The reception history of Palaephatus 1 (On the Centaurs) in Ancient and Byzantine texts[*]

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1. Introduction

The transmission history of Palaephatus' *Peri Apiston* remains a topic of dispute. The text that we have comprises a methodological introduction along with 46 examples of the rationalisation of individual myths.[1] The best evidence that we have points to Palaephatus as working in Athens in the late fourth century BC, within the ambit of the Peripatetics. But almost nothing can be said with certainty about the early history of his *Peri Apiston*.[2] Palaephatus' name – in the context of a far-fetched explanation utilising a *protos heuretes* motif – appears in a fragment of new comedy (Athenion fr.1 PCG).[3] His *Troica* is mentioned – approvingly – by Strabo (12.3.22) as a source used by Demetrius of Scepsis (early second century BC).[4] But only in the late first century AD, in a passage in the *Progymnasmata* of Aelius Theon (discussed below), is Palaephatus named as author of the *Peri Apiston*.

When Festa published the text in 1902, he used a double critical apparatus to reflect both the complicated textual transmission of Palaephatus' work, and his hypothesis that the manuscripts preserved an eleventh-century compendium of the five-book original. Our extant text, in his view, preserved genuine Palaephatean passages alongside other material corrupted by its use in rhetorical instruction. Although Festa's text has not been subject to revision since, his ideas regarding the state of the text have received some critical re-evaluation. Wipprecht (1892) and Schraeder (1894) argued against Festa's hypothesis that this was a later composite compilation, and more recently translators have insisted that the form and content of the prologue and longer entries are original.[5] Further, while Festa and his predecessors focussed on identifying the author and establishing the authenticity of the work, recent studies have shifted the focus to examining its exegetical features, its philosophical context, and its relationship to rhetoric.[6]

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[1] Five further – non rationalistic – entries found in some manuscripts are certainly interpolations and should not be included in discussions of Palaephatus and the Palaephatean tradition.

[2] For recent discussions of the ancient reception of the *Peri Apiston*, see Santoni 2000: 10; Santoni 2002: 146–47; Alganza Roldán 2012: 40–46; Hawes 2014a: 229–233.

[3] Athenion cannot be dated, not least because only this one fragment of his work survives. In *PCG* he is assigned tentatively to the first century BC.

[4] For discussion of the content of Palaephatus' *Troica* and its relationship to other accounts of the Troad from antiquity, see Trachsel 2007.

[5] E.g. Roquet 1974, Stern 1996, and Santoni 2000.

[6] See e.g. Santoni 2002; Hawes 2014a. There is a useful synopsis in Zucker 2016: 43–46.

In this article, we look in detail at the reception history of Palaephatus' treatment of the Centaurs in the first entry of the *Peri Apiston*.[7] We trace its influence through textual passages from antiquity, late antiquity, and the Byzantine period. This is of course merely one illustration of the reception history of the text amongst many possible ones, but it does have predictive value as a paradigm for the later fortunes of the text. Palaephatus' rationalisation of the Centaurs is one of the most recognisable aspects of his text; it thus has a rich reception tradition, and a distinctive status as a prominent archetype of Palaephatus' interpretative project.

The reception history of a passage of text offers much beyond information about the transmission of that text. In some instances we are indeed able to comment on whether a particular author might have had direct access to Palaephatus' text, or whether the material came to him by way of an intermediary source. But, even where such issues are not clear, we can explore how ideas which derive ultimately from Palaephatus developed by considering how each author made use of 'Palaephatean' material and how each functioned within each new context. In broadening the scope of the study of the 'afterlife' of the *Peri Apiston* in this way, we are taking up the challenge articulated by David Bouvier:

> la question est plutôt de savoir comment les notices du *PA* ont été regroupées, pourquoi elles ont été placées sous un nom particulier, comment elles ont été élaborées, dans quel contexte. Postuler que ces notices relèvent d'un auteur particulier revient à discréditer d'emblée l'intérêt d'un manuel qui révèle autre chose qu'une pensée et une position intellectuelle individuelle. Mais le XXe siècle n'était pas prêt à reconnaître ce point.[8]

Indeed, the twenty-first century, with its more sophisticated understanding of the pervasive influences and amorphous forms taken by mythographic knowledge through time, requires a new perspective on the Palaephatean tradition. In distancing ourselves from the focus on recovering the Palaephatean original (an impossibility, in any case, according to Festa), we emphasise the desirability of understanding Palaephatus' value as a

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[7] Of the manuscripts studied by Vitelli 1893, all have the entry on the Centaurs as their first entry except those he identifies as 'group E'. To the eight manuscripts classified in this group by the Italian scholar, two new ones must now be added: EBE 799 (fourteenth century) and Μονή Ιβήρων 1317 (mid-eighteenth century), which begin with the entries on Actaeon and Pasiphae respectively.

[8] Bouvier 2015: 39.

product of mythographic activity developed through generations of writers, readers, and thinkers.

2. On the Centaurs: Palaephatus' rationalisation

For the text and translation of Palaephatus 1, see Appendix.

Palaephatus' entry on the Centaurs is notable for its length and detail. It deploys the full 'Palaephatean structure', a pattern of narration, refutation, correction, and resolution characteristic of this treatise.[9] The entry begins by narrating the most pertinent 'fact' of the Centaurs, namely their hybrid form. Its refutation of them focuses on this aspect, too: such a creature could not eat food that would satisfy both its human and its equine stomachs, and whatever does not exist in the present did not exist in the past either. These arguments from biological possibility and historical consistency are among the most prominent in the treatise. They are paradigms for its 'scientific' rationale for why myths should not be believed.[10] Against the language of 'belief' (πείθεται) and 'impossibility' (ἀδύνατον), Palaephatus then offers the surety of 'truth' (τὸ δὲ ἀληθές). His rationalisation corrects the conventional myth narrative, and resolves it by explaining its origins in misunderstandings of rather more banal events.

Palaephatus' rationalisation takes the form of a long narrative account: Thessaly is suffering an incursion of wild bulls from Pelion so King Ixion promises a reward for their defeat. Youths from the foothills win this by inventing horse-riding and killing the bulls with their javelins. After their victory, however, these young men become arrogant and take to harassing Ixion and ravaging the countryside, even abducting Lapith women. Whereas Palaephatus had reduced the myth of the Centaurs to the simple fact of their hybridity in his introduction, his historicised narrative resolves four mythic 'problems' in turn: apart from their hybridity, he addresses also their birth, the meaning of their name, and their battle with the Lapiths. The Centaurs are 'of Ixion and out of a cloud / Nephele' not because they were born from such a coupling, but because they were employed by the former, and hail from a town called Nephele (the ambivalence of the

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[9] For details of the Palaephatean structure and its functions, see Delattre 2013: 70–73; Hawes 2014a: 48–52, 71–72; Hawes 2014b.

[10] Although such arguments underpin the assumptions of the *Peri Apiston*, they are very seldom stated explicitly in the entries. Arguments regarding biological possibility appear in entries 2 (the Minotaur), 4 (Sphinx), 24 (Geryon), and 28 (Chimaera); arguments for the historical continuity of species appear also in the Preface, and in entries 28 (Pegasus) and 32 (the Amazons).

preposition in the phrase ἐκ Νεφέλης cannot be adequately rendered in English). Their name is traced to their skill in using javelins to 'pierce bulls' (τοὺς ταύρους κατεκεντάννυσαν). Their battle with the Lapiths is the result of a situation of mounting hostility. Finally, we get an explanation for their hybridity: this is a visual illusion since a rider at a distance might indeed seem to an unsophisticated bystander to be fused to his mount.

These rationalisations show typical features of Palaephatus' approach. The final explanation makes use of the 'misunderstood sight' motif; the first two, by contrast, rely on misunderstandings of ambiguous language. As so often, Palaephatus ends by reporting a first-person description of the 'actual' event which forms the basis for a mythical re-imagining of the situation. So, the reader understands that an exclamation like 'the Centaurs, from Nephele, are attacking us!' (οἱ Κένταυροι ἡμᾶς οἱ ἐκ Νεφέλης κατατρέχουσιν) or the comment that 'from the cloud a horse-man was produced' (ἐκ τῆς νεφέλης ἵππος τε καὶ ἀνήρ… ἐγεννήθη) is indeed truthful, it is simply that what is signified by these words is no longer properly understood.

Palaephatus' method of rationalisation gives the interpretation in the form of an historicised narrative which replaces the mythic one. In this instance, the narrative retains many conventional aspects: the setting is Thessaly, with the Centaurs' homeland on Mt Pelion, and the Lapiths' at Larissa.[11] But in other regards, it diverges significantly. So, Ixion, in the conventional myth a by-word for violence who ends up punished on a wheel in the underworld, is in Palaephatus' version merely a king doing his best to guard his kingdom. Moreover, Palaephatus' account has its own sense of narrative logic, including structural contrasts in character – e.g. between the youthful, inventive, aggressive Centaurs, and the adult, protective Ixion – and space – e.g. between the wildness of the mountains and foothills and the civilised polis.

As we will see, this brief analysis of Palaephatus' entry does not capture all of its many facets. So often Palaephatus is characterised as merely transforming the Centaurs into the first horse-riders. Yet a close examination of the reception of this entry demonstrates how much richness subsequent generations could find and draw out of it.

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[11] Although Centaurs are encountered elsewhere in myths, their strongest connection is with Thessaly. For an overview of the ancient Centaur tradition, see Bremmer 2012; for the close associations between Centaurs and Thessaly, and the particular localisation of traditions on Pelion and Larissa, see Aston 2017.

3. Rationalistic refutations of Centaurs from antiquity and late antiquity

Palaephatus' treatment of the Centaurs does not begin a tradition *ex nihilo*. By the late fourth century, the Centaurs already embodied problems with mythic storytelling. Xenophanes (sixth–early fifth century BC) includes their battle with the Lapiths amongst stories which endanger peaceful communities by glorifying rebellion (DK B 1.21–23). Plato (fourth century) places them at the head of a catalogue of monsters 'requiring' rationalistic interpretation, an approach that he mocks as a waste of time:[12]

> μετὰ τοῦτο τὸ τῶν Ἱπποκενταύρων εἶδος ἐπανορθοῦσθαι, καὶ αὖθις τὸ τῆς Χιμαίρας, καὶ ἐπιρρεῖ δὲ ὄχλος τοιούτων Γοργόνων καὶ Πηγάσων καὶ ἄλλων ἀμηχάνων πλήθη τε καὶ ἀτοπίαι τερατολόγων τινῶν φύσεων·
>
> After [interpreting the story of Boreas and Oreithyia rationalistically], he must correct the forms of the Hippocentaurs, and then that of the Chimaera, and then there floods upon him a throng of such Gorgons and Pegasuses and other strange curiosities and mobs of impossible creatures with various monstrous physiques. (*Phaedrus*, 229d-e ed. Yunis)[13]

It is not merely accidental, then, that the Centaurs appear as the first entry in Palaephatus' treatise. His detailed critique of them situates the *Peri Apiston* within an existing discourse about mythic truth and impossibility. Although Palaephatus' treatment of them is not unprecedented,[14] aspects of it seem to have become habituated within this critical tradition in turn.[15]

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[12] For Plato's (and Galen's) mocking of rationalisation, see Alganza Roldán 2012: 41–42.

[13] All translations from Greek and Latin are the authors' own.

[14] One important possible antecedent is Hecataeus fr. 18A Fowler. Stephanus of Byzantium reports that an author of a *Genealogiai* (Hecataeus' name has to be supplied) said that the Centaurs and Hippocentaurs were in fact the same as the Leleges, the inhabitants of the Thessalian city of Amyrus. If accurately reported, Hecataeus certainly interpreted the (Hippo)centaurs as an ethnic group, a position which is not inconsistent with Palaephatus' treatment, and which accords also with other attempts to understand their battle with the Lapiths as a story of early antagonism between Thessalian communities (on this, see Aston 2017). A scholion on Pindar (*Pyth*. 2.78d), which transmits material similar to Stephanus', continues with the etymology of 'Centaur' from 'the piercing of bulls'. We cannot be certain that this aspect of Palaephatus' rationalisation thus appeared earlier in Hecataeus. Robert Fowler does not include the scholion's comment amongst the fragments of Hecataeus, and expresses scepticism: 'We may believe (with all caution in view of the mangled state of the sources) that the Amyros-Leleges-Centaur combination comes from Hekataios – which does not commit us to thinking that the rationalising is also his, although it is possible' (Fowler 2013: 99). The idea that the form of the Centaur

In this section and then next we trace two broadly Palaephatean aspects of the Centaur tradition through ancient and late-antique sources: firstly, the critique of their biological possibility, and then the rationalistic resolution of their forms. Each discussion will begin with passages from Diodorus (first century BC). Diodorus never mentions Palaephatus by name. Nonetheless, he several times includes material that bears close comparison with *Peri Apiston*.[16] At 4.8.4 Diodorus, introducing his discussion of Heracles, notes that different standards of mythic 'truth' are acceptable in different contexts and introduces the paradigm of the Centaurs:

> καὶ γὰρ ἐν τοῖς θεάτροις, πεπεισμένοι μήτε Κενταύρους διφυεῖς ἐξ ἑτερογενῶν σωμάτων ὑπάρξαι μήτε Γηρυόνην τρισώματον, ὅμως προσδεχόμεθα τὰς τοιαύτας μυθολογίας, καὶ ταῖς ἐπισημασίαις συναύξομεν τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ τιμήν.
>
> Although we are surely convinced that Centaurs – biform beings composed of two different bodies – and Geryones – composed of three! – do not exist, nonetheless in the theatre we readily accept such myths and with acclamations increase the god's honour. (ed. Oldfather)

The adjective διφυής commonly describes hybrid creatures of myth, and Centaurs in particular (e.g. Soph. *Tr.* 1095). It is not found in Palaephatus' description, but appears often in subsequent criticisms of their plausibility. Diodorus' criticism is quite general; it does not betray any particular familiarity with Palaephatus' arguments. We can certainly say that it shares certain rhetorical strategies with Palaephatus – it evokes the Centaurs as paradigms of impossibility in myth, points out that the boundaries of generic appropriateness makes them appropriate to only some contexts, and describes their most notable feature as their combination of two separate natures – but none of these observations is exclusive to Palaephatus, and all are found much more generally by the first century.

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is analogous to a man on horseback has a precursor in Xen. *Cyr.* 4.3.19–20, in which it is remarked that humans are more fortunate than Centaurs since they can enjoy the advantages of the Centaurs while they ride, then can dismount and enjoy the advantages of being human.

[15] For a list of passages in which scepticism accompanies mention of the Centaurs, see Pease 1955: 483–84.

[16] E.g. 4.26.2–3 (= Palaeph. 18) for discussion, see Alganza Roldán 2015: 19; 4.76.2–3 (= Palaeph. 21); 19.53.4 (= Palaeph. 3). Diodorus' treatment of Helle, Phrixus, and the Golden Fleece perhaps borrows from Palaephatus, via Dionysius Scytobrachion: see Schrader 1894: 10.

Scepticism regarding the existence of the Centaurs was in antiquity squarely based on their combination of two separate species in one body.[17] Aristotelian biology denied the viability of inter-species mating under normal circumstances, the limiting factor being their different gestation periods (*De gen. an.* 776b22-26). Although Aristotle does not do this, his conclusions could easily be applied to mythical monsters. Thus, Lucretius (mid-first century BC) asserts:

> *Sed neque Centauri fuerunt nec tempore in ullo*
> *esse queunt duplici natura et corpore bino*
> *ex alienigenis membris compacta, potestas*
> *hinc illinc partis ut sat par esse potissit.*

> There never were Centaurs, nor could there exist at any time creatures of a double nature and two-fold body combining limbs of different origins in such a way that these two parts could be properly balanced. (5.878–882, ed. Helm)

Lucretius goes on to observe that this particular combination would not work because horses age and die before humans even reach full maturity.[18] In his estimation, the incompatibility of life-spans and lifestyles limits inter-species hybrids; different species:

> *[…]neque*
> *florescunt pariter nec robora sumunt*
> *corporibus neque proiciunt aetate senecta*
> *nec simili Venere ardescunt nec moribus unis*
> *conveniunt neque sunt eadem iucunda per artus.*
> *quippe videre licet pinguescere saepe cicuta*
> *barbigeras pecudes, homini quae est acre venenum.*

> … are not in the prime of life at the same time, nor mature together, nor wane in strength together. They do not burn with desire in the same way, nor do they follow the same habits, nor are the same things pleasurable for their bodies. One might well see that bearded goats gorge themselves on hemlock, the very stuff that is poison to humans. (5.894–900)

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[17] Even when ancient writers are ostensibly arguing that the possibility that Centaurs might exist or have existed should be entertained, they mention or make clear from context that these creatures require the blending of separate species: e.g. Ael. *Nat.* 17.9; Pliny *NH* 7.34–35.

[18] Lucretius famously attributes the hybrids of myth – notably, the Centaurs are his most prominent example – to the creativity of the human imagination, which creates fictitious amalgams using parts of different creatures (5.732–748). For other ancient passages using this line of reasoning, see Pease 1955: 483.

In this second passage, Lucretius is speaking generally about the possibility of inter-species hybrids rather than specifically about the case of the Centaurs that he had just discussed. Nonetheless, the details are illustrative. Where Palaephatus comments generally on the different φύσεις of horses and humans and then makes the specific point that they require different foods, Lucretius likewise comments on incompatible *mores*, and then gives the example of a species which thrives on a food which kills another. The suspicion that Lucretius has Palaephatus' arguments in mind is strengthened by the next lines, in which Lucretius asks, 'how could the Chimaera… breathe out living flame from its mouth?' (*qui fieri potuit […] Chimaera / ore foras acrem flaret de corpore flammam ?* 5.904–906). This point picks up on one of Palaephatus' refutations of the Chimaera in a passage that also utilises a rhetorical question (28).

The mythographer Heraclitus (late first–second century AD) likewise broadly echoes Palaephatus' critique, but departs from him in specificities, 'after all, it is not possible for two forms thus melded to be born alive and grow up' (δύο γὰρ διηλλαγμένας φύσεις εἰς ἓν συνελθούσας ἀδύνατον ζῳογονηθῆναι καὶ τραφῆναι, *Peri Apiston* 5, ed. Festa). Heraclitus' treatment of the Centaurs is very similar to Palaephatus', but highly condensed. He omits Palaephatus' specific example regarding the incompatibility of human and equine diets. Instead he relies on a vaguer assertion of general biological impossibility, which perhaps assumes that the reader is already aware of the currency of such fuller arguments put forward in Palaephatus' treatise and elsewhere.

Galen (late second–early third centuries AD) provides the most detailed refutation of the Centaur in his *On the usefulness of the parts of the body*. After his – by now recognisably conventional – assertion that such a creature defies nature, and can only be a creation of poetry, he puts forward several distinct arguments, of which the first two are pertinent to our study. In the second, he observes:

> εἰ δὲ καὶ συγχωρήσαιμεν ἔν γοῦν τῇ κυήσει καὶ μίγνυσθαι καὶ τελεοῦσθαι τὸ ζῷον τοῦτο τὸ οὕτως ἄτοπόν τε καὶ ἀλλόκοτον, ἀλλὰ τίσι γε τροφαῖς θρέψεται τὸ γεννηθέν, οὐκ ἂν εὕροιμεν. ἢ πόαις μέν τισι καὶ κριθαῖς ὠμαῖς τὰ κάτω τὰ ἵππεια, ταῖς δ᾽ἐφθαῖς καὶ τοῖς ἀνθρωπείοις ἐδέσμασι τὰ ἄνω; ἄμεινον μέντ᾽ἂν οὕτως ἦν αὐτῷ καὶ δύο στόματα γεγονέναι, τὸ μὲν ἀνθρώπειον, τὸ δ᾽ἵππειον.

> And even if we concede that such a strange and unlikely creature might be created through some mixing in the womb, and be born, what kind of food could we find to sustain it? The lower, equine parts need grass and barleycorn as sustenance, the upper parts barley gruel and other human food. It would have been better that it had been given two mouths, a human one and a horse one. (*De usu partium* 1.1, ed. Helmreich)

Galen's point echoes and expands that of Palaephatus, that there is no food (τροφή) that could satisfy both horse and human that could pass through a single mouth (στόμα).

Galen's first argument is also strikingly Palaephatean. He observes that hybrids are possible, if the parents are sufficiently similar; so, echoing Aristotle (*Hist. an.* 607a1–8, *De gen. an.* 746a29–35), he affirms the possibility of horse-ass, dog-wolf, and dog-fox hybrids. Nonetheless:

> ἵππος δ᾽ ἀνθρώπου τάχα μὲν οὐδ᾽ ἂν ὑποδέξαιτο τοῖς κόλποις τῆς ὑστέρας τὸ σπέρμα, μακροτέρου γὰρ αἰδοίου δεῖ, εἰ δὲ καὶ καταδέξαιτό ποτε, διαφθείρειεν ἂν ἢ εὐθὺς ἢ οὐκ εἰς μακράν.
>
> It would probably not even be possible for human semen to reach the depths of a mare's uterus – a much longer penis would be needed! And even if the semen did reach there on some occasion, it would be destroyed straightaway, or very soon after. (*De usu partium* 1.1)

Galen's concern with the mechanics of inter-species mating picks up on Lucretius' circumspect reference to 'burning with Venus' (*nec simili Venere ardescunt*, 5.896). But more pertinently, it should remind us of Palaephatus' refutation of the Minotaur on the basis of the incompatibility human and taurine genitalia.[19] Galen's appropriation of these specific examples demonstrates the impact of Palaephatus' systemisation of biological refutation on the later tradition: because Palaephatus reduces his first two myths, Centaurs and the Minotaur, to the same basic 'problem' (i.e. the impossibility of inter-species hybrids), his arguments regarding one are also applicable to the other.

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[19] Palaeph. 2: πρῶτον μὲν γὰρ ἀδύνατον ἐρασθῆναι ζῷον ἕτερον ἑτέρου μὴ ὁμοίως ἔχοντὴν μήτραν τοῖς αἰδοίοις· οὐ γὰρ δυνατὸν κύνα καὶ πίθηκον καὶ λύκον τε καὶ ὕαιναν ἀλλήλοις μίγνυσθαι οὐδὲ βούβαλον ἐλάφῳ (ἑτερογενῆ γὰρ ὑπάρχει), οὐ δὲ ἀλλήλοις μιγνύμενα γεννᾶν. ταῦρος δὲ οὐ δοκεῖ μοι πρῶτον μὲν ἀναμιχθῆναι ξυλίνῃ βοΐ· πάντα γὰρ τὰ τετράποδα [ζῷα] ὀσφραίνεται τῶν αἰδοίων τοῦ ζῴου πρὸ τῆς μίξεως, καὶ οὕτως ἀναβαίνει ἐπ᾽ αὐτό· οὐδ᾽ ἂν ἠνέσχετο ταύρου ἐπιβαίνοντος ἡ γυνή, οὐδὲ φέρειν δύναται γυνὴ ἔμβρυον κέρατα ἔχον.

The rhetor Libanius (fourth century AD) offers a striking example of the use of what appears to be Palaephatus' argument in a quite different narrative context. In an exercise on 'invective' (ψόγος) intended to convince the reader that even a hero like Achilles can be subjected to scorn, Libanius demonstrates how the Centaur Chiron raised Achilles to have a savage nature:

> τροφεῖ τῷ Χείρωνι μυελοὺς λεόντων ἀντὶ γάλακτος γενέσθαι οἱ τὴν τροφήν. ἔστω τοίνυν θεῖον γενέσθαι τὸν Κένταυρον, καίτοι τίς ἂν πιστεύσειε συντεθῆναι σώματος εἶδος ἐξ ἀνθρώπου καὶ ἵππου; καὶ περὶ τῆς τροφῆς οὐκ ἀμφισβητήσας ἐκεῖνο φαίην ἄν, ὅτι ἡ πρέπουσα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις τροφὴ τὸ γάλα καὶ τῷ νόμῳ συμβαίνει τῆς φύσεως. ὅτῳ δὲ μὴ κατὰ τοῦτο τραφῆναι συνέβη, τοῦτο εἰς ἐλάττωμα τῷ τραφέντι σαφῶς ἀφῖκται. ἡμέροις ἐκεῖνο πρέπον, τοῦτ᾽ ἂν θηριώδεις ποιοίη.

> The diet [for Achilles] was lions' marrow instead of milk. But let it be that the Centaur is of divine nature. Even so, who could ever credit that his body's shape came from human and horse? I would not speak against this point regarding diets, arguing that milk is the most suitable diet for humans, and is in accordance with nature's law. On the other hand, if that man was raised in a manner which did not accord [with nature's law], this clearly caused him disadvantage. While one [type of diet] is suitable for the civilised, the other would render him like wild beasts. (*Progym.* 9.1.3, ed. Foerster).

The most striking aspect of this passage is that its apparent connection to Palaephatus 1 is much looser than first reading would suggest. Libanius has, in effect, two arguments. The first relates to the impossibility of biform creatures such as Centaurs; the second to incompatibility of human and (other) animal diets. The argument about diet in fact relates to Achilles, and not to Chiron. Libanius' point is not that Chiron could not have found food to sustain himself, but rather that if the child Achilles had been fed meat rather than milk, he would have become, not the archetype of a civilised hero, but a wild animal.

In his *Progymnasmata*, Ps-Nicolaus (late fourth–early fifth centuries AD) uses the example of the Centaurs to illustrate the technique of refutation (ἀνασκευή). Previous rhetors, such as the author of *Rhetorica ad Herenium* (2.1.2–2.2.2.), intertwined narration and confirmation with refutation. Ps-Nicolaus, by contrast, applies the dominant paradigm of late antiquity,

derived from Apthonius.[20] He treats refutation as a discrete rhetorical category, quite independent of exposition. Thus, Ps-Nicolaus focuses exclusively upon Palaephatus' negative arguments which refute the existence of the Centaurs, and ignores his positive ones, which suggest a plausible origin story.

Ps-Nicolaus opens by discrediting his opponents, the poets, 'Even as poets speak of marvels concerning the race of the gods, they are all the more culpable for depicting births even more unlikely' (τὸ δε γένη θεῶν τερατεύεσθαι, καὶ φράζειν παράλογα, καὶ γενέσθαι παραλογώτερα τοῦτο τὴν αἰτίαν μείζονα ποιηταῖς ἐπιφαίνει, 286.3–5, ed. Walz 1832a). After expounding the traditional, 'opposing' view – he gives a version of the myth in which Cronus rather than Ixion fathers the race of the Centaurs who attack the Lapiths (286.6–13) – Ps-Nicolaus refutes the existence of Centaurs using the components of refutation prescribed by Aphthonius, although without Aphthonius's specific terminology: it is unclear (ἀσαφής) whether Nephele was mortal or divine (286.14–18); it would be unseemly (ἀπρεπής) for Cronus to have intercourse with a creature not of his own kind (286.18–19); it is implausible (ἀπίθανος) that their offspring should be anything other than divine (286.19–23). Indeed, the very existence of the Centaur is impossible (ἀδύνατος) as a horse cannot be joined with a human: they are incompatible in nature and diet (286.24–287.2). It is inconsistent (ἀνακόλουθος) with a horse's nature to desire war as the Centaurs do (287.5–6), and indeed a dual-formed creature is inconsistent by nature, with both creatures only half-finished (287.6–8). Finally, it is inexpedient (ἀσύμφορος) to suppose the Centaur exists, since no war has ever wiped out an entire race (287.9–10).

Craig Gibson has argued that while late-antique and Byzantine authors knew of Palaephatus' *Peri Apiston,* they did not consult it closely as a source for rhetorical exercises.[21] Of the mythological subjects which Ps.-Nicolaus and Palaephatus discuss in common, only half show Palaephatean influences and this passage on the Centaurs features the strongest signs of direct influence.[22] As Gibson notes, the points of similarity include the basic argument that it is physically impossible for human and horse to be joined and that they eat different foods. Further, Palaephatus' argument that if

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[20] Gibson 2012: 91.

[21] Gibson 2012: 85.

[22] Gibson 2012: 90.

Centaurs ever existed they would still exist assumes an unchanging reality between past and present which reappears in Ps-Nicolaus' comment that no war ever destroyed an entire race.[23] Nonetheless, as we have seen elsewhere, the context in which these arguments are used does not replicate Palaephatus' mythographical data in its entirety. Ps. Nicolaus conflates the stories of Chiron's conception with that of the Centaurs as a race by suggesting that Cronus fathered the Centaurs, rather than Ixion. Further, he has Theseus as the leader of the Lapiths. The success of Palaephatus' arguments regarding biological possibility was such that they could be employed quite flexibly in diverse circumstances.

4. Rationalistic solutions for the Centaurs from antiquity and late antiquity

We turn now to consider a different aspect of the reception of Palaephatus' passage, its rationalistic explanation for the origins of the Centaurs. Here is the second passage from Diodorus in full (4.70.1):

> τοὺς δὲ Κενταύρους τινὲς μέν φασιν ἐν τῷ Πηλίῳ τραφῆναι ὑπὸ Νυμφῶν, ἀνδρωθέντας δὲ καὶ μιγέντας ἵπποις θηλείαις γεννῆσαι τοὺς ὀνομαζομένους διφυεῖς Ἱπποκενταύρους. τινὲς δὲ λέγουσι τοὺς ἐκ Νεφέλης καὶ Ἰξίονος γεννηθέντας Κενταύρους πρώτους ἱππεύειν ἐπιχειρήσαντας Ἱπποκενταύρους ὠνομάσθαι καὶ εἰς πλάσμα μύθου καταταχθῆναι ὡς διφυεῖς ὄντας.

> Some say that the Centaurs were raised by nymphs on Mt. Pelion and that, when they were mature, they mated with mares and that the mares gave birth to two-formed creatures who were called 'Hippocentaurs'. But others say that the Centaurs, offspring of Nephele and Ixion, having been the first to try to ride horses, were called 'Hippocentaurs' and that they were transformed into a made-up myth as if they were indeed of dual form.

Diodorus is ostensibly presenting two explanations for the origins of human-equine hybrids, couched in the rhetoric of a doxography ('some say… but others say…'). The first explanation accords in broad terms with the account of Pindar (*Pyth*. 2.44–48), which likewise presumes a multi-generational development: the first, consisting of 'Centaurus', offspring of Ixion and a cloud, and the second, consisting of offspring produced by Centaurus and mares on Pelion.

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[23] Gibson 2012: 89.

Diodorus' second explanation closely resembles Palaephatus' rationalisation of the Centaurs as horse-riders, but is presented in a markedly brief manner. It likewise reduces the 'creation' of the (Hippo)centaurs to a single generation. Yet the contextualising circumstances of the wild bulls are gone, removing with them Ixion's role as king and employer of mercenaries; he is again father to the Centaurs with Nephele not the name of a town, or part of Hera's trick, as in Pindar, but simply the mother of his children.

The most fundamental point of Palaephatean intertextuality is not, in fact, in the precise content of this rationalisation, but in its function. If we understand Diodorus' passage not as a doxography, relating two different opinions regarding the origins of the Centaurs, but rather as having the form of the Palaephatean structure, in which the second part resolves and explains the first, we can see why certain manipulations are necessary. The first part of the passage narrates a 'conventional' account, resulting in a group of hybrid creatures named 'Hippocentaurs'. What 'others say' resolves the problem both of their physical form and their strange names: horse-riding gives the Hippo-Centaurs both a pseudo-hybrid appearance, and the hybrid portmanteau of Horse-Centaurs. Because Diodorus prefers to reveal the etymology of 'Hippocentaur' (rather than 'Centaur' as Palaephatus had done), he requires the multi-generational version in the first (conventional) account. Most tellingly, Diodorus ends with the ring composition technique so typical of Palaephatus. Palaephatus describes the 'mythologisation' of this event in some detail (this being the first appearance of what would become a repeated feature of his treatise):

> *οὕτως ἀπιόντων αὐτῶν κατόπιν τὰ νῶτα τοῖς πόρρωθεν ὁρῶσι μόνον ἐφαίνοντο τοῦ ἵππου πλὴν τῆς κεφαλῆς, τῶν δὲ ἀνδρῶν τὰ λοιπὰ πλὴν τῶν σκελῶν. ξένην οὖν ὄψιν ὁρῶντες ἔλεγον "οἱ Κένταυροι ἡμᾶς οἱ ἐκ Νεφέλης κατατρέχουσιν." ἀπὸ δὴ ταύτης τῆς ἰδέας καὶ τοῦ λόγου ὁ μῦθος ἀπίστως ἐπλάσθη, ὡς <ἐκ τῆς νεφέλης ἵππος τε καὶ ἀνὴρ ἐν τῷ ὄρει ἐγεννήθη>*

> When they rode away in this manner, all that was visible to those watching them from a distance was their backs: like a horse but without a horse's head, then the rest like a human, but without the legs. Onlookers, describing this strange sight, would say: 'The Centaurs, from Nephele, are attacking us!'. And from such statements, and their appearance, the unbelievable myth was fabricated, that from a cloud a horse-man was produced on the mountain.

By contrast, Diodorus only nods in the direction of this effect: καὶ εἰς πλάσμα μύθου κατατaχθῆναι ὡς διφυεῖς ὄντας. His πλάσμα μύθου echoes Palaephatus' ὁ μῦθος ἀπίστως ἐπλάσθη. Moreover, his description of these creatures being 'two-formed' (διφυεῖς) echoes the conventional story with which he began his account, and implicitly situates his passage within the tradition of critiquing their impossible hybridity.

Palaephatus' explanation of the Centaurs as horse-riders is the most persistently replicated aspect of his rationalisation. Heraclitus 'the mythographer' (first–second century AD) focuses on this aspect (6):

> Λέγεται περὶ τὸ Πήλιον καὶ τὴν Φολόην γεγονέναι διφυεῖς, τὰ μὲν ἐπάνω τῶν λαγόνων ἀνδρῶν ἔχοντας, τὸ δ᾽ ἀπὸ <τούτου> τοῦ μέρους πᾶν ἵππων. οὐκ ἀληθὲς δὲ τοῦτο. δύο γὰρ διηλλαγμένας φύσεις εἰς ἓν συνελθούσας ἀδύνατον ζῳογονηθῆναι καὶ τραφῆναι. ἀλλ᾽ ἔτι τῆς τῶν ἵππων χρήσεως οὔσης ἀγνώστου, πρῶτοι καθίσαντες ἐφ᾽ ἵππων κατέτρεχον τὰ πεδία λῃστεύοντες, φαντασίαν τε ἀπετέλεσαν τοῖς πρώτως θεασαμένοις μακρόθεν, ὡς ἐκ δυοῖν εἰσι γεγονότες φύσεων.

> It is said that near Mount Pelion and Mount Pholoe[24] double-formed [creatures] were born. They had human bodies above the flanks, but apart from that were completely horse. And yet this is not true. For it is not possible for two forms thus melded to be born alive and grow up. Instead, at a point when the use of horses was still unknown, these [men] were the first to sit on horses, over-running and looting the plains. The [riders] gave the appearance that they were of double form to those who first beheld them from a distance (*Peri Apiston* 5).

What we have in essence is a paraphrase of Palaephatus' rationalisation: again the exact narrative context of Ixion and the bulls is gone, although the detail of the Centaurs pillaging the plains below their original mountain home (which is in Palaephatus' version an outcome of their arrogance following their success in killing the bulls) remains.

An epigram transmitted with Heraclitus' *Peri Apiston* labels its approach ἀνασκευή, a technical term from rhetorical training relating to the refutation of narratives. As has long been recognised, a passage from Theon's *Progymnasmata* (late first century AD) is pertinent for

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[24] In localising the Centaurs at Pholoe, a mountain in Arcadia, as well as Pelion, Heraclitus is importing a common mythographic detail (Pholoe was home to the Centaur Pholus, who hosted Heracles) not found in Palaephatus.

understanding this context.[25] Theon names Palaephatus alongside Herodotus, Plato, and Ephorus as 'experts' in ἀνασκευή who 'have the ability not merely to refute… myths, but also to show how they came about' (τὸ δὲ μὴ μόνον ἀνασκευάζειν τὰς τοιαύτας μυθολογίας, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὅθεν παρερρύηκεν ὁ τοιοῦτος λόγος ἀποφαίνειν τελεωτέρας ἐστίν, Spengel 95: 8–10). Here is his description:

> καὶ Παλαιφάτῳ τῷ Περιπατητικῷ ἐστιν ὅλον βιβλίον περὶ τῶν ἀπίστων ἐπιγραφόμενον, ἐν ᾧ τὰ τοιαῦτα ἐπιλύεται, οἷον ὅτι Κένταυροι μὲν ὑπελήφθησαν οἱ πρῶτοι ἐπὶ ἵπποις ὀχούμενοι ὀφθέντες, Διομήδης δὲ Θρᾷξ ἐς ἱπποτροφίαν ἐξαναλωθεὶς ἐλέχθη ὑπὸ τῶν αὑτοῦ ἵππων ἀπολωλέναι, κατὰ δὲ τὸν αὐτὸν λόγον καὶ Ἀκταίων ὑπὸ τῶν κυνῶν, ἡ δὲ Μήδεια βάπτουσα τὰς ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς τῶν ἀνθρώπων πολιὰς καὶ μελαίνας ποιοῦσα ἐφημίσθη τοὺς γέροντας εἰς λέβητα κατακόπτουσα νέους ποιεῖν, καὶ τὰ παραπλήσια τούτοις.
>
> Palaephatus the Peripatetic has an entire book entitled *Peri Apiston* in which he explains such things. He says for instance that when people first saw men riding horses they interpreted them as Centaurs; that Diomedes the Thracian, because he spent all his money on his horses, was said to have been killed by his own horses; and by the same logic Actaeon was said to have been killed by his hounds; and Medea, since she dyed men's grey hair and made it black, was said to have rejuvenated the old men by cutting them up into a cauldron; and these sorts of things. (Spengel: 96, l4–4 ed. Patillon).

Theon here characterises the contents of the *Peri Apiston* by summarising four of its entries; his treatment of the Centaurs is radically reduced to the single motif of misunderstood sight.[26] Here the demands of efficient communication are clear: the hybridity of the Centaurs is their most notorious fabulous aspect, and thus explanation of this is the most immediately important point; equally, positing the misunderstanding of a new technology is the most immediately comprehensive element of Palaephatus' much fuller narrative. A reader can quickly envisage a scenario in which a rider could from a distance be taken for a double-formed creature since this appeals directly to the reader's experience of

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[25] For discussion of the rhetorical context of Heraclitus' *Peri Apiston*, see Hawes 2014: 99–103.

[26] Strictly speaking, Theon also expands on Palaephatus in that he mentions two details not found in *Peri Apiston:* he calls Diomedes 'the Thracian' and specifies that Medea cut up her victims before boiling them. Both are conventional aspects of the broader mythic tradition. The former aids comprehension in that it distinguishes this Diomedes from the more prominent (Iliadic) hero of the same name.

misconstruing a scene. Palaephatus' attendant arguments based on wordplay are more complex – and contingent on the reader quickly grasping and accepting the *a priori* assumptions that underpin them – and thus not so effective in this context.

We have already seen that Ps.-Nicolaus used elements of Palaephatus' refutation of the Centaurs to illustrate ἀνασκευή because he clearly distinguished the refutation of a narrative from its correct narration, rationalistic interpretation has no place in his model of ἀνασκευή. Theon, by contrast, highlights the fact that refutation is just the first step towards a more advanced rhetorical technique, in which the truth of the myth is undercut by an explanation of how it might have arisen. With this in mind, we can see why Theon focuses solely upon Palaephatus' positive proof of the historical reality of the original Centaurs at the expense of the negative proof of the impossibility of their mythic forms.

Thus, despite the appearance of repetitiousness, even brief instantiations of the Centaurs-as-horseriders motif show enough variety to suggest that Palaephatus' interpretation is not merely being applied mechanically. This is seen further in Pliny's (first century AD) catalogue of military inventions. He describes Bellerophon as the first horserider, with reins the innovation of a certain Pelethronius (whose name suggests a Thessalian context – see below); 'Thessalians called Centaurs' were first to fight from horseback.[27] Although Pliny's arrangement contradicts the general motif derived from Palaephatus, that the Centaurs invented horseriding, it does replicate an important detail of Palaephatus' account: in the *Peri Apiston* their invention is indeed motivated by the need to throw javelins from horseback, and their activities become notably belligerent. The militaristic subtext of Palaephatus' account thus seems to have inspired Pliny's narrative of the early development of equitation.

Fluidity in the attribution of inventions in this field is likewise apparent in Vergil's *Georgics*, in which the *Lapiths* (described as *Pelethronii*, i.e. Thessalian, from the region of Pelion) develop the art of fighting from horseback (3.115–117). Most pertinently for us, the commentaries of both Ps-Probus and Servius invoke the *Centaurs* at this point:

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[27] *NH* 7.202: *equo vehi Bellerophontem, frenos et strata equorum Pelethronium, pugnare ex equo Thessalos qui Centauri appellati sunt habitantes secundum Pelium montem*. The invention of horsemanship is attributed elsewhere to Poseidon (e.g. Paus. 7.21.8–9).

Lapithae ergo primi existimantur equitasse, et, ut Palaephatus in libro ἀπίστων ait, eius gentis utique […] ii, qui in Nephele castello morentur. Ex qua causa Centauri nebulae filii creduntur, et Ixion iis mercedem promisit, si furentem taurorum gregem occidissent, quorum velocitate equorum cum impetus effugerent et ipsos telis conficerent, ἀπὸ τοῦ κεντεῖν, quod est figere, καὶ ταύρου Centauri dicti sunt. Existimati sunt biformes, quia primi equitare coeperunt.

And so the Lapiths were the first of all the peoples to think of and put into practice the riding of horses, as Palaephatus says in his book 'On Unbelievable Stories', … and that they lived in the village of Nephele. For this reason, the Centaurs are believed to be sons of a cloud. Ixion promised a reward to them if they would kill a wild herd of bulls. When, using the speed of their horses, they retreated from [the bulls'] attack and killed them with javelins, they were named 'Centaurs' from the Greek 'to pierce' and 'bull'. They were thought to be two-formed because they were the first to ride on horseback. (Ps-Probus ad Vir. *Georg.* ed. Thilo & Hagen)

Pelethronium oppidum est Thessaliae, ubi primum domandorum equorum repertus est usus. nam cum quidam Thessalus rex, bubus oestro exagitatis, satellites suos ed eos revocandos ire iussisset illique cursu non sufficerent, ascenderunt equos et eorum velocitate boves secuti, eos stimulis ad tecta revocarunt. sed hi visi, aut cum irent velociter, aut cum eorum equi circa flumen Peneon potarent capitibus inclinatis, locum fabulae dederunt, ut Centauri esse crederentur, qui dicti sunt Centauri ἀπὸ τοῦ κεντᾶν τοὺς ταύρους.

Pelethronium is a village in Thessaly where the practice of breaking horses was first invented.[28] For when his bulls were stirred up by a gadfly, a certain Thessalian king ordered his subjects to go and retrieve them. Since they were not fast enough on foot, they mounted horses and with the aid of the horses' speed, tracked the bulls and brought them back home using goads. But the sight gave rise to a topic for myth – whether because they moved so quickly, or because the horses inclined their heads as they drank from the river Peneus – and they were believed to be Centaurs, the name coming from the Greek 'to pierce the bulls'. (Servius ad Vir. *Georg.*, ed. Thilo & Hagen)

As Hilburn Womble argues, these two passages have distinctive differences, but cannot represent entirely independent traditions: it cannot simply be a coincidence that two commentators offered observations

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[28] For a *locus parallelus*, see *First Vatican Mythographer* 1.160.

relating to the Centaurs to illuminate Vergil's reference to Lapiths.[29] Beyond the rather clumsy equation of Lapiths with Centaurs in both passages necessitated by the Vergilian locus, the authors of both commentaries effect changes to Palaephatus' explanation. The author of the Ps-Probus commentary names Palaephatus and his work as his source, and replicates quite specific details not found in other paraphrases of Palaephatus' interpretation: notably, the role of Ixion, the advantage of speed gained by riding, the specific tactic of throwing javelins while retreating, and the town of Nephele.[30] Such accuracy in replication is notable given the laxity that Alan Cameron has diagnosed in ancient scholars' citation of existing material, even when naming the ultimate authority for such information.[31]

The passage in Servius' commentary, by contrast, illustrates the creative invention that is a characteristic of ancient myth interpretation. It takes up the Palaephatean idea that horse-riding was invented in Thessaly as a way of controlling bulls, and embroiders from it a quite different narrative, more vague in parts ('a certain Thessalian king') and more precise in others (the bulls are driven wild by a gadfly, there was a first attempt to track them on foot). Most notably, the author speculates on the exact reason for the onlookers' mistake: perhaps they were moving so fast that they only saw a blur; perhaps they happened to see them when the horses had bent their heads to drink, thus leaving just the man's torso and head visible.

In Fulgentius' *Mythologies* (late fifth–early sixth century AD), we encounter the Centaurs-as-horseriders motif in a strikingly eclectic context. Fulgentius describes Ixion's rape of Nephele as an ethical allegory: it shows, Fulgentius explains, the emptiness of aspiring to power; just as a cloud is insubstantial, so too is the transience of dominion. His punishment on a wheel is fitting since:

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[29] Womble 1961: 'That both P[s.-Probus] and S[ervius] give the same distorted (or mistaken) version of a rationalisation of the story, to explain a passage in Vergil for which their explanation is not appropriate, goes far beyond probable coincidence and makes quite clear that the notes are of common origin' (386). Womble concludes that both extant commentaries must have been influenced by a lost common source: 'Although S does not cite Palaephatus as his source, there can be no doubt that both S[ervius] and P[s.-Probus] are reproducing the same material, ultimately material of Palaephatus, whether either the author of P or that of the D scholium had actually seen a copy of the *Peri Apiston*' (385).

[30] Festa 1896: 245n.1 considered that Servius' source knew genuine work of Palaephatus since the toponym 'Nephele' is not included in any other intermediary source.

[31] Cameron 2004, with discussion of Palaephatean material in Servius and Ps-Probus, 203–206.

> *quod omnes qui per arma atque uiolentam regnum adfectant subito erectiones, subito elisiones sustineant sicut rota quae stabile non habet aliquando cacumen.*
>
> All people who strive for kingship through arms and violence are suddenly uplifted and then suddenly struck down, just like a wheel which not does not ever have a fixed summit. (2.14, ed. Wolff & Dain)

In the midst of these allegorical readings, he explains the origins of the Centaurs in rationalistic terms:

> *Dromocrites in theogonia scribit Ixionem in Grecia primum regni gloriam adfectasse, qui sibi centum equites primus omnium conquisiuit, unde et Centauri dicti sunt quasi centum armati – denique centippi dici debuerunt, ex quo equis mixti pinguntur, sed ideo centum armati.*
>
> Dromocrites in *Theogony* writes that Ixion was the first in Greece to strive for the glory of kingship. First of all, he gathered to himself one hundred horsemen, and these were called Centaurs, since they were **cent**um **ar**mati ('hundred armed') – indeed they should be called *centippi*, those portrayed as combined with horses, but for this reason they were *centum armati*.

What Fulgentius attributes to 'Dromocrites', an otherwise unknown – and thus suspicious[32] – source, builds on the now-familiar 'horseriders' motif. But Fulgentius does not rely on the idea of misunderstood sight, and like Pliny he connects the Centaurs to the first military use of horse-riding, not explicitly its invention. Most radically, he plays on the Latinate etymology of Centaurs from the cardinal number *centum*.[33] And because he dispenses with the Greek explanation, the story of the rampant bulls is likewise unnecessary and replaced by the simpler idea that Ixion acquired these mercenaries for military purposes.

5. Palaephatus' Centaurs in the Christian Chronicles

Pagan myths continued to carry cultural significance among the elite of late antiquity, serving as useful signposts by which to navigate the past.

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[32] Fulgentius' *Mythologiae* is full of references to obscure literary texts. As Hays 2002: 25 notes, we might suspect that 'some of these authors existed only in Fulgentius' fertile imagination'. An analogous situation occurs at 3.3, in which Fulgentius incorporates Palaephatus' interpretation of Actaeon but attributes it to *Anaximenes qui de picturis antiquis disseruit libro secondo*; if the sixth-century philosopher from Miletus is meant, this cannot be correct, if not, the author is otherwise unattested.

[33] *Third Vatican Mythographer* 4.6 gives the same etymology. Several centuries later Boccaccio (*Genealogia* 9.27; 28) discredits Fulgentius' explanation, arguing that Latin should not be used to explain a Greek term.

Whereas biblical events were presented in a straightforward manner, Greek myths were subjected to greater scrutiny. Rationalisation permitted Christian historians the freedom to record pagan myths as true even while decrying the gods they contained as false. This approach is particularly apparent in the relation to the Centaurs.

Three surviving discussions of the Centaurs found in early Christian writers – in Jerome's *Chronicon* (late fourth century), the fragmentary *Historical Chronicle* (Ἱστορία χρονική), of uncertain authorship but attributed to John of Antioch,[34] and George Syncellus' *Chronological Compendium* (Ἐκλογὴ χρονογραφίας) (late eighth–early ninth century AD) – are very closely inter-related. The material derives in fact from earlier work – Jerome relied on Eusebius' *Chronica* (late third–early fourth century AD) as a source, and this author in turn used material from the lost work by Sextus Julius Africanus (c.160–c.240) of the same name, including the mythic history of Greece preceding the first Olympiad. We might then consider the Palaephatean material in the three extant Chronicles to derive ultimately from the *Chronica* of Julius Africanus rather than from Palaephatus' original, with Eusebius perhaps playing a role as an intermediary source.[35]

George Syncellus' *History* covers the period from Adam to the reign of Diocletian (284–305) and is based on the work of Eusebius and Julius Africanus, which he frequently quotes. He mentions Palaephatus' interpretations of the Sphinx, Phrixus and Helle, Bellerophon and Pegasus, Cadmus and the Spartoi, Daedalus and Icarus and the Centaurs. These six passages are not only *loci paralleli* of Eusebius' discussion, there is a close relationship between Jerome's Latin translation of Eusebius and Syncellus' Greek.[36] This is notable in the passage relating to the Centaurs:

> Ieron. *Chron.* 57d (ed. Helm): *Bellum Lapitharum et Centaurorum, quos scribit Palaephatus libro de Incredibilibus primo, nobiles fuisse equites Thessalorum.*

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[34] The fragments come to us via two sources: the *Excerpta* of the Emperor Constantinus Porphyrogenitus (first half of the tenth century) and the copy of a twelfth–century codex made by Claude Saumaise in 1606 (*Vat. gr*. 96). In the preface to the first edition of the *Excerpta Salmasiana*, Cramer 1839: 383 confirms '*Excerpta sunt ex magno opere Joannis Antiocheni, non Malalas, ut annotavit aliquis in prima Codicis pagina*'. However, Müller 1851: 538 considers only the Constantinian fragments to be authentic. Roberto 2005: 263–339 agrees and attributes the *Excerpta Salmasiana* to Ps.-John of Antioch.

[35] See Wallraff, Roberto & Pinggéra, XXXI–XXXV; XXXIX–XL; XLII–XLIV.

[36] Eusebius / Jerome *Chron.* 50d, 52d, 53g, 56f, 57d, 62h; Syncellus *Chronogr.* 183, 189, 190.

The battle between the Lapiths and the Centaurs: Palaephatus writes in his first book[37] 'On unbelievable tales' that these were noble knights of Thessaly.

Sync. *Chronogr.* 191, 16-7 (ed. Mosshammer): Πόλεμος Κενταύρων καὶ Λαπιθῶν. Κένταυροι δὲ Θεσσαλῶν ἦσαν ἱππεῖς ἄριστοι, ὥς φησι Παλαίφατος ἐν πρώτῃ ἀπίστων.

The battle between the Centaurs and the Lapiths. The Centaurs were excellent horsemen of Thessaly, as Palaephatus says in his first book 'On unbelievable tales'.

The Centaurs are characterised in the same way – albeit more concisely – in the fragments of (Ps.)-John of Antioch: 'the Centaurs were excellent horsemen of Thessaly' (Οἱ Κένταυροι Θεσσαλῶν ἦσαν ἱππεῖς ἄριστοι, F 2 = *FHG*, 15 p.539). Here he has omitted both the heading which identifies the topic of the passage (the battle between the Lapiths and the Centaurs which in Eusebius / Jerome occurs in the reign of Thola in Israel) and the attribution of the material to Palaephatus' work.

Similar abbreviations are apparent in other treatments of Palaephatean material in (Ps.)-John, when compared to Eusebius / Jerome and Syncellus: the narrative is reduced to a bare minimum, and Palaephatus is only named as a source once, in relation to Bellerophon and Pegasus.[38] This approach demonstrates that (Ps.)-John's main interest was not the ancient author, but his approach to myth; indeed the epigraph to the *Excerpta Salmasiana* describes it as 'containing also clarifications of myths' (ἔχουσα καὶ διασάφησιν τῶν μυθευομένων).

Despite their conciseness, the passages of (Ps.)-John and Syncellus on the Centaurs are of interest in helping to clarify some questions relating to Eusebius / Jerome. Comparison of Jerome with Syncellus in particular reveals correspondences between the Latin and Greek versions in which 'literal' translation involves interpretation as well. When Jerome translates ἱππεῖς ἄριστοι as *nobiles equites*, he conflates 'excellence' with social and military rank; in the Byzantine chroniclers (as perhaps in Eusebius) there is

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[37] These references to the 'first book' of Palaephatus appear to support the *Suda*'s attribution of a work 'on unbelievable things' to Palaephatus (2) in five books. The *Suda* also attributes to Palaephatus (4) a work 'on myths' in one book, which accords with Theon and Ps-Probus' descriptions (see above).

[38] Cf. F 2 (ed. Roberto) = FHG p. 539, 7 (Phrixus and Helle); 8 (Pegasus); 9 (Cadmus and the Spartoi); 11 (Daedalus and Icarus); 12 (the Sphinx).

no such connotation; they follow Palaephatus in characterising them as 'excellent' in respect to their skill in training and riding horses.

Thus, these passages show that the use of Palaephatus in Christian chronography, at first- or second-hand, goes back at least to the 'father' of the genre, Julius Africanus. Moreover, Eusebius' *Chronicle* played an important role in the indirect transmission of Palaephatus. In fact, probably from Africanus or from an unabridged version of Eusebius derives this testimony included in the *Historiae adversus paganos* of Paulus Orosius (c.390-c.430):

> *Anno DLX ante urbem conditam atrocissimum inter Cretenses et Athenienses certamen fuit […] Iisdem diebus Lapithae et Thessali famosis nimium certavere conflictibus. Sed Thessalos Palaephatus in libro primo 'Incredibilium' prodit ipsos a Lapithis creditos dictosque fuisse Centauros, eo quod discurrentes in bello equites veluti unum corpus equorum et hominum viderentur* (722-23, ed. Migne).

> In the year 540 before the founding of Rome there was a terrifying battle between Cretans and Athenians … In this same period Lapiths and Thessalians fought their very famous battles. But Palaephatus, in the first book of 'On unbelievable tales', declares that the Thessalians are thought to be the same as the Lapiths, and that the Centaurs were thus named because, when they went to war on horseback, the bodies of horse and human seemed to be as one.

By the time of Justinian (fifth–sixth centuries), Julius Africanus and Eusebius had been used extensively by John Malalas, an author influential amongst later Byzantine scholars, such as John of Antioch and Tzetzes.[39] When Malalas calls Palaephatus 'the most learned chronicler (i.e. 'historian')' (Παλαίφατος ὁ σοφώτατος χρονογράφος, 2.1, 24), he expresses both his own opinion, and – perhaps – the admiration of this contemporaries. Yet, although he attributes material to Palaephatus in six passages, none of these correlates to the *Peri Apiston* as we have it.[40] Because Malalas' testimony suggests that various epitomes of Palaephatus' work

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[39] References to Malalas' work use the chapter and paragraph numbers of Thurn 2000 and the page numbers of Dindorf 1831.

[40] These are: *Chron.* 2.1, 24 (Helius, Aphrodite and Ares); 2.8, 33 (Heracles Tyrius, inventor of the colour purple); 2.15, 41 (birth of Dionysus); 2.17, 53 (Seven against Thebes); 3.12, 63 (abduction of Kore by Pirithous); 4.13, 83 (Leda and Zeus). He also attributes to Palaephatus information about an historical figure, Perseus, the last Macedonian king (8.27, 209). This would not only fit poorly within a mythographical work, it would be incompatible with the conventional dating of Palaephatus (fourth–third centuries BC).

were circulating in the Byzantine period, these attributions contributed in important ways to the late nineteenth-century disputes over the authenticity of the extant *Peri Apiston*.[41]

Although Malalas does not refer directly to Palaephatus' treatment of the Centaurs, his method, and even aspects of his interpretation, are evident in his rationalistic version of the battle between Heracles and Achelous (4.20, 163–64). Malalas says that Oineus, King of Aetolia, was at war with Achelous, son of Poseidon, because the latter had abducted Oineus' daughter Deianira. Oineus allied himself to Heracles, a brave general dubbed 'Polyphemus', i.e. 'the very famous'. Polyphemus killed Poseidon in battle, and 'because of this the poets say that Heracles tore off the horn of Achelous, that is, the army of his father' (διὰ τοῦτο δὲ ἐξέθεντο οἱ ποιηταὶ ὅτι τὸ κέρας τοῦ Ἀχελῴου ἀπέσπασεν ὁ Ἡρακλῆς, ὅπερ ἐστὶ τὴν πατρικὴν αὐτοῦ δύναμιν). Here the interpretation turns, in Palaephatean style, on the ambivilance of τὸ κέρας as both the horn of an animal and – by metonymy – the wing of an army.[42] Notably, Malalas follows this with an explanation of why Achelous is represented partially as a horse: 'when he saw his father had fallen, he fled on horseback. This is why he is represented as a Hippocentaur' (καὶ ἑωρακὼς τὸν ἴδιον αὐτοῦ πατέρα πεσόντα, φεύγει ἔφιππος· διὸ καὶ γράφουσιν αὐτὸν ἱπποκένταυρον). The Palaephatean explanation of the Centaurs as an optical illusion appears here in a different mythical context. Achelous does change form, conventionally taking on the appearance of a serpent and a bull (from which Heracles tears the horn).[43] Malalas seems to have confused Achelous with Deianira's abductor in other forms of the myth, the Centaur

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[41] See Festa 1890, the critiques of Wipprecht 1892: 8ff. and Schrader 1894: 7ff., and the reply of Festa 1896: 3–16.

[42] See Alganza Roldán 2012: 36–40. *Excerpta Vaticana* 11 also exploits the double meaning of τὸ κέρας to explain Pan's horns. Palaephatus' solution to the 'horn of Amalthea' (45) is different: he interprets this as the horn-shape container (perhaps a rhyton) in which she keeps her wealth. For other ancient rationalisations of Achelous, see Hawes 2014: 128–131.

[43] In some pictorial sources, Achelous is depicted as a Centaur: e.g. on a Corinthian cup (c.590–580 BC) Brussels A 1374, noted by Stafford 2012: 75, and on an Attic black-figure amphora (c.510–500 BC) noted by Buxton 2009: 90. These are atypical, and restricted to the archaic period. We cannot of course discount the idea that the apparent connection between the visual form of Achelous as a bull and the *taur-* element in 'Centaur' influenced the conflation of Achelous with the Palaephatean Centaur explanation found in Malalas.

Nessus. The account ends with Achelous' drowning in the river, which is then known by his name rather than its original one, 'Phorbas'.[44]

Malalas mentions only one author in this passage, Cephalion (*FGrH* 93), an historian and rhetor of the time of Hadrian, whom he cites several times elsewhere in the *Chronographia* for mythological material.[45] We cannot determine whether he is the source for the entire passage, or just for the aetiology of the river's name. In any case, this passage testifies not only to the diffusion and popularity of Palaephatean-style rationalisation, and to the explanation of the Centaurs as horse-riders in particular, but also to the difficulty of attributing interpretations in which no source is cited and there are no exact correspondences within the manuscript tradition.

6. Palaephatus' Centaurs in the Komnenian Hellenism: philosophy, scholarship and rhetoric

The Komnenian 'Renaissance', from the second half of the eleventh century until the end of the twelfth, saw the literary legacy of antiquity flourish beyond its status as a marker of ethnic identity to become a model of *paideia* for political and religious elites. In this period, philosophy and poetry, particularly the Homeric epics, were not merely objects of study and commentary in schools, but sources of literary inspiration. Hand-in-hand with this developed a taste for Greek mythology, such that 'we can speak of a literary cult of Greek mythology in the Komnenian empire'.[46] Amongst the erudite polymaths of this period are Michael Psellus (c.1018–78), Eustathius of Thessalonica (1110–98) and John Tzetzes (1110–80).

Psellus was not only the most influential intellectual of his time, but an object of admiration subsequently. His commentary on Homer uses a form of moral allegory which is compatible with Christian doctrine but quite alien to the rationalism of Palaephatus. To the best of our knowledge, Palaephatus' interpretation does not appear in his work. Psellus mentions the Centaurs three times in relation to philosophical problems: 'the mythical Centaurs and the so-called ant-lions' (οἵ τε μυθικοὶ κένταυροι καὶ οἱ λεγόμενοι μυρμηκολέοντες) illustrate Aristotle's principles on the

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[44]*Chron.* 6.20, 165: ὁ Ἀχελῷος κατηνέχθη ἀπὸ τοῦ ἵππου εἰς τὰ ῥεῖθρα τοῦ ποταμοῦ καὶ ἀπώλετο. καὶ μετεκλήθη ἔκτοτε ὁ αὐτὸς ποταμὸς ἀπὸ τῶν τῆς Αἰτωλίας χώρας Ἀχελῷος ἕως τῆς νῦν, καθὰ Κεφαλίων ὁ σοφὸς ἐξέθετο.

[45] See *Chron.* 2.14, 40; 2.15, 45; 2.16, 49; 4.19, 90.

[46] Kaldellis 2007: 245.

creation of hybrids and other prodigies (τὰ τέρατα); the Hippocentaur and the 'goat-deer' (τραγέλαφος) are cited as examples of the human capacity to think up and name non-existent creatures; and elsewhere he explains them by distinguishing between perception (αἴσθησις) and representation (φαντασία). In all three cases, Psellus draws on arguments which echo the philosophical tradition – of Proclus and John of Damascus, for example – and which Diogenes Laertius attributes to Crisipus.[47]

Amongst the preserved works of Eustathius, his Homeric commentaries are relevant to our study. In this work, he seems to have drawn his mythographical material from Ptolemy Chennos and the *Peri Apiston* treatises of Palaephatus and Heraclitus, rather than the *Bibliotheca* of Apollodorus.[48] Eustathius' appreciation for rationalistic interpretation is evident in his identification of Palaephatus as 'the wise man who healed myths, restoring them for history'; he describes such 'therapy', 'which set out to bring credibility to incredible stories' as also practiced by Heraclitus 'the mythographer', and a second-century historian, Charax of Pergamon (*FGrH* 103).[49] Furthermore, Eustathius cites Palaephatus as an authority seven times: one of these passages refers to his *Troica*, the rest to his treatise on myth.[50] These references are not unproblematic. Two, concerning the death of Protesilaus and the rebuilding of Troy, do not appear in the extant *Peri Apiston*; others contain novel information, as in the passage on the Sphinx at Thebes, where Eustathius cites Palaephatus but, on the whole, agrees with Malalas who cites Julius Africanus as his main source for the Theban legend. Thus, it is possible that Eustathius was influenced by Malalas or that, as Festa argues, both scholars had a text of the *Peri Apiston* which differed from the extant codices.[51]

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[47] The passages in Psellus are: *Philosophica Minora* I. *Opuscula logica, physica, allegorica, alia*, opusc. 16. ζ, 203 ss.; opusc. 49, 125–130; II. *Opuscula psychologica, theologica, daemonologica*, 64. 25–30. See also John of Damascus, *Contra Jacobitas* 29; *Dialectica sive Capita philosophica*, 48.85; *Fragmenta philosophica*, 18.9; Proclus, *In Platonis Parmenidem*, 885; 889; Diogenes Laertius 7.50; 53. In his polemic with Parmenides, Gorgias (Fr. B 3 D-K, 79 ff.) uses Scylla and the Chimaera to demonstrate the human capacity to conceive of non-existent creatures (see Alganza Roldán 2012: 33–34). Lucretius uses the Centaurs to illustrate a similar argument, as described above.

[48] See the 'Praefatio' of M. Van der Valk (1971, 1, CIX–CXII). We cite Eustathius' Iliadic commentary from this edition; for his commentary on the *Odyssey*, we follow the edition of G. Stallbaum (1825–1826).

[49] See *Comm. ad Od*. 1.176; *Comm. ad Od*. 2.195 (cf. Athenion fr. 1 PCG = Athenaeus 14.1460e–1461b).

[50] The passage refers to a tribe of Amazons: *Comm. ad Il*. 1, 571 = *FGrH* 44, T 4 (Strab. 12.3.22).

[51] *Comm. ad Il,* 1.508 (Aeneas and Protesilaus); *Comm. ad Od*. 1, 6 (building of the Troy's walls); *Comm. ad Il*. 4.963 (Niobe); *Comm. ad. Od*. 1.413 (the Sphinx); 2.84 (Oedipus and the Sphinx);

In relation to the Centaurs, however, Eustathius offers a faithful abbreviation of Palaephatus. The story appears in his Iliadic commentary in relation to the episode in which Nestor recalls how he had fought with the Lapiths and defeated the 'mountain-bred beasts' (φῆρας ὀρεσκῴους). Eustathius explains φῆρας (*Il.* 1.268), a reference to the Centaurs[52], as the Aeolic form of θῆρες and adds (*Comm. ad Il.* 1.159–160):

> τινὲς δὲ τοὺς Κενταύρους φῆράς φασι κατὰ λέξιν σύνθετον ἐπιθετικῶς οἱονεὶ φυῆρας, τοὺς ἐκ δύο φυῶν ἡρμοσμένους, ὅ ἐστι διφυεῖς, τὸ μὲν κάτω ἵππους ὄντας ἄχρι καὶ εἰς αὐχένα, τὸ δὲ ἐντεῦθεν ἀνθρώπους καὶ τὸ ὅλον εἰπεῖν ἵππους τε ὄντας ἀκεφάλους καὶ ἀνθρώπους ἄποδας. ὅθεν καὶ τὸ ἀστεῖον ἐκεῖνο εἴρηται, ὅτι δηλαδὴ ἐν τῇ τῶν Ἱπποκενταύρων φύσει "ἵππος μὲν ἀπερεύγεται ἄνδρα, βροτὸς δ᾽ ἀποπέρδεται ἵππον". ὅτι δὲ ἐγένοντο οἱ Ἱπποκένταυροι καὶ γενναῖοι καὶ δεξιοὶ κελητίζειν καὶ ὅτι ληστρικῶς ἔζων, καὶ ἡ τοῦ Παλαιφάτου ἱστορία φησί. δῆλον δὲ ὅτι Κένταυροι μὲν ἐκλήθησαν, διότι ταύρους ἀγριανθέντας καὶ πολλὰ περὶ Θετταλίαν βλάπτοντας κατεκέντησαν· ἐνομίσθησαν δὲ σύνθετοι ἐξ ἵππων καὶ ἀνδρῶν, διότι ἁρματηλατεῖν ἀφέντες κελητίζειν ἐπετηδεύσαντο ἤγουν ἀζεύκτοις ἵπποις ἐποχεῖσθαι καὶ ἁρπάζοντες εἶτα φεύγοντες καὶ κατὰ νώτου βλεπόμενοι ἐφάνταζον τοὺς πολλοὺς ὡς ἐξ ἡμισείας εἰσὶν ἄνθρωποι ἐγκεκεντρισμένοι ἵπποις. καὶ ἡ φαντασία τὸν μῦθον ἀστείως ἀνέπλασε.

> Some call the Centaurs φῆρας, using a compound word adjectivally, as if they were 'wild creatures', put together from two natures – that is, they are hybrids – since below they are horses, and from the neck up, men. In short, one might say that they are headless horses and 'feetless' men. For this reason, there is a joke that expresses the physionomy of the Hippocentaur: 'the horse burps out a man, and the human farts a horse'. And yet, Palaephatus says that they were mighty and skilled in horsemanship, and also that they lived as bandits. Indeed, evidently they were called 'Centaurs' because they 'pierced' wild bulls and caused great damage in Thessaly. But it was thought that they were horse-man hybrids because they took to riding horses rather than driving them in chariots, that its to say, they rode horses rather than being physically joined to them, but people saw their backs after they had made their

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Malalas, *Chronogr.* 2.17, 50–53. For discussion of these issues, see Schrader 1894: 7–12 and Festa 1896: 227-40.

[52] Homer uses the word 'Centaur' (Κένταυρος) three times, in reference to Chiron (*Il.* 11.832) and the Lapiths' enemies (*Od.* 21.295; 303).

> raid and fled and so they were thought to be men joined to horses from the waist. And so, in a funny way, this mistaken sight created the myth.

It is clear that Eustathius had a text of Palaephatus' first entry which was no more extensive than ours; here he adapts its content to his context. Thus, at the beginning of the passage, he not only offers his own description of the hybrid form of the Centaurs, but passes over Palaephatus' refutation of them based on dietary incompatibility. He introduces two novel elements. The first is the false etymology of the Aeolic φῆρας from the compound φυῆρας, a *hapax* perhaps invented *ad hoc* and applicable to the Homeric passage but not to Palaephatus, who uses the more common θηρία / θηρίον. The second novel element consists of his insertion of the humorous saying.[53] Eustathius then locates the episode in Thessaly but does not mention Nephele or Ixion. He notes both the equestrian skill of the protagonists, and their banditry, but does not describe the way that the former led to the latter, or the excursions into Lapith territory that feature in Palaephatus' account. The etymology of 'Centaur'/'Hippocentaur' is expressed in Palaephatean terms, albeit briefly,[54] as are the circumstances of the visual mistake which underpins accounts of their hybrid forms.[55]

In summary, Eustathius' purpose is to show that the 'mountain-bred beasts' of Homer were not monsters, but men, and he dispenses with the parts of Palaephatus' narrative irrelevant to this.[56] He then presents a moral allegory which explains the origins of the Centaurs from the union of Ixion and Nephele, and ends his gloss on φῆρας by stating, 'Thus, there is no such thing as the Hippocentaur, nor the goat-deer' (οὐδὲν γάρ ἐστιν ὁ Ἱπποκένταυρος, ὥσπερ οὐδ' ὁ τραγέλαφος, *Comm. ad Il.* 1.16). This

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[53] The quotation parallels a riddle in the *Anthology* of Planudes (16, 115), among the epigrams of the Emperor Julian: Ἀνδρόθεν ἐκκέχυθ' ἵππος· ἀνέδραμε δ' ἱππόθεν ἀνήρ, / ἀνὴρ νόσφι ποδῶν, κεφαλῆς δ' ἄτερ αἰόλος ἵππος· / ἵππος ἐρεύγεται ἄνδρα, ἀνὴρ δ' ἀποπέρδεται ἵππον.

[54] Palaeph. 1: καὶ τὸ μὲν ὄνομα ἐντεῦθεν ἔλαβον οἱ Κένταυροι, ὅτι τοὺς ταύρους κατεκεντάννυσαν (οὐ γὰρ ἀπὸ τῆς ἰδέας τῶν ταύρων, οὐδὲν γὰρ πρόςεστι ταύρου τοῖς Κενταύροις, ἀλλ' ἵππου καὶ ἀνδρὸς ἰδέα ἐστίν· ἀπὸ τοῦ ἔργου οὖν τὸ ὄνομα ἔλαβον). The form of the verb used by Eustathius (κατεκέντησαν) is attested in the manuscript tradition, in cod. *Venetus Marcianus* 513 (see Festa 1902: 4).

[55] Palaeph. 1: ἁρπάσαντες καὶ ἐμπρήσαντες ἀπέτρεχον ἐπὶ τὰ ὄρη. οὕτως ἀπιόντων αὐτῶν κατόπιν τὰ νῶτα τοῖς πόρρωθεν ὁρῶσι μόνον ἐφαίνοντο τοῦ ἵππου πλὴν τῆς κεφαλῆς, τῶν δὲ ἀνδρῶν τὰ λοιπὰ πλὴν τῶν σκελῶν.

[56] Callistratus had already pointed this out in his description of a statue of a Centaur 12.1: 'I see a Centaur, not like a man according to the Homeric image (οὐκ ἀνδρὶ κατὰ τὴν Ὁμήρειον εἰκόνα), but rather a 'crag on a wooded mountain' (*Od.* 9.191). The Centaur was a man down to the waist and from there downwards he stood on the four legs of a horse.'

comment recalls Psellus' arguments on creatures produced by the imagination, and is equivalent to Palaephatus' point, that 'even if someone believes this beast existed, it is impossible' (εἴ τις οὖν πείθεται τοιοῦτον γενέσθαι θηρίον, ἀδύνατον).

Immediately following his summary of Palaephatus, Eustathius presents an etymology for the Centaurs that differs from that found in the *Peri Apiston*. He says that they were named after a savage, misanthropic individual called 'Centaurus', whose name derived from the fact that Ixion 'pricked' air, i.e. a cloud (διότι Ἰξίων κεντήσας αὖραν, ἤτοι ἀερίαν νεφέλην ἐγέννησεν αὐτὸν ἐξ ἐκείνης), a story the Byzantine scholar finds abhorrent. Here he capitalises on the fact that κέντεω, alongside its meaning of 'to spur or whip' in relation to horses, can be used as a sexual metaphor for penetration. Eustathius explains this usage in two lexicographical notes in his Homeric commentaries. The first relates to the expression 'whippers of horses' (κέντορας ἵππων) as used to describe the Trojans in the *Iliad* (5.102):

> *Τὸ δὲ "κέντορας ἵππων" ταὐτόν ἐστι τῷ ἐλατῆρας ἢ ἱπποδάμους, ᾧπερ ὅμοιόν τι σύνθετον τὸ ἱπποκένταυρος, [ὁ κεντῶν δηλαδὴ ταύρους κυνηγετικῶς. ὅθεν ἡ κωμικὴ βλασφημία κενταύρους ἔπαιξε τοὺς αἰσχρῷ ἔρωτι κεντοῦντας ταῦρον, ὅπερ ἐστὶν ὄρρον…].*
>
> 'Whippers of horses' is the same as saying 'charioteers' or 'horsemen'. It is similar to the compound word 'Hippocentaur' (clearly here used in the sense of hunting bulls. From this comes the comic insult of calling people 'Centaurs', suggesting that they penetrate 'bulls' in shameful sex acts, since 'bulls' are 'buttocks'…)[57]

The second relates to *Odyssey* 21.303 and is part of his discussion of the 'humanness' of the Centaurs, in support of which, as we have seen, Eustathius invokes Palaephatus. Thus (*Comm. ad Od.* 2.260):

> *Ὅτι δὲ θηριώδεις οἱ Κένταυροι, οὓς καὶ φῆρας ὀρεσκώους ἐν Ἰλιάδι ἔφη ὁ ποιητής, δηλοῦται κἀνταῦθα ἐν τῷ, ἐξ οὗ Κενταύροισι καὶ ἀνδράσι νεῖκος ἐτύχθη. ἐρρέθη γὰρ τοῦτο, οἷα τῶν Κενταύρων ἄλλο τι παρὰ τοὺς ἄνδρας ὄντων. ὅτι δὲ καὶ γυναικεῖον μόριον σημαίνει ὁ Κένταυρος, δηλοῦσιν οἱ παλαιοί, φέροντες καὶ χρῆσιν*

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[57] *Comm. ad Il.* 2.33–34. This etymology corresponds exactly with Suetonius, *Περὶ βλασφημιῶν καὶ πόθεν ἑκάστη* (1.16): 'Κένταυρος'· ὁ αἰσχρῷ ἔρωτι κεντῶν ταῦρον ὅπερ ἐστὶν ὄρρον.

Θεοπόμπου εἰς τοῦτο. πικρότερον δὲ τούτου εἰς σκῶμμα τὸ εἰρῆσθαι Κένταυρον, ὃς κεντεῖ ὅρρον τὸν παρὰ τῷ κωμικῷ.

That the Centaurs, whom the Poet called 'mountain-bred beasts' in the *Iliad*, were savage is also evident in this line 'from this arose the dispute between the Centaurs and men'. For this is phrased as if the Centaurs were beings different from humans. That 'the Centaur' also means the female sex is clear from the ancients, who refer to Theopompos on this matter.[58] It is more cutting to jokingly call someone a 'Centaur', since such a person whips buttocks; this is found in the Comedian.

Here 'the Comedian' is Aristophanes, although the insult credited to him is not among his extant work.[59] Eustathius thus provides important evidence that the two components of Κένταυρος – the verb κέντεω and the noun ταῦρος – were used, singularly and in tandem, as *double entendres* in the colloquial language that passed into comedy (and vice versa). Their secondary sense related specifically to sexual practices considered indecent, like male prostitution.[60] Intriguingly, if this lost comedy parodied not only the myth of the Centaurs, but also interpretations of them, then perhaps Palaephatus' etymology sought to present an alternative solution to Aristophanes', where the name of the creatures expresses an historical event in which they literally 'pierced the bulls' (τοὺς ταύρους κατεκεντάννυσαν).[61] This would thus 'cure' not only the confusion created by the conventional myth, but also the 'false' etymologies that had grown up around it.

We turn now to consider the work of John Tzetzes, a rhetorician and commentator who, like his contemporary Eustathius, might be considered a 'professional Hellenist'. Unlike Eustathius, however, his attitude towards his classical and Byzantine predecessors is frequently polemical, ironic, and acidic.[62] In his *Homeric Allegories* and his commentary on Lycophron's *Alexandra*, written with his brother Isaac, he criticises Palaephatus as

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[58]*FGrH* 343, F 2 = Polib. 8.9, 6. The text of Theopompus describes sexual promiscuity in the army of Philip of Macedonia.

[59] The passage here recalls one in *Peace* (1235–39): Trygaeus, haggling over the price of a breastplate, jokes that he will have to turn to prostitution to afford it, and then decides not to buy it because it 'pricks the buttocks' (θλίβει τὸν ὅρρον).

[60] Aristophanes' *Centaur* is known through fragments (fr. 267–77, Kock). The *Suda* records works with this title by Apollophanes (α, 3409), Theognetus (θ, 135), Nicochares (ν, 407), Timocles (τ, 623), Chairemon (χ, 170), and Ophelion (ω, 272).

[61] Sumler 2014 discusses eight cases of mythic rationalisation in Greek comedy, some of which have echoes of the *Peri Apiston* treatises of Palaephatus and Heraclitus.

[62] On Tzetzes' personality and position towards the classical tradition, see Kaldellis 2007: 301–307.

writing 'insipidly' (ψυχρῶς).[63] Such antipathy is also clear in the *Chiliades*, an historical miscellany written in 'political verse' (πολιτικὸς στίχος) andcontaining six passages that cite Palaephatus by name, two of which concern the Centaurs.[64]

The *historia* 'On Lapiths and Centaurs' (*Chil.* VII, Hist. 99) begins with a list of the famous Lapiths who fought the Centaurs. It then discusses the conflict itself and its consequences. To the account of Homer (*Il.* 1.262–68; *Od.* 21.293–98), Tzetzes contrasts that of Palaephatus, which he summarises (6-14):

> Τινὲς δ᾽ ἦσαν οἱ Κένταυροι, Παλαίφατος μὲν λέγει,
> πρὶν ἵπποις μονοκέλησιν οὐκ ἔτι ἐπωχοῦντο·
> ταύρων δ᾽ ἀγρίων Θετταλῶν τὴν χώραν σινομένων,
> νέοι τινὲς τῶν σθεναρῶν κέλησιν ἐπιβάντες
> τοὺς ταύρους κατηκόντιζον· οὕσπερ τινὲς ἰδόντες,
> ὡς ταύρους ἀκοντίζοντας ὠνόμασαν κενταύρους.
> ἱππομιγεῖς δ᾽ ἐνόμισαν ὡς πόρρωθεν ἰδόντες.
> Χρὴ κεντοταύρους τὸ λοιπόν, μηδὲ κενταύρους λέγειν,
> Παλαίφατε σοφώτατε. τὰ Παλαιφάτου ταῦτα.

> But there were some Centaurs, Palaephatus says,
> before, when saddle-horses had not yet been mounted,
> at the time when wild bulls ravaged the land of the Thessalians.
> Some brave young men mounted these horses
> and they shot down the bulls; and others, seeing
> how they had pierced the bulls called them 'Centaurs'.
> They thought that they were part horse when they saw them from afar.
> And so henceforth we must say 'Centotaurs', and not 'Centaurs',
> Wisest Palaephatus. This is the account of Palaephatus.

Thus, Tzetzes seems to accept the idea that the Centaurs invented horse-riding and that their forms are the result of an optical illusion. But he amends Palaephatus' etymology on linguistic grounds, since, according to him, the compound of the verb τὸ κέντω and the noun ταῦρος would be κεντοταύρους (i.e. the vowel should not be elided). Following this

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[63] *Comm. ad. Il.* 16.54–63; *Schol. Lyc.* 106, 29. Santoni 2002: 154, n.49 records eleven places where material from the *Perí Apíston* appears in the commentary on Lycophron. In total, Tzetzes names Palaephatus 19 times in his major works (including three times in the *ad Lycophronem*). For a full study of the reception of Palaephatus in Tzetzes, see Alganza 2017.

[64] Explicit references to Palaephatus in the *Chiliades* (ed. Leone, 1968): I, Hist. 20 (Cephalus and Procris); II, Hist. 47 (Mestra); II, Hist. 53 (Alcestis); VII, Hist. 99 (Lapiths and Centaurs); IX, Hist. 273 (Centaurs, in relation to the wheel of Ixion); X, Hist. 332 (Cadmus and the Spartoi).

grammar lesson, Tzetzes gives Pindar's version to the imaginary listener, who in this context is identified with Palaephatus: the Centaurs were a race of human-equine hybrids produced by an 'arrogant creature' (γόνον ὑπερφίαλον), the son of Ixion and Nephele, who mated with Magnesian mares on Pelion.[65] Thus, 'they had the lower parts of their mother, and the upper parts of their father'. At the end, Tzetzes asks ironically, 'Have you heard Pindar, how he speaks in this mythical way? / a creature born of a cloud of air / who begot the Centaurs by mingling with mares' (23–25). He then changes interlocutor and quarrels with the Theban poet as if he were his pupil: 'Not so, Pindar; learn from Tzetzes!' (οὐχ οὕτως ἔχει, μάνθανε δ' ἐκ τοῦ Τζέτζου) – and, immediately, he goes on to complete, correct, and interpret the myth himself.

Tzetzes relates, in a Euhemeristic manner, how Ixion killed his father-in-law, was forgiven of this crime by King Zeus, and then fell in love with Queen Hera. Zeus then forced a slave named Nephele to take Hera's place in Ixion's bed, and thus from her – not from a cloud formed by moist air (ἐνύγρῳ ἀερίῳ) – Imbrus was born, 'who was called 'Centaurus' since he was the son of a slave (δουλογέννητον). Indeed, female slaves (δοῦλαι) are also called 'breezes' (αὖραι)'. This etymology, based on synonymy between δούλη and αὖρα on the one hand, and the semantic affinity between the latter in its meaning of 'moist air' and νεφέλη, is recognised in several Byzantine lexica.[66] Tzetzes also echoes the obscene and comedic meaning of τὸ κέντω already commented on by Eustathius: 'from this, Ixion, by 'pricking the slave' (κεντήσαντα τὴν αὖραν), to describe it lewdly (ἄσεμνον), begot him' (38–39). This way of revealing the origins of myths in misunderstandings of figurative language is the premise of Palaephatean rationalisation. Tzetzes also insists that Imbrus was said to 'have had relations' (συμμιγνύμενος) with the mares because he bred horses (ἱπποφορβῶν) in Thessaly, and to have fathered children with them; because his children were 'raised' (συντραφέντας) among horses, people said that their mothers were mares.

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[65] Cf. line 15: 'The lyre of Thebes, I speak to you of Pindar' (Ἡ Θηβαΐς κινύρα δὲ – τὸν Πίνδαρόν σοι λέγω). Tzetzes summarises and paraphrases the myth of Ixion from *Pyth.* 2.20–48.

[66] Cf. Hesychius, α, 179: ἄβραι· νέαι δοῦλαι; Photius *Lexicon* s.u. Ἄβραι· νέαι δοῦλαι. οἱ δέ φασιν οὔτε ἁπλῶς ἡ θεράπαινα ἄβρα λέγεται οὔτε ἡ εὔμορφος, ἀλλ' ἡ οἰκότριψ γυναικὸς κόρη καὶ ἔντιμος, εἴτε οἱ κογενὴς εἴτε μή. *Etymologicum Gudianum*, α, 4: Ἄβραι· νέαι δοῦλαι, θεραπαινίδια; *Etymologicum Seguerianus*, α, 4: ἄβρα· ἡ σύντροφος καὶ παρὰ χεῖρα θεράπαινα.

In his *historia* 'On the wheel of Ixion' (*Chil.* IX, Hist. 273), Tzetzes uses the same rationalistic and etymological explanations for the Centaurs, but expands on them and adds new details. Most significantly, the passage is structured as a refutation (ἀνασκευή) and correction (κατασκευή) of Palaephatus' explanation of the Centaurs. The Byzantine scholar makes Palaephatus his interlocutor and casts upon him scathing invective.

The passage begins with a detailed account of Ixion (378–97), taking in his genealogy, marriage to Dia, murder of his father-in-law, madness and purification by Zeus, his passion for Hera and the trick of the cloud, his having sex with Nephele, the birth of Imbrus-Centaurus, his mating with the Magnesian mares and the creation of the hybrid Centaurs, then the iron wheel, to which Ixion is tied in Hades as punishment for his impiety. Tzetzes cites Pindar and the mythographers as the sources for 'these myths of the ancients, which seduce the souls of the young' (Μῦθοι μὲν ταῦτα παλαιῶν, ψυχὰς κηλοῦντες νέων, 398).[67] Against these, he offers the version of 'a man who finds much importance in allegory, / Palaephatus, philosopher of the Stoic school' (Παλαίφατος φιλόσοφος ἐκ Στωικῶν τοῦ γένους, 400).[68] Yet Tzetzes begins by censuring him for having omitted the roles of Zeus, Hera, Nephele, Centaurus, and the wheel, and criticises him because he 'tells the story of the Centaurs in an insipid manner, and prattles only of things appropriate to Palaephatus, to a stoic philosopher, and to the presumptuous, but not of the things worthy of Tzetzes, the unlearned prefect' (λέγει δὲ τὰ Κενταύρων ψυχρῶς καὶ ταῦτα πλὴν λαλεῖ, / πρέποντα Παλαιφάτῳ, καὶ φιλοσόφῳ Στωϊκῷ καὶ κομπολακυθοῦσιν / ἀνάξια τῷ Τζέτζῃ δὲ τῷ ἀμαθεῖ ἐπάρχῳ).[69] Following this ironic preamble, Tzetzes gives a summary of the *Peri Apiston* entry which resembles his earlier one in 'On Lapiths and Centaurs', but with some changes in syntax and vocabulary (409–17):

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[67] Cf. Pind. *Pyth.*2.20 ff; 2.44 ff; Tzetzes' comment echoes one on Apollonius (*Sch. Ap. Rhod.* 3.62). See also *Sch. Hom. Il.* 1.266–268 and Diod. 4.69–70.1.

[68] Tzetzes also describes him as a 'Stoic' in two passages in the *Chiliades* (2, Hist. 53, 840; 10, Hist. 332, 418), but in another, as a Peripatetic (ὁ δὲ σοφὸς Παλαίφατος ἀνὴρ ἐκ περιπάτου, 1, Hist. 20, 561), as Theon had (96, 5).

[69] Natale Conti (*Mitologia*, 6.16) later ridicules what he considers to be unwarranted aggression on Tzetzes' part, given that Palaephatus' explanation of the Centaurs 'are far from ancient simplicity and the credulity of men' (*quae quo pauco tanto abhorreant ab antiqua simplicitate, et credulitate hominum*), while the Byzantine scholar's explanation is much more absurd (*quam absurdam ipse postea attulit expositionem Dii boni?*).

> He says that some wild bulls invaded Thessaly
> badly damaging the land and its fields.
> And that some brave young men, riding their horses,
> chased the bulls and pierced them with javelins (κεντεῖν ξυστοῖς).
> And that some peasants, seeing their backs as they galloped,
> since there was at the time no riding of horses, only chariot-driving,
> said: 'Centaurs are now seen here!' (Κένταυροι τῇ χώρᾳ νῦν
> ὁρῶνται).
> And when they were asked what the Centaurs were like,
> they responded that they were half-horse creatures who pierced bulls
> (βροτοὶ ἱππομιγεῖς, ταύρους κατακεντοῦντες).

Next Tzetzes disputes both the Palaephatean etymology, and the idea that Centaurs might have invented riding. He bases this second argument on a calculation of mythical generations. He ends up accusing the mythographer of ignorance, and mendacity (418–33):

> That is what Palaephatus says. But Tzetzes tells you this:
> 'Centotaur' (and not 'Centaur') comes from 'piercing the bulls'
> And he tells you that horse-riding was already known at the time
> for those you, Palaephatus, call 'Centotaurs'
> were – believe me – contemporaneous with the Trojan War.
> Was horse-riding not known then to the Greeks?
> Horsemen and saddles were known at the time
> and horse-riding even predates the Trojan War.
> And Centaurs were around at the same time as the Greek expedition.
> Listen, do not hide yourself away, Tzetzes does not lie.
> Ixion, Centaurus and Centaurus' sons,
> the third generation from Ixion are Centaurus' sons;
> and Ixion himself with his lawful wife
> was the son of Peirithous, whose son Polypoetes
> fought with the Greek contingent. You know, dear Palaephatus,
> that you lie and recount nothing accurately.
> Listen and learn everything clearly from Tzetzes,
> you and all who wish. Truthfully, it is not inconvenient,
> if anyone lies in his lifetime, he will come to learn his error in Hades,
> even if he's an ancient, a philosopher, and a Stoic.

In the lines which follow, Tzetzes develops his own exegesis of Ixion's story, his crimes, and his offspring. He holds up this version as the only true one, superior to the other interpretations, including that of Palaephatus, whom he interpellates so as to reiterate that a 'piercer of bulls' is more correctly a 'Centotaur', not a 'Centaur' (οὐκ ὡς ταύρων κεντητήν –

κεντόταυρων ἐχρῆν γάρ), and that the son of Nephele was so-called because 'Ixion pricked the "aura", that is, the slave girl (κεντῶν Ἰξίων αὖραν γάρ, τουτέστι τὴν δουλίδα) who replaced Hera in her bed. This etymology was already found in Eustathius and other Byzantine authors of the ninth–eleventh centuries.[70] Nonetheless, Tzetzes invokes biblical support (463–66):

> You know that 'aura' means 'slave girl'.
> Since you, Palaephatus, heard the story that Moses told,
> how the Pharoah's daughter came down to the river
> and 'aurae' – slave girls – came with her[71]

Next, Tzetzes takes on the 'contra natura' union of Centaurus with the Magnesian mares: he corrects this episode by playing on the ambiuity of its language, and offers the same solution as given earlier in 'On the Lapiths and Centaurs'. He finishes by citing an oracle which mentions the superlative quality of Thessalian mares.[72] This epilogue reinforces the rhetorical tone of the passage.

Like 'On the Lapiths and Centaurs', 'The wheel of Ixion' demonstrates Tzetzes' skilful rhetoric and his mastery of the different modalities and topics of epideictic discourse. Most significant for our study is the fact that the structure of his argument – narration (διήγημα), refutation (ἀνασκευή), correction (κατασκευή), and solution (λύσις) – replicates the sequence of the 'Palaephatean structure', albeit in a more elaborate and artificial style. Thus, Tzetzes attacks Palaephatus using his own weapons. We might consider both rationalisations to be 'demonstrations' written to entertain, or to provide pleasurable instruction to students at the court, as well as to display the author's skill and erudition. Finally, with regard to Tzetzes' treatment of the Palaephatean source, both the content of the summaries, and the list of things that Palaephatus had 'omitted', shows that

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[70] Lines 458–63. Cf. Eustathius, *Comm. ad Il.* 1, 669; George Choeroboscus, *Prolegomena et scholia in Theodosii Alexandrini canones isagogicos de flexione nominum*, 109, 17: ἔστι δὲ τὸ κένταυρος σύνθετον παρὰ τὸ κεντᾶν τὴν αὖραν, ἤγουν τὴν πνοήν· φασὶ γὰρ ὅτι ὁ Ἰξίων τῆς Ἥρας ὁμοιωθείσης νεφέλη συνεγένετο αὐτῇ, ἐξ ἧς ἐτέχθησαν οἱ κένταυροι); *Etymologicum Parvum* k, 37: ‘Κένταυρος’· παρὰ τὸ κέντω / κεντῶ καὶ τὸ αὖρα, ὅ ἐστι πνοὴ τοῦ ἀνέμου; *Etymologicum Gudianun*; κ, 314: Κένταυρος, παρὰ τὸ κέντω καὶ τὸ αὖρα, ὅ ἐστι πνοὴ τοῦ ἀνέμου· φασὶ γὰρ τὸν Ἰξίονα τῆς Ἥρας ὁμοιωθείσης νεφέλη, ὅταν συνεγένετο αὐτῇ· ἐξ ἧς ἐτέχθησαν οἱ Κένταυροι· παρὰ τὸ κεντεῖν τὴν αὖραν ἤγουν τὴν φωνήν.

[71] ὡς ἡ θυγάτηρ Φαραὼ πρὸς ποταμὸν κατέβη, / αὖραι παρεπορεύοντο ταύτῃ δὲ δουλίδές. Cf. *Exodus* 2, 5: κατέβη δὲ ἡ θυγάτηρ Φαραὼ λούσασθαι ἐπὶ τὸν ποταμόν, καὶ αἱ ἄβραι αὐτῆς παρεπορεύοντο παρὰ τὸν ποταμόν.

[72] Cf. *Anthologia Palatina* 14, 73 (= *Sch. Theocritum*, 14).

Tzetzes had before him a text similar – if not identical – to what is available to us in the manuscripts.

7. Palaephatus' Centaurs in the work of Michael Apostolius: a literal version with ethical exemplum

Given Malalas, Eustathius and Tzetzes' attributions of material to Palaephatus, Nicolas Festa suggested – plausibly – that these writers 'avevano a redazione, almeno in parte, diverse della nostra'.[73] If true, the two scholars of the Komnenian Renaissance would be amongst the last to possess this 'other' Palaephatus since, in Festa's hypothesis, at some point between the end of the tenth and the beginning of the eleventh century there emerged the archetype of all manuscripts then known, a copy written in miniscule, without chapter separations, and containing the prologue but not the seven final entries.[74] There would be two main branches of transmission: the codices of groups AE and S, on the one hand, and those of group B on the other. The oldest belong to the latter group; but the former were more widespread (vulgata), and these were the basis for the *editio princeps*, of Aldo Manuzio, published in Venice in October 1505.

Vitelli concluded that Manuzio made use of two codices: one from group A, which he identifies with *Parisinus gr.* 2557 (*p*), and one from group E, presumably the *Vaticanus Palatinus gr.* 143 (*Q*), which he used to fill lacunae in *p* and to correct its errors.[75] Both manuscripts, and a third from group A, *Vratislaviensis Rehdigeranus* 22 (*V*), come from the scriptorium of Michael Apostolius; *p* is even in his hand.[76] Michael's son,

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[73]Festa 1890: 23 ff.

[74]Festa 1902: XVIII–XXI.

[75]On *Parisinus gr.* 2557, see Vitelli 1893: 243–44. This is considered the best manuscript from group A and has served as the basis for the modern editions (Festa 1902: IX). *Peri Apiston* occupies folios 65–80v. For its contents, see the description in *Pinakes. Textes et manuscrits grecs* http://pinakes.irht.cnrs.fr/notices/cote/52189/. On *Vaticanus Palatinus gr.* 143 see Vitelli 1893: 252. For the online version, see http://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Pal.gr.360. This codex remained in the possession of the Apostolius family until the 16th century. Although Michael is identified as the copyist on *Pinakes* (http://pinakes.irht.cnrs.fr/notices/cote/66092/), examination of the digital images shows that Palaephatus' treatise (ff.156–178v) was copied by another hand.

[76]Vitelli 1893: 244. An online version is avalaible in http://www.bibliotekacyfrowa.pl/dlibra/docmetadata?id=64105&from=&dirids=1&ver_id=&lp=1&QI=C99EC2EF43364D64F8BCAC67F8697723-8; for its contents, see http://pinakes.irht.cnrs.fr/notices/cote/72184/. Apostolius copied the final parts (ff.140–301); *Peri Apiston* (ff.61–77v) is in the hand of a Cretan, Antonio Damilás.

Aristobulus (later Arsenius, bishop of Monemvasia) collaborated with Manuzio in several first editions of classical and Byzantine authors.

Michael Apostolius (Constantinople c.1422 – Candia, c.1476) belonged to the generation of Byzantine scholars who, after the fall of Constantinople in 1453, sought refuge in Italy. After a period spent in Venice, Rome, and Bologna, among other cities, he settled in Crete in 1555 and devoted himself to locating and copying Greek manuscripts on behalf of humanists, including Cardinal Bessarion, and to teaching. Apostolius' importance in the final stage of the Palaephatean manuscript tradition is twofold. His scriptorium produced the manuscripts which would be the basis for the *editio princeps* of Palaephatus. Moreover, his anthology of sayings, Ἰωνιά or *Violetum,* is a major source for the indirect tradition of *Peri Apiston* since it contains 23 instances of material borrowed from *Peri Apiston*, either verbatim, or in abridged form, all replicating the extant treatise closely.[77] Palaephatus is named as a source on one occasion.[78]

In *Violetum* 10.73 Apostolius transcribes Palaephatus' entire entry on the Centaurs, giving a version very similar to the *editio princeps*. Vitelli and Festa observed that, where it does diverge, its readings are influenced by *p*, the codex transcribed by the Byzantine scholar himself.[79] These findings can now be supplemented with a broader comparison of the *Violetum* passage with all three Palaephatus manuscripts produced by Apostolius' scriptorium. Such a comparison allows for the evaluation of different treatments of the same piece of text by Manuzio, as editor of the *editio princeps*, and Apostolius, as copyist of *p* and author of the *Violetum*. Here is the result of this analysis, set out as a critical apparatus:

> *Tit.: om. p, Q : Περὶ Κενταύρων V, a᾽: Κενταύρων ὕβριν μεμίμηται· ἐπὶ τῶν ἐπὶ πλούτῳ γαυριώντων καὶ ὑβριζόντων Apost. ‖ (p.2, 14) Κένταυροι, ὡς θηρία ἐγένοντο p, Q, a᾽: Κένταυροι φασὶν ὡς θηρία ἐγένοντο V: Λέγεται δὲ τοὺς Κενταύρους, ὡς θηρία ἐγένοντο Apost. ‖ (p.2, 15) ἵππον p, V, Q, Apost. : ἵππων a᾽ ‖ (p.2, 16) πεπίστευκεν p,*

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[77] Among the many codices of Ἰωνιά or *Violetum*, we have copies in the author's own hand: *Mazarineus* 4461 and *Parisinus gr*. 3059, dating from 1470 and 1472 respectively. Citations of *Violetum* refer to the edition of von Leutsch 1851: 233–744.

[78] This appears in regard to Amaltheia (Apost. 2.53). After mentioning different explanations of the various figures involved, he introduces his quotation of the full entry from *Peri Apiston* with the words Ὁ δὲ Παλαίφατος περὶ Ἀμαλθείας οὕτω φησίν. Festa 1902: XIX–XX offers a list of 26 relevant passages (he includes the narratives of Hyacinthus, Marsyas and Phaon, i.e. the non-Palaephatean entries interpolated into the *Peri Apiston* text).

[79] Vitelli 1893: 300, 1902: XX–XI.

V, Q, a᾽ : πιστεύει Apost. || (p.2. 16-17) γενέσθαι θηρίον p, V, Q, a᾽: θηρίον γενέσθαι Apost. || (p.3, 1) τροφή p, V, a᾽: μορφή Q, Apost. || (p.3, 11) ὑπωρείας p, V, Q, a᾽ : ὑπερορίας Apost. || (p.3, 15-16) ἐπεισβαλόντες p, V, Q: ἐπεισβαλλόντες Apost. a᾽ || (p.3, 17) ἀπέφευγον p, V, Q, a᾽: ἔφευγον Apost. || (p.4, 6) γοῦν p, V, a᾽: οὖν Q, Apost. || (p.4, 9) παρὰ Ἰξίονος χρήματα p, V, Q, a᾽: τὰ Ἰξίονος χρήματα Apost. | νῦν p, V, Q, a᾽: om. Apost. || (p.4, 14) φεύγοντες εἰς τὴν οἰκείαν p, Q, a᾽ : φεύγοντες εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν V : εἰς τὴν οἰκείαν φεύγοντες Apost. || (p.5, 6 f.) τῆς ἰδέας καὶ τοῦ λόγου p, Q, Apost.: τῆς ἰδέας τοῦ λόγου V, a᾽|| (p.5, 7) ἀπίστως p, V, Q, a᾽: om. Apost.[80]

We find that the *editio princeps* departs from all three codices in only a single reading, ἵππων for ἵππον, a correction which both improves the meaning of the passage and is found in other manuscripts. Vitelli drew attention to the reading τῆς ἰδέας τοῦ λόγου, when all group A codices give τῆς ἰδέας καὶ τοῦ λόγου.[81] However, the same reading is found in *V*. Finally, in this passage the *editio princeps* shares with the *Violetum* a single variant, the present participle ἐπεισβαλλόντες, rather than the aorist ἐπεισβαλόντες of the codices.

As for the passage on the Centaurs in the *Violentum / Ἰωνιά*, Apostolius prefers two readings of *Vaticanus-Palatinus gr.* 360 over *p*, *V* and the *editio princeps:* μορφή for τροφή and οὖν for γοῦν. Two variants found in the *Violetum* are paralleled in other manuscripts from the tradition. The first appears in the introductory phrase, Λέγεται δὲ τοὺς Κενταύρους ὡς ... which is noted by Festa in group S manuscripts.[82] This is absent from the Paris and Vatican codices and from the *editio princeps* while *V* changes the *verba dicendi* and the construction (Κένταυροι φασὶν ὡς...). The second concerns Apostolius' preference for ὑπερορίας over ὑπωρείας, as found in *p*, *V*, *Q* and the *editio princeps*, a variant with correspondence in the

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[80]To add precision to the readings, the page and line numbers of Festa's edition are given in parentheses. Abbreviations (following Vitelli 1893; Festa 1902): *p = Parisinus gr.* 2557; *V = Vratislaviensis Rehdigeranus* 22; *Q = Vaticanus Palatinus gr.* 360; Apost. = Michael Apostolios *Ἰωνιά/ Violetum* (ed. von Leutsch 1851); *a᾽* Ed. Aldina. The collation of *p*, *V*, and *Q* has been made in the digitised copies of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, the Bibliothek der Universität Wroclaw and the Vatican Apostolic Library (see above links in notes); the digitised copy of the *editio princeps* is available on the web <https://archive.org>.

[81] Vitelli 1893: 300.

[82] According to Vitelli 1893: 300, all codices of the groups A–E begin with Κένταυροι ὡς θηρία (ἐγένοντο). Regarding the λέγεται of the *Violetum*, Festa 1902: 2 signals in his apparatus this reading in a fifthteenth century manuscript of group S (see Vitelli 1893: 251).

manuscripts of group B.[83] This alternative is relevant as it changes the location the Centaur's homeland in this episode: the village 'Nephele', is not 'at the foot of the mountains (ὑπωρείας)', i.e. of Pelion, but 'beyond the borders (ὑπερορίας)' of Thessaly. Finally, aside from the heading which gives the maxim and its moral (to be discussed below), the only interventions of Apostolius unparalleled in any manuscript are two cases of inverted word order (θηρίον γενέσθαι and εἰς τὴν οἰκείαν φεύγοντες; cf. εἰς τὴν οἰκείαν φεύγοντες), three omitted words (the adverbs νῦν and ἀπίστως, and the preposition in the phrase παρὰ Ἰξίονος χρήματα of the A codices), and the use of the present tense in πιστεύει.

In conclusion, Apostolius' passage is almost an exact copy of the source. This may be for several reasons. Perhaps it exists in an embryonic state: the *Violetum* is a work 'in progress' which Michael Apostolius worked on for several years, but it was completed and edited by his son Arsenius. Alternatively, perhaps Apostolius considered Palaephatus' treatise to be simply utilitarian, that is, as material to be read and commented on for exemplary as well as grammatical value.[84] In any case, the lack of reworking, along with Apostolius' silence about his source reveals an approach alien to our own concept of plagiarism but typical of a scholarly copyist who, acquainted with several manuscripts of the same author, intervenes occasionally to chose between variants, correct apparent errata, fix lacunae, and fill gaps, yet also introduces inadvertent errors due to failures of visual and auditory memory. More substantial conclusions will only be possible after all of the Palaephatean passages in the *Violetum* have been analysed in the manner set out above using the passage on the Centaurs. Nonetheless, this case-study does suggest that throughout the centuries other scholars and copyists have intervened in the text to not only make cuts and additions but to, in effect, edit the text using criteria quite different from those of modern philology.

Apostolius transcribes the first entry of *Peri Apiston* to explain the saying in the heading:

> Κενταύρων ὕβριν μεμίμηται· ἐπὶ τῶν ἐπὶ πλούτῳ γαυριώντων καὶ ὑβριζόντων.

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[83]Festa 1902: 3.

[84] Arsenius published a compendium of his father's maxims (Ἰωνιᾶς συνθήκη) in 1517 and, two years later, his own anthology of the sayings of famous men (ἀποφθέγματα) dedicated to Pope Leon X (see Walz 1832b: II–VI).

> 'He has imitated the insolence of the Centaurs': used about those who, on account of their wealth, are arrogant and insolent.

This statement does not have an exact equivalent amongst the Greek *corpus paroemiographicum* beyond the compilation of Apostolius' Ἰωνιά / *Violetum* edited by Arsenius, where it occurs without the text of Palaephatus. The *Violetum* does contain another maxim about wealth triggering 'arrogance' (ὕβρις), but the reference is to the people of Colophon, not to the Centaurs ('Κολοφωνία ὕβρις'· ἐπὶ τῶν πλουσίων καὶ ὑβριστικῶν· τοιοῦτοι γὰρ οἱ Κολοφώνιοι, 9.94). This adage appears, in identical form, in the *Epitome* attributed to Hadrian's grammarian, Diogenianus of Heraclea (*CPG* II, 135–227).[85]

The Centaurs are mentioned as paradigms of *hybris* and its manifestations in two other passages in the *Violetum*, both of which have *loci paralleli* in Arsenius and precedents in the *corpus paroemiographicum*. The first is accompanied by this maxim:

> *Νοῦς οὐ παρὰ Κενταύροις'· ἐπὶ τῶν ἐπιλησμόνων καὶ πλεονεκτῶν· παρόσον ὑπὸ πλεονεξίας ἀπώλοντο* (12.12)[86]
>
> 'There is no intelligence among Centaurs': used about the ungrateful and presumptuous; they are destroyed by their pride.

The second relates to a quotation from Teleclides, a writer of comedies active in the mid-fifth century BC: ''This does not happen among Centaurs': this was something said by Teleclides to certain rulers,' ('Τάδ' οὐ παρὰ τοῖσι Κενταύροισι'· λεγόμενόν τι ἦν· Τηλεκλείδῃ τισὶ τῶν δυναστῶν, 16.2).[87]

Returning now to the maxim which introduces Michael Apostolius' transcription of Palaephatus' material on the Centaurs (Κενταύρων ὕβριν μεμίμηται), the second part of the statement, which specifies its meaning (ἐπὶ τῶν ἐπὶ πλούτῳ γαυριώντων καὶ ὑβριζόντων), resembles

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[85] Diog. 5.79: 'Κολοφωνία ὕβρις'· ἐπὶ τῶν πλουσίων καὶ ὑβριστῶν. Τοιοῦτοι γὰρ οἱ Κολοφώνιοι. In the 14th century, Macarius Chrysocephalus (5.24) offered a similar formulation: 'Κολοφωνία ὕβρις'· ἐπὶ τῶν διὰ πλοῦτον ὑβρίζειν ἐπαιρομένων.

[86] The formulation is identical in Diogenianus (6.84) and Arsenius (*Ἰωνιά*, Walz 1832b: 367), and abbreviated in Macarius (6.12: 'Νοῦς οὐ παρὰ Κενταύροις'· ἐπὶ τῶν ἐπιλησμόνων). Photius' *Lexikon* (s.v.) gives a different definition: 'Νοῦς οὐκ ἔνι Κενταύροις'· παροιμία ἐπὶ τῶν ἀδυνάτων ταττομένη.

[87] See *Fr. fab. inc.* 11 (Meineke). The same formulation is offered by the Byzantine lexicographers: *Suda* τ, 18; Photius, s.v. Τηλεκλείδη. Arsenius (*Apophth.*17. 45 b) inverts the clauses of the statement: Τῶν δυνατῶν τι κέλευ'· οὐ γὰρ παρὰ Κενταύροις.

Palaephatus' description of what happened after the young men from Nephele killed the bulls besetting Ixion's land and won the name of 'Centaurs':

> λαβόντες οὖν οἱ Κένταυροι παρὰ τοῦ Ἰξίονος τὰ χρήματα καὶ γαυριῶντες ἐπὶ τῇ πράξει καὶ τῷ πλούτῳ, ὑβρισταὶ ὑπῆρχον καὶ πολλὰ κακὰ εἰργάζοντο, καὶ δὴ καὶ κατ' αὐτοῦ τοῦ Ἰξίονος, ὃς ᾤκει τὴν νῦν καλουμένην Λάρισσαν πόλιν (τότε δὲ ἐκαλοῦντο οἱ τοῦτο τὸ χωρίον οἰκοῦντες Λαπίθαι).
>
> The Centaurs got money from Ixion, and their pride in their achievement and their wealth grew into arrogance: they committed many brutal acts, especially against Ixion himself. Ixion resided in what is now called Larissa, although at the time the people who lived there were called 'Lapiths'.

This intertextual echo raises complex questions about the genesis of the maxim and the relation between it and the origins of the narrative: did Apostolius, influenced by *Peri Apiston*, create the saying, or did he add Palaephatus' explanation to a paremiographic source unknown to us? We do not know of a specific maxim from antiquity which Palaephatus might have taken advantage of in the first place, although, as we have seen, his account does respond to a general environment which connected the Centaurs to *hybris*. This relationship is clear in the fragment of Xenophanes mentioned above, which characterises those things that should not be sung about (a category which includes the Centaurs) as 'ταῦτα γὰρ ὦν ἐστι προχειρότερον, οὐχ ὕβρεις'.[88] The specific value of Apostolius' testimony, despite the fact that he does not rework the text, is that he draws attention to the *hybris* of the Centaurs. This is in fact an important aspect of the narrative logic of Palaephatus' account: it is fundamental to the resolution (λύσις) and correction (κατασκευή) of the myth. And yet it had been overlooked not only by ancient authors who responded to this passage, but also by Christian scholars such as Eustathius and Tzetzes: all of these focus on rejecting the myth on biological and ethological grounds, and explaining its existence as the product of an optical illusion, and so miss the opportunity to exploit its ethical potentials.

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[88] In this respect, commentary on the expression 'ὡς Κενταυρικῶς' found in Arist. *Ran.* 38 is significant: e.g. Schol. *Ran.* 38: 'ὡς Κενταυρικῶς'· ἀντὶ τοῦ ἀκόσμως καὶ ὑβριστικῶς, ὅτι καὶ οἱ Κένταυροι ὑβρισταί […] Κενταυρικῶς· λίαν ἀγρίως, δίκην Κενταύρων; Photius, *Lex.* s.v. κενταυρικῶς ἀγροίκως; Hesychius s.v. κενταυρικῶς· ἀγροίκως, ἀγρίως; Suda κ 1330: κενταυρικῶς· ἀγροίκως. ἀκόσμως, ὑβριστικῶς· ὅτι καὶ οἱ Κένταυροι ὑβρισταί.

The *hybris* of the Centaurs is broadly attested throughout the tradition which makes them synonymous with irrationality and savagery. Their anatomy provides an embodiment of this: their bodies are hairy, their hair and beards shaggy, their faces reminiscent of Satyrs'. More than this, their behaviour crystallises this ethical association: they are ignorant of the rules of civilised life – of drinking, marriage and war – and all of these aspects are present in Palaephatus' account. The novelty of his version is clear when we consider that, in the conventional version of the myth, the Centaurs are the product of Ixion's attempt to rape Hera, and thus *hybris* is part of their very nature. In *Peri Apiston*, by contrast, Ixion is not malevolent, but simply a king trying to solve a problem which afflicts his territory: wild bulls that destroy crops and prevent free passage through the mountain passes. The *hybris* of the Centaurs is not present in their origins: they are not the product of an abnormal coupling and do not have a semi-bestial nature. Those called 'Centaurs' do not lack intelligence and ingenuity, as is proven by their training of horses and their successful hunting of the bulls. However, they prove incapable of coping wisely with their success and repay the magnanimity of the king, who has given them 'much wealth' (χρήματα πολλά), with 'many brutal acts' (πολλὰ κακά). This reward corrupts them, and their greed drives them to steal the women and possessions of the Lapiths.[89] So, rustic but skilful boys become malefactors who ignore the rules of hospitality, abduct women and practise a form of war that has nothing to do with pitched battles - in which two armies pit against each other on a plain in the light of day - but rather involves the surprise assaults of bandits and thieves by night.

Finally, we should point out that Apostolius' treatment of the Centaurs highlights the efficacy with which maxims might concisely and allusively reveal great teachings, and thus their value in the schoolroom. Arsenius remarks on precisely this when he explains the reasons that led him to publish his father's work in the preface to the compendium of *Violetum* (Ἰωνιᾶς συνθήκη). He praises the utility of the work for all: 'it contains instruction for the correction of customs, and of passions, and sound counsel for good conduct' (περιέχει δὲ παίδευσιν ἠθῶν καὶ παθῶν ἐπανόρθωσιν, καὶ πρακτέων πυκνὰς ὑποθήκας, Walz 1832b: 7). As our examination of his paremiographic antecedents shows, the Centaurs

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[89] Other passages from Palaephatus characterise 'primitive' Greece as not yet having seen the development of money, with wealth based on agriculture and bartering of crops and livestock: e.g. Actaeon (6); The Horses of Diomedes (7); Mestra (23); Ketos (37); Zethus and Amphion (41).

had been glossed, at least since the second century, as an admonition against pride, ingratitude, and greed, vices that led to envy and concupiscence. The Centaurs offered, therefore, a mythic exemplum which could accommodate pagan ethics in Christianity. Indeed, the implicit moral conclusion of the explanation of the Centaurs in *Peri Apiston* is made explicit in Apostolius' proverb, which recalls the last of the Ten Commandments: 'Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour' s house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour' s wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour' s'.[90]

8. Conclusion

In our survey of the reception history of Palaephatus 1, the material that ancient and Byzantine writers attribute to Palaephatus regarding the Centaurs accords with the content of the extant text. It is likely, then, that at no point during this period was there circulating under Palaephatus' name an interpretation of the Centaurs which differed substantially from, or was more extensive than, ours. This observation is particularly significant in relation to those Byzantine writers who elsewhere attribute other material to Palaephatus that does not accord with the surviving manuscripts. We can conclude that the rich reception history of Palephatus 1 occurs in the context of a markedly stable transmission history.

The stability of the content attributed to Palaephatus is paralleled by the relative uniformity of textual sources for this entry. As Festa's apparatus criticus and our own findings with regard to Apostolius show, those textual variants that did appear are quite minimal in effect; none changes the sense of the passage. Here, then, we are led to adopt a cautious, intermediate position, between the eagerness of Schrader and Wipprecht to establish the 'genuine' text of Palaephatus, and the view of Festa and, more recently, Bouvier, that what we have is essentially a multi-authored work, the product of myriad edits and interpolations. Our close examination of this one entry has lead us to agree with the more positive attitude towards the treatise, expressed by Roquet, Stern, Santoni, and Zucker. We must assume, of course, that the text underwent certain changes as it was used

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[90] *Exodus* 20.17: οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις τὴν γυναῖκα τοῦ πλησίον σου. οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις τὴν οἰκίαν τοῦ πλησίον σου οὔτε τὸν ἀγρὸν αὐτοῦ οὔτε τὸν παῖδα αὐτοῦ οὔτε τὴν παιδίσκην αὐτοῦ οὔτε τοῦ βοὸς αὐτοῦ οὔτε τοῦ ὑποζυγίου αὐτοῦ οὔτε παντὸς κτήνους αὐτοῦ οὔτε ὅσα τῷ πλησίον σού ἐστιν. English translation follows the King James Version.

through the centuries; nonetheless, it appears to have maintained its exegetical coherence and a certain uniformity of language and style.

This article has shown clearly of course that different readers will respond to Palaephatus' interpretation differently, and manipulate parts of it to their own needs. We saw that Palaephatus' rejection of the Centaurs on account of their biological implausibility was influential in antiquity and late antiquity, despite few later writers attributing the arguments to Palaephatus explicitly. The Byzantine writers, by contrast, show little interest in this part of the entry: for them, of course, the falsity of pagan myth may be taken as a given; they do not need to demonstrate that the Centaurs do not exist, only that they retain some conceptual utility for the present. The greater prestige that Byzantine writers afforded to Palaephatus' work as an authoritative mythography is clear from their treatment of his first entry. Although they too tend to focus on the 'Centaurs were early horseriders' aspect of Palaephatus' explanation, from this period we get responses to his work which are both extensive, and eclectic in their development of it. These make much more of the etymological potentials of the Centaurs' name, even to the extent of critiquing Palaephatus' one (Tzetzes), and suggesting new possibilities of their own (Eustathius, Tzetzes). The richness of the reception history of Palaephatus 1 is in part an expression of the intricacy of Palaephatus' rationalised narrative. Subsequent paraphrases of it do not settle into a homogeneous pattern, but continually find within it new points of relevance. The Chroniclers, like Diodorus and Pliny before them, used Palaephatus' historicised account to slot the Centaurs into a developmental history of human civilisation. And yet, their successors could likewise find lessons within this same passage suited to a reading public sensitive to the workings of ethical allegory; so, we find Apostolius able to bring out the significance of the Centaurs' *hybris* by making Palaephatus' explanation stand in proximity to a moralising maxim.

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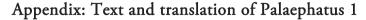Wolff, É.; Ph. Dain, eds. 2013. *Fulgence.* Mythologies. Lille.

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Appendix: Text and translation of Palaephatus 1

Περὶ Κενταύρων φασὶν ὡς θηρία ἐγένοντο καὶ ἵππου μὲν εἶχον τὴν ὅλην ἰδέαν πλὴν τῆς κεφαλῆς, ταύτην δὲ ἀνδρός. εἴ τις οὖν πείθεται τοιοῦτον γενέσθαι θηρίον, ἀδύνατον· οὔτε γὰρ ἄλλως αἱ φύσεις σύμφωνοι ἵππου καὶ ἀνδρός, οὔτε ἡ τροφὴ ὁμοία, οὔτε διὰ στόματος καὶ φάρυγγος ἀνθρωπείου δυνατὸν ἵππου τροφὴν διελθεῖν. εἰ δὲ τοιαύτη ἰδέα τότε ἦν, καὶ νῦν ἂν ὑπῆρχε. τὸ δὲ ἀληθὲς ἔχει ὧδε. Ἰξίονος βασιλέως ὄντος Θεσσαλίας ἐν τῷ Πηλίῳ> ὄρει ἀπηγριώθη ταύρων ἀγέλη, ἥτις καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ τῶν ὀρῶν ἄβατα ἐποίει· εἰς γὰρ τὰ οἰκούμενα κατιόντες οἱ ταῦροι ἐσίνοντο τὰ δένδρα καὶ τὸν καρπόν, καὶ ὑποζύγια συνέφθειραν. ἐκήρυξεν οὖν ὁ Ἰξίων, εἴ τις ἀνέλοι τοὺς ταύρους, τούτῳ δώσειν χρήματα πολλά. νεανίσκοι δέ τινες ἐκ τῆς ὑπωρείας, ἐκ κώμης τινὸς καλουμένης Νεφέλης, ἐπινοοῦσιν ἵππους κέλητας διδάξαι (πρότερον γὰρ οὐκ ἠπίσταντο ἐφ᾽ ἵππων ὀχεῖσθαι, ἀλλὰ μόνον ἅρμασιν ἐχρῶντο). οὕτω δὲ ἀναβάντες τοὺς κέλητας ἤλαυνον ἐφ᾽ οὗ οἱ ταῦροι ἦσαν, καὶ ἐπεισβαλόντες τῇ ἀγέλῃ, ἠκόντιζον· καὶ ὅτε μὲν διώκοιντο ὑπὸ τῶν ταύρων, ὑπέφευγον οἱ νεανίαι (ποδωκέστεροι γὰρ ἦσαν οἱ ἵπποι), ὅτε δὲ σταίησαν οἱ ταῦροι, ὑποστρέφοντες ἠκόντιζον· καὶ τοῦτον τὸν τρόπον ἀνεῖλον αὐτούς. καὶ τὸ μὲν ὄνομα ἐντεῦθεν ἔλαβον οἱ Κένταυροι, ὅτι τοὺς ταύρους κατεκεντάννυσαν (οὐ γὰρ ἀπὸ τῆς ἰδέας τῶν ταύρων, οὐδὲν γὰρ πρόσεστι ταύρου τοῖς Κενταύροις, ἀλλ᾽ ἵππου καὶ ἀνδρὸς ἰδέα ἐστίν· ἀπὸ τοῦ ἔργου οὖν τὸ ὄνομα ἔλαβον). λαβόντες οὖν οἱ Κένταυροι παρὰ τοῦ Ἰξίονος τὰ χρήματα καὶ γαυριῶντες ἐπὶ τῇ πράξει καὶ τῷ πλούτῳ, ὑβρισταὶ ὑπῆρχον καὶ πολλὰ κακὰ εἰργάζοντο, καὶ δὴ καὶ κατ᾽ αὐτοῦ τοῦ Ἰξίονος, ὃς ᾤκει τὴν νῦν καλουμένην Λάρισσαν πόλιν (τότε δὲ ἐκαλοῦντο οἱ τοῦτο τὸ χωρίον οἰκοῦντες Λαπίθαι). καλεσάντων οὖν αὐτοὺς ἐπὶ θοίνην μεθυσθέντες ἁρπάζουσιν αὐτῶν τὰς γυναῖκας, καὶ ἀναβιβάσαντες αὐτὰς ἐπὶ τοὺς ἵππους ᾤχοντο φεύγοντες εἰς τὴν οἰκείαν. ἐντεῦθεν ὁρμώμενοι ἐπολέμουν αὐτοῖς, καὶ καταβαίνοντες μὲν διὰ τῆς νυκτὸς εἰς τὰ πεδία ἐνέδρας ἐποιοῦντο, ἡμέρας δὲ γενομένης ἁρπάσαντες καὶ ἐμπρήσαντες ἀπέτρεχον ἐπὶ τὰ ὄρη. οὕτως ἀπιόντων αὐτῶν κατόπιν τὰ νῶτα τοῖς πόρρωθεν ὁρῶσι μόνον ἐφαίνοντο τοῦ ἵππου πλὴν τῆς κεφαλῆς, τῶν δὲ ἀνδρῶν τὰ λοιπὰ πλὴν τῶν σκελῶν. ξένην οὖν ὄψιν ὁρῶντες ἔλεγον "οἱ Κένταυροι ἡμᾶς οἱ ἐκ Νεφέλης κατατρέχουσιν." ἀπὸ δὴ ταύτης τῆς ἰδέας καὶ τοῦ λόγου ὁ μῦθος

ἀπίστως ἐπλάσθη, ὡς ἐκ τῆς νεφέλης ἵππος τε καὶ ἀνὴρ ἐν τῷ ὄρει ἐγεννήθη. (ed. Festa: 2–5)

It is said about the Centaurs that they were beasts and that they had the appearance of a horse, except for their head, which was that of a man. Even if someone believes this beast existed, it is impossible, since human and equine natures are entirely incompatible, their food is different, and it is not possible for the food of a horse to pass through the mouth and gullet of a human. If a creature of this appearance had once existed, it would still exist now.

Here is the truth: at the time that Ixion was king of Thessaly, a herd of bulls gathered on Mt Pelion, cutting off access to the other mountains. The bulls would come down to where humans lived, ruin trees and crops and destroy their farm animals. And so Ixion announced that he would give a great amount of money to whomever killed the bulls. Some young men from the foothills, from a town called 'Nephele', contrived to teach their horses to carry riders. (Before this they did not know how to ride horses, only how to use them to draw chariots.) They then mounted their horses and rode to where the bulls were, and attacked the herd by hurling javelins at them. Whenever they were rushed by the bulls, the youths would manage to retreat – for their horses could outpace them. But when the bulls came to a stop, they would turn and hurl their javelins. Using these tactics, they killed them, and earned the name 'Centaurs' since they 'pierced the bulls'. (The name did not come from their having the appearance of bulls, for Centaurs do not have the appearance of a bull, but of a horse and a human). So the name came from this event.

The Centaurs got money from Ixion, and their pride in their achievement and their wealth grew into arrogance: they committed many brutal acts, especially against Ixion himself. Ixion resided in what is now called Larissa, although at the time the people who lived there were called 'Lapiths'. The Lapiths invited the Centaurs to a feast; the Centaurs got drunk and carried off their wives: they bundled the women onto their horses and fled homeward. From that position, they made war on the Lapiths, descending onto the plain by night, they would hide, then burn and pillage by day before returning to the mountains. When they rode away in this manner, all that was visible to those watching them from a distance were their backs: like a horse but without a horse's head, then the rest like a human, but without the legs. Onlookers, describing this strange sight, would say: 'The Centaurs, from Nephele, are attacking us!' And from such

statements, and their appearance, the unbelievable myth was fabricated, that from a cloud a 'horse-man' was produced on the mountain.