

## Lost in Translation: What are στελμονίαι?

Xenophon's *Κυνηγετικός* presents an interesting exercise in translation. The fragmentary condition of the manuscripts has led to some doubt concerning its authenticity as one of Xenophon's works (Schmoll, 1989), but it is Xenophon's apparent creation and use of the term στελμονίαι that has led to a variety of translations, some misguided (Blane, 1788; Lenz, 1828; Talbot, 1859; Watson, 1898), that seem to miss the apparent function of the term. The term is used only by Xenophon and appears only twice in his corpus; specifically only in the *Κυνηγετικός* 6.1. The term appears in a description of how hunting dogs should be dressed for the hunt, along with δέραια and ἱμάντες, and suggests that στελμονίαι are distinct from the other trappings in their function to τὰ γένη φυλάττωσιν.

This paper explores the history of the translation of the *Κυνηγετικός* with a particular examination of how στελμονίαι has been translated since the translation of the *Κυνηγετικός* into Latin in 1460 (Marsh, 1992) until the recent English translation in 2001 (Doty, 2001). Focusing on its function to 'guard the breed', this paper suggests that the current manner of translating στελμονίαι simply as belts (noted as chastity belts in some cases (Doty, 2001)) implies a function inconsistent from the manner of handling hunting dogs prescribed by Xenophon and misses what appears to be a unique item used to preserve the safety of these specially trained dogs. In a careful etymological study of στελμονίαι and the additional words in the passage, it is evident that Xenophon prescribes a type of belt that will protect the dog from injury, less than protecting it from breeding. Moreover, this paper explores the relative importance of hunting, especially hunting dogs, in the ancient Greek world as opposed to that of the Roman, illustrating the differences in culture represented by the respective time periods of various authors and Xenophon's explicit directions for the handling of hunting dogs.

## Bibliography

Blane, Willian. 1788. *Cynegetica; or Essays on Sporting Consisting of Observations on Hare Hunting*. John Stockdale Piccadilly.

Marsh, D. 1992. Brown, V., Kristeller, P. Oskar, Cranz, F. Edward (Eds.). *Catalogus Translationum et Commentariorum: Medieval and Renaissance Latin Translations and Commentaries*. The Catholic University of American Press.

Doty, Ralph D. 2001. "Xenophon On Hunting", *Studies in Classics*, 13.

Lenz, T. W. 1828. *Xenophon uber die jagd verdeuscht und erlautert*. Leipzig.

Schmoll, Edward A. 1989. "The Fragmentary Manuscripts of Xenophon's Cynegeticus". *Syllecta Classica* 1.

Talbot, Eugene. 1859. *Œuvres Complètes*. Édition Hachette.

Watson, Rev. S. 1898. *Xenophon's Minor Works; Literally translated from the Greek with Notes and Illustrations*. George Bell and Sons.