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## RUSTICUS ES CORYDON

by Giorgio Brugnoli, University of Roma Tor Vergata

From Pétursson onwards it seems a fact we must reckon with that Virgil's verse from *Bucolics* II "Rusticus es Corydon: nec munera curat Alexis" ["You are a rude person, Corydon, and Alexis despises your rude gifts"], especially in its first hemistich, "Rusticus es Corydon", was used in the jargon of the Icelandic students as a scholastic quibble. This quibble, that was founded on some goliardic malice with a strong hint to the Corydon's homosexual intercourses with the *puer delicatus* Alexis, surely enjoyed a high degree of popularity among Icelandic ordinary people, and indeed, as Benediktsson pointed out, it is very likely that the Icelandic words "rusti" i.e. "rustic" and "dóni" i.e. "rude" came out of the Virgilian words "*rusticus*" and "*Corydon*".

The parodic use of this Virgilian text has in fact a very long story.

In my opinion, it was Martialis the first who used the Virgilian hemistich "Rusticus es" in the general sense of "You are a rude person", compare his *Apophoreta* 58:

# APHRONITRUM

Rusticus es? Nescis, quid Graeco nomine dicar:  
Spuma vocor nitri. Graecus es? Aphronitrum.

[Are you a rude person? You do not know why my name is Greek. My Latin name is "spuma nitri". If you were Greek, my name would be "Aphronitum"]

But the most important thing is that it was Egbert of Liege the first who definitely increased Martialis' pun in a scholastic form with high circulation, compare his *Fecunda ratis sive Liber de aenigmatibus rusticanis* (written about 1022-1024) 1,1526-1527 ed. Voigt:

Rusticus, ut Coridon, stupet in sermone disert, veste incompotus nulloque lepore facetus.

[A rude person, as was Corydon, so shabbily dressed he is and so unwitty in his speeches, is dumbfounded when a great orator is speaking]

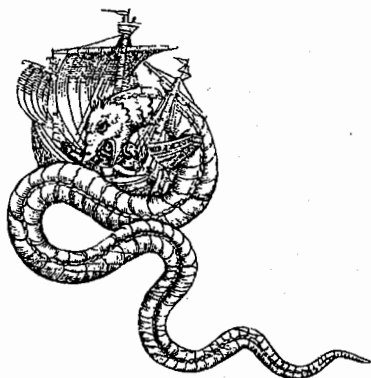
The parody of the Virgilian Corydon treated as a rude man is frequent in Egbert, see *Fecunda ratis* 1,673-674:

Pollinis et fumi sunt plena tuguria stulti, qualis erat Coridon et plurimus usque fatoclus.

[The stupid man, as was Corydon and all stupid people, live in a dusty and smoky hovel]

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## THE "GULO FILFROS" AND NARRATIVE FABLES.

### II: IN SEARCH OF THE TRUTH, BUT NOT SOO MUCH

by Anna Maranini, University of Bologna

#### 1. Old Sources in Ulisse Aldrovandi

The description of the strange animal called "Gulo", which lived in the cold lands of Northern Europe, and the legendary tale of its digestive habits were widely circulated through types of historico-geographical and naturalistic publications between 1517 and the end of the 16th century.

These works were essentially based on a feeding custom, as related from the time of Matthias of Miechow but popularized by Olao Magno in his *Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus*, which was handed down from century to century, ending up - according again to the tradition as narrated by Olao - in L. Oken's *Allgemeine Naturgeschichte für alle Stände*, Stuttgart 1838, p. 1520 (see A. Maranini, *The "Gulo filfros" and Narrative Fables. I: Some of Olao Magno's Imitators*, in «Classiconorroena» 4, 1994, pp. 4-12).

The strong editorial resonance of the work of this bishop from Upsala, who lived for a time in Italy, canonized the tale of the Gulo and acted as the intermediary for a tradition that was integratively preserved in its complexity and rich both in its contradictions and its original - while at the same time outlandishly symbolic - annotations.

One can discover this resonance also in Edward Topsell's *The History of Four-footed Beasts and Serpents* by C. Gesner, published in London in 1658, but with a first edition from 1608 (see also the reissue by W. Ley, New York, 1967), and in the naturalistic manual that popularized the tale, amplifying it with mythological, historical, literary, and cultural data - in the broadest sense of the term - namely, the one written by the Bolognese Ulisse Aldrovandi (1522-1605).

In Chapter XI of the first book of *De quadrupedibus digitatis viviparis* - one of the