

SOCIETAS DANICA INDAGATIONIS ANTIQVITATIS ET MEDIAEVI

CLASSICA  
ET MEDIAEVALIA

REVUE DANOISE DE PHILOGIE  
ET D'HISTOIRE

PUBLIÉE AVEC LE CONCOURS DE

SIGNE ISAGER · HOLGER FRIIS JOHANSEN  
BIRGER MUNK OLSEN · JENS ERIK SKYDSGAARD  
OLE L. SMITH

PAR

OTTO STEEN DUE

Tirage à part

VOL. XXXV

1984

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LIBRAIRIE MUSEUM TUSCULANUM  
COPENHAGUE 1984

# THE EARLIEST INFLUENCES OF INDIAN FABLE ON MEDIEVAL LATIN WRITING

BY  
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It is well known that Spain acted as a link between the fable tradition of Indian origin and the western world, as may be seen from the translations into Castilian ordered by King Alfonso the Wise around the middle of the 13th century. Thus the translation of the *Pañcatantra*, under the name of *Calila e Dimna*, dates from 1251; the book called *Sendebār*, doubtless derived from a lost *Siddhapati*, dates from 1253. In both cases, the Indian tradition had come down to the Arabs through Persia. It was, in effect, the Arabic texts that were translated for the first time into a western language. Moreover, this occurred not only in the two above-mentioned cases; the influence of the Indo-Perso-Arabic tradition was likewise propagated through Spain from approximately the same dates in cases such as *Barlaam and Josaphat* and *The Thousand and One Nights* among others.

The proliferation at a later date of translations of these works into the European languages is well known, even into Latin, as is also the influence of this literature on European literature, Spanish literature holding pride of place, as from the middle of the 13th century. We shall not go further into this matter here<sup>1</sup>.

Our intention in this paper is quite different: we shall refer to the influence of the Arabic fable of Indian tradition at an earlier date than the above, an influence, therefore, independent of the translations mentioned.

This paper will be centred on the early European medieval Latin fable and its projection in the French *Roman de Renart* and similar works written in Germanic languages. For it is a well known fact and requires no comment on our behalf, that the Aragonese Jewish convert, Pedro

Alfonso, knew the Arabic sources that were later translated into Castilian and other languages. The Iberian Peninsula was the most direct point of contact between the two cultures: the fact that this influence was exerted has nothing strange in it and, I repeat, is only too well known.<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand, as far as the possible influence of the Indian fable on medieval Latin fable north of the Pyrenees and on the French, German, Dutch and English fables, is concerned, although these latter are related to the former, there is almost total darkness on the matter today. The great debate on the origins of the *Roman de Renart* and other versions of the same subject has set the Germanistic folklorist thesis of Jacob Grimm<sup>3</sup> and his followers (L. Sudre, K. Veretzsch, G. Paris, A. Graf, A. Schossing, etc.) against the "Aesopic" thesis of L. Foulet<sup>4</sup> which is today supported by the most representative writers: J. Nogués<sup>5</sup> and J. Flinn<sup>6</sup>. This latter attitude is obviously correct. Although there may be traces of local traditions in certain details, as likewise unmistakable influences from the medieval environment, the fables of the *Roman de Renart* fundamentally come from the Aesopic tradition which came down to the Middle Ages through Phaedrus and Avianus above all; the works of these writers gave rise to an abundant succession of medieval Latin fables. There is often a clear influence on them of versions prior to the date of the first *branches* of the *Roman de Renart* dated between 1175 and 1180; the so-called *Romulus* and its derivations, the imitators of Avianus, other fable writers collected by L. Hervieux in his monumental work *Les fabulistes Latins*<sup>7</sup>; the Latin animal epics, namely *Ecbasis Captivi* (c. 1039-1046), *Ysengrimus* (the main source of the *Roman de Renart*, prior to 1148). There are still other works more or less contemporary to the *Roman*, which, whether they influenced it or not, derive in the ultimate analysis from the same ancient tradition: the *Speculum Stultorum* (c. 1179-1180), the fables of Marie de France (1170-1190), those of Odo Ceritonensis (beginning of the 13th century), particularly.

Of course, it is not our intention either to research in detail the western sources of the *Roman de Renart* or the Latin animal epic prior to this and Marie de France. What we wish to state here is that, whilst we acknowledge the existence of these western sources, it is our opinion that this type of fable literature of the 11th, 12th, and early 13th centuries at the

same time followed a second model: that of the fable tradition of Indian origin which came to Europe through the Arabs. That both sources merged in the European fable of that time is by no means odd; this is what happened when, for example, in the *Libro del Buen Amor* by the Arcipreste de Hita and in *Conde Lucanor* by D. Juan Manuel, the two traditions merged at a later date.

Oddly enough, the presence of an Indian tradition in early European fable writing has hardly been detected. In books such as those by Foulet, Nogués and Flinn, whom we mentioned above, all that is to be found in these works on the *Roman de Renart* are at the most comparisons here and there between certain fables of the *Roman* and other Indian ones, which it is believed, may be their source, although only in a few cases. In turn, F. P. Knapp's work<sup>8</sup>, the most recent and complete study of the *Ecbasis*, the *Ysengrimus* and the *Speculum*, proceeds in the same manner: it points to a few cases of possible Indian influence. But he never draws any type of general conclusion. Neither does he answer the following question, which is decisive: how did the Indian fable become known by European fable writers from the 11th century on, before the translations of the middle of the 13th?

Really, the only direct study I know of on the subject is a short paper by R. C. Gupta<sup>9</sup>. Once more, it is restricted to pointing out certain points of contact between European animal epic and Indian fable in specific cases. In sum, a few parallels between fables from the *Jātaka* and the *Pañcatantra*, on the one hand, and fables from the *Ysengrimus* and the *Roman de Renart* on the other. The author explicitly points out that these are merely parallels and that "it is not my aim to go into the question of direct borrowing".

The problem to my mind cannot be restricted to pointing out a few parallels in certain fables: it is the general characteristics of the European animal epic which, it seems to me, cannot be explained without relating them to others from Indian fable. If this is so, the "parallels" mentioned between specific fables should be re-studied because there is now a clear possibility that, should they be correct, they may really be explained by the influence of Indian fable, naturally through indirect means, on European fable, merging with the "Aesopic" tradition, that is that of the Latin

fable of Greek origin. However, there will then be a last point to clear up: how, and in what way did the influence in question manage to arrive in Europe as early as the 11th century?

I am now going to consider a few aspects, summary ones of course, on the three points in question: general traits of European animal epic which lend plausibility to an Indian influence; certain fables derived from India (the list of which may eventually be enlarged by others); possible means of access to Indian fable in medieval Europe as from the 11th century (and perhaps earlier).

To begin with the first point, I believe that a serious limitation has arisen in considering the European animal epics solely from the point of view of the fables contained therein. The medieval Latin, French or German fables included in collections may of course be studied only individually with a view to determining their sources. But the animal epics are quite another matter.

If we take the *Ecbasis* and consider its structure as it has been studied by a series of authors and, finally, by Knapp<sup>10</sup>, we find in it something totally discordant with what we are used to finding in the Greco-Latin fable and which, on the other hand, is normal in Indian fable: the narration of one fable within the framework of another.<sup>11</sup> Thus, as each book of the *Pañcatantra* is really one single fable with others incorporated into it with which the animals of the fable-framework argue their points (although these incorporated fables may in turn contain others), the *Ecbasis* in the same way has a fable-framework which includes an internal fable narrated as an example or argumentation by one of the characters of the fable-framework. The parallel could not be more significant in the case of the books of the *Pañcatantra*: to say that this is an *ordo artificialis* imitated from the *Aeneid*, as Knapp<sup>12</sup> does, is to content oneself with a trivial parallel against an absolutely accurate one.

As is well known, the fable-framework refers to the calf which fled from the stable and was taken prisoner by the wolf which wanted to eat it, and was saved thanks to the cunning of the fox, the wolf finally dying. Now, at a certain point the wolf signs his anxiety about the fox's ruses and tells it to his servants, the otter and the hedgehog. What he tells them is the story of what happened to another wolf, an ancestor of his and a victim precisely of the fox's cunning. This is the internal fable: that of the

court of the lion, who, being ill, orders the fox to be killed for not coming to his call, it being the fox in the end who convinces the lion that he should cure himself with the wolf's skin.

There is no lack in the internal fable of allusions to other fables or animal themes: thus in the wolf's dream (231ff., the theme of the two he-goats), in the story of the fox's pilgrimage (446ff., the theme of the messenger *fulica*), in that of the fox's "reign" (an alternated song from the nightingale, parrot and swan, 938ff.).

But there are other important factors to be added:

a) – The ensemble of the fable-framework and the internal fable is in turn implanted within the author's narration about the aims of his composition (1-68 and 1224-1229). The author is a monk who repents of his idleness whilst others work and decides to work himself by writing the pious fable of the calf and the wolf, that is he attempts to reform himself through work. The fable refers to the Easter feast and in it the calf symbolizes the wayward Christian whom the forces of evil want to devour. These evil forces are symbolized by the wolf which is finally overcome. As in other medieval fables, the wolf is the bad monk who rejects the abstinence symbolized by the dishes brought by his servants (fruit from the hedgehog, fish from the otter) and who wants to eat meat by devouring the calf: *nunc comedes vitulum, sanctum spernens monachatum ... nomine tu monachus* says the otter to him (302ff.). That is, the fable of the calf is a lesson within a framework, as is habitual in Indian fable and in its western imitations: the *Disciplina Clericalis*, *Conde Luconor*, etc.

b) – It is certainly a lesson within a monastic environment, to be precise Benedictine, and more accurately in the region of Trier. However, the internal fable with its theme of the lion's court contains a specifically political lesson, as do the various books of the *Pañcatantra* and, more specifically, the first in which the lion and his servants, the two jackals, appear. Witness the advice of the fox to the king (514ff.), the dialogue of the leopard and the hedgehog on the subject of service to the king (670ff.), etc.

c) – The theme of the lion's court, with its hierarchies, has, of course, medieval elements, but its origin lies in Indian fable rather than in Greco-Latin fable. Numerous specific details also go back to Indian fable: the

very theme of the animal's skin supposedly used to cure another but really to kill the former (see below, in Indian tradition the heart is used), as likewise the fable themes mentioned above. I also believe that the theme of the wolf-monk (like that of the cat-monk in isolated fables) is of oriental tradition. See below on this matter.

It seems obvious to me that in the Latin Middle Ages one could not go from the odd, isolated fable to the complex narration in which the fable is recounted as instruction and which contains another fable within which it is an exemplification, without previous knowledge of this procedure in Indian fable. The Indian elements (mingled with other Greco-Latin ones) in the internal fable which we have mentioned and which we shall return to later, make this hypothesis even more plausible.

I cannot perceive such clear traces of oriental influence in the composition of medieval Latin epic either in the *Ysengrimus* of Nivard de Gante or in the diverse *branches* of the *Chanson de Renart* (beginning with the oldest, II and Va, by Pierre de Saint-Cloud). The diverse fables which follow each other in these poems narrate to a certain extent the "biography" of the fox and, above all, the hostility between her and the wolf. It does not seem doubtful that the *chansons de geste* have influenced these poems as a model, the latter being a satirical counterpart of the former. The composition of the *Ysengrimus*, in which books IV and V 1-1128 make up a story of previous events told by the bear whose verses the boar reads, does not really contribute anything new as far as a well-known traditional device is concerned. In any case, the *Ysengrimus* culminates with the death of the wolf, that is, with something which corresponds to the internal fable of the *Ecbasis*: what has been done is that it is placed after other fables which occur prior to it. Basically, with its theme of the wolf's monkhood, the lion's court and the death of the former, this is an enlargement of the fable model prior to the *Ecbasis*. The wolf's death is preceded by a long tale in which diverse animals intervene. There is certainly an influence of the usual procedure which consists of a sum of adventures in *chansons de geste* and biographical stories. The *Roman* develops this model.

I consider the Indian model to be clearer and more direct in the *Speculum Stultorum*, the story of the travels and adventures of the ass Burnellus written towards the end of the 12th century by Nigellus de Longo

Campo (Nigel de Longchamp). According to J. H. Mozley and R. Raymo, the editors of this work<sup>13</sup>, its model is to be found in Avianus's fable "The ass and the lion's skin" (derived from 199 H.) quoted in v 57ff. However, whilst not wishing to put this and other older elements to doubt, as likewise medieval ones such as the *Ysengrimus*, I believe that the general plot of the work derives from the *Ass* of which the well-known versions of Lucianus and Apuleius have come down to us. For in this work an ass (really the author speaking in the first person transformed into an ass) likewise travels the world criticising it from quite a different viewpoint to that of the ruling social strata.<sup>14</sup>

Nevertheless, this is not the sole influence. Both Knapp<sup>15</sup> and Mozley-Raymo<sup>16</sup> look for the origin of the apologue on ingratitude in the *Pañcatantra* in vv 1804-1912. This is not the most important factor for me, but that in different circumstances the ass and other characters narrate diverse fables among which is the above mentioned. This is the oriental procedure of inserting fables within a framework and of making the intervening characters of a fable narrative argue their points with fables; given that Nigel knew the *Pañcatantra* as we postulated above, it is without doubt from there that he takes the procedure, as for example, the Arcipreste de Hita later takes it in the dispute between Doña Garofa and Trota-conventos. On the other hand, the old *Ass* tells adventures of the hero which are really fables but not debates of this type.

Thus, in the *Speculum* when the ass Burnellus asks the doctor Galianus for a longer tail, he gets a negative reply in the form of a fable: that of the two cows whose tails were trapped by the ice. Later it is the Sicilian Arnoldus who replies with a fable (that of the presbyter's son and the chicken) to Burnellus's words when he asks to be instructed in the liberal arts. Various other fables and tales are told in similar contexts.

It would therefore not seem doubtful that at least the *Ecbasis* and the *Speculum* follow Indian models, reflected both in specific fables and above all in the structure of these works. But I believe that this model is also reflected, perhaps in a clearer and more decisive way, in the fact that in the medieval fable as from the *Ysengrimus* onwards, the animals have proper names. This is very important, for if in the case of this poem and the *Roman de Renart* arguments based on the composition are weaker, then they are backed up in this way (in the *Ecbasis* the animals are still

without names, in the *Speculum* we have already seen that this was not the case).

What seems quite remarkable is the scant interest given to the fact that the medieval fable, contrary to the Greco-Latin one, gives proper names to the animals therein. A counterpart has been perceived in them to the proper names of the heroes of the *chansons de geste*, a not erroneous idea but one which could better explain the reason for the diffusion of proper names than the origin of the same. This origin was explained by J. Grimm as springing from the "people", according to his well-known theory; G. Paris advocated that it was a question of "literary invention"; A. Schossig has to a certain extent renovated Grimm's thesis by speaking of a mythical origin for the animals, Celtic to be precise.

Another interpretation really prevails as quite obvious. If the European medieval tradition possessed knowledge of Indian fable, imitating it with regard to composition and specific fables, it would seem quite plausible that this other coincidence, the fact that in both traditions, as opposed to the Greco-Latin one, proper names should be given to the animals, cannot be casual. That is to say that it is from Indian fable that the habit of giving proper names – often of a descriptive nature – to the animals in fables, has been taken. The parodic imitation of the *chanson de geste* by the *Ysengrimus* (not yet in the *Ecbasis*) favoured this procedure without a shade of doubt.

I believe that arguing on the basis of composition or structure of the epic animal poems and of the names the animals are given is really the most conclusive in favour of the idea that the Indian fable influenced European literature at an earlier date than the Castilian translations of round about 1250. However, having stated this, the argument should be qualified by the remark that certain specific fables (included in the poems of "animal epic" or in collections) are of Indian origin. We have already pointed out the main examples, indicating on the other hand that this origin at times had already been suggested, although without drawing any general conclusions. We are here going to study the subject in a more systematic way. We shall then consider the following subject: to devise by which means Indian fable came to medieval Europe at the dates with which we are concerned here.

The study of Indian material in the successive collections or epics of

the West shows that this material had been borrowed at successive stages, that is, that there is not one sole western Indianized source which was imitated at a later date; rather, the imitation existed, but the flow of Indian elements increased later. If we begin with the *Ecbasis*, the oldest animal epic, dating from around 1039-1046, we observe that the structure of the poem is clearly influenced by Indian collections; it is highly probable that the theme of political indoctrination by the fox in the lion's court comes from the *Pañcatantra*. Yet, however, there is an essential element in Indian fable which has not yet been imitated in the *Ecbasis*: the proper names given to the animals. On the other hand, there are traces in this poem of Indian fables or fable themes, which merge with other western ones, as we have already mentioned. In the later poems fables or new elements are added to the practice of giving proper names to the animals.

The *Ecbasis* in fact has no more than one fable, which we shall discuss later, and which is that of the death of the wolf. But it does include numerous allusions to ancient fable themes, and to precisely Indian ones as we have already stated. The most explicit of these is that which appears in vv 233-234 in the wolf's dream:

Bini cardones certabant stringere fauces,  
quod mihi nulla salus mansit nec uiuida uirtus.

In fact, it seems quite clear to me, although as far as I know this has never been acknowledged, that there is an allusion here to the fable of the two he-goats and the wolf, narrated in detail in the *Ysengrimus* II 271-688 and (following this model) in the late *branche XX* (prior to 1250 in any case) of the *Roman de Renart*. However, this fable is of Indian origin as J. Nogués<sup>18</sup> clearly perceived. R. D Gupta<sup>19</sup> also noticed the parallel. It comes from the *Pañcatantra* I 6, p. 61ff.<sup>20</sup> It is clear that this text was first seen by the author of the *Ecbasis*, later by Nivard de Gante, the author of the *Ysengrimus*.

The theme of the messenger *fulica* who on her pilgrimage brings the fox news of the wolf's illness (4446ff.) seems to me explainable only in terms of the Indian theme of the *hamsah* who plays a similar role in the Indian legend in passages such as the well-known story of Nala and

Damayantī in the *Mahābhārata*. And the theme of the alternate song of the birds celebrating Easter in a sort of singing contest (931ff.) reminds one of the theme of the election of the king of birds in the *Pañcatantra* II 2, p. 304ff. One should compare two poems by Theodulf of Orleans, a poet at the court of Charlemagne, which deal with the theme of the Parliament of Fowls and the confrontations within it<sup>21</sup>. A later poem of the 14th century, the Byzantine *Poululogos*<sup>22</sup>, is related.

A highly interesting problem is posed in relation to the theme of the central fable of the *Ecbasis* which is that of the wolf's death in order that the lion may supposedly be cured by his skin following the sly advice of the fox. In this case also there is an Indian parallel to the theme. In the version of the *Tantrākhyāyika* IV 1, p. 140ff.,<sup>23</sup> the oldest Indian fable collection, the crocodile's wife, jealous of the monkey (according to her a she-monkey) who is her husband's friend, becomes seriously ill and one of her friends tells the crocodile that only by eating the monkey's heart will he cure his wife. The most remarkable thing is that in the version of the *Pañcatantra* (not collected on the other hand in the *Calila* nor in its Arabic model) the theme has been modified in a different sense. Did the old Indian version come by some means to Europe? In any case that means must have been Byzantium, from which came the fable of the wolf's death (see below).

As we have already suggested, the echoes of Indian fable in the *Ecbasis* are sparse, mere allusions of greater or lesser certainty. Indian fable was not imitated in a detailed way, as may also be observed by the lack of use of proper names for the animals. But it is no less certain that it was known by the author of the poem, for its structure and general theme show this to be the case.

We shall now turn to the *Ysengrimus*. If its composition is not so close to that of Indian fable, the use of proper names for animals and a truly well developed Indian fable display a knowledge of the Indian fable tradition which is undeniable, this knowledge being independent of that of the *Ecbasis*. Its greater development of a theme already present in the *Ecbasis*, that of the wolf-monk, shows an irrefutably independent knowledge of the source, a hypothesis which is backed by the presence of diverse fables of ancient or doubtful origin which are in the *Ysengrimus* but not in the *Ecbasis*.

The Indian fable we refer to is that of the wolf and the two he-goats, a fable from the *Pañcatantra* which as we have seen was known to the author of the *Ecbasis*. As far as the theme of the wolf-monk is concerned, whilst it is only indirectly referred to in this latter poem (see above), it is absolutely central to the *Ysengrimus*. I should like to demonstrate the plausibility of the idea that this theme is a Christian adaptation (among others: there are also cats and foxes as priests and monks) of several Indian fables.

In effect, whilst in Greco-Latin fable there is the theme of the cat-doctor (7 H.) or the cat who acts as if dead (81 H.) and thus tries to eat the chickens or mice, there is no instance at all of the theme of the animal which takes on the part of an ascete or clergyman to satisfy its appetite. Neither can there be found in it themes such as that of the cat, albeit applied to the fox or wolf. The most one finds is the wolf who tries to deceive the kid by imitating the mother goat's voice (Romulus 36, Ademar 61) and later, in the Byzantine epoch, the theme of the wolf which dresses in the sheepskin (in Nicephorus Basilakis).

On the other hand, the subject of the ascetic cat which deceives and manages to eat the partridge and hare is in the *Pañcatantra* III 4, p. 315, as also in the *Jātakas* nos. 127 and 128 there are similar themes on the jackal which disguises itself as a saint in order to eat the mice.<sup>24</sup> In fact, the theme is frequent in Indian literature, applied generally to the cat and also to other animals.<sup>25</sup>

I believe that we have here the origin of the western theme of the animal of prey which disguises itself as a priest or monk. It is sufficient to observe that in Odo Ceritonensis, who lived somewhat later than the time of the *Ysengrimus*, in the second half of the 12th century, there appears the theme of the cat which became a monk to eat the mouse (Fable 15), other similar ones which refer to the wolf (Fable 22) and the fox (Fable 50). It is impossible here to give full details of the extremely wide diffusion of the theme in medieval fable. But one should state that it was known from the *Metrum leonis* by Bishop Leo de Vercelli (c. 965-1026), the *Fecunda ratis* by Egbert von Lüttich (c. 1023) and the *De lupo* (c. 1100)<sup>26</sup>. More precisely, the theme of the wolf instructed as a novice in the convent is to be found from 1096 onwards<sup>27</sup>. Let us say, in summary, that the *Ecbasis* is not isolated in the 11th century in its knowledge of the

theme of the wolf-monk which it deals with as a matter of course and that the development of the same in the *Ysengrimus* in the second half of the 12th century has in turn abundant parallels.

The wolf does not appear in the Indian fable. It is doubtless the fusion of the theme of the cat-ascete and the jackal-ascete, both false traitors, in one and the same with the theme of the rapacious wolf in the Greco-Latin fable, which has created the new theme of the wolf-monk. Perhaps only in western Europe and not in Byzantium, where we only find the theme of the wolf in sheep's clothing created from ancient models. We shall see later, however, that the theme of the wolf's death, which as it is given in the *Ecbasis* contains an Indian element, did in fact come to the western world through Byzantium.

It is definitely in this way that the author of the *Ysengrimus* came to know the *Ecbasis* for it is basically a development of the theme of the death of the wolf and, in particular, of that of a wolf who is a false monk. But he also had access to many other sources, whether Greco-Latin, folkloric or other models of composition. However, among these models there are those which contain elements of Indian origin in particular, in the theme of the wolf-monk. There was therefore a European tradition influenced by India prior to the *Ysengrimus*. The very proper name given to the wolf is older than the poem.<sup>29</sup> There is no reason to believe, on the other hand, that the theme of the wolf and the two he-goats, although greatly modified, was directly taken from the *Pañcatantra*; there are certainly intermediate sources. The *Ysengrimus* really modifies many of its models: the death of the wolf is quite different, the *Ecbasis*<sup>30</sup> adds numerous new fables, etc., etc.

This background of diverse fables which in one way or another come from India is also found in the case of the *Roman de Renart* in its different branches. It is true that the chief model is the *Ysengrimus*, as is well known. But for individual fables there are several models (apart from the invented fables).

I now refer to Indian models, dismissing at the outset certain ones which have been suggested and which do not seem plausible, particularly in the case of *branche* XVII "The death and procession of Renart" (of around 1205) and XIX "The wolf and the she-ass" (between 1205 and

1250). This latter fable is of an older tradition, cf. 198 H.<sup>31</sup> In the former, the feature of a game of chess lends an oriental setting, but this is all.

On the other hand, the fable of the wolf and the two he-goats (*branche XX*), mentioned above, comes directly from the *Pañcatantra*.

Apart from this, there is the fable of Renard the fox and Isengrim the wolf and the well; that is, the theme of the pulley with the two buckets in one of which the fox gets out of the well whilst the other lowers the wolf to the bottom of it. This fable is in *branche IV*, of around 1178. Contrary to Nogués's statement<sup>33</sup>, I do not believe that this fable has anything to do with that of the hare and the lion in the *Pañcatantra* I 10, p. 81ff (= *Calila* III 10). It is, however, in the *Disciplina Clericalis* by Pedro Alfonso.<sup>34</sup> It is his Fable no. XIV, which is also found elsewhere; thus in Odo Ceritonensis XIX<sup>35</sup>. But it is not at all certain that the *Disciplina Clericalis* is the source, for our fable belongs to the group of those which Pedro Alfonso took from the *Sendebār*<sup>36</sup>. In any case, it is a source that is alien to the *Pañcatantra* although of Indian origin and prior to the Castilian translation of the *Sendebār* in 1253.

On the other hand, the fable of *branche I b* (c. end of the 12th century) with the theme of Renard as a minstrel, comes from the *Pañcatantra*: the castration of Isengrin by means of one of Renard's tricks. In this ruse, there figures the closing of a window which traps Isengrin as Renard removes a small stick which had been keeping it open. If we add that in the German *Reinhart Fuchs* there figures the episode of the bear trapped by the fox by means of the trick of making it put its head into a half-spliced tree-trunk from which the fox removes the wedge, one may see that both themes derive from the fable in the *Pañcatantra* I 2, p. 25 (= *Calila* III 2) in which a monkey is trapped by the testicles in a similar manner.<sup>37</sup>

In this same *branche* the well-known fable of Renard is highlighted. The fox prays God to save her from Isengrim; she falls into a bucket and emerges dyed yellow, so that the wolf does not recognize her. Nogués<sup>38</sup> points out the exact parallel to *Pañcatantra* I 14, p. 122, the fable of the blue jackal (missing in the *Calila*). It should be noted that a similar fable "Renard dyed black" is found in *branche XIII* (between 1205 and 1250).

Moreover, I should like to point out in *branche XI* (around 1200) the

fable of Renard and the peasant Leotard; this latter tries to trick the former, who had helped him to kill the bear which was about to eat one of the peasant's oxen.

It has been accepted as derived from no. XXI of the *Disciplina Clericalis* "Exemplum de aratore et lupo iudicioque uulpis"<sup>39</sup>. There are really remarkable differences between both fables; that of the *Disciplina Clericalis* was introduced in the *Liber Kalilae et Dimnae* by Raymundus de Biterris<sup>40</sup>. It would rather seem that these are related versions: the part common to both consists of the peasant cursing one of his oxen and saying that he will give him to the bear (or the wolf); the wild animal comes to claim the ox and the fox helps the peasant to get rid of it in exchange for the promise of a few hens. This seems to be the nucleus and it is quite probable that it is Indian (on account of its appearance in the *Disciplina* and in Raimundus de Biterris and the fact that it is missing in the Greco-latin tradition).

Something similar happens with the *Roman de Renart* to that which happened with the *Ysengrimus*. Thus, as this latter is based on the *Ecbasis* which it completes with diverse partly Indian material, the *Roman de Renart* is likewise based on the *Ysengrimus* and among other things adds even more Indian material to it. We do not know whether this Indian material is taken directly from Indian collections or whether it has come into the *Roman* indirectly. It is of various origins: from the *Pañcatantra* (at times from a version prior to the translation into Arabic and Castilian), from the *Sendebār*, from unknown sources, and is modified in various ways, sometimes in different ways in different versions or *branches*. In some instances it is a fable known by the *Ysengrimus* (that of the wolf and the he-goats), in others there are fables unknown to this text.

Similar conclusions may be drawn about the *Speculum*. We have already seen how it includes diverse fables, and would add that these are missing from the *Ysengrimus* and the *Roman de Renart*. Among them we have already seen, too, that there is that of man's ingratitude, which clearly derives from the *Pañcatantra*, a fable which is likewise missing from the epic animal poems we have mentioned.

The foregoing confirms our opinion that the Indian fable was available to medieval Latin fable writers and the French and German medieval epic at an earlier date than that of the Alphonsonian translations of the

*Pañcatantra* and the *Sendebār* of the middle of the 13th century. To be precise, we would say from the 11th century onwards. The Indian texts which, directly or indirectly, came down to our authors, were at least in part different to those which were later translated into Castilian through Arabic. They were moreover widely re-elaborated, and diverse fables were derived therefrom; the two derived from the “monkey and the wedge”, the numerous ones on the theme of the false ascete, or those of the peasant and the wolf (or bear).

Certainly, the dependence of certain European medieval fables on the Indian ones had already been suggested upon occasion, as we have already pointed out. But no attempt had been made to solve the enigma of how an acquaintance with India had come to Europe at this date. In the face of this problem, L. Foulet<sup>41</sup> replies with regard to the “Renard dyed” fable: “this is an enigma to which it is impossible to give an answer for the moment”. However, once we realise that we are not faced with isolated or casual coincidences but with basic characteristics of medieval fable, especially those of animal epic, which cannot be explained without resorting to Indian influence, the problem becomes even more thorny.

In my opinion, the solution to this problem must be sought by investigating the possible intermediate sources between oriental and European traditions. The greatest probabilities are a priori to be found in Spain and Byzantium.

The works of Pedro Alfonso, an Aragonese Jewish convert baptised in 1106 and the author of the *Disciplina Clericalis*, point to Spain. On their influence in Europe, see the introduction to the edition by González Palencia, p. XXVI. But the subject is in need of detailed research. As far as “animal epic” is concerned, one should state that an influence from the *Disciplina*:

- a) cannot be acknowledged for the *Ecbasis*, which is earlier, nor can it explain the coincidence with Indian fable with regard to composition or to the use of proper names for the animals;
- b) is incapable of explaining the knowledge in Europe of the greater part of the above-mentioned Indian fables, for they are simply missing in that work.

- c) The few coincidences may be explained perhaps on the basis of the *Disciplina*, but it is more likely that they come from the existence of a common source, whether it be the *Sendebār* or another.

In the best possible instance, the *Disciplina* is really only one of the sources and a minor source at that. Moreover, it perhaps may not be a source at all for the period and works we are concerned with here.

This leads us to seek the solution to the problem in Byzantium, the other point of contact between Europe and Indian literature translated into Arabic. We are justified in thinking along these lines: In the 11th century, there already existed in Byzantium translations into Greek of both the *Pañcatantra* and the *Sendebār*.

In effect, the *Pañcatantra* had already been translated into Greek *koiné* around the year 1000. Then there is a later translation, by Simeon Seth, of the second half of the 11th century.<sup>42</sup> The Greek translation by Michael Andreopoulos of Sintipas's book, that is the *Sendebār*, dates from the end of the same century. In the case of the *Pañcatantra*, it is an Arabic text translated into Greek; in that of the *Sendebār*, it is an Arabic text translated first into Syriac and then into Greek.

This is to say that the first phases of transmission of these texts were common to both Byzantine and Spanish traditions: successive versions in Sanskrit, Pehlevi and Arabic. But, from here on the Greek translations were earlier than the Alphonsian ones; they already existed at the time of the *Ecbasis* and, of course, at that of the *Ysengrimus* and other poems discussed here. Certainly the corresponding Arabic texts were already known in Spain around the same time, to judge from the work of Pedro Alfonso. But they were minimally translated by him into a language comprehensible throughout Europe, Latin.

Western knowledge of Greek translations of Indian fables forms part of the same movement reflected in the influence of Byzantine art on Romanesque art: architecture, sculpture, ivory carving, sumptuary objects, cloth, etc. From the 11th century onwards, this influence gained in importance. It should be attributed in good measure to the relations between western and Byzantine men on the occasion of the Crusades at the end of the 11th century and of the pilgrimages to the Holy Land. The *Ecbasis* in particular offers us the theme of the fox's pilgrimage to Jeru-

salem and Italy. Sometimes, however, these relations date back earlier than this time.

Naturally, the Byzantine route for Indian fable to arrive in Europe in the 11th and subsequent centuries is still as yet a hypothesis, albeit a reasonable one to my mind. To make it even more plausible, I should like to add certain data from a unique but quite significant case. This is the case of the internal fable of the *Ecbasis*, the story of the wolf's death through the fox's ruse, that is that the lion can only be cured by the wolf's skin. In the *Ecbasis* it is the wolf of the story who recounts the sad death of the other wolf his ancestor, thanks to the wicked ruses of the fox. It obviously echoes an ancient and well-known fable.

In effect, it is a commonplace that a Latin version of the Carolingian era exists, dated in the 9th century and preserved in Codex 889 of the monastery of St. Gall; and there also exists a Byzantine version in the Accursian collection edited as Hausrath's number 269. This author, precisely by allowing himself to be led by the fashion begun by Grimm, attempted to establish a Germanic origin for this fable, which had then passed on to Byzantium.<sup>44</sup> But this is contrary to all that we know about the evolution of the fable in general. The fable in the St. Gall manuscript is written in elegiac distichs and is accompanied by late Latin works and others of the Carolingian era, especially Paulus Diaconus' poems. It is a poetical and erudite work based on a previous version in the cultured tradition. Both F. P. Knapp<sup>45</sup> and D. Scheller<sup>46</sup> reject the Germanistic thesis. I believe that the Latin fable is a re-elaboration of the Byzantine fable and not the contrary as the latter author believes, basing his thesis on an assumption which a priori is not at all plausible.

One should point out that the Byzantine fable is only included in the Accursian collection, which I date, together with the majority of critics, in the 9th century A. D.<sup>47</sup> It is not only not to be found in the older collection, the Augustan one, nor in the early Byzantine one, the Vindobonensis, but also in no instance appears in the wide range of old Greco-Latin fables either. Obviously, it came to Byzantium in the 9th century from somewhere. I believe it came from India, for I have already pointed out the similarity of the central theme of the fable to that of an Indian fable in the *Pañcatantra*.

In my opinion, the fable of the *Ecbasis* does not come from that of the *Aeger Leo* of the St. Gall monastery, but both have their origin through different means in Greek fable. Whilst the *Aeger Leo* has the wolf transformed into a bear, the wolf is still the character who is defeated in the *Ecbasis* (and in Marie de France 68), just as he is in the Greek fable. Later western tradition was to be divided between the two versions of the bear and the wolf.

The entry of this fable into the *Ecbasis* (the theme, although with variants, is preserved in later animal epic), should therefore be understood within the wider context of the entry into the same poem of Indian elements through Greek translations: the composition within a fable framework, the theme of the lion's court, the political advice of the fox, etc. Later animal epic continued to take in more material of the same origin, although one cannot discard the entry of certain material through Spain, this latter being the chief route as from the second half of the 13th century.

But it is not only in the animal epic poems that, as we believe, the entry of Indian material through Byzantium should be acknowledged at an earlier date than the Alphonsonian translations. We have already mentioned the fable of the sick lion in the St. Gall manuscript in the 9th century. We should like to give the following information regarding several fables of the Indian tradition. Those fables which appear in animal epic and are known are left out here, for it is often highly problematical to decide whether the individual fables came down to the fable collections through animal epic or directly. There are, however, even more Indian fables in the said collections. We shall mention a few which on account of their date or other circumstances may be thought to derive from the Castilian translations of the *Pañcatantra* and the *Sendebār* mentioned above.

Thus the fable of Odo Ceritonensis no. 45 "Homo et unicornius" (609 Perry), cannot, on account of the author's date, have come from our Castilian *Calila* which includes it, although it is alien to the *Pañcatantra* (it is already in the Arabic original). This is the well-known allegory of the man who, having fallen into a ditch, eats the fruit of a tree rooted therein whilst two snakes gnaw the roots. Although this allegory is to be found in other places in Indian literature, it is quite plausible that it came

to Eudes through a translation of the Arabic version by al-Muqaa, the basis for the Castilian one of the *Pañcatantra*.

Then there is a fable included in Steinhöwel's edition of fables in Ulm (after 1475, the first printed western collection), the Latin source of which we cannot specify. I refer to "Canis, lupus et aries" (Hervieux II, pp. 296-705 Perry) and to "Homuncio, leo et filius eius" (id. pp. 297-706 Perry). The former corresponds to the theme of the *Pañcatantra* IV 9, p. 409 "The ass in the tiger-skin" (quite different from "The ass in the lion's skin" in the Greek collection, 199 H.). What is quite remarkable is that this fable does not appear in the *Calila* or in its Arabic model. Although we do not know the date of the collection followed in this case by Steinhöwel, this is what ensures that the fable came down to him by a different means to the Spanish one of the 13th century.

Perhaps one may include in this list Nicolos Bozon's fable "Leo, uulpes et asinus corde carens"<sup>48</sup> clearly derived from the *Pañcatantra* IV 4, p. 395ff. It is the only medieval version of this fable, whilst those of its corresponding Greek fable are common. In this latter the deer plays the part of the ass. Although Nicolas Bozon lived in the 14th century, the fact that apart from rare exceptions he translates and paraphrases Odo Ceritonensis may lead one to think that the fable appeared in Europe at an earlier stage in the 12th century. Although this is not certain, he may have added it from the *Calila*.

As may be seen, these few isolated fables are only given here as an appendix within the context of the foregoing statements. What has been our chief concern in this paper is the arrival of Indian fable through diverse intermediaries to the European animal epics of the 11th and 12th centuries. In short, we believe that a means of communication between India and Europe existed through Byzantium at this time and that it should be investigated in greater depth.

In vol. II (forthcoming) of my *Historia de la Fábula Greco-Latina* I present some new materials which, I think, are of interest with regard to this thesis.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> We would point to the following items of an abundant bibliography: Juan Vernet *La cultura hispano-árabe en Oriente y Occidente* (Barcelona 1978) 309ff.; Isidoro Montiel *Historia y bibliografía del libro de Calila y Dimna* (Madrid, Editora Nacional 1975); Angel González Palencia *Versiones Castellanas del Sendebār* (Madrid-Granada, 1946) prologue; F. Lecoy *Recherches sur le "libro de Buen Amor" de Juan Ruíz, Arcipreste de Hita* (Paris 1938) 137ff.; M. Ruffini, *Les sources de D. Juan Manuel, Les Lettres Romanes* 7 (1953) 27-49.
- <sup>2</sup> Cf. Pedro Alfonso, *Disciplina Clericalis*, Angel González Palencia ed. (Madrid-Granada, 1948), prologue XXIVff.
- <sup>3</sup> Reinhart Fuchs (Berlin 1934).
- <sup>4</sup> *Le Roman de Renart* (Paris 1914, 2nd. ed. 1968).
- <sup>5</sup> *Estudios sobre el Roman de Renard* (Salamanca 1956).
- <sup>6</sup> *Le Roman de Renart dans la littérature française et dans les littératures étrangères au Moyen Age* (Toronto 1963).
- <sup>7</sup> Paris 1893ff. (re-edited in Hildesheim, Olms, 1970).
- <sup>8</sup> *Das lateinische Tierepos* (Darmstadt 1979).
- <sup>9</sup> *Indian parallels of the fox story in Aspects of the medieval animal epic* (Leuven-The Hague, 1975) 241-249.
- <sup>10</sup> *Op. cit.*, 9ff.
- <sup>11</sup> On this procedure of composition and its origins, see my *Historia de la Fábula Greco-Latina*, I (Madrid 1979), 312 and 331ff.
- <sup>12</sup> *Op. cit.*, 12. The "Einleitung" of W. Trillitzsch's and S. Hoyer's edition *Ecbasis cuiusdam captiui per tropologiam* (Leipzig 1964, cf. 23ff., *Form und Quellen*), does not even take the composition problem into account.
- <sup>13</sup> Nigel de Longchamps, *Speculum Stultorum*, University of California Press, 1960, 3ff.
- <sup>14</sup> On the characteristics of this work and the "realistic novel" in general, see my paper *The "Life of Aesop" and the Origins of the Novel in Antiquity* in *Quaderni Urbinati*, N. S. 1 (1979) 92-112.
- <sup>15</sup> *Op. cit.*, 123.
- <sup>16</sup> *Op. cit.*, 5.
- <sup>17</sup> *Die Namen des Widders, des Schafes im altfranzösischen Roman de Renart, Romanische Forschungen* 71 (1969) 17-71. Details may be found in this paper on Grimm's and Paris's hypotheses.
- <sup>18</sup> *Op. cit.*, 249.
- <sup>19</sup> *Op. cit.*, 247.
- <sup>20</sup> I always quote from A. W. Ryder's translation, *The Pañchatantra* (University of Chicago Press, 1964 edition).
- <sup>21</sup> Poems 27 and 72, cf. D. Scheller *Lateinische Tierdichtung in frühkarolingischer Zeit in Das Tier in der Dichtung*, edited by Ute Schwab (Heidelberg 1970), 98ff. See also Chaucer's *Parliament of Fowles*.
- <sup>22</sup> Cf. J. Irscher, *Das mittelgriechische Tierepos in Aspects ... cit.*, 220ff. Cf. also the poem in K. Streketz, *Poetae latini aevi Carolini IV*, 11 (Berlin 1923), 610, no. 76.
- <sup>23</sup> I quote from J. Hertel's edition *Tantrākhyāyika, Die älteste Fassung des Pañcātāntra II, Uebersetzung und Anmerkungen* (Leipzig and Berlin 1909).
- <sup>24</sup> Cf. R. D. Gupta, *op. cit.*, 248.

- <sup>25</sup> Cf. M. Bloomfield, *On false Ascetics and Nuns in Hindu Fiction*, *JAOS* 44 (1924) 202-242. On its transfer to catholic clergy, cf. M. Artola *El libro de los gatos: An Orientalist's View of its title*, *Romance Philology*, 9 (1955) 17-19.
- <sup>26</sup> Cf. F. P. Knapp, *op. cit.*, 24ff., 70ff.
- <sup>27</sup> Cf. Knapp, *op. cit.*, 71.
- <sup>28</sup> The appearance of the theme of the wolf in school in the Assyrian *Ahikar* VIII 36 is mysterious (v. my *Historia ...*, 364). This fable may be compared to a medieval one in Hervieux *op. cit.* II, 642 (= 688 Perry) and in Marie de France 81. Perhaps this is just pure coincidence. But one should point out that the *Ahikar* was known by a Greek collection translated into Syriac (edited by Sister B. Lefèvre, *Une version syriaque des fables d'Esopé*, Paris 1941). This version was known in Byzantium for Manuel Andreopoulos partially translated it in the 11th century, cf. *Historia*, 147. To be precise, only in the *Ahikar* is there any parallel to Fable 74 "The trap and the lark" and that of Sister Lefèvre.
- <sup>29</sup> Cf. Knapp, *op. cit.*, 21.
- <sup>30</sup> Another source influenced this, perhaps Hildebart of Lavardin, cf. Knapp, 75.
- <sup>31</sup> This is not found in the *Pañcatantra*, despite Nogués, 242.
- <sup>32</sup> There is an Egyptian representation of the lion playing chess with the gazelle, cf. E. Brunner-Traut, *Altaegyptische Tiergeschichte und Fabel* (Darmstadt 1977) 11, fig. 6.
- <sup>33</sup> *Op. cit.*, 102.
- <sup>34</sup> Cf. Nogués, *op. cit.*, 105, Foulet, *op. cit.*, 288.
- <sup>35</sup> Imitated from the *Roman* according to Flinn, *op. cit.*, 488.
- <sup>36</sup> Cf. the above-mentioned edition by González Palencia, XXVI.
- <sup>37</sup> Gupta, *op. cit.*, 248 has established a parallel for the German fable.
- <sup>38</sup> *Op. cit.*, 142, Cf also Dufournet, *Petite introduction aux branches Ia, Ib du R. Renard* (Paris 1971).
- <sup>39</sup> Cf. Nogués, 203.
- <sup>40</sup> Cf. Hervieux, *op. cit.* V, 755ff.
- <sup>41</sup> *Op. cit.*, 358.
- <sup>42</sup> Cf. J. Irmscher, *Das mittelgriechische Tierepos*, in *Aspects ...*, 217.
- <sup>43</sup> Cf. Irmscher, *op. cit.*, 218, and *Historia ...*, 147.
- <sup>44</sup> *Germanische Märchenmotive in griechischen Tierfabeln*, *N. Jahrb für die d. Wiss.* 13 (1937) 140ff.
- <sup>45</sup> *Op. cit.*, 21ff.
- <sup>46</sup> *Lateinische Tierdichtung in frühkarolingischer Zeit*, in *Das Tier in der Dichtung*, *cit.*, 94ff.
- <sup>47</sup> Cf. *Estudios sobre el léxico de las fábulas esópicas*, Salamanca 1948, 130.
- <sup>48</sup> In Hervieux IV, 258.
- <sup>49</sup> Cf. *Historia ...*, 340.