Apolonio, Sócrates y Dión de Prusa: la prosa con Esopo

(Apollonius, Socrates and Dion of Prusa: a prose with Aesop)

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Abstract
In antiquity, writers such as Plato, Philostratus and Dion of Prusa include in their investigations on discourse (*logos*) theoretical reflections, to a greater or lesser extent, systematized on poetry and poetic art. Theorizing about prose speeches, on the other hand, does not receive a specialized treatment directed to the analysis of its own purpose, configuration and forms of evaluation, even though it is possible to find the enunciation of some more general guidelines. The figure of Aesop, however, receives a treatment from these three thinkers that shows a way of discussing prose. Aesop thus becomes a catalyst and a kind of distinctive sign for the assessment and status of prose discourse, in particular, or for poetic-literary discourse, more generally. In this work, I intend to analyze specific passages of works by Plato (*Phaedo*), Philostratus (*Life of Apollonius of Tyana, Imagines*) and Dion of Prusa (*Discourses* XII, XXXII, XXXIII, LXXII), in which the mention and use of the figure of Aesop is instrumental in discussing the purpose, the qualities and the characteristic features of a prose speech with artistic pretensions.
Keywords: Aesop, Apollonius of Tyana, *Phaedo*, prose in Antiquity, Dio of Prusa, Philostratus, Plato

Resumo:
Na Antiguidade, escritores como Platão, Filóstrato e Díon de Prusa incluem em suas investigações sobre o discurso (*lógos*) reflexões teóricas, em maior ou menor medida, sistematizadas sobre a poesia e a arte poética. A teorização sobre os discursos em prosa, por outro lado, não recebe um tratamento especializado e direcionado para a análise de sua própria finalidade, configuração e formas de avaliação, embora possa se encontrar a enunciação de algumas diretrizes mais genéricas. A figura de Esopo, não obstante, recebe um tratamento por parte desses três pensadores que evidencia um modo de discutir sobre prosa. Esopo se torna, assim, um catalisador e uma espécie de signo distintivo para a avaliação e status do discurso em prosa, de modo particular, ou para o discurso poético-literário, de modo mais geral. Pretendo neste trabalho analisar passagens específicas de obras de Platão (*Fédon*), Filóstrato (*Vida de Apolônio de Tiana, Imagens*) e Díon de Prusa (*Discursos* XII, XXXII, XXXIII, LXXII), em que a menção e utilização da figura de Esopo é instrumental para a discussão da finalidade, das qualidades e dos traços característicos de um discurso em prosa com pretensões artísticas.
Palavras-chave: Esopo, Apolônio de Tiana, Sócrates, prose in Antiguidade, Díon de Prusa, Filóstrato, Platão

THE FIGURE OF AESOP IN THE *LIFE OF APOLLONIUS OF TYANA*

In previous work[1], I made brief comments on the way in which Philostratus reappropriates the figure of Aesop to legitimize a type of discourse that is purely fictitious, but which links some kind of moral teaching, of a parenetic, advisory or admonitive character[2]. In the book V of the *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, the character Apollonius arrives in Catana, in his pilgrimage from the East to the West. He comments with his interlocutor, Menippus, about the properly scientific reasons for the volcanic eruptions, right after they heard fabulous reports about the eruptions of Etna. In this context of argumentation, the theme about Aesop's mythos / logos arises from the mention of this type of report, but as a detour from the main subject. Here is the passage in question:

> These [the poets], in effect, force their stories / speeches (*lógous*) to seem plausible, but he [Aesop] announcing a story / discourse (λόγον / *logon*) that is fictional (*pseudés*), everyone knows that, due to the fact that, even though he does not refer to true things (*alethinôn*), he is being true (*aletheúei*). Furthermore, the poet, on the one hand, telling his own story (λόγον / *lógon*), leaves it to the listener, in a healthy spirit, to investigate it in order to find out if it really happened. On the other hand, someone who says a false speech (*pseudê logon*) and induces admonition, like Aesop, shows that he uses the fictitious (*pseûdei*) for the benefit of the audience (LA, V, 14).[3]

Philostratus' narrative, on this occasion, mimics the Platonic dialogue when initiating a discussion seeking to define the term μυθολογία / *mythología*. The character Menippus, at the beginning of the conversation On the topic, advocates the perspective of the poets, considering Aesop's fables[4] as

[1] "Philostratus and the *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*: between biography and romance", (Júnior Ipiranga, 2020, p. 133-156). For questions about fictionality and the concept of *phantasía* in the work, cf. Watson, 1994; Schirren, 2009.

[2] For general, historical and literary questions about the *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, cf. Grosso, 1954; Dzielska, 1986; Flinterman, 1995; PUECH, 2002; Graham, 2003; Mheallaigh, 2008; Billault, 2009; Schirren, 2009; Van Uytanghe, 2009; Bowie, 2009, 1994; Silva, 2014.

[3] All translations of the excerpts in Greek are done by me. Cf. the translation by F. C. Conybeare: "(…) for the latter (poets) do violence to their own stories in order to make them probable; but he (Aesop) by announcing a story which everyone knows not to be true, told the truth by the very fact that he did not claim to be relating real events. And the poet, after telling his story, leaves a healthy-minded reader cudgelling his brains to know whether it really happened; whereas one who, like Aesop, tells a story which is false and does not pretend to be anything else, merely investing it with a good moral, shows that he has made use of the falsehood merely for its utility to his audience." (Philostratus, 1948, p. 495)

[4] Aesop is called *mythológos* and *logopoiós* by Menippus, seeming to want to emphasize the pejorative or merely negative aspects associated with these terms.

nonsense told by old women; the protagonist Apollonius, on the contrary, will value precisely the self-declared fictional record of the Aesopian *mythos* / *logos*, which would attest to his virtue of not deceiving the audience, but mainly its usefulness and profit due to the transmission of some moral precept. While the content of the tragedies, according to Apollonius, would deal with matters that were morally harmful to listeners, such as abnormal loves, marriages of brothers, slander against the gods, etc., Aesop's fables, starting from prosaic arguments, would speak of important issues in an appropriate way. In this way, learning the fables since children, according to the text's argument, everyone would be able to discern, according to the species of the animal, those aspects related to royalty or insignificance, to what is refined or to what is simple.

According to Wannes Gyselinck and Kristoffel Demoen, there is a digression here that has an explicit metaliterary character, evidencing not only a Platonic theorization about myths, but also evoking the passage in *Poetics* in which Aristotle, when comparing poetry and history, affirms that the first would be more philosophical than the second because it addresses not what happened, but what could have happened. Similarly, the Aesopic fable, because it deals with non-factual or likely circumstances, would be more appropriate to wisdom, as it would not lead listeners to imitate vile and impudent actions, as would be the case with myths taken up by tragedy. For these scholars, the Philostratus narrative in LA[5] makes use of a metafiction strategy, in which, at the same time, there is, on the one hand, the configuration of a non-omniscient narrator, who seeks to build a reliable account of Apollonius, allegedly supported by historical sources, and, on the other, a narrative dimension that refigures the text and characters according to rhetorical devices and procedures. The mention of Aesop[6] and the Aesopian fable (mythos / logos) would be part of this discursive strategy in drawing attention to the narrative itself, placing the purposes of each of the speeches, of Aesop's fabulous speech and of Apollonius's philosophical speech as analogous or similar. In addition, there would be a metaliterary game between author and reader, from which the theoretical argument about literature in charge of the character of Apollonius would come, to a certain extent, from the author's own voice and, therefore, would provide clues for the characterization of the Philostratean prose.

[5] From now on I refer to the *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* by the acronym LA.
[6] For questions about the figure of Aesop in the G and W recensions of Aesop's Life, cf. Perry, 1933; Hansen, 1998; Papathomopoulos, 1999, 2010; Holzberg, 2003; Jouanno, 2006, 2009; Karla, 2009; Ipiranga Júnior, 2009, 2011, 2015a, 2015b, 2018a.

Following his conversation with Menippus, Apollonius tells an etiological fable that explains the creation of the genus of the Aesopic myth. Here's the passage:

> And to me, still a child, o' Menippus, my mother taught the myth (*mython*) about Aesop's wisdom: once when Aesop was a shepherd and shepherded in the vicinity of the sanctuary of Hermes, he longed for wisdom and, for that , prayed to the god. Also, countless others, requesting the same, frequented the god Hermes, one dedicating gold, another silver, yet another ivory herald's staff, and the rest of them, splendid things. However, Aesop was in such a condition that he could not afford any of these things and even soberly used what he had. He made libation to the god with as much milk as a milked sheep would give him, and he carried a honeycomb to the altar that filled the palm of his hand. He believed that he should grace it with myrtle berries and deposit a few roses and violets. He said: 'Why is it necessary, O' Hermes, to interweave wreaths and neglect the sheep?' When they arrived on the day announced for the distribution of wisdom, Hermes, since he was well versed in speech (*lógios*) and gain/profit, said: 'You shall have the philosophy', for the one who had undoubtedly dedicated the most excellent offerings; 'You shall take a place in the speakers' plagues', to one which gave offerings second in value; 'To you the position of dealing with astronomy, to you being a musician, to you being a poet in the epic meter, to you in the iambic meter'. Since, despite being the shrewdest in the discourse (*logiótatos*), he unwittingly spent all portions of philosophy and was unaware that he had left Aesop out, the fact comes to mind that the goddesses Horae (for which he himself had been created on the summits of Olympus), told him, when he was still wrapped in swaddling cloths, a myth (*mython*) about a cow (a myth that the cow had told to the man about herself and the land[7]), they led him to a passion for Apollo's cows. And, as a result, he [Hermes] gives Aesop the mythology, being the one that remained in the habitation of wisdom, saying: 'Have what I first learned'. Precisely from then onwards, the multiform elements of art arrived for Aesop and that was the end of the mythology question. But perhaps I have suffered something foolish, because, having in mind to turn you to the more logical (*lógous*) arguments concerning nature and more truthful than those of which many (poets) sing about Etna, I deviated myself for a compliment of myths / fables (ἔπαινον μύθων / *épainon mython*), however, not without grace came to be the digression. Indeed, the myth (*mythos*), from which we depart, is not characteristic of Aesop's speeches / fables (λόγων), but of those more properly dramatic, which poets repeatedly boast. (LA, V, 15-16).[8]

[7] Another possibility of translation: "(…) myth according to which the cow had talked to man about herself and the earth".

[8] Cf. the translation by F. C. Conybeare: "And as for myself, O Menippus, my mother taught me a story about the wisdom of Aesop when I was a mere child, and told me that he was once a shepherd, and was tending his flocks hard by a temple of Hermes, and that he was a passionate lover of wisdom and prayed to Hermes that he might receive it. Many other people, she said, also resorted to the temple of Hermes asking for the same gift, and one of them would hang on the altar gold, another silver, another a herald's wand of ivory, and others other rich presents of the kind. Now Aesop, she said, was not in position to own any of these things; but he saved up what he had, and poured a libation of as much milk as a sheep would give at one milking in

The passage as a whole is emblematic. A myth / *mythos* is told to explain the origin of the narration of the myth / fable and of the effabulation as Aesop's own genre. Gyselinck and Demoen draw attention to a paradox that exists there: the myth told by the cow, about itself, in addition to not being narrated, inflates Hermes to the theft of Apollo's cows, that is, it leads to an action considered harmful by Apollonius, previously attributed and inherent to the myths told by the poets. The myth-fable, moreover, ends without a moral benefit stricto sensu: the benefit is more of the aesthetic order and presents an etiology for the relationship between the fable and the philosophical discourse. For Leslie Kurke (2011, p. 1-2), the account told by Apollonius would indicate a clear hierarchy of literary genres as subspecies of *sophia*: first, philosophy, second, oratory, followed by astronomy, music, epic / heroic poetry, iambic poetry and, lastly, the Aesopic fable, which here concerns, in principle, the fable of animals. According to the argument advocated by the scholar, what is made explicit there is that this hierarchy of literary genres and decorum related to each one would be inseparable from a socio-political hierarchy: Aesop, being poor, humble and marginal, would correspond to the fable, whose style and content reveal an equally low, simple and marginal character.

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honour of Hermes, and brought a honeycomb and laid it on the altar, big enough to fill the hand, and he thought too of regaling the god with myrtle berries, or perhaps by laying just a few roses or violets at the altar. 'For', said he, 'would you, O Hermes, have me weave crowns for you and neglect my sheep?' Now when on the appointed day they arrived for the distribution of the gifts of wisdom, Hermes as a god of wisdom and eloquence and also of gain and profit, said to he who, as you may well suppose, had made the biggest offering: 'Here is the philosophy for you'; and to him who had the next handsomest present, he said: 'Do you take your place among the orators'; and to others he said: 'You shall have the gift of astronomy or you shall be a musician, or you shall be an epic poet and write in heroic metre, or you shall be a writer of iambics'. Now although he was a most wise and accomplished god he exhausted, not meaning to do so, all the various departments of wisdom, and then found that he had quite forgotten Aesop. Thereupon he remembered the Hours, by whom he himself had been nurtured on the peaks of Olympus, and bethought him of how once, when he was still in swaddling clothes, they had told him a story about the cow, which had a conversation with the man about herself and about the earth, and so set him aflame after the cows of Apollo. Accordingly he forthwith bestowed upon Aesop the art of fable called mythology, for that was left in the house of wisdom, and said: 'Do you keep what was the first thing I learnt myself.' Aesop then acquired the various forms of art from that source, and the issue was such as we see in the matter of mythology. "Perhaps I have done a foolish thing", went on Apollonius, "for it was my intention to recall you to more scientific and truer explanations than the poetic myths given by the vulgar of Etna; and I have let myself be drawn into a eulogy of myths. However, the digression has not been without a charm of its own, for the myth which we repudiated is not one of Aesop's stories, but belongs to the class of dramatic stories which fill the mounts of our poets." (Philostratus, 1948, p. 497-499)

In one way or another, the narrative strategy of the LA makes an approximation of the philosophical speech, embodied by the character of Apollonius, and the fabulous speech represented by the figure of Aesop, which can be corroborated by the narrator's speech at the end of this discourse by Apollonius: "In effect, he ended his speeches by pointing at the useful aspects of the examples" (LA, V, 17). There is a game with the meanings of mythos and logos associated with Fables by Aesop, who in addition is called by the character of Menippus, in a more or less pejorative way, of *mythológos* and *logopoiós*. Consequently, the Aesopic fable is functional and instrumental to talk about moral and pedagogical aspects of the philosophical discourse, as well as about more general stylistic and aesthetic aspects of an artistic and literary prose. In addition, a perspective for the Aesopic fable is created, alternately referred to by the terms mythos and logos. At first, the philosophical discourse as the logos par excellence is radically opposed to the mythos of the poets. On the one hand, the Aesopic fable comes close to the poetic myth due to its fictitious character, but at the same time, also for showing its fictionality, it provides a moral benefit, which makes it subsidiary to the philosophical logos. Consequently, the game between mythos and logos in the designation of the fable appears not as extemporaneous and arbitrary, but according to an author's discourse conception that makes the reference to the fable guided by a pendulum that moves it between mythos and logos, according to the aspects to be highlighted.

SOCRATES AND AESOP

In Plato's *Phaedo*, the reference to Aesop is made, at first, after the scene that sets and frames the dialogue (whose interlocution takes place between Phaedo and Echecrates[9]), by Socrates himself in relation to a type of argument appropriate for the composition of a mythos / fable on the part of Aesop. Before that, in the beginning, Phaedo had explained the reason why the death sentence[10] had been postponed and had then described the emotional state of Socrates' friends and followers in those last days. According to Phaedo, he did not feel pity (*éleos*), since he was happy, but there was

[9] Echecrates asks Phaedo about the latest events on the day of Socrates' death.
[10] The day before the trial, a religious period had begun with the crowning of the ship that would set sail to Delos, which recalled the mission performed by Theseus in Crete. In the midst of these ritual ceremonies, that is, until the ship returned to Athens, the city should remain pure and, therefore, there could be no death sentence compliance.

also no pleasure (ἡδονή / *hedoné*) in the usual philosophical conversation; the affection (πάθος / *páthos*) that possessed them then was a mixture of pleasure (*hedonés*) and pain (*lypes*). A little earlier Phaedo had declared that remembering or listening to someone else narrating Socrates' conversations was the most pleasant / pleasurable to him (ἥδιστον / *héditon*). In this way, the theme about the reactions of pleasure and pain is narratively explored in this initial scene, which precedes and foreshadows the argument about such sensations, at first, at the bodily level, by the character of Socrates, who alludes to the figure of Aesop. Let's look at the passage in question:

> And Socrates, sitting on the bed, bent his leg and rubbed it with his hand; at the same time as he rubbed, he said: 'How out of place (strange / *attopon*) it seems, at a certain point, to be what men call pleasant (pleasant / ἡδύ / *hedú*); how admirably it is, by nature, linked to what is known to be the opposite, the painful: on the one hand, there is the fact that both do not want to be present at the same time in men; on the other hand, if someone seeks one of them and catches it, it is almost certain that he is bound to catch, somehow, the other as well, like two entities connected from a single head. And it seems to me that, 'he said', if Aesop had such considerations in mind, he would have composed a myth, in the fable format (*mython*), of how the deity, wanting to reconcile them both who were at war, since he could not, put their heads together in the same part, and, due to these facts, any person that one of them presents itself subsequently also the other accompanies, as so it also seems to happen to me: after the sensation of pain that was in the leg on account of the chain, the pleasurable sensation (pleasure / **ἡδύ**) is then shown to follow [after the chain that held the leg was removed] (Plato, *Phaedo*, 60b1-c7).[11]

The passage itself is paradigmatic, for there is not only mention of Aesop: Socrates composes a fable / mythos of an Aesopian type that explicitly proposes itself as etiological, that is, it provides an *aition*, an explanatory cause for a given phenomenon, in this case, the combined alternation of pleasure and pain. In order to better frame this passage and the following within the Platonic dialogue, I list Christos Zafiropoulos' observations, comments and analysis related to the

[11] Cf. translation by David Gallop: "(…) Socrates, meanwhile, sat up on the bed, bent his leg, and rubbed it down with his hand. As he rubbed it, he said: 'What an odd thing it seems, friends, this state that men call "pleasant"; and how curiously it's related to its supposed opposite, "painful": to think that the pair of them refuse to visit a man together, yet if anybody pursues one of them and catches it, he's always pretty well bound to catch the other as well, as if the two of them were attached to a c single head. I do believe that if Aesop had thought of them, he'd have made up a story telling how God wanted to reconcile them in their quarrelling, but when he couldn't he fastened their heads together, and that's why anybody visited by one of them is later attended by the other as well. This is just what seems to be happen-ing in my own case: there was discomfort in my leg because of the fetter, and now the pleasant seems to have come to succeed it." (Plato, 1975, p. 4)

appropriation of the figure of Aesop in the Platonic work, especially in the *Phaedo*, and its relationship with the configuration of the Socrates character: 1) the setting of the dialogue brings numerous references to the religious aspect linked to the Apollo's figure; three festivals are indicated: Thargelia, Delphinia and Delia; 2) In relation to aspects of salvation and purification linked to the domain and attributes of Apollo, Socrates' image is configured as a philosopher who provides a type of therapy, whose treatment is given by the philosophical discourse: he heals the soul's suffering, as well as the false beliefs; 3) there are crossed references to other dialogues such as *Criton* and *Socrates 'Apology* and an emphasis on the characters present in the *Phaedo*, signaling Socrates' legacy through friends and disciples; 4) the fable told by the character of the philosopher would have a limited scope: it illustrates its current condition and derives from its etiological application concerning human emotions, previously exemplified by the manifestation of reactions of pleasure and pain among those present at meetings and conversations held in prison; 5) in a broader sense, the alternation of opposite emotions must be replaced and overcome by the philosopher's attitude, in function of and through conversation and philosophical speech (logos): Socrates' example of not being shaken by the situation, in an serene and even negligent attitude about the imminence of his death, should be imitated; 6) as a result, the philosophical logos would prove its superiority in relation to the type of knowledge provided by empirical observations or through popular reports such as the fable, that is, the purpose and content of the fable / mythos is directed to the crowd, its application being simplistic and restrictive and, for this reason, replaced by contemplation and philosophical argumentation, which would be more effective for soul therapy, in controlling and subduing emotional turbulences; 7) The reference to Aesop, reputed as the *heuretés* / inventor of the fable, modulates the protagonist's configuration as a kind of Aesopic Socrates: the fact that the character Socrates composes a fable in the manner of Aesop evokes questions of genre and prose record, besides pretending to indicate Socrates' only written compositions; the fable composed there has a style, structure and content similar to those in the prose fable collections; 8) The alternation of emotions, as the object of the fable, would be a first reference to the theory of opposites, to be further developed in the dialogue; nevertheless, there would be differences in application and in various implications and effects: although Aesop is referred to in view of his previous condition as a slave and the subsequent freedom and autonomy he achieved, Socrates'

freedom concerns the liberation of the body, the freedom of soul from physical and mental restrictions (Zafiropoulos, 2015, p. 29-56).

Zafiropoulos' interpretation allows us to glimpse the programmatic character of the reference to Aesop and clarifies several correlated factors and aspects between him and Socrates: the theme of freedom, the entire religious context concerning the figure of Apollo (especially the *katharmós* ritual, which implies notions of purification in general), ethical conceptions concerning ways of life, the status of prose and the way of using the fable / mythos. This programmatic character is also highlighted by Leslie Kurke, a scholar who first came up with a currently renewed field of studies about the affiliations between Aesop and Plato. She recognizes Aesop and the tradition constituted around him as precursors of the Platonic dialogue and of the configuration of the Socrates character. According to her, one of the crucial factors for this, concerned the double conformation of the "pre-philosophical *sophia*" system represented by the Aesopic tradition: 1) on the one hand, he participated in high wisdom, as a popular representative associated with the seven wise men; 2) on the other hand, it was characterized by an attitude of criticism and parody, as elements arising from the segments of the lower social strata; his biographical trajectory, as an example of this, starts from the condition of a slave and, later, comes to freedom, autonomy and frank clash of ideas (Kurke, 2011, p. 247).

In the two excerpts cited below, this appropriation of the figure of Aesop is more explicit in its programmatic character and provides a more complete framework of the issues identified there and indirectly alluded to:

> Cebes, then, making an aside, said:' By Zeus, Socrates, you did well to remind me. Because, in this case, about the poems (ποιημάτων) that you produced / composed (left produced / πεποίηκας), versifying (music / put in a musical way) the speeches of Aesop's fables (**ἐντείνας** τοὺς Αἰσώπου λόγους), so many people have already asked me, and in addition Evenus, why, having conceived it when you came here (to prison), you produced them (composed / ἐποίησας), since previously nothing of the type had produced (compound / ποιήσας). If, therefore, it matters to you that I will be able to answer when he asks me again - because I know he will ask - tell me what I should say '. 'Say, then, Cebes,' he said, 'what is true: that I produced them (I composed / ἐποίησα) not wanting to be a rival in art to him through the poems - because I knew it wouldn't be easy - but trying to probe, from some dreamlike visions, what sense could there be, and atoning for any mistake in view of the fact that they were actually repeatedly prescribing me to produce / compose (ποιεῖν) such artistic-musical activity (within the scope of the

Muses / μουσικήν). In fact, it appeared as follows: when often the same dreamlike vision appeared in the past, sometimes in one form, sometimes in another, such manifestations said: 'Socrates', they said,' produce / compose (ποίει) the artistic activity of the muses (music / μουσικήν) and execute it/ put it into practice'. And I myself, in the previous time, interpreted that these exhorted and encouraged me in what I already did; like those who encourage those running for a race, so the dream vision also exhorted me in what I did: producing / composing music (activity within the scope of the Muses / μουσικήν ποιεῖν), since philosophy was music par excellence and I was practicing this activity. But now, once the trial took place and the festival of divinity was an impediment to my dying, it seemed to me to be accurate (was it really the case that the dream vision was prescribing to produce / compose this type of popular / common artistic activity (δημώδη μουσικήν ποιεῖν)), do not disobey it, but compose / produce it (ποιεῖν); it therefore seemed safer not to leave this life before making this atonement, producing / composing poems (ποιήσαντα ποιήματα) and obeying the dreamlike vision. Thus, firstly in honor of the divinity for which the present sacrifice ceremony was held, I made the composition (I composed / ἐποίησα). After divinity, keeping in mind that the poet (ποιητήν) was needed, if it is the case of becoming a poet (ποιητής), producing / composing myths (ποιεῖν μύθους), but not speeches (λόγους), and myself not being a mythologist (effabler / μυθολογικός), in view of such considerations, precisely the fables-myths (μύθους) of Aesop d ready to hand and knew by heart, and among those I composed (composed the versification / ἐποίησα) with the first ones that occurred to me (that I first had contact). Such things then, Cebes, communicate to Evenus and transmit my farewell wishes and say, if it is considered, that he follows me as soon as possible. But I am going to leave, as it seems, today, because that is how the Athenians have ordered it. (Plato, *Phaedo*, 60c8-61c1)[12]

[12] Cf. the translation by David Gallop: "Here Cebes joined in and said: 'Goodness yes, Socrates, thanks for reminding me. Several people, you know, including even Evenus just the other day, have been asking me about the poems you've made up, putting the tales of Aesop into verse, and the hymn to Apollo: what had you in mind, they asked, in making them up after you'd come here, when you'd never made up anything before? So if you'd like me to have an answer for Evenus when he asks me again-and I'm quite sure he will-tell me what I should say. Ipiranga 'Tell him the truth, then, Cebes, Ipiranga he said: 'I made them, not because I wanted to compete with him or his verses – I knew that wouldn't be easy – but because I was trying to find out the meaning of certain dreams and fulfil a sacred duty, in case perhaps it was that kind of art they were ordering me to make. They were like this, you see: often in my past life the same dream had visited me, now in one guise, now in another, but always saying the same thing: "Socrates, Ipiranga it said, "make art and practise it." Now in earlier times I used to assume that the dream was urging and telling me to do exactly what I was doing: as people shout encouragement to runners, so the dream was telling me to do the very thing that I was doing, to make art, since philosophy is a very high art form, and that was what I was making. But now that the trial was over and the festival of the god was preventing my death, I thought that in case it was art in the popular sense that the dream was commanding me to make, I ought not to disobey it, but should make it; as it was safer not to go off before I'd fulfilled a sacred duty, by making verses and thus obeying the dream. And so I first made them for the god in whose honour the present feast was kept. Then, after addressing the god, I reflected that a poet should, if he were really going to be a poet, make tales rather than true stories; and being no teller of tales myself, I therefore used some I had ready to hand; I knew the tales of Aesop by heart, and I made verses from the first of these I came across. So give Evenus this message, Cebes:

In Leslie Kurke's reading, Plato, in the *Phaedo*, would have shown Aesop as a precursor and model for the construction of Socrates' character. The passage cited above, according to her, would be programmatic, since it would associate, on the one hand, the Platonic dialogue with the Aesopic fable and on the other, the figure of Socrates with that of Aesop. She divides several ways of association regarding the genre of discourse: as a high discourse, on the one hand, the philosophical logos would concern philosophy; on the prose plane, on the other hand, the Platonic dialogue would be associated with Aesop's fable. Nevertheless, there would be an effort to obliterate and devalue this affiliation due to the transposition of the fable from the registration of prose to that of poetry, which would result in four terms in the equation: 1) high poetry (Homeric hymn), 2) prose of a low and vulgar style (Aesopic fable), 3) artistic activity/common *mousiké*, 4) excellent artistic activity/*philosophía*. Within this game of four terms, the contrast between the high poetry associated with Apollo and the common prose associated with Aesop[13] would be manifested, a contrast which could be verified in Aesop's Life, in the recension G. In function of proving the connection of the Platonic dialogue and the fable tradition associated with Aesop, Kurke takes Aristotle's indications as his basis, especially in Rhetoric and in the doxographic tradition: there the broader genre of Socratic dialogue is close to low and vulgar prose, like the fable, but also the mimus (Kurke, 2011, p. 251-260).

In reaction to this type of interpretation, the position of Gregory Nagy is presented, who in a 2011 article confutes several of Kurkes' arguments, resuming the main points of a previous work from 1979/1999[14]. He disputes the more conventional opinion that, in this passage from the *Phaedo*, Homeric poetry of a high character would be opposed to Aesopic fabulous prose of a low and vulgar character. According to him, the way of equating both would point either to the lowering of the former (when compared to the excellent *mousiké* represented by the *philosophía*), or to the elevation of the latter (transposed in verse and leveling off with the former), representing one of the forms of artistic expression chosen by Plato as paradigmatic. For him, Aesop would present both statutes,

say good-bye to him, and tell him, if he's sensible, to come after me as quickly as he can. I'm off today, it seems-by Athenians' orders." (Plato, 1975, p. 4-5)

[13] For the antagonism between Apollo and Aesop and questions about discursive genre in Aesop's Life/Novel, cf. Konstantakos, 2013; Kurke, 2011; Nagy, 2011, 1979/1999; Jedrkiewicz, 2009; Holzberg, 2003; Papathomopoulos, 2010; Ipiranga Júnior, 2015a.

[14] This 1979 work, *The Best of the Achaeans*, is published again in a revised edition in 1999, in which Nagy adds a new preface.

high and low, according to a double framework: the character who talks about his life and his time, as it happens in Aesop's Life/Novel[15], and the figure who enunciates the speech that typifies it, in the case, the Aesopic fable. Although the fable could be enunciated in the prose record (as in Herodotus or even in the Platonic work, for example, in the fable expressed by Protagoras in the homonymous dialogue), it was also composed in verse, following the example of Hesiodus, Stesichorus, Archilochus and Aristophanes himself. Both in the discursive context of Protagoras, as in that of *Wasps* by Aristophanes, the fable in general and the Aesopic fable in particular, one and the other could, according to Nagy's argument, reveal a graceful and elegant style, typical of literate and refined people, which would use them as a modulation consciously sought among discursive genres. In his interpretation of the transposition from prose to verse, alluded to by the aforementioned passage, Nagy considers that the fable, as mythos, can be conveyed in prose, but its content remains poetic; for him, the meaning of the passage would be that a poet, to be truly a poet, must compose *mythous*, that is, mythos would have an intrinsically poetic value and, therefore, linked to poetry, despite its enunciation in a record of prose (Nagy, 2011, §85-§120).

DION AND AESOP

In his *Discourse on form*[16], Dion Chysostomus weaves his argument from the form of personal presentation of the philosophers: the mantle, the beard, the long hair, the staff. Initially, it seeks to find the reasons why most people persecute and insult those who present themselves with this characteristic dress of the philosopher. The first explanation would be the discomfort that philosophers cause in those who have a position of social prestige: because they consider that the philosopher underestimates the values they consider to be good, like wealth, they think they are liable to be ridiculed by him and, therefore, because of this, they seek to disqualify him in all ways. Nevertheless, according to him, the men in the crowd often disturb the philosopher in an attempt to obtain at any cost the type of advice or admonition proper to figures such as Socrates, Diogenes and the seven sages. It is in this context that there is the first mention of Aesop. Here's the passage:

[15] For questions of discursive genre in relation to the ancient novel, cf. Holzberg, 1995; Brandão, 2005; Hägg, 2009; Ipiranga Júnior, 2015b. For gender issues specifically in Aesop's Romance / Life, cf. Hansen, 1998; Holzberg, 2003; Gallo, 2005; Jouanno, 2009; Karla, 2009; Ipiranga Júnior, 20015a.
[16] Form here in the sense of figure or appearance.

Some also consider Aesop to be of such a type [as the Seven Sages], wise and thoughtful, but particularly smart and quite capable of composing speeches / fables (λόγους) of such quality that they themselves would listen with maximum satisfaction / pleasure. And perhaps not completely in error they consider that Aesop, in fact, tried in this way to admonish men and show them what things were wrong, so as to have the maximum tolerance for him, delighted by his humor and his fables (μύθοις), just as children pay attention to nursing women when they tell them fabulous stories (μυθολογουμέναις) and so be delighted. As a result of this opinion, they approach us, in order to hear from us something similar to what Aesop said, or Socrates, or which sayings Diogenes enunciated, and thus annoy and cannot distance themselves from who they see under that appearance, no more than birds when they see an owl.

On this issue, Aesop also had composed a story / fable (λόγον) like this: the birds gathered together with an owl and begged it to move its nest from the roof of human houses to the trees, in the same way that they had done themselves, and to transfer it to their branches, about which it is even possible to sing with a clearer sound. And, in fact, next to an oak tree that had recently started to grow, at the time it was about to reach its strength, they were getting ready to settle there and take advantage of the green foliage. But then the owl advises the birds not to do this or to rejoice in the bud of a plant whose nature produces a mistletoe, doom for the birds. But they did not approve of the owl on that advice and, on the contrary, they rejoiced at the growing oak and, once it reached a sufficient size, they, sitting over it, sang their song. But, with the viscous resin appearing, being easily caught by the men, they were sorry and admired the owl for its advice. And until today they feel that way, so skillful and wise that the owl is, and that is why they want to be close to it, judging to be something good to be able to enjoy its coexistence. I believe that, subsequently, they approach in vain for something harmful. For the old owl was in fact thoughtful and could provide advice, but today's owls only have the owl's wings, eyes and beak, but in relation to other aspects, they are more immoderate than the other birds. Therefore, they cannot even be of use to themselves; because, in this case, they would not be fed by birdcatchers, being prisoners and servants. " (Dion, LXXII, 13-16)[17]

[17] Cf. the translation by Lamar Crosby: "And there are those who think that Aesop too was somewhat like the Seven Sages, that while he was wise and sensible, yet he was crafty too and clever at composing tales such as they themselves would most enjoy to hear. And possibly they are not wholly mistaken in their suppositions and in reality Aesop did in this way try to admonish mankind and show them wherein were in error, believing that they would be most tolerant toward him if they were amused by his humor and his tales —just as children, when their nurses tell them stories, not only pay attention to them but are amused as well. As the result, then, of this belief, that they are going to hear from us too some such saying as Aesop used to utter, or Socrates, or Diogenes, they draw near and annoy and cannot leave in peace whomever they may see in this costume, any more than the birds can when they see an owl. Indeed, this is why Aesop composed a fable which I will relate. The birds came together to call upon the owl, and they begged her to withdraw from the shelter afforded by the human habitations and to transfer her nest to the trees, just like themselves, and to their branches, 'whence', they declared, 'I is actually possible to sing a clearer note'. And, in fact, as the fable has it, they stood ready to settle upon an oak, which was then just starting to grow, as soon as it should reach its prime, and to enjoy its green foliage. However, the story continues, the owl advised the birds not to do this and not to exult in the shoot of a plant whose nature it is to bear mistletoe, a bane to feathered folk. But the

In Dion's discourse we can see some common aspects regarding the treatment of Aesop's figure: 1) a relationship is established between Aesop and the philosophical discourse[18]; 2) one of the bases for this relationship is the utility or, above all, the benefit of a moral character that can be withdrawn; 3) Aesop's action is contextualized on three perspectives: a) an issue he faces and how to solve it; b) a discussion about their ability and way of composing discourses; c) the statement of a fable as an example; 4) the terms mythos and logos are used to refer to Aesop's fabulous discourse. Dion's narrator persona assumes, throughout the narrative, the position and place of the philosophers, among which Aesop is situated (although he disqualifies those who claim to be philosophers in his time)[19]. While Philostratus, in the previous example, fabricated a mythos about mythos/fable itself in its relation to philosophy, Dion, in turn, takes up an Aesopic logos/fable to explain the attraction and repulsion caused by the action of philosophers, mainly putting in highlight the effect and scope of philosophical discourse. Even if he denounces the loss of the philosophical aura, since there would be no more arguments or sayings worthy of Socrates and Diogenes, nor the legitimately philosophical way of life, most men would still be attracted to this type of discourse and way of life.

Anne Gangloff (2006, p. 64-67) draws attention to how Dion uses the nursing mother's model in several of his discourses. This becomes instrumental for a pedagogical purpose, in the sense of

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birds not only did not applaud the owl for her advice, but, quite the reverse, they took delight in the oak as it grew, and when it was of proper size they alighted on it and sang. But because the mistletoe had grown on it, they now were easily captured by the men and repented of their conduct and admired the owl for her advice. And even to this day they feel this way about her, believing her to be shrewd and wise, and on this account they wish to get near her, believing that they are deriving some benefit from association with her; but if they do, they will approach her, I fancy, all in vain and to their cost. For thought that owl of olden days was really wise and able to give advice, those of to-day merely have her feathers, eyes, and beak, but in all else they are more foolish than other birds. Therefore they cannot benefit even themselves; for otherwise they would not be kept at the bird-catcher's, caged and in servitude." (Dio Chrysostom, 1951/2005, p. 187-191)

[18] For Aesop's vision linked to a philosophical profile based on Dion's work, cf. Jedrkiewicz, 2015, p. 65-80.

[19] Discourse XXXII presents similar questions. There the Dion narrator persona addresses the people of Alexandria, making a sharp criticism for the fact that the Alexandrians are exaggeratedly maniac for dances and scenic-musical shows, such as mimes and pantomimes. In his argument, he narrates the fable (*lógon*) of a Phrygian man, countryman of Aesop, who makes a fable-like account of the origin of the Alexandrians: Calliope, Orpheus's mother, after his death, would have asked Zeus to transform the animals, who admired and accompanied Orpheus for his music, into human beings. The Alexandrians would then be remnants of those humans who had been animals, which would explain their devotion to scenic and musical shows. It is interesting to compare this fable with that told by Aesop's character to the Delphians in Aesop's Romance: the Delphians would have been remnants of the slaves sent across Greece to Delphi, as part of a percentage owed to the city (Aesop's Romance, 126; cf. Duarte, 2018, p. 143; Ipiranga Júnior, 2018b, p. 199). In both accounts, there is a clear objective of censorship and declassification.

putting assistance in the place of the child who must receive training through myths. In the case of the above excerpt, the educational role of the Aesopic fables is accentuated in view of the comparison with the effabulation (μυθολογουμέναις) made by the nursing mothers, such comparison being used by the sophist to designate his own role in relation to his audience, that is, the master and educator. The scholar highlights the features of the Aesopic fable that, for Dion, would guarantee its efficiency and its wide spreading: the humor and the wonderful character of the fables. Such traits would constitute a pedagogical strategy to impress the audience, through the enchantment specific to this type of narrative and based on pleasure, in order to transmit knowledge based on persuasion. Thus, in the face of an audience that seems to be averse to philosophical injunctions and admonitions, the Aesopic model presents itself as ideal through the "report's good appearance, seductiveness, masking the bitterness of the lesson" (Gangloff, 2006, p. 67).

This role of nursing mothers and the enchantment produced by myths are two aspects that Díon, according to Ganglof, is taking up from Plato, especially from the discussion initiated in books II and III of the Republic, concerning the education of the guardians of the ideal polis. In one way or another, this serves to confirm Dion's interest in returning to the problem of the status of discourse from the Platonic framework. The strict contrast between logos and mythos introduced by the character of Socrates in the Republic should not make us lose sight of the subliminal tension between discourses in prose and poetic discourses, that is, the creation of myths was due both to poets and to prose writers, in this last category included all those responsible for the education and training of citizens, from nursing mothers[20] and mothers themselves to sophists and philosophers. For the argument made here, it is important to list, for example, the various nuances of the meanings of mythos that appear in Dion's work, recorded by Anne Bangloff: 1) mythological legends; 2) generic tales, legends and fables; 3) lying, negative characterization; 4) Aesopic fables; 5) words or proposition, returning to the meaning of Homeric mythos; 6) mythical report for paradigmatic purposes, in which Dion combines mythical elements in a report that serves as a protreptic model; 7) philosophical myth in the Platonic sense of the term. For the scholar, despite this multiplicity of meanings, the term mythos and its derivatives encompass constitutive traits, which would be the fabulous/wonderful element and its persuasive aspect linked to the enchantment of the narrative

[20] Cf. Ipiranga Júnior, 2016, p. 85-106.

(often indicated in the text by the verb κελεύω / *keleúo* - enchant, seduce) and the resulting pleasure. In view of this, the mythological accounts, in Dion, are opposed to the *lógoi* in several of his discourses, according to the Platonic distinction that distinguishes the discourse (logos) endowed with rationality and truth from mythos, which would be from the order of the wonderful, the lie or of the fiction. But, for Dion, the logos would also designate the critical and rational interpretation of mythos, enabling a rational and philosophical discourse from another irrational and fictitious one (Gangloff, 2006, p. 18-24).

Although this contrast between logos and mythos is used by Dion from a primarily Platonic conception, this does not prevent him from using the term logos for the Aesopic fable. In the above-mentioned excerpt from Discourse LXXII, the two terms logos and mythos appear to refer to the fable, which would serve to corroborate the opinion of modern scholars, so there would be an alternation of the two terms, with a greater tendency to use logos for fable in the classical period and mythos from the imperial period onwards[21]. However, it is possible to clarify in the text different meanings for the use of one term or another.

Before referring to Aesop, the narrator, to explain the reason for the approach and attraction of men in relation to philosophers, exemplifies with the discourses (*lógous*) of Socrates and Diogenes, who would be thoughtful and helpful to others; in the sequence he says that the opinions, maxims and doctrines recorded by the seven sages in Delphi would also be of common use, appointed for the benefit of all. It is in this comparison with the seven wise men ("Some also consider Aesop to be of such a type, wise and thoughtful") that the term logos appears in reference to the narratives told by Aesop, as a skillful, astute and seductive composer, whose listeners would have maximum pleasure in listening to. In this context, the term logos makes a direct reference to the benefit, above all moral, that derives from Aesopic discourse, in view of the advice it provides to men in order to show in what circumstances and how they make their mistakes[22]. The second reference to the Aesopic fables is made by the term mythos and is linked to the pleasure that men enjoy (*hedomenoi*) when hearing the fables (*mythois*) together with the humor (*geloío*) that is characteristic to them. In this way, the logos/fable is associated with profit, while the mythos/fable is linked to pleasure and

[21] Cf. Zafiropoulos, 2015, P. 106-107; Zafiropoulos, 2001, P. 2-10; Van Dijk, 1997, p. 79-111.
[22] For the representation of Aesop as a wise man in antiquity, cf. Jedrkiewicz, 2015b, §1-§28.

comic traits. In the third reference to the fable, he again uses the term *lógos* ("On this question, Aesop also composed a story/fable (λόγον) of this type"), in which the emphasis befall on the process of composition and the exposure of the narrative that will follow. Here, the *lógos* have the meaning of "discourse", a narrative in which a subject is discussed according to stages of an argument. This sense is corroborated by the last reference in which the term *lógos* appears: used in the plural in the passage, it refers to the conversations and reports that would have been made by Socrates and Diogenes, where there is implicit both the moral benefit, as well as the question of composition and argumentation in a narrative. The passage is paradigmatic, because, in addition to spelling out this semantic scope, an indirect relationship is drawn between the Aesopian discourse and the Platonic dialogue (which may include Socratic dialogues in general and the diatribes of cynics). In this way, the Aesopic fable is linked to the philosophical prose by this semantic scope of *lógos*, concerning utility and argumentation set in a narrative.

THE *IMAGINES* OF PHILOSTRATUS

Aesop's figure is also depicted in another work by Philostratus: *Imagines*. These are descriptions of paintings, true ekphrasis, which, according to the argument in the text, the author would have seen and commented on during his visit to the city of Naples. In a splendid portico, overlooking the Tyrrhenian Sea, having seen numerous paintings on the walls, the narrator feels motivated to praise the works; subsequently, instigated by a 10-year-old boy (son of the person who hosted him) who asked him about the meaning of the pictures, the narrative persona decides to make a descriptive and explanatory speech for the boy, as well as for the group of boys who accompanied them. Let us look specifically at the part that refers to the fable's ekphrasis and that concerns Aesop:

> Fables (*mythoi*) are often around Aesop for their affection for him, since he himself devotes his care to them. In fact, the fable (mythos) was also the object of care on the part of Homer and Hesiod, and also by Archilochus in his poem for Licambes; however, in Aesop, all human affairs were converted into fables (*ekmúthotai*) and he caused the animals to share the speech (*lógou*) in view of the discourse (*lógou*) as a moral argument. In fact, he represses greed, rejects unruliness and deceitfulness, and, in these circumstances, a lion, for him, represents the designated role, just like a fox, a horse and, by Zeus, not even a turtle is speechless, expedient through which children become apprentices in the things of life. The Fables (*mythoi*) then, prestigious because of Aesop, circulate over the door of the sage's house, girding him with ribbons and crowning him

> with an olive wreath. And he, I believe, is currently making a fable, because Aesop's smile and his eyes on the ground indicate this. The painter knows that his zeal for fables requires a relaxed soul. But even the painting philosophizes in the representation of the characters of the fables, because the animals, together with the men[23], form a chorus around Aesop, being made from his own ceno-dramatic fiction (*skenês*), and the fox is painted as chorus choryphaeus, because Aesop uses it as an auxiliary agent (*diakónoi*) for most of the arguments, just as comedy uses the character Davos.[24]

As can be seen from both the text's preamble and the above ekphrasis, there is a markedly pedagogical purpose: both the narrator prioritizes his interpretation for boys and kids, and the expedient of using animals in fables would be instrumental in the education of children. According to Graeme Miles and Kristoffel Demoen (Miles & Demoen, 2009, p. 36,40), this interest in the educationalqqq function of fables would be one of the common features between the representation of Aesop in this work, *Imagines*, and that one which appears in the *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*; in the latter, a sub-plot would be at stake concerning the education of the character of Menippus promoted by the protagonist, Apollonius, in the sense of teaching him to value and to know how to interpret Aesopic fables.

Direct references to poets must be underlined: Homer, Hesiod and Archilochus. In the passage in question, Homeric expressions are also used, such as the Homeric metaphor of weaving words, in this case, weaving a fable (ὑφαίνειν μῦθον), as well as Aesop's position, with his eyes turned to the ground, would evoke Odysseus' attitude (Miles & Demoen, 2009, p. 36, 40). In addition, the process

[23] Or according to another reading: animals combined with human aspects. According to Graeme Miles and Kristoffel Demoen, instead of meaning a circle made by animals and men, the verb used, συμβάλλουσα / *symbállousa*, would preferably indicate hybrid beings that would combine animal and human traits; cf. Miles & Demoen, 2009, p. 34-35, n. 25.

[24] Cf. the translation by Arthur Fairbanks: "The Fables are gathering about Aesop, being fond of him because he devotes himself to them. For while Homer also cared for fable, an Hesiod, and Archilochus too in his verses to Lycambes, Aesop has treat all sides of human life in his fables, and has made his animals speak in order to point a moral. For he checks greed and rebukes insolence and deceit, and in all this some animal is his mouthpiece — a lion or a fox or a horse, by Zeus, and not even the tortoise is dumb — that through them children may learn the business of life. So the Fables, honoured because of Aesop, gather at the doors of the wise man to bind fillets about his head and to crown him with a victor's crown of wild olive. And Aesop, methinks, is weaving some fable; at any rate his smile and his eyes fixed on the ground indicate this. The painter knows that for the composition of fables relaxation of the spirit is needed. And the painting is clever in representing the persons of the Fables. For it combines animals with men to take a chorus about Aesop, composed of the actors in his fables; and the fox is painted as a leader of the chorus, since Aesop uses him as a slave in developing most of his themes, as comedy uses Davus." (Philostratus, 1931, p. 13-15)

of composing fables is compared to dramatic composition, in general, and to comedy, in a specific way, as animals are seen as actors playing specific roles; and the fox is defined as a characteristic and central character for the Aesopic fabulous discourse, being compared with the character of Davos, a paradigmatic name for slave in comedy. The repeated correlation between Aesopian discourse and poetic discourse is corroborated, which results in a certain iconization of Aesop and his fables in relation to poetry and poets, that is, the mention of Aesop and the fable genre is recurrently associated with an aesthetic and, often, moral evaluation of the poetic discourse in relation to or in contrast to the prose discourse, whether of rhetorical, philosophical or historical character.

AESOP IN PROSE WITH PLATO, DION AND PHILOSTRATUS

There are, however, differences in the treatment of Aesop between these sources in antiquity. Although there is, in the quoted section of *Imagines*, this indirect reference to slavery through the mention of the character Davos, Philostratus does not refer to Aesop's status as a slave, nor does he refer to his appearance or his presumed ugly face and his body deformity. Although the misshapen appearance, bordering on the grotesque, can be presupposed in the oldest sources, the fact is that the only evidence of this in the classical period consists of a vase from the 5th century, dated around 450 BC, today in the Gregorian Etruscan Museum in the Vatican (Inv. No. 16552). Either we think that Philostratus is opposed to the majority perspective in relation to Aesop's misshapen aspect, as defended by Miles and Demoen (Miles & Demoen, 2009, p. 38-40), or we have to conjecture different forms of his representation in Antiquity, given the lack of another evidence of his ugly and misshapen appearance prior to the composition of *Romance/Life of Aesop* in the 1st or 2nd century AD. In any case, for Zafiropoulos, Aesop's misshapen appearance would be presupposed in the appropriation of Aesop's figure in the *Phaedo* in its correlation with Socrates, according to the elements mentioned above, among which would be the following: a) death as a result of an unfair accusation; b) a markedly critical discourse; c) the intrinsic relationship with the god Apollo; d) the assimilation of the *pharmakós* statute, to which would contribute the deformity of the face and body of both characters: Socrates and Aesop, that is, the approximation and parallel between one and the other would also have as a basis of comparison their misshapen appearance.

Attention should be paid to the use of the figure of Aesop and the appropriation of the Aesopic fable in the narrative of each of the authors. In the case of Dion's *Discourses*, although there are strictly no characters in the analyzed texts, the narrative voice, presenting itself as a substitute for the authorial voice, tells a fable of Aesop in the same way that the fabulist would tell in a similar context to express a similar perspective. In a way, the narrator in Dion behaves like the character of Socrates in the *Phaedo*: both embody the figure of Aesop and elaborate a fable according to the style and genre of discourse of each one. In the *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, the protagonist *Apollonius* advocates in favor of Aesop, which makes him tell a *mythos* in which the etiology of mythology is provided, having Aesop as a character in the narrative. Thus, the mentions of Aesop and the fable in these three authors assimilate the figure of Aesop as a character in the narratives, either enunciating them or as an intra-diegetic character; this could be indicative of the way of characterizing and describing Aesop's appearance: while there would be no problem associating him with Socrates, as he is admittedly ugly, in the Platonic dialogue, in the case of the character of Apollonius in Philostratus and the narrative voice in Dion, on the other hand, the option chosen was not to make any reference or allusion to its misshapen and grotesque aspect, also keeping in mind the philosophical and ethical agenda of each one.

As seen, in the three authors the Aesopic fable is not only related to the philosophical *lógos*, but works as a trigger or conclusion of a discourse on some philosophical question or even on the status of prose discourse in comparison and in confrontation with the poetic discourse. Let us see how this problem is approached and arranged in another discourse of Dion: Discourse XXXIII, addressed to the inhabitants of Tarsus. As in Discourse LXXII, here the narrative voice seeks to warn the audience as to how to apprehend the philosophical teaching: do not expect praise from him based on the natural and architectural appearances and beauty of the city or the river that passes there, just as "the poets in meters and those who make compositions on the same subject through commissions"[25] would do. To prove his point of view, which would be contrary to that of poets and prosers interested in easy praise, he will quote and allude to the procedure of two poets and one proser. The

[25] This reference to the records of poetry and prose, thus juxtaposed, is more objectively referenced in Discourse XII: "(…) on the one hand, the most skilled speakers, on the other, the most pleasant writers (*ksungraphéas*) of verses (*emmétron*) and prose discourses (*amétron lógon*) (XII, 5). As in Discourse LXXII, the philosopher's appearance (*skhéma*) (XII, 9) is discussed here, alluding to the same *mythos* of Aesop concerning the owl and birds.

two poets would be Homerus and Archilochus, which raise to Dion several arguments to prove his thesis, both of which are used as emblematic representatives of epic poetry and iambic poetry respectively, the latter characterized by censorship and harsh admonition, qualities reputed to Archilochus by Dion. As for the example of prose, he tells the Aesopic fable of the eyes: envious of the mouth that would enjoy the best flavors, the eyes claim to absorb the honey, which, after all, is allowed and causes them ardor and suffering. Thus, in relation to the interpretation of the fable and the morals explained by the narrator, the absorption of philosophical knowledge by people without an intellectual preparation through *paideia* would also cause pain and malaise, effects that would be the same as the ones in Dion's discourses for listeners.

The figure of Aesop, as in the description that appears in Philostratus' *Imagines*, is used here in comparison with the poetic discourse, represented by the equally emblematic figures of Homer and Archilochus (Hesiod also being mentioned in the *Imagines*). In addition to this, in Discourse LXXII, there was an association with emblematic figures of philosophy, Socrates and Diogenes, and the Aesopic fable was also related to Dion's own discourse, in a matter of moral and philosophical framing. In turn, in Discourse XXXIII, the aesthetic and literary plane is present through the referral to poets, the figure of Aesop also appearing there as a representative of prose and, therefore, as an intermediary and spokesman for this type of discourse. In one way or another, the figure of Aesop (and, consequently, the related genre of the fable) is instrumental in articulating Dion's discourse, both in the face of the prose discourse, especially of the philosophers, represented emblematically by Socrates and Diogenes, and in the face of poetic discourse, repeatedly represented by Homer, Archilochus and, sometimes, by Hesiod[26]. Consequently, Aesop is taken up in this double framework: one face turned to prose, the other facing poetry.

In relation to the game between *lógos* and *mythos* in the designation and definition of the fable in antiquity, this question arises already in the dramatized scene of the *Phaedo*. The perspective of Zafiropoulos (2015, p. 105-111) is that Plato uses *mythos* in a complementary relation to *lógos*, as a narrative that illustrates and exemplifies an argument, but under the constraints of philosophical discourse: the systematic use of *mythos*, in addition to the argumentative *lógos*, it would have a

[26] For references to poets in Dion, cf. Bangloff, 2006, p. 30-41. The mythical references in Dion concerning Homer reach the figure of 51.2%, totaling 193 cases in a total of 377.

pedagogical, aesthetic purpose and destined to cause a certain effect in the narrative[27]. In Nagy's perspective (2011, §92-§98), the Aesopic fable, under the Platonic prism, would be primarily *mythos* in the sense of indicating its specific fictionality, frontally opposing on to the rational and true *lógos*, that is, Socrates' character would oppose himself to a fable conception designated by the term *lógos*, a designation that is adopted by Cebes' character in the dialogue. Thus, the most appropriate to settle the question would be to hypothesize that Plato puts into question two competitive conceptions or two forms of reference to the fable: α) one that makes its fictional character manifest under the term *mythos*, as opposed to the philosophical *lógos* (which, to a certain degree, will be adopted by Dion); β) another that claims an argumentation status with some kind of moral benefit or that expresses aesthetic and diegetic aspects in its discourse. It is precisely this tension and play between *lógos* and *mythos* in their reference to the fable that later writers, such as Dion and Philostratus, return to metaliterary and self-referring questions concerning the type of prose, related to philosophical discourse that they engage in, in wich the comparison with the Aesopic fable is correlated with the attitude of confrontation, with or assimilation of, the poetic discourse.

Let us return to the etiological *mythos* of the *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*:

> When they arrived on the day announced for the distribution of wisdom, Hermes, since he was well versed in speech (*lógios*) and profit, said: 'You shall have the philosophy', to the one who had undoubtedly dedicated the most excellent offerings; 'You shall take a place in the speakers' plague', to one which gave offerings second in value; 'To you the position of dealing with astronomy, to you being a musician, to you being a poet in the epic metro, to you in the iambic metro'. Since, despite being the shrewdest in the discourse (*logiótatos*), he unwittingly spent all portions of philosophy and was unaware that he had left Aesop out (...). And, as a result, it gives the mythology to Aesop, being the one that remained in the habitation of wisdom (…).

As in Dion's discourses, Philostratus' *Imagines* and Platonic *Phaedo*, here the Aesopic fable is associated with other genres of discourse, in prose and verse, explicitly occupying the last place, as explained by Leslie Kurke (2011, p. 1-2). Although the fable as a distinctive genre may, in certain contexts, express the point of view of the lower social strata, it also seems to be conceived as a structural unit of discourse. In fact, it is due to the portion that is granted to Aesop that *mythos* is to;

[27] Notwithstanding this clear distinction in the functions and scope of the *lógos* and *mythos*, this does not prevent the character of Socrates from calling *lógos* the ancient myth he proposes to tell at a given point in the argument (*Phaedo*, 70c5-6).

better saying, the etiological fable about mythology is also an etiological myth about the division, evaluation and distribution of discourses. With this in mind, the game between *mythos* and *lógos* in the *Phaedo* concerns this structurality and flexibility of the fable to constitute discourses or to be assimilated by it. If we think about it, in the *Phaedo*, Plato makes Socrates's character practice two discursive actions: 1) in one, he makes a fabulous report, but within the constructions of the philosophical discourse and according to the parameters presented in the *Republic*: it's a simple narrative, devoid of the most refined linguistic resources typical of poets' mimetic narratives; 2) in the other, he reports having made two poetic compositions, a hymn to Apollo and the versification and / or musicalization of Aesop's fables[28]. The last action is not actually presented in his products, that is, Plato does not record in the text of the dialogue the hymn, and the Aesopic fables purportedly versified or set to music by Socrates, which generated the later controversy of whether or not Socrates wrote such poems. Nevertheless, what Socrates says he has done is exactly what Aristophanes did with the Aesopic fables in some of his comedies, as in *The Wasps*: he went from recording prose to poetry and possibly put it in a certain melodic line proper to the drama comic. Therefore, the figure of Aesop, in addition to signifying a kind of iconic index for prose with some artistic intent, presents itself as a kind of discursive switcher: the passage of the registration from prose to poetry, as well as from poetry to prose, makes the Aesopic fable the argument par excellence for framing issues of discourse genre and, especially, issues related to poetics in Antiquity.

[28] Zafiropoulos (2015, p. 57-60) explains the problem related to the meaning of the verbal participle "*enteínas*" used by the character of Cebes in the passage cited by Phaedo (when versing (musicizing/putting in a musical way) Aesop's fables/discourses - ἐντείνας τοὺς Αἰσώπου λόγους), which most specialists and most translators interpret as the action of versifying. Nevertheless, the first sense would be to "tension and stretch", in this case, strings and cables, and, therefore, "to tension strings of a musical instrument"; with the meaning derived from "taking or putting on music", "set to music". If we think about the broader scope provided by the term *mousiké* used by the character of Socrates in the following excerpt, perhaps the participle "*enteínas*" covers the various aspects of *mousiké* in this period, that is, both the record of the poetic discourse and the musical elements. It is not necessary to assume that Aesopic fables, to be set to music, would necessarily be in verse. The transition from prose to poetry, if we take Aristophanes' transposition of Aesop's fables, would include versification and, to some degree, a certain musicalization. In this way, the composition of philosophy, as the highest kind of poetry, would seek to emulate and surpass compositions within the scope of Muses in all its aspects. The Aesopic fable, therefore, transiting between the record of prose and poetry, traversing the various discursive genres, would appear as a kind of structural unit of discourse, whether in prose or in verse, with or without the melodic element.

CONCLUSION

In all the examples cited, Aesop's fabulous discourse is put in relation to the philosophical discourse. It often occupies the lowest hierarchical position within the philosophical system of which he would be a part, nevertheless it shows itself as a structural constituent of prose discourse, in particular, and of poetic discourse in a more general way. In one way or another, the three authors, Plato, Philostratus and Dion of Prusa, comment on and discuss the form of composition, the purpose, the function, the type of address and the effects of the fable, to a greater or lesser extent, related to the various types of discourses. From the narrative setting of such comments and explanations, correspondences are drawn, directly or indirectly, with the style, composition and reception of the discourses of the authors themselves, that is, the mention of Aesop and/or of the related fable gives room to a theorizing about a prose of artistic pretensions, which does not give up its utilitarian character in relation to the moral sphere, as well as deals with the more general problematics of poetics in Antiquity.

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