι ἐχεσθαι διὰ τὰς ἀκάνθας, ὃ ἐστὶν ἀκράτητος.

38. Cf. ἐχῖν (serpent), in Hercher and West (fr. 302W), instead of ἐχῖνος.

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