Unpublished Pontic stories: Collected by R.W. Dawkins

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In the summer of 1914, having completed the preparation of his monumental work on the dialects and folklore of Cappadocia (Modern Greek in Asia Minor, Cambridge 1916), R. M. Dawkins set out on a field trip to Pontos. He had spent just over a month there collecting dialect and folklore material when he was forced to abandon his project by the outbreak of the First World War. «When I was caught up by the outbreak of the war in 1914,» he later reminisced, «I was beginning what I hoped to be a series of visits to Pontos for the purpose of a similar book on Pontic; it has always been a deep regret to me that this was made impossible».

The Dawkins archives at Oxford contain four notebooks that he kept during his visit to Pontos. Most of the pages are taken up with transcriptions of stories, which are interspersed with a large amount of linguistic material. It is clear from his later writings that at that time his interests lay more in ' philology' (in the English sense of the historical and comparative study of language) than in folklore, and that — as with his Modern Greek in Asia Minor — his collection of tales was primarily aimed at providing material for the study of traditional dialectal usage: the subject-matter of the Cappadocian tales in that book interested him so little at the time that he got his friend and mentor W. R. Halliday to contribute the chapter on subject-matter, and it is perhaps significant that the hand-written transcriptions and fair copies of his Pontos stories contain comparative references to Halliday's chapter. It was however his collections of stories from Cappadocia and Pontos that eventually fired his interest in Greek folktales, an interest that bore fruit in a number of articles and books, culminating in another monumental volume, Modern Greek Folk Tales.

1. Quoted from an unpublished memoir in the Dawkins archive, housed in the Taylor Institution Library, Oxford. For a general survey of Dawkins's career, see Peter Mackridge, «Some Pamphlets on Dead Greek Dialects': R. M. Dawkins and Modern Greek Dialectology», Annual of the British School at Athens, 85 (1990), pp. 201-212, particularly p. 206. I am grateful to the Rector and Fellows of Exeter College for granting me permission to publish material from the Dawkins archive.
(Oxford 1953). Sadly, however, in keeping with Dawkins’s characteristic reticence, his Pontic notebooks contain no comments on his personal experiences, nor even on the landscape, the appearance of the villages, their inhabitants, and their way of life, with the exception of the occasional tiny pencil-sketch of some implement or utensil to illustrate the meaning of a certain word.

Each of the four Pontic notebooks is devoted to one region of Pontos: Sourmena, Ophis, Sanda and Imera. From the dates given in the notebooks we can conclude that he arrived in the Sourmena region on 11 July 1914; on the 16th he left for the Ophis region, where he stayed until the 21st. There follows a gap of ten days during which it is impossible to follow his movements with certainty, though we can suppose that he spent this period at Trebizond. On 31 July he went to Sanda, where he stayed until 8 August, and the following day arrived in Imera, where he stayed until he had to leave abruptly on or after 14 August. From there he made his way—with considerable difficulty—via Trebizond to Athens.

The notebooks contain twenty-three stories from Sourmena, nine from Ophis, six from Sanda, and twenty-eight from Imera. Each story is numbered but not titled; in some cases titles have been added subsequently, either in the notebooks or on the fair copies. The stories vary significantly both in quality and in length. Some are traditional folktales, while others are humorous anecdotes. Some of the anecdotes are only a few lines in length, while most of the other tales are much longer: at least twenty pages in the case of two of the Sanda stories. He tried as far as possible to find young men to act as his informants, because he felt that youths who were not long out of childhood yet had not achieved the sophistication of adulthood were both the most faithful and the most competent practitioners of traditional storytelling, neither reproducing parrot-fashion what they had heard nor attempting to re-cast the stories in an excessively personal style. The Pontic notebooks contain not a single story told by a woman; likewise, of the Cappadocian stories in Modern Greek in Asia Minor, only one was taken down from a woman (with the addition of a second tale that involved the collaboration of a man and a woman). While five stories from Pharasa in Modern Greek in Asia Minor were told by a Moslem, Dawkins had no contact with Greek-speaking Moslems in Pontos.

Dawkins normally employed the following procedure in recording the Pontic folktales. Having found a suitable informant, he would write down the story in pencil on the left-hand pages of the notebook, and afterwards he would write out a fair copy in ink on the facing pages; for this he would, if possible, seek the assistance of either the teller of the tale or some other informant, who

would correct the transcription. In many cases, however, he was unable to make a fair copy until after his arrival in Athens, where he did not have Pontic-speakers to help him. At a later date (probably some years later) he wrote out a final fair copy of all the stories in traditional orthography. In the meantime he studied the texts of Pontic dialect plays as well as material in the Folklore Archive in Athens. The Dawkins archive also contains typewritten English translations of some of the stories (it may be that he translated them all, but that the rest of the translations were lost).

A number of the stories have been published. A selection of sixteen from Sourmena and seven from Ophis appeared in 'Αρχείον Πόντου in 1931 (vol. 3, pp. 79-122); one from Sanda and four from Imera appeared in various issues of Ποντιακή 'Εστία in 1951; while another one from Imera appeared as early as 1923 in Λαογραφία (vol. 7, pp. 285-291). A further two Imera stories were published in English translation (see below). Some of the published stories, together with some of those never published, are referred to by Dawkins in various articles on Greek folktales, and particularly in Modern Greek Folk Tales; it is curious, however, that of the Pontic tales that appear in that book he included only those that had already been published in Greek, as if he had forgotten about the existence of the rest. As for the reason why Dawkins published a greater proportion of his Sourmena and Ophis stories than of those from the other places, it may be that he felt attracted by the particularly archaic dialect of these two areas. It may also be that Sourmena and Ophis were rather inadequately represented in the corpus of published stories from Pontos: it is indicative that all the stories from Sourmena and Ophis (two from each region) published in S. Lianidis’s Τά παραμύθια του ποντιακού λαού (Athens 1962) are taken from the selection published by Dawkins in 'Αρχείον Πόντου. It seems, however, from the high quality of Dawkins’s final fair copies, that he may have intended at some time to publish the whole collection of Pontic tales; it would be pleasant to be able to publish all of them in book form at some future date.

A further word should be said about Dawkins’s informants. Although he was not always careful to record their names, let alone any further information about them, the majority of them seem to have been schoolboys, or recent school-leavers. For this reason they were both literate and fluent in non-dialectal Greek and were able to help Dawkins with the correction and interpretation of his transcriptions. It is clear from some of the texts that some of the tellers mixed standard or purist forms with the dialect, and Dawkins even notes in one instance that the young men who had been to school generally conversed with each other in standard Greek, reserving dialect only for their conversations with women (notebook «Sanda», p. 55). At Imera Dawkins was for-

3. Examples of non-dialect forms include the following: άσκητής (Imera 3), δτι (Sourmena 1), να πάρουνε, ἐπαίνο (Ophis 2), and in Ophis 1 — aside from the «quotations» in katharevousa — λέξεις, υψηλό, τελειώνει.
tunate to find an 18-year-old informant, Charilaos I. Photiadis, who must have had a prestigious fund of stories, considering that 27 of the 28 stories from that village were taken down from his mouth. At Ζουρνατσάντων Σάντας Dawkins collected four of his six stories from Aristidis I. Charitidis (both from Tsita), Pandelis Petrou Kazantzidis and 20-year-old Christos St. Ephraimidis from the nearby village of Karakandzi, and Leonidas Irakleous Adamidis (also aged about 18-20). As for Ophis, Dawkins notes that at the small villages of Krinita and Yiga on the Baltadzi-dere, where he recorded his stories, the men did not talk much, but were apt to speak «a mixed language of the dialect and school Greek» (notebook «Ophis», p. 165); he presumably had little or no converse with the womenfolk. The tellers of the Ophis tales published in 'Αρχείον Πόντου were Vasilis and Yorgos D. Mavropoulos (both aged about 20) from Yiga and Dimitris Soundoulidis (an old man) at Krinita.

The stories printed below have not been published before in Greek, although one has appeared in English translation only. They include some of the Sourmena and Ophis stories that were not published in 'Αρχείον Πόντου, followed by a selection of some of the best unpublished Imera stories. Reasons of time and space have unfortunately prevented me from presenting any of the Sanda stories.

The Imera stories published here are good traditional didactic tales4. Two of the pieces from Sourmena are stories involving animals, while one is an example of what Halliday and Dawkins termed «noodle stories» — perhaps the forerunners of the modern «ποντιακά άνεκδοτα». The stories from Ophis are humorous anecdotes. None of the stories published here has the kind of formulaic beginning and ending characteristic of Greek and Turkish folk tales. In fact, such formulas are largely absent from the Pontic stories published by Dawkins himself, with the exception of a couple from Ophis that end with a phrase containing the words, «Καί εγώ έρθα,» and another that finishes, «Έκείνος έζησε από τότε πολλά καλά και έμεις κι άλλο καλλίο άπές σο Γίγα» ('Αρχείον Πόντου, 3 [1931], p. 117).

Linguistically, the dialects of the Ophis and Sourmena stories are similar, not only because of the propinquity of the two valleys, but because (according

4. Such didactic stories are perhaps close to the category that I. T. Pamboukis calls μύθος: «διήγηση μικρή, πότε κανονική και πότε παραβολική, πού θέλει νά διδάξει κάτι». But these Imera stories, unlike the «myths» from Inoi, are not generally humorous; on the contrary, their message is quite stern. I am grateful to Patricia Fann for pointing out Pamboukis’s definition.
to Avraam Papadopoulos the inhabitants of the Sourmena villages of Tsita and Karakandzi were descended from Christians who had fled the Ophis region when the latter area became largely Islamized in the eighteenth century. While the Greek-speaking Moslems of Ophis continue to this day to use the ancient negative particle όu rather than the general Pontic κι, and pronounce kappa before a front vowel like the English ch (as do the Cypriots). Dawkins noted in 1914 that these usages were considered to be old-fashioned in Sourmena and Ophis—or at least in the Baltadzi-dere valley, which is the easternmost of the two Ophis valleys; he was informed that the Christians of Zisino, in the western valley which he seems not to have visited, still employed these features (notebook «Ophis», pp. 74 and 165-166).

I have adhered as closely as possible to Dawkins’s original transcriptions, taking into account both the corrections he made when writing his fair copy with the help of a native-speaker and any interpretative notes he made in the margins. I have used the historical orthography. (The only symbols that require comment are: ä, which represents a vowel between a and e; the dotted τ and π, which represent voiced d and b when not preceded by a nasal; ð, which represents the English sh and often originates from χ before a front vowel; and the accent on the negative particle κί, which distinguishes it from the contracted form κι from καί.) As far as the language is concerned, the final result is, I hope, representative of the speech of the informants (including their use of «school Greek»), and I have been reluctant to «correct» Dawkins’s readings except in the few instances where he has clearly made a serious error; a few uncertain forms have been printed in upright instead of slanting type. I should however record my thanks to Mr. Chrysostomos Savvidis, whose mother tongue is σουρμενίτικα and who suggested a number of emendations to the Sourmena texts; I have adopted the most important of these.

The numbers in brackets at the top of each story are the numbers used in Dawkins’s notebooks; the titles, where given, are also due to Dawkins. Instead of giving either a full translation or a glossary I have preferred to provide a summary in English of each story. Some of these summaries are by Dawkins himself; the rest are mine.

'Ένας πασάς εἶσεν ἐναν κορίτσ'. 'Αμοί τὸ κορίτσ' κρυφᾶ '𝚜ὸν κύρ’ν ἀθές εἶσεν εἰνάν ἄγαπητικόν. 'Ονταν ὁ πασάς ἐπέγνεν σῇ βασιλέᾳ τὰ κονάκα, ἐκούξεν τὸν παιδάν σ’ ὀσπίτ', κι ἐκαλάτσεβεν μετ’ ἐκείνον.

'Έναν ἡμέραν πού τὸ κορίτσ’ εἶσεν σ’ ὀσπίτ’ ἀπός τὸν παιδάν, ἐντόκεν τὴν πόρταν ὁ κύρ’ς ἀτς. 'Ατε ἐφοέθε, καὶ εἶπεν τὸν παιδάν νὰ ἐμπαίν’ ἀπές σ’ ἔναν σαντούχ’. 'Εκείνος ἐσέβεν ἀπὲς σὸ σάντούχ’, καὶ κατά τύχην ἐπήγεν ἐκάτσεν ἀπάν σὸ σαντούχ’. Ποῖος ἐξέρ’; 'Έναν ἄραπαν ἐκάτσεν, δύο ὄρας ἐκάτσεν. 'Οντες ὅλων ὑστέρ ἐξέβεν καὶ ἐπήγεν σήν δουλείαν ἄτα, ἡ κουτσή ἀνοί’ τὸ σαντούχ’. Καὶ ντό νὰ ἔλεπ; 'Ὁ παιδάς ἔτον ἀποθαμένος, ἀνάσμαν ἄσον κ’ ἐπόρεσεν νὰ παίρ.

'Η κουτσή ἐρχίνεσεν νὰ κλάει· ἀμά ντό νὰ ἔφταει; Αὐτόν τοῦ ἐπού ἐπέστειλεν τὸ σαντούχ’. Καὶ ντό τὸ ἐπέστειλεν, 'Ο παιδάς τὸν ἐπέστείλεν, καὶ Κουτσή ἐξεντρεύμεν τὸ σαντούχ’. Καὶ κατά τύχην ἐπήγεν τὸν κύρ’ν ἀτς. ‘Ο πασάς ἐσέβεν ἀπές καὶ τὰ τὸν κύρ’ν ἀθές, γιὰτί τὸν κύρ’ν ἀθές, γιὰτί πασάς ἐν. Ἐφέκεν καὶ ἐπήγεν σήν
A pasha’s daughter had a secret lover whom she summoned whenever her father was away. One day the father unexpectedly knocked at her door, and she hid the lad in a trunk. The father stayed so long that the lover died of suffocation. In despair, the girl called her coachman to help her bury the body. One day, while the coachman was sitting drinking in a tavern with his colleagues, he boasted that he could get the pasha’s daughter to come and serve them raki. When the coachman threatened to reveal her secret, she had no alternative but to obey. But she happened to find a can of paraffin in a back room and she set fire to the tavern, burning all the revellers to death. The girl then went to a priest to confess her misdeeds, and he assured her God would forgive her. But when the dead boy’s father announced that he would give two hundred pounds to anyone who had information about his son, the priest revealed the whole story to him. The father brought a court case against the girl in Russia, bringing the priest forward as a witness. The girl confessed, but accused the priest of denouncing her for gain. The court decided the fault lay with the priest and ordered him to be shot and the girl to be acquitted. Such is the punishment reserved for those who divulge secrets that have been confided to them. [Dawkins (Forty-Five Stories, p. 470) states that the priest was burned; my reading of the text suggests that he was either shot dead or shot out of the barrel of the cannon.]

A very similar story from Kos was published by Dawkins in Forty-Five Stories from the Dodekanese, Cambridge 1950, pp. 466-470, where he provides details of parallels in Greek and other cultures.

2. (Imera 5): Travellers and their mysterious guide

Τρί νομάτ’ άνθρωπ’ ἐπέγναν σ’ ἔναν στράταν κές. Καί ἔρθεν εὔρεν ἄτς καί ἔνα παλικάρ’. 'Καλὰ παιδία, ποὺ πάτε;'' ἐρωτά 'τς. «Πάμε σὸ δείνα χωρίον,» εἶπαν τά παιδία. «Έκείν πάγω καί ἔγω. 'Ἐφάτωμε ἔναν καλὸν συντροφίαν.» «'Ας ἐν,» εἶπαν τά παιδία. «Έλα μετ’ ἐμάς».

Σήν στράτα σίτα ἐπέγναν ἐπέντεσαν ἔναν χωρίον. 'Ασού ἐβράδυνεν κέλα ἐψαλάφεσαν ἔναν ὦ τά και κοιμοῦνταν. 'Εκείν τ’ κ’ ἐδώκαν ἄτς. 'Εδίεζαν ἄτς
Τέσσερες. 'Ατείν' οί μαύρ' έμναν όξωκά με τά πρόστα πά, κ' εθέλεσαν νά μονάζ'ν ατς. 'Αποπουρνούν έθέλεσαν και τερέν έμναν περβόλ 'φουσκω-μένον' όλγον έθελεν νά χαλάται. 'Εκείνο το παλικάρ' χαλάντα και σέ δύο λεφτά απές ἐβγάλατο απάν.


Σήν στράταν σίτα ἐπέγναν, ἐρωτοῦνε το παλικάρ', «Νέπρε, έσύ το είν άτα το έφτας; Σ' έναν το χωρίον πού ἐδίεξαν ἐμα, ἐσύ ἐποϊκες ατς καλόν. 'Εχάλασες το περιβόλ'ν ἄτουν καὶ ἐχτ' σες ἄτο. Σ' άλλο πά πο το είν ἐδίεξαν ἐμας, ἐχτ' σες τ' ὀσπίτ' σεν ἄτουν. Και ἀδα πο εσέγκαν ἐμας ἀπές καὶ δοικα τιμάντας ἐποίκας ἐμας, ἐσυ ἐφούρκ' σες το μαναχόν το παιδίν ἄτουν.» 'Ατότε το παλι-κάρ' εἶπεν, «Σ' ἓναν το χωρίον ἐκεί ἄρμά μα ψεν πού περιβόλ' ἥταν κρυμμένον μάλα-μαν. "Αμοντο εσχαλάουτον το περβόλ' τα έφαινεν το μάλαμαν, καὶ ἐκεῖ ἀπαν πολλοὶ θα εσκοτοῦσαν. 'Εχτ' σα τ' το ἐγα, καὶ άλλο κι θα χαλάται καὶ ἄνθρωπ' πα κι θα σκοτούνταν. Σ' άλλο το χωρίον εκεί ἄρμα σ' ὀσπίτ' ἐκά-θουτον ἑναν καλον ὀσπίτ'. Θα εσχαλάουτον τ' ὀσπίτ' καὶ θα ἐσκότωνεν ατς. 'Εχτ' σα τ' ὀσπίτ' καὶ ἐγουρτάρεψα ἄτο κακόν ἄτο. "Αδα πά σο χωρίον πο εσέγκαν ἐμας ἀπές, ἐφούρκ' σα το παιδίν ἄτον γαιτί ἀτο ἤμεραν θα εσχαλάουτον εναν κακό παιδί καὶ θα εχάλανεν τα καλα τη κυριον ἀδες, καὶ θα ἐποίεν καὶ ἐκείνουν κακόν. "Εφούρκ' σα το παιδίν καὶ ήμ ἄτο ἐγουρτάρεψα ἐμ των κυρ'ν ἄτες άτην κολάσιν. 'Ατώρα έγγ ειμαι ο Χριστόν. 'Ερη έποικα ατα τα δουλεια, καὶ θα πάγω σον ουρανόν. 'Εσείν' δεβάτε σο καλόν;» 'Ατά εἶπεν ατς καὶ ἐγένεν τημ' ἐπεκεί. 'Εκείν' τά ἐπήγασα ση δουλειαν ἄτουν καὶ ήμενταν ἔλεγαν ὄλα το γένεταν. Told by Χαρίλαος Φωτιάδης at the Monastery of the Forerunner, Intera, 12 August 1914.

Summary

"Three men going along a road met a youth. In the first village they reached, they were ill received: the youth before leaving built up a falling wall. So too in the next village, and there the youth repaired a tottering house. In the third village they were well received: before they left in the morning the youth strangled the only son of the house. The [youth's] explanations were that under the falling wall a treasure would have been found;* that the house would have fallen on some good people who lived next door;"
that the son would have grown up wicked and ruined his father. Then the youth said: ‘Now, I am Christ. I came and did these deeds and now I shall go away to heaven. As for you, farewell.’ (Summary from Dawkins, Forty-Five Stories, p. 262.)

* In his translation Dawkins interpolates at this point: «Here the story has gone a little off the rails; the real reason for building up the wall is that the bad inhospitable villager should not get hold of the treasure. The avoidance of future bloodshed is a moralizing touch which spoils the regularity and the quite unmoral spirit natural to these folktales.»

The story was published in Dawkins’s translation in Medium Aevum, 6 (1937), pp. 181-182, and summarized in Forty-Five Stories from the Dodekanese, p. 262, where he published a similar story from Kos about Saint Elias. In both these publications Dawkins provides details about the remarkable dissemination of this type of story illustrating the inscrutability of divine ways, from the Koran (ch. 18) and the Talmud to western Europe.

3. *(Imera 8)*

Έτον ένας άσκητής καί ἐπήγε σ’ ένα πεγάδι κατά. Ἐκάτσεν κι ἔφαγεν τὸ ψωμῖν ἀτ, ὄντες τερεῖ, ἀπὸ μακράν ἔρται ένας καβαλάρτης. Ἐφοδεθεὶς, γὰρ κατ ἐφτάτου, καί ἐκρύψεν ὅπις σ’ εκεῖνος κατὰ παράδας. Ἀτὸς ὁ καβαλάρτης ἔρθε σὸ πεγάδι οὐκαί, ἐφαγεν καί ἔπευ, καί ἐσκότωθεν καί ἐπήγεν. Ἀναμ ἐνέσπαλεν ἐκείνος τῇ κάσαν ἀτ ὀ σὲ δὴ λίρας. Ἐκείνος ἐπῆγεν, καί ἀποπέν ἀτ ἐρθεν εῖνας ἄλλος νὰ πὶν’ νερὸν. Ἐλέπ’ τῇ κάσαν μὲ τὰ παράδας, καί παιράτα καὶ φει.’ Ἀποπέν ἀτοῦν ἐπηρέ ἐνας ἐφτωχός. Ἐκάτσεν καὶ πεγάδι κατά καί τρώει ἕραν ψωμῖν. Ἀλλομιᾶν ἔρται ἐκείνος ὁ καβαλάρτης: Ἐκ’ νύ, τὰ παράδας ἢ τ’ ἐκλεφτες ἀγλήγορα δός μ’ ἀτα, ἀν κ’ ἐν σκοτώνοι σε. Ἐνα μαῦρον ἐφτωχόν, «Ποδεδίζω σε,» λέγατον, «ἐγὼ παράν κ’ εἶδα». «Ἐσῳ ἐπαίστες ἂς,» λέγατον ὁ καβαλάρτης. Λός μ’ ἀτα, ἀθανασίωσεν σε. Καὶ έβγάλ’ τὸ ἔφηβον τὸ ἀτ καί κρούει καὶ σκοτώσεν. Καὶ ἔπεκει μόνος ἐπήγεν.

Ἀτά οὐλά ἐλεπεν ἀτα ἀποπέν ἀσὸ παρτίν ἀσκητης. Ἐβγαίν’ ἐξωκα ἐφταγεν ἐνας Άσκητής καὶ ἐπευλι άτον, καὶ παρακαλεὶ νὰ φανερώσωβαν τὸν άσκητή, τὸν ἐφτάŋ Θεόν, καὶ παρακαλεὶ νὰ φανερώσωβαν τὸν άσκητή, τὸν ἐφτάμονον Θεόν, καὶ παρακαλεὶ νὰ φανερώσωβαν τὸν άσκητή, τὸν ἐφτάμονον. «Ποδεδίζω σε,» λέγατον, «ἐγὼ παράν κ’ εἶδα». «Ἐσῳ ἐπαίστες ἂς,» λέγατον ὁ καβαλάρτης. «Λός μ’ ἀτα, ἀθανασίωσεν σε. Καὶ έβγάλ’ τὸ ἔφηβον τὸ ἀτ καί κρούει καὶ σκοτώσεν. Καὶ ἔπεκει μόνος ἐπήγεν.

Έπηγεν ἀσκητὴς σήν δουλείαν ἄτ, καὶ ἐφτωχὸν μὲ τὸ παιδίν ἄτ σ’ ἐκεινέτερον.

Ἐφτωχὸν μὲ τὸ παιδίν ἄτ σῖτα ἔλασκον σήν θάλασσας σήν ἄκραν κές, λέει τὸ παιδίν, «Πατέρα, ἄσο γούι’ τῇ θάλασσας κι ἄλλο πολλά ποιόν ἐν;» «Παιδί μ’,» εἶπεν ἄτον, «άσῃ θάλασσας τὸ γούι’ κι ἄλλο πολλά ἐν τῇ Θεοῦ ἐσπλαχνία». 'Ασκητής ἀποβραδίς ἐπήγεν ἑκάσταν σής χανίν τὴν πόρταν, καὶ τὰ τερεὶ ποιῶς θὰ ἐμπάιν’ πρώτα ἀπές, γιὰ νὰ ἐγνωρίζ’, ποῖος ἐν ὁ καλῶν. Κι ὄντες τερεὶ, τὸ ἔλεπ’. 'Εφτωχὸν μὲ τὸ παιδίν ἄτ ἐσέβεν πρῶτα ἀπές. «Ἀσταϊτικὸν ἔρθην ἄτο’ ἀποπουρνοῦ νὰ ἐν κακός καὶ ἀτόρα νὰ ἐν καλὸς.» 'Εσίρεψε καὶ ἐπήγεν α’ ὁσπίτ’ν ἄτ, καὶ ἐνοῦντζεν πῶς νὰ μαθάν’ ἄμα στὸ τὸ βάμαν. 'Εσκώθεν ἀποπουρνοῦ καὶ ἐπήγεν ἑυρέν τὸν ἐφτωχὸν. 'Ἐρωτά τον, «Ὅγε τὸ καλὸν ἐποίκες;» «Τιδὲν καλὸν κ’ ἐποίκα,» λέγ’ ἐφτωχὸν. «Πῖκοκ, τσάνουμ,» λέει καὶ ἀσκητής, «κάτ καλὸν θὰ ἐποίκες. Πὲ μ’ ἄτο.» «Τιδὲν καλὸν κ’ ἐποίκα,» εἶπεν. «Σὸν γιαλὸν κές σῖτα ἐπέγνα, ἔρωτα μὲ τὸ παιδὶ μ, 'Πατέρα, ἄσο γούι’ τῇ θάλασσας κι ἄλλο πολλά ποιόν ἐν;’ 'Εγὼ πά ἐπί τὸν, ‘Παιδί μ, τῇ Θεοῦ ἐσπλαχνία.‘ Καλὸν ἄν ἐν ἄτο, ἄτο τὸ καλὸν ἐποίκα.» «Κανεῖται ἄτο,» εἶπεν ἀσκητής, καὶ ἐσίρεψεν σ’ ἀσπίτ’ν ἄτ. 'Ἐνοῦντζεν ἀπές ἄτ, «Τ’ ἐμέτερον ὁ παράδεισον μετ’ ἕναν λόγον παίρκεται, καὶ μετ’ ἕναν λόγον χάται.»

Told by Χαρίλαος Φωτιάδης at the Monastery of the Forerunner, Imera, 12 August 1914.

Summary

An ascetic was sitting by a well when he saw a horseman approaching. He hid behind a bush in fear. When the horseman had eaten and drunk by the well, he set off, forgetting to pick up his purse containing a thousand pounds. The ascetic saw another man come by and take the purse. Then a poor man sat down by the well to eat a crust of bread. The horseman returned and shot the poor man dead, convinced that he had stolen his purse. Puzzled, the ascetic came out from hiding and besought God to explain the justice of what he had witnessed. An angel came down and told him that the man who had taken the purse was the rightful owner, and had been deprived of it by the horseman; furthermore, the poor man had murdered the horseman’s father; so that now they were all quits. The ascetic then besought the angel to show him how to distinguish the good from the evil. The angel told him to wait outside the tavern door; the first man to come out in the morning would be the worst man of all, while the first to go in in the evening would be the best. To the ascetic’s surprise, the first to come out and the first to go in was one and the same man. The next day the ascetic went to ask the man what good deed he had done between leaving and entering the inn. He replied that he had done nothing good except to tell his son that God’s mercy was more abundant than the sand of the sea. The ascetic realized that the kingdom of heaven can be gained and lost with a single word.

The story was published in Dawkins’s translation in Forty-Five Stories from the Dodekanese, pp. 262-263 (cf. Imera 2).
'Ένας δάσκαλος έπαϊρεν έναν ημέραν τον μαθητήν άτ και έξέβαν σο λάσμον. Κατά τύχην εξέβαν σ’ έναν χωράφρ’ κές. Έκει είχαν ἐδούλευσεν ένας χωρέτες τάπ’ ἐφταχός. Πλαγκείκτικ’ ἀπές σ’ ὁρμίν είδαν ἕνα δεκαγό’ τάπ’ γραφμένα ποστάλα. Ο μαθητής εἶπεν το δάσκαλον άτ, «Λελεύω σε, δάσκαλε, ας παίνει τ’ ἀβούτον τά κουντούρας καί κρύψεμες ακακακά σ’ έναν καφούλ’ ἄρκα: έκακα τά έχουμε καί ἕβορα, καί ας τερούμε, ἀμοντο ἔρται ἀρακάτα καί κ’ ευρύκατα, τό θα ἐφταίει». «Καλὸν παιδίν,» εἶπεν ο δάσκαλον, «τερώ σε, θέλτς ν’ ἔφτας τό κέιφι ς, σίτα τερεϊς εκείνον νά κρούει τά γόνατα τ’γιά τά ποστάλα’ τ. 'Εσύ ατώρα βάλον ἀπές σά δύο πά ἀπ’ έναν λίραν’ άτ κρύψεμες ὑπ’ οπίς σό καφούλ’ καί ας τερούμε τό θα έφταει άμοντο εύρίκ’ τά λίρας. Ατότες έκείνος θα σχίαρει γιά τά λίρας, κι ήμεις πά θα τερούμ’ άτον καί σάναρομες.» Ο μαθητής ἐποίκεν άπ’ έναν ποστάλαν άπ’ έναν λίραν καί ἐπαιρεν τον δάσκαλον άτ καί ἐκρύφτεν ὑπίς σό καφούλ’.

Τέτερον άτ’ έναν κάρτον τερούμενε τον χωρέτα νά έρται νά φορεί τά ποστάλαν άτ’ έσέγκεν άναχάπαρα τ’ έναν τό ποδάρ’ άτ σ’ έναν τό ποστάλ’, καί ἐπεκεί πώσοτι κάτ κρούει τό ποδάρ’ν άτ. Ἐχάρεν, καί άση χαράν άτ σκοῦται ἐφταίει έξες άμον παλαλά, καί τ’ ατίς’ χαρίς γιά γροικάς τό λέει. Ο μαθητής καί ο δάσκαλον ἐπεκεί πώσοτι κάτ κρούει τό ποδάρ’ν άτ. Έθαρσεν λιθάροπον καί έξεγκεν τό ποδάρ’ν άτ νά χάν’ τό λιθάρ’. Μέ τό νά λέγω σας κ’ ἐπορώ νά φανερώνω σας καλά πόσον έχπαράεν ονταν είδεν πώσοτι έκείνον τό έντούμεν τό ποδάρ’ν άτ έτον λίρα. Έχαρεν, καί άση χαράν άτ σκοῦται έφταει έκείνον τό λίρα. Μέ τό νά λέγω σας καί άση χαράν άτ σκοῦται έφταει έκείνον τό λίρα.}

'Άτοτες έστάθεν ό χωρέτας καί έσταφεν τά σέρα τ’ έσταφεν τήν μετάναν άτ καί είπεν, «Θεέ μ’ άλπάτ θά έξερες πώς ἀπόψ’ κ’ είχα ψωμίν νά φάζω τά παιδία μ’ θα έστειλες με μέ κάποιον καλόν καρδίαν γιά νά φάζω τήν γυναίκα μ’ καί τά παιδία μ’». Άτότε έξέβαν άποπίς όσο καφούλ’ καί ο δάσκαλον μέ τον μαθητήν άτ. «Μετ’ ἐμάς,» εἶπαν άτον, «ὁ Θεός ἐστειλε σε ἄβοτα τα παράδας. Δέβα καθ’ κά καὶ φα τα μέ το καλόν καρδίαν. “Αν είναι ὅλιγα, ἔπαρ’ ἄλλο δύο άλλο.” Καί εξέγκεν καί ἐδώκεν άτον καί δύο άλλα. Ο χωρέτες άσοι εὐχέθεν καί δέστερον, ἔπηγεν σ’ ὁσπίτ’ έν τ’ έπειν τήν γυναίκαν άτ τό καλόν τ’ χαμπάρ’. Οι δ’ τά, ο δάσκαλον καί ο μαθητής, χαρεμέν’ γιά τό καλόν π’ ἐποίκεν, ἔπηγαν σ’ ἔρατον, καί ἔγροικ’ σ’ ένον ο μαθητής πωσότι άλλ’ ἐμοφον ἐν νά δί’ κάποιος παρά νά παίρ’.

Told by Χαρίλαος Φωτιάδης at the Monastery of the Forerunner, Imera, 12 August 1914.
Summary

“A master and his disciple were out walking and they found a pair of shoes which a man had left at the edge of the field when he went to plough. At the master’s suggestion they put some money into the shoes and hid themselves. What they wanted was to have the pleasure of witnessing the simple delight of the ploughman when he found this piece of good luck which had come upon him.” (Summary by Dawkins, Folk-Lore, 59 [1948], p. 53).

With regard to this story Dawkins comments (ibid): “A most attractive trait we sometimes find in Greek stories is the unfeigned delight the narrators show in their hero’s happiness and pleasure.”

Stories from Sourmena

1. (Sourmena 16): The cock and his friends

'Έναν ήμέρα ή κάτα ν’έπέγνε σήν ξενιτία. Σό δρόμο είδε ἕνα πετεινό. 'Ὁ πετεινό εἶπε τὴν κάτα, «Καλημέρα, κάτα, ποῦ νά πάς;» «Σήν ξενιτία, πετεινό.» «Ἐγώ πάλ ας ἔρχομαι.» Καὶ ἐπήγαν ἑντάμα.

Σό δρόμο εἶδαν ένα ζῷ. 'Εκείνο πάλ ἐπῆ ἑντάμα. Κι ἑπεκεί ἐπήγαν ἑπήγαν, εἶδαν ἕνα γάιδαρο. 'Εκείνος πάλ ἐπῆ ἑντάμα. Σίτ’ ἐπήγαν ἕβρανταν, καὶ εἶδαν έναν ἐφκαιρὸν χαμαλέτε καὶ ἐσέβαν ἑπές. Σά ἕξημερῳματα σιμά ὁ πετεινό ἐκούζε. Ἐκούσαν ἅτο τρί νοματο θοπεκαν’ καὶ εἶπανε, «Ποίος ἀτ’ ἐμᾶς νά ἐπορεί καὶ παιρ’ ἀτὸ τὸν πετεινό;» Ἐνας πάλ εἶπε, «Ἐγὼ ἐπορίῳ καὶ πῶς παιρ’ ἀν.» Ἐπη ἐπη σιμά σὸν πετεινό καὶ ὁ πετεινό ἐποίκε «κό κό κό». 'Εκείνος πάλ ἐθάρρησε ὅτι ἐν ζουρνατσῆς. Σίτε πάει, ἕτα ἐπη ἕτα ἐπη σόν πετεινό καὶ ὁ πετεινό ἐποίκε «κό κό κό». Ἐκείνος πάλ ἐπη σά μουντζούρα 'τ. Καὶ ατός πάλ σίτε φεύ, ἐπη σὸ γάιδαρο έκεικα καὶ ὁ γάιδαρο ἐντώκεν ἄτονα λάχτας. Κι ἑπεκεί ἐπη σὸ κό έκεικα καὶ τὸ κό μὲ τὰ κέρατα ἐκάκοσε καὶ ἐσύρεν ἄτονα οξουκά.


Told by Χρίστος Στ. Εὐφραιμίδης (aged 20, from Καρακαντζί), at Τσίτα, 14 July 1914.

Summary

The cat was on its way to foreign parts with a cock, a cow and a donkey. They spent the night in an empty mill. At dawn the cock crowed. Some jackals heard him and one of them boasted that he would go and snatch him. The cock made a sound like a pipe, and the jackal fled, thinking it was a piper. As the jackal was running away, the cat pounced at his muzzle, then the donkey kicked him, then the cow tossed him out with...
her horns. When the jackal got back to his companions they asked him what had happened to the cock. He replied: «It wasn’t a cock, it was a piper, and he beat me with his pipe. Then when I was running away the miller’s wife hit me with her sponge, then the piper hit me three times with his pipe, then the miller tossed me out with his shove!»

Dawkins published a similar story from Αχό in Modern Greek in Asia Minor, pp. 400-402; on this see Halliday’s commentary and references in the same book, pp. 243-244.

2. (Sourmena 17): The chain of requests

Ἐνας γυναίκα πάντα ἐπαίρινε κρέας, κι ὄλο ἔρχουτουνε ἐτρωεν ἃ ἕνα πουλι. Ἐναν ἡμέρα πᾶλ εἶπε τὸν ἄντραν ἃτς, «Ἐπαρε με κρέας, καί ἐγὼ τὸ πουλί κὲ νὰ φαῖς, ἃ.» Ἐκείνος πᾶλ ἔγορασε κρέας. Καί πᾶλ ἃτς ἡ γυναίκα ἐφάίσεν ἃ τὸ πουλί. Καί τόπους ἐροθέ άντραν ἃτς, ἐφή παρεκάλεσε τὸ πουλί νὰ δὲ ὅπις τὸ κρέας. «Ἀμα τὸ πουλί εἶπεν ἄτενα, «Ἀν φέρεις μὲ ἕνα κοσσοπούλι, ἔτοτε ἑγὼ νὰ δίω σὲ τὸ κρέας.» Ἐπήγε σὴν κοσσού καὶ λέει ἃτεν, «Δός μὲ ἕνα πουλί γιὰ νὰ φέρ’ ἀτὸ τὸ ἁθὸν’ καὶ νὰ δἰ μὲ τὸ κρέας.» Ἡ κοσσού πᾶλ εἶπε, «Ἀν φέρεις μὲ τσουπάδ’, ἔτοτε ἑγὼ νὰ δίω σὲ πουλί.»


Ἐκεῖν’ τὸ βράδο δὲρται ἄντρας ἃτς καὶ λέει ἃτενα, «Ποῦ ἐν τὸ κρέας;» Ἐτότε ἡ γυναίκα εἶπε, «Ἐ ἄντρα μ, να ἔξερνες τ’ ἐπαθά τῇ δουλείᾳ. Σὸ κρέας ἀπάν ἔρθε ἐνα τρανόδω μυία καὶ ἐγέννησε ἀπάν δβγα, κι ἐγὼ ἔνεραστα τ’ το καὶ ἐχάσα τ’ το, κι ἄντα ἐλέσω ἐκεῖνο τῇ μυίᾳ ἐγὼ νὰ σκοτών’ ἀτό.» Ἐτὸ σῖτ’ ἐλέγανε ἐρθ’ ἐνα τρανό μυία κι ἐκάτοσε σ’ ἄντρα σατς σὸ κιφάλ’ ἀπάν. Ἐτὲ ἐπήρε ἐνα αξινάρ’ καὶ τεάμ να χτυπά τῇ μυίᾳ ἐντοκε ἐδόσε σ’ ἄντρα σατς τὸ κιφάλ’.

Told by Χρίστος Εὐφραιμίδης, Τσίτα, 14 July 1914.

Summary

There was a woman who used to buy meat and feed it to a bird (later a nightingale). One day she asked her husband to buy meat and promised not to give it to the bird. Her husband bought the meat, but she fed it to the bird. Then she became afraid of her husband, and asked the bird to give it back. But the bird refused to give her the meat.
unless she brought it a chick. She went to the hen, but the hen refused to give her a chick unless she brought her a corn-cob. The corn-merchant refused to give her a corn-cob unless she brought him a sponge. The sponge-seller refused to give her a sponge unless she brought him a bill-hook. The bill-hook-seller refused to give her a bill-hook unless she brought him some coal. At this, she gave up and went home. When her husband asked where the meat was, she told him a huge fly had laid its eggs in it; she had thrown the meat away and was now waiting to kill the fly. As she spoke, a huge fly settled on her husband's head. The woman grabbed a pickaxe as if to kill the fly, and split her husband's head in two.

3. (Sourmena 20)

"Έσανε δύο νομάτ'. Τρώγοντας και πίνοντας άπαν σο δρόμο έμέθιξαν και έκοιμέθανε. Τή νύχτα εξύπνησαν ο ένας και έκνεθη τ' ἀλλουνού το κιφάλ'. Έτοτες ο γι-άλλο εξύπνησε και είπεν άτονα, «Ρε τό φτάς άτοι;» 'Εκείνος είπε, «Τό κιφάλ μ κνέθω». Έτοτε ο γι-άλλο είπεν άτονα, «Άτο τό κιφάλ' τ' έμόνα έν.» Κι ο γι-άλλο είπε, «Κιάμ τ' έμόνα το κιφάλ' πού γι-έν;»
Told by Λεωνίδας 'Ηρακλέους 'Αδαμίδης (18-20 years old) at Sourmena school, 15 July 1914.

Summary

Two men got drunk. During the night one of them woke up and started scratching the other man's head. The other one woke up and asked him what he was doing. «I'm scratching my head», he replied. And the other one asked, «So where's mine then?».

Stories from Ophis

1. (Ophis 4): Γλωσσικόν ζήτημα

"Ένας Σουρμενίτες επέγινε σο Χολό μεζέρεσι. Έντάμωσε ένα Όφλη, παλτούρι τσιπλάκ, και έρωτεσε άτονα, «Π' εδ' ι' πάς, Όφλη;». Όφλης πάλ είπεν άτονα, «Έγω τε εδ' ι' πάγω σ' όρος. Εχω 'τσεϊ ένα ένοικο· μετ' άου το λυτάρ' νά πάω παίρ' άτο.» 'Ο Σουρμενίτες τίπο 'κ έγρικεσε, «Άντα είπεν ούρεσε πάλ σ' σπιτ' το βράδι, είπε το παιδίν ατ, «Παύλο, οσήμε-ρο σίτ' επέγινα σο Χόλο μεζέρεσι έτσάτεψα ένα 'Όφλη. Ερώτεσα 'τονε γιά μασκαραλούκ, για τή γλώσσα 'τούνα. Είπα 'τονα, 'Όφλη, π' εδ' ι' πάς; 'Εκείνος πάλ είπε με, 'εδ' ι' πάω σ' όρος. Έχω 'τσεϊ ένα ένοικο· μετ' άου το λυτάρ' νά πάω παίρ' άτο.» 'Αμ' άσα λόγια 'τ τίπο 'κ έγρικεσα. 'Εσυ γιά εξήσσεο τά λόγια 'τ.» 'Ο παιδί 'πειδή έμαθαν σο σκολείο σο Χάν', κάποια έγρικεσε. Είπε τον πατέρα 'τ, «Ατός 'Όφλης παλάδα έλληνικά λέξεις έλεγε, για τ' έκείνο κι έγρικεσες ατά. Όρος έλληνικά, λέγει, έμεις το λέγουμε ύψηλο ρασί. 'Εδ' ι' πάω σ' όρος τεμέκ έδ' και πάω σο ρασί.» Είπεν ο κύρης ατ, «Τό είπεν 'Έχω 'τσεϊ ένα ένοικο, έκείνο πώς έν;» 'Ο παιδάς έστάθεν,
έσυλλοίστε πολλά, τό ένοικο κι 'πόρεσε νά ευρίσκ'. 'Επήρε κά τό λεξικό, ετάραξε αδά, ετάραξε ακει τά φύλλα, εύρε τή λέξη ένοικο. 'Ερχίνεσε τή γραμματική. «Ένοικος», σύνθετον ἀπό τήν πρόθεσιν ἐν καί οίκος, ἐγκάτοικος' τουρκικά δενλίκ.» Είπε τό παιδί, «Σό ρασί ἀπάν κάτι δενλίκ πράμα ἐν;» Είπεν ὁ κύρης ατ, «Τό λυτάρ' τό πράμα ἐν;» Τό παιδί ἐπήρε τή γραμματική, «Λυτάρ’ ἀπό τό ρήμα λύω ἔλυν, παράγων λυτάριον λυτάριον, δηλαδή τό ὄργανον μέ τό ὄποιο λίτον καί δένουνε, τεμέκ τό σκοινί. Ὅμων τό φαίνεται, σό ρασί ἀπάν μέ τό σκοινί ν’ ἐπαίρινε ἐνοικο, τεμέκ τό λέγωμε γουρνία, μελεσσίδα, ν’ ἐκαταβάζει γουρνί τά σκοινί. »Ετότες είπεν ὁ κύρης ατ, «Κρίμα τ’ έποίκα ἐξοδός, ψαλμο, κρίμα τ’ ἐποίκα ἔξοδα ἀποπίσα εἰς τό σκολείο τό Χάν’ ἀφάντο μετάς, καί εἴχε χατεσλούκ ν’ ἑστείλανε σε τήν Τραπεζούντα σό τράνο τό σκολείο. Α’τόρα ἔπαρεντα, αντζάκ ἰσα μ’ ένα Ὀψιπονόμεμας. 'Εκείνο πάλ μέ τά λεξικά καί μέ τή γραμματική αντζάκ ἐπόρεσες εξήγεσε τά λόγια 'τ.’

Signed ΠαπαΙωάννης [Χατζή-Ιωαννίδης], priest at Κρινίτα, 19 July 1914.

Summary

A man from Sourmena meets a man from Ophis on the road and fails to understand anything he says. On his return home the man tells his son what has happened, repeating what the Ophite had said. The boy, who goes to the local school, explains that the reason why his father couldn’t understand the man from Ophis is that the latter was speaking Ancient Greek; with the help of a dictionary and a grammar he manages to interpret the Ophite’s words. The father considers the money he has spent on his son’s school fees is wasted. «You’ve hardly learned as much as a peasant from Ophis,» he declares; «you could scarcely explain his words even with a dictionary and a grammar!»

The story shows that Pontians take pride in the antiquity of their dialect not only vis-à-vis other Greeks, but in competition with people from other parts of Pontos.

2. (Ophis 6)

Τένα καίρο έτονε ένα γυναίκα καί είσε ένα παιδί. Καί τό παιδί έκόντεψε νά γυναίκις'. 'Ενα ἄλλε γυναίκα, γιά νά ευρίσκ' κορίτσ’' γιά τό παιδί, είπε τού παιδί ή μάνα, «Νά πάμε σ’ ένα ὀσπίς’». 'Εκεί εἴγω νά λέγω ἔνα, ἑαυ νά λές δύο.» 'Επήγανε σό σπί, ἀπασθεθ’ νά πάρουνε κορίτσ’'. 'Επήγανε εκεί ἐσέβανε σό σπί. 'Εκάτσανε κά καί ἐρχίνεσε ἡ γυναίκα νά ἐπαινά τό παιδί, καί ἔλεγε, «Ταυτηνής τό παιδί δ’ ἕκατο λιρών χώματα.» Καί τό παιδί είπε, «Γίοκ, ἐδάκόδα λιρά είναι.» 'Υστέρ είπε ἡ γυναίκα, «Έσ’ ἐδάκόδα λιρών χτίματα.» «Γίοκ, είπε τό παιδί, τετρακόδα λιρών.» 'Υστέρ’ πάλ είπε ἡ γυναίκα, «Έσ’’ ἕκατο κεφάλα πρόβατα.» «Γίοκ, είπε τό παιδί, ἐδάκόδα κεφάλα είναι.» 'Υστέρες είπε ἡ γυναίκα, «Έσ’’ κ’ ἐνα κουνουφ’ τ’ ένα τό μάτιν ατ ἐν στραβό.» «Γίοκ, είπε τό παιδί, ἀδύο μάτα είναι στραβά.» 'Υστέρ είπε ὁ νοικοκύρης,
«Χάρ, άμήτε σα καλά.» 'Εκείν' πάλ έσκώθαν κ' επήγαν, χωρίς να γίνεται ή δουλεία 'τουνα να γυναικίζουν·τό παιδί.

Told by Δημήτριος Παπαδόπουλος, son of the priest at Krinita, 19 August 1914.

Summary

A boy was going to get married. His mother went to the prospective bride’s parents with another woman and the woman’s son. The woman instructed her son to say twice as much as whatever she said. The woman began singing the praises of the prospective bridegroom, saying, «This woman’s boy’s got land worth £200.» «No,» said her son, «£400.» «He’s got a hundred head of sheep.» «No,» said her son, «two hundred.» Then the woman said, «He’s got one defect: he squints in one eye.» «No,» said the son, «both eyes.» Whereupon the father of the prospective bride sent them packing.