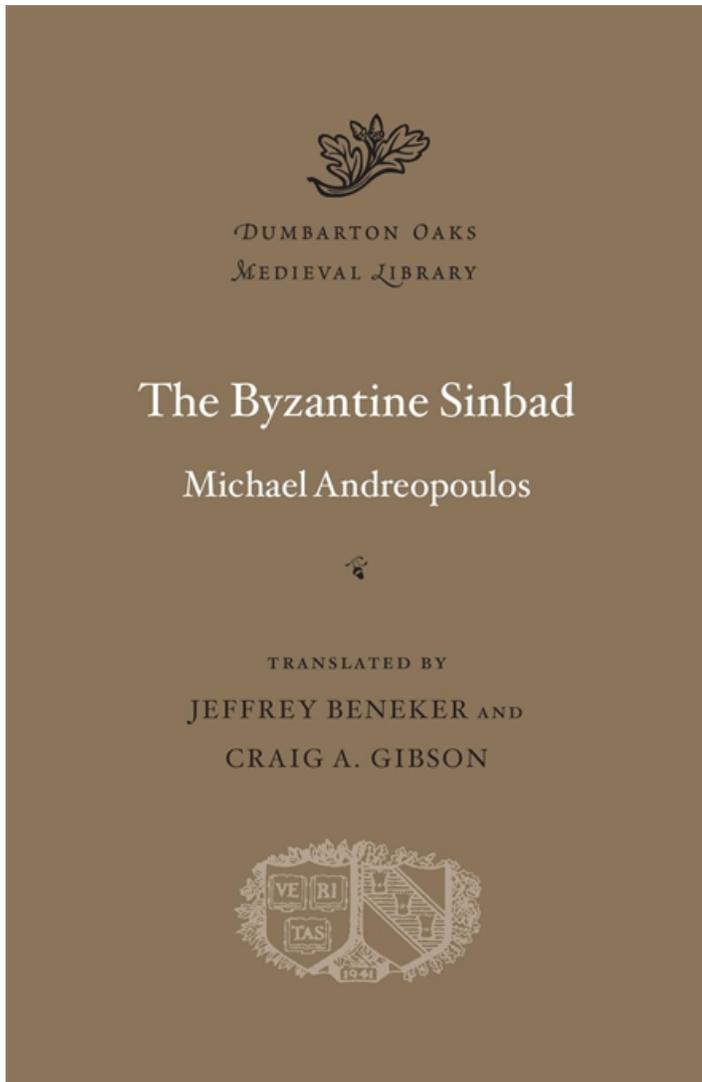


# The Byzantine Sinbad

MICHAEL ANDREOPOULOS

TRANSLATED BY JEFFREY BENEKER AND CRAIG A. GIBSON



*The Byzantine Sinbad* collects *The Book of Syntipas the Philosopher* and *The Fables of Syntipas*, both translated from Syriac in the late eleventh century by the scholar **Michael Andreopoulos**.

Originally written in Persian and part of a multilingual and multicultural medieval storytelling tradition, *The Book of Syntipas* recounts how the Persian king Cyrus's unnamed son—a student of the fictional philosopher Sinbad, who is known in Greek as Syntipas—is falsely accused of rape by a royal concubine. While the young man awaits execution, seven philosophers and the concubine attempt to influence Cyrus's judgment. After seven days of storytelling, the son is exonerated and demonstrates the wisdom he learned from Syntipas.

The sixty-two moral tales in *The Fables of Syntipas* are inspired mainly by the tradition of Aesop but include fifteen that are uniquely attributed to the philosopher.

This volume is the first English translation to bring together Andreopoulos's Byzantine Greek texts.

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THE BYZANTINE SINBAD

MICHAEL ANDREOPOULOS

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THE BOOK OF SYNTIPAS  
THE PHILOSOPHER



Harvard  
University  
Press

Βίβλος Συντίπα  
τοῦ Φιλοσόφου

Ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς βίβλου ἔνε οὕτως·

Τοῦ μυθογράφου Συντίπα κατὰ Σύρους,  
μᾶλλον δὲ Περσῶν τοὺς σοφοὺς λογογράφους,  
αὕτη πέφυκεν ἦν βλέπεις δέλτος, φίλε.  
Ἦν καὶ συρικοῖς τοῖς λόγοις γεγραμμένην  
εἰς τὴν παροῦσαν αὐτὸς ἑλλάδα φράσιν  
μετήγαγόν τε καὶ γέγραφα τὴν βίβλον,  
τῶν γραμματικῶν ἔσχατός γε τυγχάνων,  
Ἄνδρέοπλος Μιχαήλ, Χριστοῦ λάτρις,  
ἔργον τεθεικῶς προστεταγμένον τόδε  
παρὰ Γαβριὴλ τοῦ μεγιστάνων κλέους,  
δουκὸς σεβαστοῦ πόλεως μελωνύμου,  
ὃς ἔστι Χριστοῦ θερμὸς ὄντως ἰκέτης.  
Ὅς καὶ διωρίσατο γραφῆναι τάδε,  
ὅτι γε μὴ πρόσεστι Ῥωμαίων βίβλοις.  
Ἦ συγγραφή γὰρ ἦδε τοὺς κακεργάτας  
διασύρει μάλιστα καὶ πρὸς τῷ τέλει  
πράξεις ἐπαινεῖ τὰς καλῶς εἰργασμένας.

<sup>2</sup> Πρόλογος τοῦ πρωτοτύπου ἦτοι τοῦ ἀντιβολαίου, τῆς Συρικῆς βίβλου τῆς λεγομένης “Συντίπα τοῦ Φιλοσόφου,” ἔχων αὐταῖς λέξεσιν οὕτως· “Διήγησις ἐμφιλόσοφος, συγγραφεῖσα παρ’ ἡμῶν περὶ τοῦ τῶν Περσῶν βασιλέως

THE BOOK OF SYNTIPAS  
THE PHILOSOPHER

The book begins as follows:

This book which you see before you, my friend, is that of the fable writer Syntipas as told by the Syrians, or rather, as written down by the wise Persian authors. It was written in the Syrian language, and then I myself translated and wrote the book in the present Greek version, though I am the least of the grammarians. I, Michael Andreopoulos, a Christian, published this work as a commission from Gabriel, the glory of the nobility, the venerable governor of the city named for honey, who is truly a fervent suppliant of Christ, and who directed that this story be written because it did not exist among the Romans’ books. For this book especially disparages evildoers, and, in its conclusion, praises deeds that have been nobly done.

Here is the prologue of the original, namely my exemplar, of the Syrian book entitled “The Book of Syntipas the Philosopher,” which reads verbatim as follows: “A story imbued with learning, written by me, about Cyrus, king of the <sup>2</sup>

Κύρου καὶ τοῦ γνησίου τούτου παιδὸς καὶ τοῦ αὐτοῦ διδασκάλου Συντίπα, ἔτι δὲ καὶ περὶ τῶν τοῦ βασιλέως ἑπτὰ φιλοσόφων καὶ τῆς μιᾶς αὐτοῦ τῶν ἄλλων πονηρᾶς καὶ ἀναιδοῦς γυναικὸς καὶ ἧς τῷ βασιλεῖ κατὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ προέθετο διαβολῆς καὶ σκαιωρίας οἷα τούτου μητρὶα τυγχάνουσα. Ἦντινα διήγησιν προῖστόρησε Μοῦσος ὁ Πέρσης πρὸς τὴν τῶν ἐντυγχανόντων ὠφέλειαν.”

3 Βασιλεὺς τις ἦν Κύρος ὀνόματι, ᾧ καὶ ὑπῆρχον γυναῖκες ἑπτὰ. Ἦν δὲ ὁ τοιοῦτος ἄπαις καὶ τέκνων ἔρημος· ὅθεν καὶ παιδοποιίας ἐφιέμενος θερμότερα τὸ θεῖον ἐξελιπάρει τοῦ τῆς ἀτεκνίας λυθῆναι δεσμοῦ. Ἐπὶ πολὺ γοῦν περὶ τούτου δεόμενος ἔτυχεν τῆς ἐφέσεως, καὶ τούτῳ υἱὸς γεννᾶται· ὃς καὶ ἀνατρεφόμενος ἠὔξανέ τε καλῶς καὶ ὡς δένδρον εὐθαλὲς ἐπεδίδου τῇ ἡλικίᾳ. Τοῦτον τοίνυν τῆς πρώτης ἡδὴ ἡβῆς τοῦ τέλους ἀψάμενον διδασκαλείῳ παραδέδωκεν ὁ πατήρ πρὸς τὸ τοῖς σοφιστικοῖς ἐκπαιδεύεσθαι μαθήμασι. Τριετὴ δὲ διατρίψας ἐν τούτοις χρόνον οὐδὲν τούτῳ ὄλως ἐκαρπώσατο. Εἶτα διαπορούμενος ἐπὶ τούτῳ ὁ βασιλεὺς ἔλεγεν ὡς· “Εἰ ἐπὶ μακροῦς, τὸ τοῦ λόγου, ἐνιαυτοῦς παρὰ τῷδε τῷ διδασκάλῳ ὁ παῖς μου προσμείνειεν, οὐδὲν τὸ παράπαν ἐξ αὐτοῦ μαθήσεται· ἀλλ’ ἐκδώσω αὐτὸν Συντίπα τῷ φιλοσόφῳ, ὅτι περ ἀκήκοα ὡς μάλα σοφιστικὸς ὁ ἀνὴρ καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἀπάντων τοῖς λόγοις ὑπερτερῶν.”

4 Καὶ ταῦτα εἰπὼν εὐθύς τὸν Συντίπα μετεκαλέσατο καὶ φησι πρὸς αὐτόν· “Πῶς δοκεῖ σοι καὶ μέχρι πόσου τὸν ἐμὸν παῖδα ἐκπαιδεῦσαι, φιλόσοφε;” Ὁ δὲ ἔφη τῷ βασιλεῖ ὡς· “Τὸν παῖδά σου ἐτοίμως ἔχω ἐπὶ μῆνας ἕξ καὶ μὴ περαιτέρω τὸ σύνολον ἐκδιδάξαι καὶ ἐκπαιδεῦσαι καὶ

Persians, about his legitimate son, and about his son’s teacher, Syntipas; and furthermore about the king’s seven philosophers and about one of his several wives, who was wicked and shameless, and about the sorts of slander and intrigue that she used on the king against his son, because she was his stepmother. Mousos the Persian first wrote this story for the benefit of his readers.”

There was once a king called Cyrus who had seven wives, 3 but he was childless and bereft of offspring. And so, because he longed to have children, he fervently entreated God to be released from the bond of childlessness. Now when he had prayed for this for a long time, he obtained his desire, and a son was born to him. As the boy grew up, he became very strong and increased in height like a thriving tree. Accordingly, when he had just reached the end of his adolescence, his father sent him to a school to be educated in lessons about wisdom. Although he spent three years in his studies, the boy did not profit from them at all. Then the king, who did not know what to do about this, said, “Even if my child should remain with that teacher for many long years, as the saying goes, he will learn nothing at all from him. Instead, I will entrust him to Syntipas the philosopher, because I’ve heard that he is a very wise man and surpasses all others in his learning.”

When he had said this, he immediately summoned Syn- 4 tipas and said to him, “What do you think is the best way to educate my son, philosopher, and how long will it take?” And Syntipas answered the king, “I am ready to instruct your son in everything for six months and not a day longer,

τοσαύτης ἐμπλήσαι φιλοσοφίας ὡς μή τινα ἕτερον εὐ-  
ρίσκεσθαι τοῦ σου υἱοῦ φιλοσοφώτερον. Εἰ δὲ μὴ οὕτως  
ἔχοντα τοῦτον ἐντὸς τῆς διορίας παραστήσω σοι, ἀπο-  
λέσθω μου τὸ ζῆν, ὦ βασιλεῦ, καὶ ἡ πᾶσά μου ὑπαρξίς τῷ  
σῷ κράτει προσγενέσθω· ἄτοπον γὰρ τηλικαύτην εὐθαλίῃ  
ἐπαρχίαν καὶ τοιοῦτον βασιλέα πλουτοῦσαν, πάσης συν-  
έσεως καὶ ἀγχινοίας ἀνάπλεων, μὴ φιλόσοφον ἄνδρα  
κεκτῆσθαι καὶ αὐτὴν δὲ τὴν ἰατρῶν τέχνην ἄκρως ἐξησκη-  
μένον· εἰ γὰρ μὴ τοιοῦτος ἀνὴρ ἐν ἐπαρχίᾳ τοιαύτῃ ἐπι-  
χωριάζοι, οὐ χρὴ τινα τὸ παράπαν ἐνδιατρίβειν αὐτῇ· με-  
μύημαι γὰρ ὡς οἱ βασιλεῖς οὐδὲν τοῦ καυστικοῦ πυρὸς τῷ  
θυμῷ διαφέρουσι καὶ δεῖ τούτοις καὶ φιλοσόφους ἄνδρας  
προσομιλεῖν, ἵνα μὴ τῷ ζέοντι τῆς ὀργῆς παρὰ τὸ δέον  
τινὰ τῶν ὑπηκόων ἀναλίσκωσιν. Εἰ τοίνυν, ὦ βασιλεῦ,  
καθάπερ σοι ἐπαγγέλλομαι τέλειον ἐν φιλοσόφοις τὸν  
υἱόν σου ἀποκαταστήσω σοι, χρὴ καὶ τὴν σὴν βασιλείαν,  
εἴ τι δὴ καὶ παρ' αὐτῆς ἐπιζητήσω, φιλοτίμως μοι  
παρασχέιν." Ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς τῷ φιλοσόφῳ ἔφη· "Τί ἂν εἴη  
τὸ ἐπιζητούμενον; Λέγε μοι, καὶ εἴπερ μοι πρόσεστιν εὐ-  
θέως σοι τοῦτο καθυπόσχωμαι· εἰ δὲ τῶν ἀδυνάτων μοι  
ἔσται, οὐκ ὀφειλέτης σοι περὶ πράγματος ἀνυπάρκτου  
γενήσομαι." Ὁ δὲ Συντίπας εὐήκοον καὶ καταπειθῆ τῷ  
ἑαυτοῦ λόγῳ ὡς ἐν παραδείγματι τὸν βασιλέα καθιστῶν,  
"Ὡ βασιλεῦ," ἔφη, "ὅπερ σοι παρά τινος οὐ χαίρῃ προσ-  
γενέσθαι, μηδὲ σὺ ἐτέρῳ τοῦτο πεποιηκέναι θελήσης." Αὐθις δὲ ὁ βασιλεὺς τῷ τοιοῦτῳ λόγῳ λοιπὸν συγκατανεύων  
καὶ χρησταῖς ταῖς ἐλπίσι τὸν φιλόσοφον ἐπερείδων, "Πᾶν  
εἴ τι," φησὶν, "αἰτήσῃ παρ' ἐμοῦ, ἐτοίμως καὶ σοι δοθήσεται."

to train him, and to fill him with so much learning that no  
one else will be found to be more learned than your son. If I  
do not present him to you in this state within the specified  
time, my king, let me be deprived of my life, and let all my  
property be forfeited to your majesty. For it would be  
strange for so great and thriving a kingdom, one that is en-  
dowed with such a king who is filled with all intelligence and  
cleverness, not to possess a philosopher who is also perfectly  
practiced in the physicians' art. For unless such a man dwells  
in such a kingdom, no one at all should live there. For I have  
learned that kings in their rage are no different from burn-  
ing fire and that philosophers must converse with them so  
that, when boiling over with anger, they do not wrongly de-  
stroy one of their subjects. And so, my king, if I return your  
son to you perfect among philosophers, as I promise you,  
then your majesty must generously provide me with any-  
thing I request." Then the king replied to the philosopher,  
"What would you ask for? Tell me, and if I possess it, I will  
promise it to you immediately. But if it is something impos-  
sible for me, I will not become indebted to you for some-  
thing that I do not have." Syntipas, in order to make the  
king agreeable and obedient to his word, said by way of an  
illustration, "My king, do not wish to treat someone else in a  
way that you would not like to be treated by him." The king,  
in turn, ultimately agreed with this argument and, encour-  
aging the philosopher with good hopes, said, "Whatever  
you ask of me, I will readily grant you." And with these

Καὶ τούτων οὕτως παρ' ἀμφοτέρων πρὸς ἀλλήλους λεχθέντων, συμβόλαιον ὁ φιλόσοφος τῷ Κύρῳ ἐξέθετο, ἐν ᾧ δὴ καὶ ἀνατέτακτο ὡς μετὰ μῆνας ἕξ καὶ ὥρας δύο εἰς τέλος δεδιδασκόμενος ὁ παῖς τῷ βασιλεῖ παρ' αὐτοῦ ἀποδοθήσεται· εἰ δὲ πλέον τοῦ ἐμπροθέσμου τούτου καιροῦ τὰ τῆς συνθήκης παραταθήσεται, κεφαλικῆ ἔκτομη τὸν Συντίπαν ὑποβληθήναι.

5 Ἐπὶ τούτοις τοιγαροῦν ὁ βασιλεὺς τὸν ἑαυτοῦ υἱὸν εἰς χεῖρας τοῦ φιλοσόφου παρακατέθετο. Παραλαβὼν δὲ ὁ Συντίπας τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ βασιλέως ἐκ τῶν χειρῶν αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ οἰκίαν ἀπήγαγεν. Εἶτα ἐν πρώτοις οἰκίσκον εὐρυχωρότατον νεωστὶ αὐτῷ ἐδείματο, καὶ τοῦτον ἔσωθεν εὐκόσμως περιχρίσας καὶ λευκότητι καταλαμπρύνας πᾶν εἴ τι τὸν νέον ἐκδιδάξαι ἔμελλεν ἐν τοῖς τοῦ οἰκίσκου τοίχοις εὐθύς ἀνιστόρησε. Μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα, φησὶ πρὸς αὐτόν· “Πᾶσά σου ἡ διαγωγή καὶ ἡ δίαίτα, ὦ νεανία, ἐν τούτῳ ἔστω τῷ οἰκήματι, ἄχρις ἂν καλῶς ἐκμάθῃς ὅσαπερ ἐν τοῖς αὐτοῦ τοίχοις παρ' ἐμοῦ ἀνιστόρηται.” Ἐκτοτε γοῦν ὁ φιλόσοφος τῷ παιδί παρεκάθητο, κάκεῖσε αὐτῷ διόλου συνδιαιτώμενος ἐξεδίδασκεν αὐτὸν τὰ ἱστορηθέντα (ἢ τε βρῶσις αὐτῶν καὶ πόσις παρὰ τοῦ βασιλέως ἐστέλλετο), καὶ τούτου μεγάλως ἐπιμελησάμενος μέχρι τῆς τῶν ἕξ μηνῶν (καὶ μόνων) συμπληρώσεως τὰ τῆς διδασκαλίας ἀπήρτισεν, ὡς μηδεμίαν ὥραν περαιτέρω ταύτης τῆς διορίας τὸ πέρασ αὐτῶν παρατεῖναι. Καὶ δὴ μεμάθηκεν ὁ παῖς ἅπερ οὐδεὶς ἕτερος μνηθῆναι δύναται.

6 Πρὸ γοῦν μιᾶς ἡμέρας τοῦ ἐμπροθέσμου καιροῦ ἐμνηύθη τῷ φιλοσόφῳ παρὰ τοῦ βασιλέως λέγοντος· “Τί

words exchanged by both parties, the philosopher set before Cyrus a contract in which it was stipulated that the boy, having been completely educated, would be returned by Syntipas to the king after six months and two hours; but if what he contracted to do was prolonged beyond this prescribed time, Syntipas would be subject to beheading.

And so, on these terms the king placed his son in the hands of the philosopher, and Syntipas received the king's son from his father's hands and led him off to his own house. First of all, he constructed a new, very spacious room for him, and when he had beautifully painted the interior and made it a brilliant white, he immediately sketched on the walls of the room everything that he intended to teach the young man. After this, Syntipas said to him, “You must spend all your time and life in this room, my young man, until you have thoroughly learned everything I have sketched on its walls.” And then the philosopher sat down with the boy, and by spending all his time with him there, he taught him what he had written. (Their food and drink were sent in by the king.) After thus devoting a great deal of attention to the boy until the six months (and no more) had passed, he completed his instruction in such a way that he did not prolong its conclusion a single hour beyond the deadline. And indeed, the boy had learned what no one else was able to learn.

Now on the day before the appointed time, the king sent a message to the philosopher, asking, “What is the result of

ἄρα τῶν ὑποσχεθέντων παρά σοί ἐστιν;” Ὁ δὲ ἀντιμηνύει τῷ βασιλεῖ ὡς· “Εἴ τί σοι ποθητὸν καὶ θυμῆρες καθέστηκεν, ὦ κράτιστε βασιλεῦ· αὔριον γὰρ τὸν παῖδα ἐνέγκω σοι ὥρα τῆς ἡμέρας δευτέρα καὶ ὄψει αὐτὸν ὡς ἐθέλει καὶ ἰμείρεται τὸ κράτος σου.” Ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς ἐπὶ τῇ ἀγγελίᾳ εὐθυμος λίαν καὶ περιχαρῆς καὶ εὐελπὶς γίνεται. Λέγει οὖν πρὸς τὸν νέον ὁ φιλόσοφος· “Ἐδοξέ μοι ταύτῃ τῇ νυκτὶ συζήτησιν ποιῆσαι τῆς ἀποκειμένης τῇ γενέσει σου τύχης καὶ περὶ ταύτης ἀκριβῶς ἀστρολογῆσαι, ὡς ἂν εἴ ἔστιν σοι συμφέρον, οὕτως τῷ πατρὶ σου παρ’ ἐμοῦ προσαχθήσῃ αὔριον.” Τὴν οὖν τοιαύτην ἀστρολογικὴν συζήτησιν ὁ φιλόσοφος ποιησάμενος ἔγνω ἐσύτερον ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν συμφέρον προσαχθῆναι τῷ βασιλεῖ τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ, εἰ μὴ ἄλλαι ἐπτὰ ἡμέραι μετὰ τὸν ὀρισθέντα παρ’ αὐτοῦ τοῦ φιλοσόφου καιρὸν τῷ παιδί ἀναλωθῶσιν· εἰ γὰρ μὴ κάκεινα παρέλθωσι, κίνδυνος περὶ τὸ ζῆν τῷ παιδίῳ προσγενήσεται.

7 Ταῦτα γούν τῇ νυκτὶ μετὰ τὴν ἀστρολογικὴν συζήτησιν ὁ φιλόσοφος κατανοήσας συνεχύθη τῇ λύπῃ. Ἰδὼν δὲ αὐτὸν ὁ τοῦ βασιλέως υἱὸς οὕτω δεινῶς ἀθυμοῦντα ἐπηρώτα λέγων· “Ἰνα τί οὕτω στυγνὸς καὶ κατηφής, ὦ διδάσκαλε, κατέστης;” Ὁ δὲ Συντίπας τὴν αἰτίαν δεδήλωκε τῷ παιδί. Καί φησιν ὁ παῖς πρὸς αὐτόν· “Εἴ ἄρα σοι ἄρεστόν ἐστι καὶ προστάτεις μοι, οὐδὲ παρ’ ὄλον ἔτερον μῆνα τῷ βασιλεῖ ὅπως οὖν προσφθέξομαι, ἀλλ’ ἐφ’ ὅσον βούλη καιρὸν σιωπῶν ἔσομαι.” Ὁ δὲ φιλόσοφος πρὸς αὐτόν, “Ἀλλὰ τῷ πατρὶ σου,” ἔφη, “συνθήκας ἐποιησάμην, ἃς ἀδύνατόν ἐστι παραβῆναί με τὸ σύνολον· συνεθέμην γὰρ

your promises?” And Syntipas sent this message in reply to the king: “The very thing that you were longing for and that would please you, most powerful king. For tomorrow at the second hour of the day I shall bring your child to you, and you will see him as your majesty wishes and desires.” When he received this reply, the king became very cheerful, exceedingly happy, and full of hope. Then the philosopher said to the young man, “I have decided that tonight I will inquire about the fortune that lies in store for you based on your horoscope. I will consult the stars carefully about this, so that I may deliver you to your father tomorrow, if it is advantageous for you.” But then, when the philosopher made his astrological consultation, he learned that it was not advantageous for the son to be delivered to the king, unless the boy spent another seven days beyond the time that had been fixed by the philosopher himself. For if those days did not also pass, the boy’s life would be in danger.

Now on that same night, after his astrological consulta- 7 tion, the philosopher realized his situation and was overcome by sorrow. When the king’s son observed how terribly despondent Syntipas was, he asked him, “Why are you so gloomy and downcast, my teacher?” Syntipas revealed the reason to the boy, who replied to him, “If you like and you tell me to, I will not speak to the king at all for another whole month, but will keep silent for however long you wish.” And the philosopher replied to him, “But I have made a contract with your father, which is absolutely impossible

# Animal Fables of the Courtly Mediterranean

*The Eugenic Recension of Stephanites and Ichnelates*

EDITED AND TRANSLATED BY ALISON NOBLE WITH  
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STEPHANITES AND ICHNELATES



EDITED AND TRANSLATED BY  
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