

**ARISTOTLE'S CARP AS CLARETUS' BIRD COMOR?  
Tracing the origin of one medieval term\***

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**ABSTRACT**

The research of medieval reception of Aristotle's knowledge of zoology confirmed that on the way through the Arabic and Latin translation to mediaeval encyclopaedias Aristotle's treatises underwent both large and small alterations in both names and descriptions of animals. The meaning of these new names often remained unchanged; in other instances, however, medieval authors interpreted their models so incorrectly that they endowed the original animal not only with a new name but also with new features of appearance and patterns of behaviour. In the Arabic and Latin translation of Aristotle's treatise, the original information about the fertility of the carp remained basically unchanged, but given the phonetic differences between Greek, Arabic and Latin, the original Greek name κωπρίνος from the relevant passage of Aristotle was deformed to the form *kokonior* and others like it. While consulting Michael's translation, Thomas of Cantimpré did not comprehend that the animal that lays eggs several times a year was a fish, and he put it under an altered name *komor* to the book on birds and located it to Arabia. Thomas' term then appears in a slightly different form *comor* in Czech medieval sources.

**Keywords:** ancient and medieval zoology; medieval Latin lexicography; Aristotle; Aristoteles Latinus; Michael Scotus; Thomas of Cantimpré; Bartholomaeus de Solencia dictus Claretus; carp; *komor*

Among the sources of Latin zoological terms recorded and explained by *The Dictionary of Medieval Latin in Czech Lands*, glossaries by the 14th-century Czech lexicographer Bartholomaeus of Chlumec, also called Claretus, are very important. The author collected the names of animals mainly from the encyclopaedia *De natura rerum* written by the 13th-century preacher Thomas of Cantimpré, but was inspired by other texts as well, including the

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work of Albert the Great, who used Thomas' text as the main source for books XXI–XXVI of his treatise *De animalibus*. Apart from more or less well-known names of birds, fishes, quadrupeds, reptiles and insects, many of which are attested already in the classical Latin and whose origins and meanings have been described in detail by modern scholars,<sup>1</sup> it is possible to find in Claretus unusual animal names, that are partially or totally unexplained; nor have the Czech glosses, appended to these names by Claretus, been of much help, because many of them are as enigmatic as their Latin counterparts.

To these yet undeciphered Latin terms belongs the name *comor*, used in Claretus' *Glossary* in a chapter dealing with field birds (*De volatilibus campestribus*), where it appears in the pair *comor ozwecz*.<sup>2</sup> This term was included in the *Dictionary of Medieval Latin in Czech Lands* with a question mark and vaguely defined on the basis of Claretus' chapter as "some bird".<sup>3</sup> We have some notion of the kind of bird on Claretus' mind thanks to the Czech equivalent, the meaning of which is rather easy to understand compared with Claretus' other translations. *The Dictionary of Old Czech* derives the name *ozwecz* from the verb *ozývati sě*, "to sound", and defines the animal as "a calling bird (calling a flock together by its sound)" and offers a hypothesis that the Latin *comor* could have perhaps been formed by a shortening of a noun *convocator*, "the one who calls together". The Bohemist Emanuel Michálek, in a passage dealing with word formation by shortening, notes the appearance of the same Old Czech equivalent of Latin *comor* in the *Liber viginti arcium* by Paulerinus, a Czech author of the 15th century, where both words introduce a chapter on some forest songbird.<sup>4</sup> But there is not a mention in Paulerinus' description about a "calling a flock together", and consequently it seems to me rather bold to deduce the formation of *comor* from *convocator* only on the basis of the characteristics *avis cantus sonorusi*, "a bird that sings loudly". I think that Claretus did not create the word, but rather adopted it from some older text.

An almost identical Latin term is found in the encyclopaedia by Thomas of Cantimpré. In his fifth book, Thomas describes a certain Arabian bird named *komor* which is exceptionally prolific, for it breeds five or six times a year. According to the author, a frequent clutch is common among the pigeons, hens and other domestic birds, but not among wild birds. What is remarkable is not only the fact that the Arabian bird lays eggs so often, but also that it needs special circumstances for its breeding, namely an appearance of certain stars that positively influence its fecundity.

De komor. Komor avis est Arabie, ut dicit Aristotiles, et est avis optime pullificationis inter omnia genera avium silvestrium. Quinquies enim in anno vel sexies ovat et pullos facit, et hoc nulla avium silvestrium facit preter istam. Aves vero, que in domibus manent, sicut columbe aut galline, sepius ovant. Igitur in komor ave hoc satis mirabile perpenditur, quod

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<sup>1</sup> From the rich literature on ancient zoology see especially these basic handbooks on the study of Greek and Latin animal names: Keller (1909–1913); Thompson (1936 and 1947); Cotte (1944); de Saint-Denis (1947); André (1967); Leitner (1972); Capponi (1979); Beavis (1988); Kitchell (2014).

<sup>2</sup> Claretus, *Gloss.* 296.

<sup>3</sup> *LB* (I, 793, s. v. \**comor*).

<sup>4</sup> *StĕS* (II, 1073, s. v. *ozvec*); Michálek (1989: 28); Paulerinus, *Liber vig. arc.* 186: <C>*omor* (in mg. add.: *ozwecz*) *est avis ad magnitudinem passeris, habens nasum, ac si esset truncatus, raro reperibilis. Et est avis silvana et cantus aequaliter sonorusi, colligit suum pastum ex arboribus.*

de facili non ovat, antequam appareant quedam stelle in firmamento, que medio tempore reconduntur. Et harum stellarum apparitio dicte avi virtutem tribuunt fecundandi.<sup>5</sup>

Thomas' description of an unknown prolific bird attracted the attention of Albert the Great and Jacob van Maerlant, with the result that they used it in their treatises, and it is possible that Claretus was also influenced by Thomas' text.<sup>6</sup> But whence did Thomas' description come and what bird is called *komor*?

A possible solution is offered by the editor of Albert's work *De animalibus* Hermann Stadler, who points out<sup>7</sup> that the presentation of the bird *komor* (*komer* in Albert the Great) is similar to the passage of Aristotle's treatise *Historia animalium* that under a name κυπρίνος describes a fish that lays eggs five or six times a year, especially when certain constellations appear in the sky:

Τίκτουσι δ' ἐν τῇ καθηκούσῃ ὥρᾳ κυπρίνος μὲν πεντάκις ἢ ἑξάκις (ποιεῖται δὲ τὸν τόκον μάλιστα ἐπὶ τοῖς ἄστροις), χαλκίς δὲ τίκτει τρίς...<sup>8</sup>

The passage probably concerns the common carp (*Cyprinus carpio* Linné) that actually does breed several times a year.<sup>9</sup> Apart from the *Dictionary of Medieval Latin in Czech Lands*, the word *komor* (*komer*, *comor*) has not appeared in any Medieval Latin dictionary, but a certain clue can be obtained by the way this bird name was handled by the translators of Albert's treatise *De animalibus*. In a note to his 1987 translation, J. J. Scanlan calls attention to Aristotle's passage on the carp, voicing his opinion that the word *komer* originated from the Greek name κυπρίνος, grossly distorted. The authors of the 1999 translation K. F. Kitchell and I. M. Resnick note that Scanlan ponders a possible connection with the Aristotle passage and add a reference to the similar name and description at Thomas of Cantimpré.<sup>10</sup> I found no similar passage in Aristotle's treatise, so there is no other solution but to work on the assumption made by Hermann Stadler and accepted by other scholars who studied Albert's text. Is it possible to go further and to explain how the Greek name κυπρίνος was changed into the Medieval Latin *komor*, and the reason why Thomas of Cantimpré uses the word not in reference to a fish, but to a bird?

The lore of Greek zoologists reached the Middle Ages in two ways. The first means of transmission was via the Roman polyhistor Pliny the Elder, who devoted several books of his encyclopaedia *Naturalis historia* to the animals and who was the source of the twelfth book of the *Etymologiae* by Isidore of Seville. Pliny the Elder did not skip over the passage of Aristotle, but he was not overly interested by its wording, so he shortened it to a simple note stating that the carp breeds five or six times a year.<sup>11</sup> He put the Latin loan-word *cyprinus* in his ninth book, dealing with fishes and other sea creatures, so it is improbable that this

<sup>5</sup> Thomas of Cantimpré, *De nat.* V, 72.

<sup>6</sup> Albert the Great, *De animal.* XXIII, 124: *komer* (for the text, see below, n. 22); Jacob van Maerlant, *Der naturen Bloeme*, vv. 7107–7120: *komor*.

<sup>7</sup> Stadler (1920: 1501).

<sup>8</sup> Arist., *Hist. animal.* VI, 14, 568a16–19.

<sup>9</sup> Thompson (1947: 135–136).

<sup>10</sup> Scanlan (1987: 301, n. 124.2); Kitchell, Resnick (1999: 1634, n. 403).

<sup>11</sup> Plin., *Nat.* IX, 162: *cyprini sexies* (i.e. *pariunt*). The name of *cyprinus* appears in the Middle Ages in a very short note by Vincent of Beauvais, *Spec. nat.* XVII, 146, in the chapter *De temporibus ovandi et pullificandi*; Vincent claims that the fish breeds three times a year.

name and Pliny's short note would influence Thomas of Cantimpré's description of the bird *comor*. Furthermore, Pliny leaves out the detail about the stars' influence on the breeding of this animal – just the important feature of Thomas' description. It is thus necessary to explore the other way by which the passage of Aristotle could have reached Medieval Latin texts.

Aristotle's zoological treatises *Historia animalium*, *De partibus animalium* and *De generatione animalium* became known to medieval authors during the 13th century, when two independent Latin translations were made. In the 1260s, the treatises were translated from Greek into Latin by William of Moerbeke. But Thomas of Cantimpré, Albert the Great and other medieval encyclopaedists, who had all written their treatises several decades earlier, were using the translation from the Arabic, made c. 1220 by Michael Scotus.<sup>12</sup> Because of the different phonetics of Greek, Arabic and Latin, and further because of faulty readings of the Arabic script and errors during the copying of the Latin text, smaller and greater changes were occurring not only in Aristotelian descriptions, but also in animal names, especially in cases of names simply transcribed from Arabic to Latin.<sup>13</sup>

The passage concerning the frequent breeding of the carp, however, was not gravely affected by changes, and Michael's version mirrors Aristotle's description quite accurately.<sup>14</sup> The name of the fish was not so fortunate; it was first transcribed in Arabic and then into Latin, and substantial phonetic changes took place during the process. In the passage describing the carp's fertility we find in place of the Greek term *κυπρίνος* the readings *kokonior*, *kokonioz* and *kemoi*,<sup>15</sup> there are many different Latin variants in other passages.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>12</sup> A part of Michael Scotus' translation was published by Benedikt Konrad Vollmann (Aristoteles Latinus, *De animal*). The critical edition of books I–X (= *Historia animalium*) is being prepared by Aafke M. I. van Oppenraay in the Aristoteles Semitico-Latinus Series, who has as yet published the books XI–XIV (= *De partibus animalium*) and the books XV–XIX (= *De generatione animalium*).

<sup>13</sup> Some Medieval Latin names of animals found in Michael's translation in place of Aristotle's original terms suggest that he must have been mistaking the Arab letters *fā* and *qāf* (the shapes of which differ only slightly) or letters *bā*, *nūn*, *thā* and *tā* which differ only in the number of dots above or below the same sign. This is probably the origin of the sea monsters' names *barcora* (originally Greek πορφύρα, "the purple dye murex") and *koki* (originally Greek φύκη, "the seal"), the bird names *fatocor* (originally Greek κόττυφος, "the blackbird") and *kini* (originally Greek φήνη, "the bearded vulture"), the fish names *akaleki* (originally Greek ἀκαλήφη, "the sea anemone") and *abereni* (originally Greek ἀθερίνη, "the sand smelt"), the quadruped name *lamiekuz* (originally Greek λάταξ, "the beaver"), and others. For some of these Medieval Latin names see in more detail Šedinová (2008: 324–325 and 330–331; 2012: 410–411; 2013a: 223–235). About the preparation of the critical edition of Michael Scotus' translation see van Oppenraay (especially 1999; 2009a; 2009b; 2012).

<sup>14</sup> Aristoteles Latinus, *De animal*. VI, 568a15 (ed. Vollmann, p. 96): *Et animal, quod dicitur kokoneoz, ova<t> quinquies aut septies in anno et pullificat in maiori parte apud aparitiones stellarum*. For the name of the animal see following note.

<sup>15</sup> For her edition of Scotus' translation of *De animalibus* Dr van Oppenraay collected seven manuscripts, one of which (Vaticanus Chigi E.VIII.251, siglum A) is known to be very close to Scotus' autograph. As Dr van Oppenraay wrote me, according to the forthcoming edition of *De animalibus* I–X (= *Historia animalium*) readings of the manuscripts in VI, 568a15, are as follows: *kokonior* (ACD<sup>1</sup>HW), *kokonioz* (BD<sup>2</sup>) and *kemoi* (E).

<sup>16</sup> Arist., *Hist. animal*. IV, 11, 538a15 (κυπρίνος); VI, 14, 568b26 (κυπρίνος); VIII, 10, 602b24 (κυπρίνος); according to the forthcoming edition of *De animalibus* I–X (= *Historia animalium*) prepared by Dr van Oppenraay, readings of the manuscripts in IV, 538a14, are as follows: *kiroz* (ABCD<sup>2</sup>), *kiroc* (D<sup>1</sup>), *recoh* (EW), *leveh* (H), *lenoh* (W); in VI, 568b26: *kokoneoz* (ABCD<sup>1</sup>W), *kokonioz* (D<sup>2</sup>), *keconeoz* (E), *kokoneor* (H); in VIII, 602b24: *kokonioz* (ABC), *coconioz* (D), *kokenioz* (E), *coconiez* (HW).

Aristotle mentioned the carp also in his *De partibus animalium*.<sup>17</sup> The Latin translation of this treatise, also done by Michael Scotus, has already appeared in a critical edition supplied with Latin-Arabic-Greek indexes. In the Arabic version, the carp's name has the form *q-w-b-r-n-y*.<sup>18</sup> It is thus evident that the Greek word (pl. κυπρίνοι) was simply transcribed to Arabic with the letter π transcribed with the consonant *bā* (Arabic lacks the phone *p*), the vowel *υ* was replaced by the semivowel *wāw* (which can be read as *ū*) and the diphthong *οι* was transcribed with the semivowel *yā* (which can be read as *ī*). This Arabic word was in turn transcribed by Michael Scotus, who supplemented Latin vowels at his own discretion: apart from the variant *kobri* (which was adopted) the editor Aafke van Oppenraay notes variants *kebri* and *koki* in the apparatus.<sup>19</sup> The variant *kobri* indicates that the Latin translator transcribed the Arabic semivowel *wāw* with the Latin vowel *o* (as he did on other occasions as well), missed the letter *nūn* and transcribed the final semivowel *yā* with the Latin vowel *i* (this, too, is common for him).<sup>20</sup>

Further deformation of the animal's name to the form *komor* is attested in the work of Thomas of Cantimpré. Someone probably misread the form *kokonior* as *kokomor*, which was subsequently shortened to *komor*. Such a marked difference between Michael and Thomas is not unusual. Thomas of Cantimpré borrowed some of Michael's terms without change (e. g., *koki* > *koki*); on other occasions the form of the name we find in copies of Thomas' encyclopaedia differs slightly, but the similarity remains visible (e. g., *khilon* > *chilon*). Sometimes, however, a greater deformation took place, such, that it is difficult to connect Thomas' term with the name given by Michael Scotus without a textual analysis (e. g., *akaleki* > *kylok*).<sup>21</sup>

Thomas of Cantimpré was not the only one who worked with Michael's translation. We find the Aristotle passage in two places in the treatise *De animalibus* by Albert the Great. In his twenty-third book, which treats the topic of birds, and is modelled after the work of Thomas of Cantimpré, Albert mentions the fertile bird in the form of *komer* and reproduces Thomas' text, although he reduces it to a single sentence – the notice of the bird's fertility.<sup>22</sup> In his sixth book, which is not based on Thomas and comments directly on Michael's Latin translation of Aristotle, Albert gives the name of the animal in the form *kokomoz*, classifies the animal among aquatic creatures and elaborates on Aristotle's finding that the carp breeds especially at the time when certain stars shine in the sky.<sup>23</sup> It is obvious

<sup>17</sup> Arist., *Part. animal.* II, 17, 660b36: οἱ καλούμενοι κυπρίνοι.

<sup>18</sup> Van Oppenraay (1998b: 444, s. v. *kobri*).

<sup>19</sup> Aristotle, *De animal.* XII, 660b36 (ed. van Oppenraay, translation and apparatus on p. 89).

<sup>20</sup> The transcription of vowels in the name (i.e., *qwbri* > *kobri*) is in accordance, for instance, with the transcription of vowels in the name of the seal (Greek φώκη): Arabic *fwky* > Latin *koki*.

<sup>21</sup> For an analysis of Thomas' name *kylok* (*kiloka* at Claretus) see Šedinová (2013a: 227–234). See further Michael's name *hahanie*, which has the form *ahune* in Boese's edition of Thomas' encyclopaedia (Thomas of Cantimpré, *De nat.* VI, 3), while in the manuscript XIV A 15 in Prague National Library we find variants *hahune* and *achime*; see Šedinová (2008: 316 and 321–324).

<sup>22</sup> Albert the Great, *De animal.* XXIII, 124: *Komer avis est, quae in anno quinquies vel sexies pullificat et nutrit.*

<sup>23</sup> Albert the Great, *De animal.* VI, 77 (cf. Aristoteles Latinus, *De animal.* VI, 568a15 [ed. Vollmann, p. 96]): *Animal autem aquaticum, quod kokomoz dicitur, quinquies aut sexies in anno ovat et pullificat in maiori parte apud apparitiones stellarum diversarum, quae in mutatione sex signorum aquiloniarum desub radiis solis emergunt.* Albert also adapted Michael's translation of other Aristotelian passages dealing with the carp, see Albert the Great, *De animal.* IV, 105: *kyroz* (cf. Aristoteles Latinus, *De animal.* IV, 538a14 [ed. Vollmann, p. 72]); VI, 78: *kokomoz* (cf. Aristoteles Latinus, *De animal.* VI, 568b18

that Albert did not connect the fish name in this passage (and its variants elsewhere in Michael's translation) with the almost identical text he found in Thomas' book on birds under the name *komor*, given that he described with similar words first a fish (rightly), and then a bird (wrongly). This marks the end of the way of Michael's and Albert's Medieval Latin variants of the word *κυπρίνος* as a fish name. Thereafter the carp was denoted by the name *carpo* (alternatively *carpera*) and medieval authors give other information unrelated to its fertility.<sup>24</sup> On the other hand, the name *komor* denoting the bird was destined to have a long life, for medieval encyclopaedists and lexicographers passed it on, one to another, until the end of the Middle Ages.

But how should we explain the erroneous ranking of the animal among creatures of a completely different class? The error is probably due to the fact that Michael Scotus did not call the described creature *piscis*, but used the word *animal*.<sup>25</sup> Although the whole chapter that includes the relevant passage of Aristotle concerns fishes and the name *piscis* appears often in preceding and following sentences, it probably did not occur to Thomas of Cantimpré that *animal* is meant generally as "an animal", including all quadrupeds, birds, fishes, snakes and insects, and he consequently classified *komor* as a bird. This is by no means a unique case. Another fish (Greek *ἀγρία*) was ranked by Thomas of Cantimpré among quadrupeds under the name of *ana* and described as a ferocious carnivore.<sup>26</sup> Here, too, Thomas was probably misled by the formulation of Michael Scotus, who termed the fish *animal*.<sup>27</sup>

Medieval illuminators of Thomas' encyclopaedia and that of its follower Jacob van Maerlant complied with Thomas' classification, though their artistic interpretations varied. Some hinted at the bird's fertility by painting it in its nest (fig. 1), without picturing the eggs laid or sat on by the bird. Others preferred to depict several eggs with the bird seated upon them, rather than the nest (fig. 2). Still others were captivated by the detail about direct connection between stars and the fertility of *komor*, so that they painted a nest full of birds staring at the sky with a bright star (fig. 3). Authors of some other surviving illuminations, however, did not form any specific idea and simply pictured a bird without any hint at its behaviour (fig. 4).<sup>28</sup>

[ed. Vollmann, p. 96]); VI, 79: *kokoz, kokonez* (cf. Aristoteles Latinus, *De animal*. VI, 568b22.26 [ed. Vollmann, p. 97]); VII, 102: *kokomos* (cf. Aristoteles Latinus, *De animal*. VII, 602b23 [ed. Vollmann, p. 121]); XII, 207: *kohery* (cf. Aristotle, *De animal*. XII, 660b36 [ed. van Oppenraay, p. 89]).

<sup>24</sup> Thomas of Cantimpré, *De nat*. VII, 23 (*carpo vel carpera*); Claretus, *Gloss*. 420: *carpo tyepal* (manuscript B: *czyepal*); Iohannes Aquensis, *Voc. Lact.*, fol. oo 2vb: *carpo, -onis, m. t. kapr*. In his chapter on the carp, Thomas of Cantimpré refers to the treatise *Liber rerum* which did not survive to the present day and from which Thomas also borrowed names of the quadrupeds *cricetus* and *hemtra* or the sea animals *rochen, helchus, zydrach* and *zytiron*. The name *carpo (carpera)* is related to Old High German *charpfo* and Middle High German *karpfe* which probably denoted the freshwater carp; Sanders (1978: 439).

<sup>25</sup> See note 14.

<sup>26</sup> Thomas of Cantimpré, *De nat*. IV, 9.

<sup>27</sup> Thomas committed more errors in taking over passages from Pliny the Elder's encyclopaedia and other sources. To name a few examples: under the name *locusta* he describes not only the locust (putting it in the book that deals with insects: IX, *De vermibus*), but also a quadruped of a size of the rabbit, supposedly eaten by John the Baptist in a desert (Thomas of Cantimpré, *De nat*. IV, 67); from the name of the sea nation of the Troglodytes he created a name of cattle *tragodite* (Thomas of Cantimpré, *De nat*. IV, 102), and from the name of the nation *Gedrosi* a name of a sea monster *zedrosi*; see Aiken (1947: 205–225); Šedinová (2013b: 223–235; 2015: 231–268).

<sup>28</sup> In addition from the cited illumination from the copy of Thomas' encyclopaedia currently located in Cracow, see also Prague National Library, MS XIV A 15, fol. 76va.

Let us now return to the *Glossary* by Claretus. Thanks to the studies of Bohumil Ryba and new results of research on Claretus' zoological names we know that Claretus adopted a good number of animal names from Thomas of Cantimpré's encyclopaedia;<sup>29</sup> it is therefore not out of the question that he found the Latin name *comor*, agreeing with Thomas' term *komor* (the substitution of the initial *k* with *c* is not uncommon in medieval manuscripts),<sup>30</sup> in a copy of Thomas' encyclopaedia. Doubts about this being the case are raised by the Czech equivalent *ozwecz*. If Claretus indeed drew on Thomas, there should be some hint of the singing of the animal *komor* that would have inspired the form of the Czech term. Many Czech equivalents appearing in Claretus were created in this way: for instance, the Czech name in the pair *beznoha dariaca* is related to the note that the bird does not have legs (cf. the Czech preposition *bez*, "without", and the noun *noha*, "leg") and for this reason moves forward on the ground with the help of its chest, beak and wings;<sup>31</sup> the Czech name in the pair *wletnye Pegasus* mirrors the description of terrible Ethiopian horse with wings greater than the eagle (cf. the Czech verb *letět*, "to fly");<sup>32</sup> and the Czech name in the pair *aspis hlus<e>cz* corresponds to the description of the snake that defends itself from the charmers by covering one of its ears with its tail and pressing the other one to the ground, so that it do not hear the voice of the man uttering the incantation (cf. the Czech adjective *hluchý*, "deaf").<sup>33</sup> But there is not a single word in Thomas' entry *komor* about a song or a sound, nor do the medieval illuminators depict the bird singing, but rather fulfilling its parental role.

However, creating Czech animal names based on their looks and behaviour is not a rule for Claretus. There are other names borrowed from Thomas' encyclopaedia to which Claretus appended a Czech equivalent lacking any connection to Thomas' descriptions, but rather influenced by the form of the Latin term. For example, the Czech name *twrdopal* (cf. the Czech adjective *tvrdý*, "hard") is coupled with Latin *duranus*, although there is no connection with the word *durus*, "hard", in Thomas' description of the quadruped *duran*.<sup>34</sup> Similarly, with regard to the pair *dobranyk banochus* (cf. the Czech adjective *dobry*, "bonus"), we do not find in Thomas' exposition of the appearance and behaviour of a quadruped called *bonachum* any mention of the word *bonus*, "good", disregarding the fact that Thomas in his allegory assimilates good priests to the bird.<sup>35</sup> This way of creating Czech equivalents is not uncommon in Claretus, so it cannot be ruled out that he proceeded in the same way in the

<sup>29</sup> See esp. Ryba (1940 and 1942) and Šedinová (2005).

<sup>30</sup> See, e.g., *karkolaz > carbolasia; kalaoz > calazo; karabo > carabo*; Thomas of Cantimpré, *De nat.* V, 71; VII, 42; VI, 31; Claretus, *Gloss.* 290; 421; 444.

<sup>31</sup> Thomas of Cantimpré, *De nat.* V, 42: *Dariata... Pedibus caret, pectore, rostro et alis in rependo utens*; Claretus, *Gloss.* 258. Similarly, Iohannes Aquensis, *Voc. Lact.*, fol. oo 5ra, who created a Czech name *beznožka* to match Latin <d>*ariaca*.

<sup>32</sup> Thomas of Cantimpré, *De nat.* IV, 89: *Pegasus ... animal magnum et horrendum est in Ethiopia. Equi formam habet, alas ut aquila sed multo maiores...*; Claretus, *Gloss.* 456.

<sup>33</sup> Thomas of Cantimpré, *De nat.* VIII, 2: *Aspis ... naturaliter cauta est contra incantatorem. Nam ubi venefici sapientis incantationes perceperit, cauda sua unam aurem obturat, reliquam vero ad terram premit, ne incantantis vocem exaudiat*; Claretus, *Gloss.* 562. Similarly Iohannes Aquensis, *Voc. Lact.*, fol. oo 5ra, who created a Czech name *hluchy had* to match Latin *aspis*.

<sup>34</sup> See Thomas of Cantimpré, *De nat.* IV, 31 (*duran*), according to whom this animal (the description of which corresponds with Aristotle's presentation of a bison) defends itself when hunted by hurling its stinking faeces at dogs; Claretus, *Gloss.* 536. The origin of the name *duran* is not known yet.

<sup>35</sup> Thomas of Cantimpré, *De nat.* IV, 11; Claretus, *Gloss.* 546. The name *bonachum* stems from Greek βόνακος, "the bison", without any relationship with Latin *bonus*.

case of the bird *comor*: in creating Czech *ozwecz*, he could have thought of the substantive *canor*, “a sound”, *sonor*, “a song”, or the adjectives *canorus* and *sonorus*, “sonorous”.

The research of medieval reception of Aristotle’s knowledge of zoology confirmed that on the way through the Arabic and Latin translation to mediaeval encyclopaedias Aristotle’s treatises underwent both large and small alterations in both names and descriptions of animals. Nevertheless, the meaning of these new names which were created by a translation or transcription of the Greek term into Arabic and then into Latin, often remained unchanged and the medieval variants consequently denote the same animal that was described by Aristotle. In other instances, however, medieval authors interpreted their models so incorrectly that they endowed the original animal not only with a new name but also with new features of appearance and patterns of behaviour. Errors in adopting Aristotle’s expositions were committed already by Roman authors, but the responsibility for most of them lies with Michael Scotus and Thomas of Cantimpré. The translator of Aristotle’s treatise created some new words with transcriptions that failed to match original Greek terms not because of different phonologies of Greek, Arabic and Latin, but because of an erroneous reading of the Arabic text. For his part, Thomas of Cantimpré often did not understand Michael’s version of Aristotle’s text, to the extent of combining descriptions of two different animals or even moving the described creature to a completely different class.

Important changes also took place in the reception of Aristotle’s description of the carp, which reached the Middle Ages by two ways. Pliny the Elder briefly reproduced Aristotle’s note of the fish with Latin loan-word *cyprinus* which, however, appears only rarely in medieval texts; in the majority of medieval texts the carp is described under a term stemming from some vernacular language and medieval authors give other details about its appearance and behaviour than those known from the passage of Aristotle. In the Arabic and Latin translation of Aristotle’s treatise, the original information about the fertility of the fish remained basically unchanged, but given the phonetic differences between Greek, Arabic and Latin, the original Greek name *κυπρίνος* from the relevant passage of Aristotle was deformed to the form *kokonior*. While consulting Michael’s translation, Thomas of Cantimpré did not comprehend that the animal that lays eggs several times a year was a fish, and he put it under an altered name *komor* to the book on birds and located it to Arabia.

Thomas’ term then appears in a slightly different form *comor* in Czech medieval sources, where it probably denotes two different birds. Claretus borrowed it, as well as many other animal names, either directly from a copy of Thomas’ encyclopaedia, or from another medieval treatise closely related to Thomas. Despite the Czech equivalent *ozwecz*, created, I think, because of acoustic similarity of words *comor* and *canor*, Claretus had on his mind Thomas’ description of an unknown Arabian bird that breeds several times a year. Paulerinus, on the other hand, obviously used not just Thomas’ encyclopaedia (or a text dependent on it) and the *Glossary* by Claretus, but also another source unknown to us, and he preferred to ascribe the names of Claretus’ pair *comor ozwecz* to a completely different bird of passerine size that lives in the forest and “sings loudly” rather than to connect them with the description of Thomas’ bird breeding five or six times a year.



Figure 1. Komor. Prague, Archiv Pražského hradu, Metropolitní kapitula u sv. Víta, sign. L 11, fol. 106vb

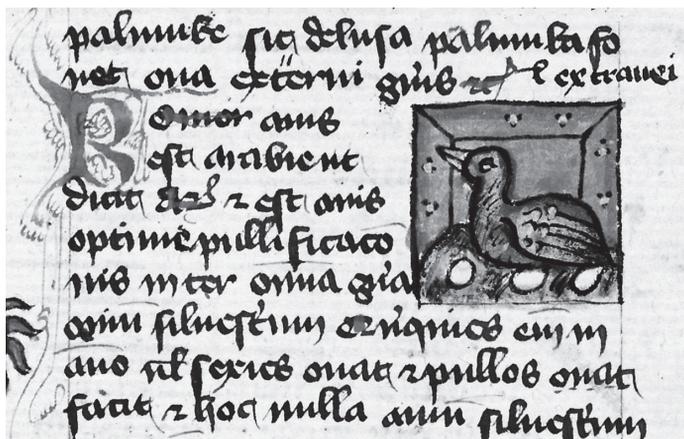


Figure 2. Komor. Prague, Národní knihovna, sign. X A 4, fol. 106rb



Figure 3. Komor. The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, sign. KA 16, fol. 92v



Figure 4. Komor. Cracow, Biblioteka Jagiellońska, sign. 794, fol. 128rb

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## ARISTOTELŮV KAPR JAKO KLARETŮV PTÁK *COMOR*? PÁTRÁNÍ PO PŮVODU JEDNOHO STŘEDOVĚKÉHO TERMÍNU

Shrnutí

Bádání nad recepcí Aristotelových zoologických poznatků ve středověku potvrdilo, že cestou přes arabský a latinský překlad Aristotelových spisů do středověkých encyklopedií došlo k větším či menším změnám v podobě jmen živočichů i v jejich popisech. Význam nových jmen se často nezměnil, jindy však středověcí autoři interpretovali text své předlohy natolik nesprávně, že obdařili původního živočicha nejen novým jménem, ale též novými rysy v jeho vzhledu a chování. Cestou přes arabský a latinský překlad Aristotelova díla zůstalo Aristotelovo původní sdělení o plodnosti kapra zachováno téměř beze změny, v důsledku fonetických odlišností mezi řečtinou, arabštinou a latinou však došlo v příslušné pasáži k deformaci původního řeckého jména κυπρίνος na podobu *kokonior* a další podobné varianty. Tomáš z Cantimpré pak při práci s Michaelovým překladem nepochopil, že tento živočich, který klade několikrát do roka vejce, je ryba, zařadil jej pod pozměněným jménem *komor* do knihy o ptácích a lokalizoval jej do Arábie. Tomášův termín se posléze objevuje jen v málo odlišné podobě *comor* v pramenech českého středověku.

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