**Thrasyleon: Man or Bear?**

**Transformations through *eo* in Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses***

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**1. Ovid, *Metamorphoses* I.1**

In nova fert animus mutatas dicere formas / corpora.

My spirit is moved to tell about forms changed into new bodies.

**Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* I.1**

At ego tibi sermone isto Milesio varias fabulas conseram, . . . *figuras fortunasque hominum in alias imagines conversas et in se rursum mutuo nexu refectas* ut mireris.

But I would like to join together different sorts of tales for you in that Milesian style . . . so that you may marvel at *men’s forms and fortunes transformed into other shapes and then restored again* in an interwoven knot.

**2. Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* IV.14**

unus e numero nostro, non qui corporis adeo, sed animi robore ceteris antistaret, atque is in primis voluntarius, pelle illa contectus ursae **subiret** effigiem, domumque Democharis illatus per opportuna noctis silentia nobis ianuae faciles praestaret aditus.

One of our number, who should surpass the rest in strength of mind even more than of body, and above all be a volunteer, was to **take on** the likeness of a bear, concealed in that skin; after he had been brought into Demochares’ house, he was to provide us with an easy entrance through the door by the opportune still of night.

**3. *Metamorphoses* IV.15**

Quorum prae ceteris Thrasyleon factionis optione delectus ancipitis machinae **subivit** aleam, iamque habili corio et mollitie tractabili vultu sereno sese recondit . . . Ad ipsum confinum gulae, qua cervix bestiae fuerat exsecta, Thrasyleonis caput **subire** cogimus, parvis respiratui circa nares et oculos datis foraminibus, *fortissimum socium nostrum* *prorsus bestiam* *factum* immittimus caveae modico praedestinatae pretio.

By the troop’s choice Thrasyleon, selected over the others, **undertook** the risk of this dangerous scheme. With a cheerful face he concealed himself inside the skin, now fitting easily with pliant softness. . . . We forced Thrasyleon’s head **to go** toward the edge of the throat where the neck of the beast was cut out, having given him some small holes around his nose and eyes for breathing, and sent *our steadfast companion* – *made entirely a beast* – into a cage, provided beforehand for a cheap price.

**4. *Metamorphoses* IV.20**

Tunc ego sensim, gliscente adhuc illo tumultu, retrogradi fuga domo facesso, sed plane Thrasyleonem mire canibus repugnantem latens pone ianuam ipse prospicio. Quamquam enim vitae metas ultimas **obiret**, non tamen sui nostrique vel pristinae virtutis oblitus, iam faucibus ipsis hiantis Cerberi reluctabat.

While that uproar was still swelling, I slowly went away from the house in a backward escape. But I, hiding behind the door, clearly caught sight of Thrasyleon remarkably defending himself against the dogs. Although he **was near to** the very last limits of his life, yet not having forgotten himself or us or his former courage, he fought back now against the gaping jaws of Cerberus himself.

**5. *Metamorphoses* IV.21**

Tanto tamen terrore tantaque formidine coetum illum turbaverat, ut usque diluculum, immo et in multum diem nemo quisquam fuerit ausus, quamvis iacentem, bestiam vel digito contingere, nisi tandem pigre ac timide quidam lanius paulo fidentior, utero bestiae resecto*, ursae magnificum despoliavit latronem*.

He had thrown that crowd into so great a terror and such a fright that until dawn – rather, even until full daylight – no one dared to touch the beast even with his finger, lying still as he was, until finally, slowly and timidly, a certain butcher, a little braver, *stripped the magnificent robber of his bearskin* after cutting open the belly of the beast.

**6. *Metamorphoses* IV.21**

Sic etiam Thrasyleon nobis **perivit**, sed a gloria non **perivit**.

So Thrasyleon too **was lost** to us, but not **lost** from glory.

**7. *Metamorphoses* IV.21**

Enimvero Thrasyleon, egregium decus nostrae factionis, tandem *immortalitate digno illo spiritu* expugnato magis quam patientia, neque clamore ac ne ululatu quidem fidem sacramenti prodidit, sed iam morsibus laceratus ferroque laniatus, obnixo mugitu et ferino fremitu praesentem casum generoso vigore tolerans *gloriam sibi reservavit, vitam fato reddidit*.

Indeed, Thrasyleon, the excellent honor of our band, once *his* *spirit worthy of immortality* was subdued more than his endurance, did not betray the trust of his allegiance either with a shout or even with a yell. But already mangled by teeth and mutilated by steel, with a resolute roar and a beastly growling, he bore his present plight with noble vigor. *He preserved glory for himself, although he gave up his life to fate.*

**8. *Metamorphoses* XI.21**

Nec tamen esse quemquam de suo numero tam perditae mentis vel immo destinatae mortis qui, non sibi quoque seorsum iubente domina, temerarium atque sacrilegum audeat ministerium **subire** noxamque letalem contrahere.

Besides, he said, there was no one among his number of priests of such depraved reason – or, rather, so determined to die – who would dare **to undertake** this office rashly and sacrilegiously and commit a fatal crime, unless otherwise ordered by the goddess.

**9. *Metamorphoses* XI.22**

Dixerat sacerdos, nec impatientia corrumpebatur obsequium meum, sed intentus miti quiete et probabili taciturnitate sedulum quot dies **obibam** culturae sacrorum ministerium.

The priest spoke thusly. My obedience was not tainted by impatience, but attentively, in placid calm and commendable silence, I **performed** my diligent ministry every day for the cultivation of the sacred rites.

**10. *Metamorphoses* XI.30**

inanimae protinus castimoniae iugum **subeo** et lege perpetua praescriptis illis decem diebus spontali sobrietate multiplicatis.

I immediately **submitted** to the yoke of abstinence from animal food, in my voluntary continence multiplying those ten days prescribed by everlasting law.

**11. *Metamorphoses* XI.30**

Rursus denique quaqua raso capillo collegii vetustissimi et sub illis Sullae temporibus conditi munia, non obumbrato vel obtecto calvitio, sed quoquoversus obvio, gaudens **obibam**.

Then, once more with my head completely shaved, neither covering up nor concealing my baldness but exposing it everywhere, I joyfully **entered into** the duties of that most ancient office, founded in the time of Sulla.

All translations of Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses* are adapted from J. Arthur Hanson, *Apuleius: Metamorphoses* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989).

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