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**The Structure of the Romulean Textual Tradition of the  
Aesopic Fables**

Ph.D. Dissertation Theses

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## I. Introduction

The introduction deals with the history of the Graeco-Latin Fables and the origin of the so-called collection of Romulus. The dissertation examines this collection in detail and tries to sketch and retraces the textual tradition.

In the early period of Greek Literature the Aesopic fables occur in other writings as parable and allegory, for example the fable about the hawk and nightingale stands in Hesiod's *Works and Days*. The first collection may have constructed by the philosopher and orator Demetrius of Phalerum in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, it entitled *Αἰσωπεύων*.

From the latter periods of Greek Literature three large collections of the Aesopic Greek Fables are known, the oldest one is the *Augustana Collection* (Recension I), and the others, the *Vindobonensis* (Recension II) and the *Accursiana* (Recension III) derived from this. It is not easy to date these collections and to establish the relationship between them. The first fable collection in verse was made by Babrius in the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. Then the fables were used for teaching in the schools of rhetoric and of elementary in the Imperial Ages. The Progymnasmata of Aelius Theon, Hermogenes of Tharsus and Aphthonius contained rhetorical exercises, and in these they have tried to give a definition of the fable and dealt with the origin and function of it.

The first well-known Latin translator of the Greek Aesopic fables was Phaedrus, who composed an original collection of fables. However Phaedrus' name was unknown in the Middle Ages. Instead of him, a prose version of fable-collection attributed to a certain Romulus flourished until the age of humanism. Although the origin of the collection of Romulus is not known correctly, it is certain, that several prose paraphrases was made from the verses of Phaedrus. Certainly a version was made from the fables of Phaedrus in which the fables were written continuous prose, this is the *Phaedrus solutus*. An other prose paraphrase was made from the verses of Phaedrus, the first piece of which was a dedication: Aesopus inscribes to his master, a certain Rufus. This dedication introduced a collection, the so-called *Aesopus ad Rufum*, but this do not exist today. From this the collection of *Romulus* derived, but this did not survive either. It is not easy to date the collection of Romulus, but the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> century is generally accepted for the origin of it. A lot of manuscripts derived from the Romulus-corpus, these are divided conventionally in two groups, the one is the *recensio gallicana* and the other is the *recensio vetus*. The former contains 81 fables in four books, the other contains less fables without book division.

## II. Editions of Romulus

The 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter sets out the former editions and commentaries of the manuscripts of Romulus. From the 15<sup>th</sup> century the first early printed books already have contained fables of Romulus and the series of editions continued up to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Editions can divide in four various periods, the first one is the Medieval era, in which the texts circulated in manuscripts. The collection of Romulus was copied into codices, which are especially preserved to us from the 10–12<sup>th</sup> centuries. Of course, these cannot be literally accounted as critical editions. From the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century the humanist fable collections did not merely contain the Romulean fable-tradition, but incorporated new fables which derived from other sources. At the same time the collection of Romulus was overshadowed. The turning-point is when Pierre Pithou discovered and printed the verses of Phaedrus. The scholars of Phaedrus immediately noticed that the prose paraphrases can help to interpret, emend or even to reconstruct Phaedrus' verses. Thus the collection of Romulus became an integral part of the commentaries of Phaedrus. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Romulus-corpus is also edited independently which can be considered as scholarly critical editions. The main editions of Romulus are the following:

1. NILANT, Johannes Fredericus: *Fabulae antiquae ex Phaedro, fere servatis ejus verbis, desumptae et soluta oratione expositae, inter quas reperiuntur nonnullae ejusdem auctoris et aliorum antea ignotae. Accedunt Romuli fabulae aesopiae omnes ex mssis depromptae et adjectis notis editae ab Joh. Frederico Nilant, Theodorus Haak, Lugduni Batavorum 1709*
2. SCHWABE, Johann Gottlob: *Phaedri Augusti liberti Fabularum Aesopiarum libri quinque. Ad codices mss et optimas editiones recognovit varietatem lectionis et commentarium perpetuum adjecit Joann. Gottlob. Sam. SCHWABE. Accedunt Romuli Fabularum Aesopiarum libri quatuor ad codicem divionensem et perantiquam editionem Ulmensem nunc primum emendati et notis illustrati. I–II. Friedrich Vieweg, Braunschweig, 1806*
3. OESTERLEY, Hermann: *Romulus. Die Paraphrasen des Phaedrus und die aesopische Fable im Mittelalter. Berlin, Weidmann 1870*
4. HERVIEUX, Léopold: *Les Fabulistes latins. Depuis le siècle d'Auguste jusqu'à la fin du moyen âge II. Paris 1894<sup>2</sup>*
5. THIELE, Georg: *Der Lateinische Äsop des Romulus und die Prosa-Fassungen des Phädrus. Heidelberg 1910*

### III. The manuscripts of the Romulus-corpus

This chapter enumerates the manuscripts of Romulus and a printed book too, in which the fables of Romulus can be found. At first, the two manuscripts are examined which are the derivatives of the collection of *Aesopus ad Rufum*. Thereafter we deal with the two recensions of Romulus, the *gallicana* and *vetus*, then such other manuscripts are shown of which it is not easy to establish their place in the tradition. Finally we refer the collection of Pseudo-Dositheus which does not belong to the Romulus-corpus but some fables from it got into the collection of Romulus by contamination.

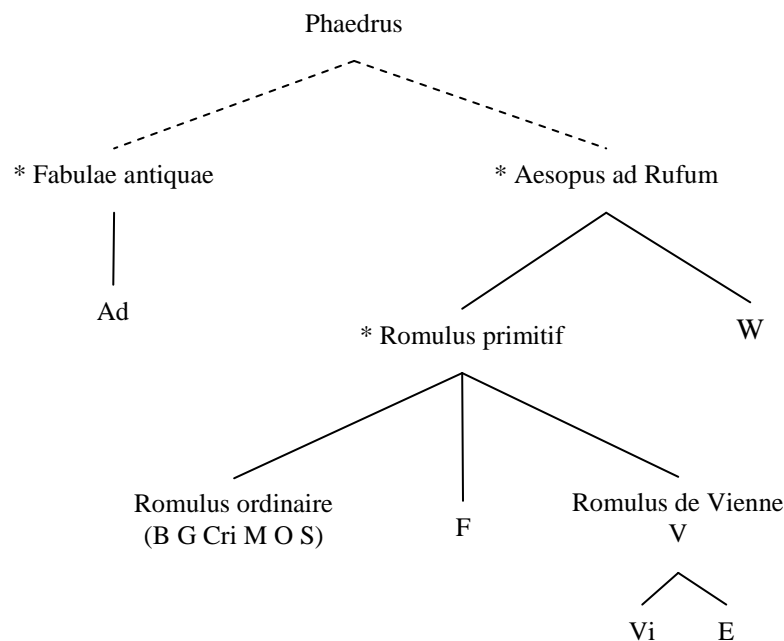
1. Manuscripts of the derivatives of *Aesopus ad Rufum*:
  - Ad**: Codex **Ademari**, Cod. VLO 15. (Leiden)
  - W**: Codex **Wisseburgensis**, Cod. Guelf. 148 Gud. Lat. (August Herzog Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel)
  
2. Manuscripts of the *recensio gallicana*:
  - F**: Codex Ashburnhamianus (Biblioteca Mediceo Laurentiana Ms. 1555. Florence)
  - M**: Codex Cenomanensis (Médiathèque Loius Aragon, Ms. 84, Le Mans)
  - B**: Codex **Burneianus** 59. (British Museum)
  - G**: Codex **Gudianus**, Cod. Guelf. 182 Gud. Lat (August Herzog Bibliothek)
  - Cri**: CLM 750. (Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich, Petrus **Crinitius**)
  - S**: Steinhöwel, *Fabulae Aesopi*, Ulm 1476?
  - Fr**: Codex **Frankfurtensis**, Praed. 60. (Frankfurt am Main)
  - O**: Codex **Oxonienis** Collegii Corpus Christi 42. (Oxford)
  - RAH39**: Real Academia de le **H**istoria, ms. 39. (Madrid)
  
3. Manuscripts of the *recensio vetus*:
  - V**: Codex **Vindobonensis** 303 – Cod. **Vind.** lat. 303 (Wien)
  - Vi**: Codex **Vindobonensis** 901 – Cod. **Vind.** lat. 901. (Wien)
  - E**: Cod. Ms. lat. oct. 87. (formerly in Erfurt, today in Berlin)
  - W<sup>2</sup>**: the 2. hand of the Codex **Wisseburgensis**
  
4. Other manuscripts:
  - VB**: fables in the work of Vincent de **B**eauvais (*Speculum historiale* and *Sp. Doctrinale*)
  - Mon**: CLM 5337 (Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich)
  - O86**: Codex **Oxonienis** Collegii Corpus Christi **86**. (Oxford)
  - B679**: Codex **Bernensis** **679** (Universitätsbibliothek Bern Ms. 679)
  - B141**: Codex **Bernensis** **141** (Universitätsbibliothek Bern Ms. 141)
  - Nil**: Romulus **Nilantius** – MS 18270 (Paris); MS Digb. 172 (Oxford); MS VLO 46.(Leiden)
  
5. Pseudo-Dositheus:
  - L**: Pseudo-Dositheus-gyűjtemény, Codex **L**eidensis, VGQ 7 (Leiden)
  - P**: Pseudo-Dositheus-gyűjtemény, Codex **P**arisinus, ms. 6503 (Paris)

#### IV. Theories of the Romulean tradition

The textual tradition of the manuscripts of the Romulus-corpus, the relationship between them and the medieval adaptations made from the Romulean fables are complex questions which have already been examined by the early editions of Phaedrus. Schwabe edited the texts of the Romulean fables by two sources, **G** and **S**. Oesterley extended the series of the manuscripts previously known by text of **B**, and in his view **B** can be considered as the original phase of Romulus.

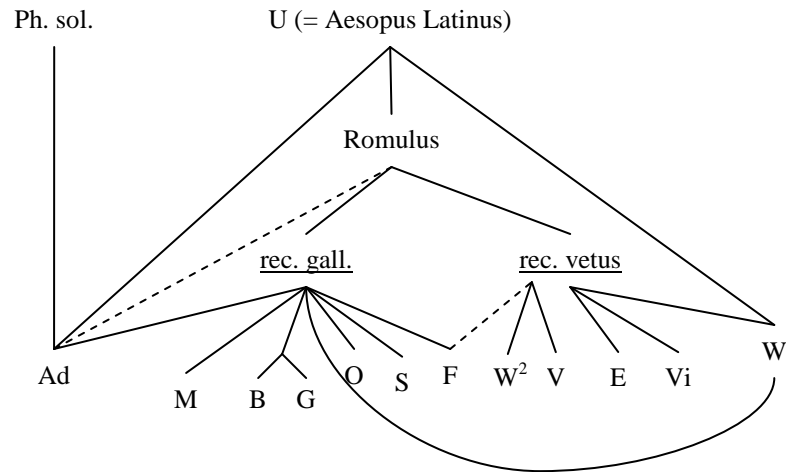
Hervieux, on the basis of the manuscripts studied by him, divided the derivatives of the so-called *Romulus primitif* in five recensions. Among them, the most important is the recension of the *Romulus ordinaire* which essentially corresponds to the *recensio gallicana*. Hervieux called *Romulus de Vienne* the second derivative of the *Romulus primitif* which agrees with the *recensio vetus*. Hervieux also accounted that the main manuscript of the *Romulus ordinaire* is **B**, and he published its text in the second volume of his work.

Although Hervieux did not draw a stemma, but from his explication we can see how he conceives the tradition:

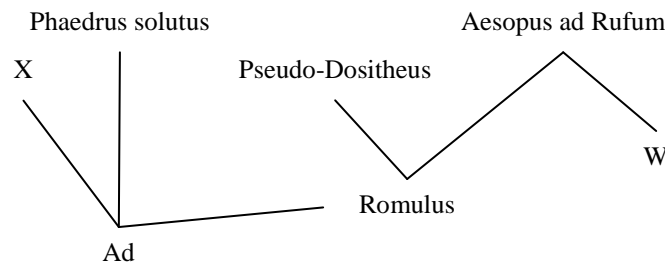


Georg Thiele studied the Romulus-corpus and its problems in a different way. In his opinion, the collection of Romulus did not come from the paraphrases of Phaedrus but originated from such a Latin fable-collection (*Aesopus Latinus*), which arose from a tradition

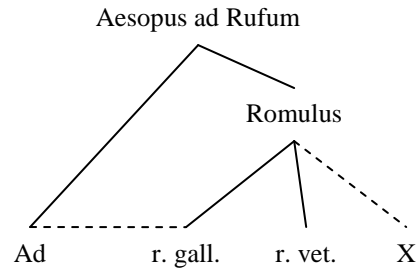
independent from Phaedrus. He explained the Phaedrian reminiscences which can be continuously found in the Romulean fables, as additional Phaedrian interpolations. He drew the following stemma of the tradition:



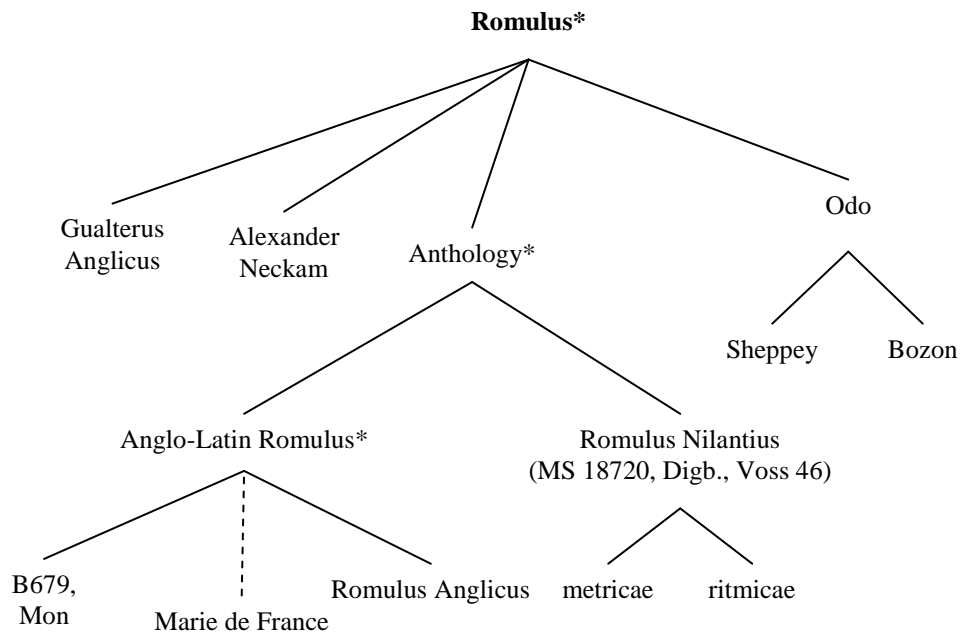
Carl Magnus Zander dealt with the collection of Romulus with respect of its relationship with Phaedrus again. Although Zander did not sketch the connection between the sources, we can sum up his conception by the following stemma:



Francisco R. Adrados thought that the main question about the corpus is that the collection of Romulus can be considered as the paraphrases of Phaedrus' verses or the non-Phaedrian fables are emphasized as the essential character of the Romulus. In his view it is merely a quantitative question. Adrados did not count **Ad** and **W** to the Romulus-corpus, and he presumed that these can contact by contaminations. Reserving the name *recensio gallicana* and *recensio vetus*, he redrew the tradition of the collection of Romulus:



After the review of the two recensions of the Romulus-corpus, Adrados looked into the sources of the medieval tradition of Romulus in another chapter. He marked these collections by X in this stemma. According to the arguments of Adrados, a lost Anthology derived from the Romulus around the 9<sup>th</sup> century, then the collections of the *Anglo-Latin Romulus* and the *Romulus Nilantius* came from this Anthology. In addition, he thought that the **B679** and the **Mon** also belong to this branch of the tradition. Adrados represented this medieval transmission by the following stemma:



## V. Aims and methods

Karl Lachmann drew up the text-critical method in the 19<sup>th</sup> century which is generally used today to edit ancient texts. The method of the *common errors* is criticized from the beginning (Pasquali, Bédier), the modern philology and literary theory always disapproves

and absolutely ignores this method (Zetzel, Cerquiglini). These reflections are merely allowable in part, because the Lachmann method cannot avoid in the case of the *recensio clausa*. The method is not bad, but the transmission of the ancient and medieval text is often problematic. The contamination, the *recensio aperta* actually limits the Lachmann method.

When a scribe writes a text from various sources, contaminated tradition can be issued. In this case it should not be possible to build a stemma. It is not infrequent that the texts are emended, amplified or expanded by the scribes thus contaminated manuscripts are generated. The text criticism cannot generally solve this problem, merely complains the Lachmann method. The dissertation attempts to classify the frequent types of the contamination and demonstrates a method how the contaminated texts can be analysed. The contaminated tradition must be detected, isolated and eliminated from the survey.

In the textual history of the Romulus-corpus one can find significant alterations, for example the collection of the *Aesopus ad Rufum*, or the Romulus-corpus itself are suchlike alterations, and there are more other collections in the tradition which are in some degree modified. Each recension can be considered as a close text tradition, and the altered manuscripts can mark the turning-points of the transmission. Of course each type of the contamination can be detected during examining the manuscripts. When studying the collection of Romulus our model seemed to be well adaptable. Consequently we can use the Lachmann method in a modified version and with limitations.

Lachmann correctly separated the *recensio* and *emendatio*, because the former is objective, the other is subjective. Accordingly, we concentrated on the *recensio* of the texts and we did not attempt to reconstruct an archetype or to emend the text of each manuscript.

At first, we made a table about the fables of the collections of Romulus which can be applied as a concordance and can also facilitate to survey the content of the Romulus-corpus. Then, we recorded the whole texts of the manuscripts on computer and collated them in synoptic table in which we marked the differences between the sources by various colour. By the help of the collation we can survey the text tradition of the Romulus-corpus. We corrected the statements of the scholars of Romulus on several points, we transposed some manuscripts in the stemma and reconsidered the relationship between the sources. We dealt with the tradition of each family of manuscripts and with the problem of the structures of the collections. Finally, we built a stemma which in our view correctly represents the relationship between the manuscripts.



## VI. The *recensio gallicana*

This chapter turns to examine three manuscripts of the *recensio gallicana* (**B**, **G**, **Cri**), which form a group within this *recensio*. This group has reputed as the principal family within the *gallicana* and all critical editions published this group as main text or reconstructed an archetype by this group. However, when comparing the common forms of the group with the other sources of the *gallicana*, it is clear that there are not only common forms but also common errors. Accordingly, these manuscripts occupy the bottom of the stemma and thus we called this group *gallicana B* to mark its secondary place.

The other sources of the *recensio gallicana*, named *gallicana A*, do not form such close family, than the manuscripts of *gallicana B*. At first we dealt with the codex **Fr** which has not yet studied. The fables of this manuscript can be divided in several parts, the first section contains the fables of the *recensio gallicana* (**Fr<sub>1</sub>**), and the second part corresponds to the *recensio Wissemburgensis* (**Fr<sub>2</sub>**). The collation approved that **Fr<sub>1</sub>** is a good text of the *recensio gallicana* and it takes place on the top of the stemma.

The codex **Mon** has been already known by the literature, but its place in the order of derivation was misjudged. Actually, the comparison of the texts testified that this manuscript is related to the *gallicana A*, thus, we have to transpose it in the stemma. The collation also showed that **Mon** takes place early in the tradition together with **Fr<sub>1</sub>** and **S**, and these three sources form a relatively close relation.

With respect of the 4<sup>th</sup> book of the Romulus-corpus there is an interesting notice in several sources, namely the same fables fail from the Romulean fables of the *Codex Ademari* (**Ad<sub>2</sub>**), from the collection of Vincent de Beauvais (**VB**) and from the derivatives of the Anthology. These manuscripts belong to the *gallicana A*, but their material has been altered by a selection which can originate from a common source.

When comparing the manuscripts of the *recensio gallicana* we collected the variants which distinguish the families of the *gallicana A* and *gallicana B*. These variants can help us to place codices **F** and **M** in the stemma. The variants of **F** correspond to the *gallicana A*, but several readings can be found which did not concern the sources close relatives of the archetype, thus the place of **F** can be judged in the order of derivation. **M** contains further errors, accordingly, it takes place below as **F** in the stemma.

## VI. The *recensio Wissemburgensis*

**W** is an important source, because it can be deduced from the *Aesopus ad Rufum*, the ancestor of the Romulus-corpus. The letter, from which this collection takes its name, can be found broken in several parts in **W**. When studying the prose fragments standing in the beginning and at the end of the manuscript, we can reconstruct the prologue which headed the collection of *Aesopus ad Rufum*.

We dealt with the order of the fables in the 4<sup>th</sup> book of this manuscript. Some fables remained in a fragmented form or are cut in two parts, and several promythia also show that the order of the fables was confused. We proved that the fables form blocks, and the blocks were changed each other. This change can be explained by the change of the leaves.

The order of the fables in the whole manuscript does not correspond to the order of the Romulus-corpus, it seems to be independent. However, we found that the series of the fables also form blocks. When following these blocks we can detect a relation between the collection of Romulus and **W** and we can deduce either of them from the other.

**Fr<sub>2</sub>** agrees with **W** both in the textual phase and in the order of fables. Although it contains fewer fables than **W**, it is clear that **Fr<sub>2</sub>** and **W** belong to the same *recensio*. Thus **W** is not considered more as a *codex unicus* of the *recensio Wissemburgensis*.

Although the fables of **Fr<sub>1</sub>** belong to the *gallicana A*, several fables and marginalia show the relationship with the *recensio Wissemburgensis*. **Fr<sub>1</sub>** is a contaminated manuscript, and we presented how can it happened. Johann Streler, the copyist of **Fr**, copied a damaged *gallicana*-manuscript and he supplied its lacunas by the help of another manuscript belonging to the *recensio Wissemburgensis*. This copying method can explain both the contamination and the marginalia.

## VII. The *recensio vetus*

In Georg Thiele's view the manuscripts of the *recensio vetus* represent an older tradition than the codices of the *recensio gallicana*. He directly deduced it from the archetype of the Romulus-corpus. At first, we noticed that the largest collection of this *recensio*, **V** does not correctly represent the material of the *recensio*, because the *recensio vetus* contains only 60 fables.

The fables found at the end of **V** do not occur in other manuscripts of the *recensio vetus*. These are the expansions of **V**. We allocated the family with which these fables

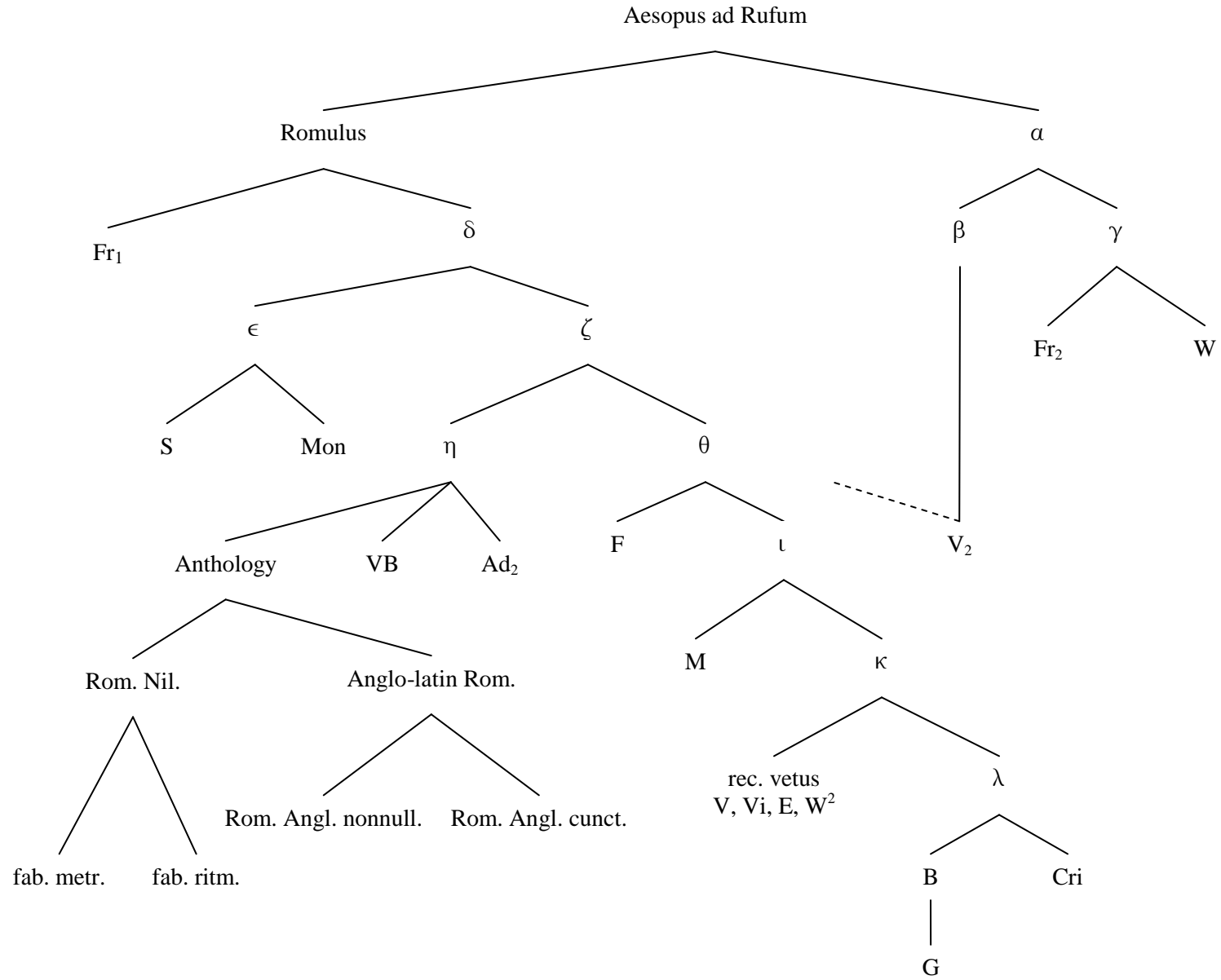
correspond. This family apparently belongs to the *recensio gallicana*. Additionally we proved that the variants of the *recensio Wissemburgensis* can be found in this *gallicana*-manuscript. That is to say, we found a double contamination, first a *gallicana*-manuscript contaminated by a source of the *recensio Wissemburgensis*, and then **V** added the fables of this to his material.

Another contamination can be detected in **Vi**, another manuscript of the *recensio vetus*. A series of fables derived from the *recensio gallicana* can be found in the centre of **Vi**. We approximately determined the places of the two *gallicana*-manuscripts in the order of derivation which were connected with **V** and **Vi**.

When comparing the variants of the *recensio vetus* with the *recensio gallicana*, we can ascertain that the former *recensio* is not independent from the tradition of the *recensio gallicana*, as Thiele accounted. Although the text of the *recensio vetus* was greatly altered, thus the tradition is hardly detected, we think that the *recensio vetus* can be placed in the bottom of the stemma. A series of common errors show the relation with the manuscripts of the *gallicana B*.

## VII. The stemma

On the basis of our observations about the various manuscripts of the Romulus-corpus we built stemma. From the collection of the *Aesopus ad Rufum*, almost all the recensions are placed in the stemma, the *recensio Wissemburgensis*, the collection of Romulus and its derivatives, the *recensio gallicana* and the *recensio vetus* designate the order of derivation. For the sake of comprehension, we do not sign the lines of the contaminations, except in the case of **V<sub>2</sub>**, which is included in the stemma, because the structure of the *recensio Wissemburgensis* can be represented by the derivation of **V<sub>2</sub>**. However, when drawing stemma, it is clear, that actually this cannot exactly present the transmission, but this can demonstrate the relationship between the manuscripts. During the correction of the stemma made by the former scholars, it seems clear that the new structure creates a new starting point, because our statement determines the direction of collation. This stemma can be considered as the conclusion of the dissertation:



## VIII. Excursion – Translation of Aesop by Pesti Gábor

However, the fable-collection of Pesti Gábor is not closely related to the tradition of the Romulus-corpus, the first part of it carries on the order of fables of Romulus. Pesti translated such a humanist collection which particularly differs from the family of Romulus-corpus. As is well-known that the printed book of Pesti Gábor, in the title *Aesopis Phrygis fabulae* was the first Hungarian fable collection and it was published in 1536 by the press of Singrenius.

Scholars of Pesti have already established that the source of Pesti's translation was a Nuremberg edition of the collection of Martin Dorp. When closely considering the tradition of the *Aesopi Dorpii*, it is clear that Pesti did not merely translate one edition, but several. In the case of the *Vita Aesopi* Pesti certainly contaminated at least three various texts and prints. This is approved by detailed philological method, thus we assume that Pesti not merely translated the Nuremberg edition, but the French branch of the tradition too. Concerning to the fables of Abstemijs, Pesti left them, not because those did not arise from the Antiquity, but because the work of Abstemijs simply was in Index.

## IX. Publications related to the dissertation

Phaedrus és Romulus. Mesék kétféle szereposztásban. in: *Corollarium, Tanulmányok a 65 éves Tar Ibolya tiszteletére*, szerk. CZEROVSZKI Mariann, NAGYILLÉS János, Szeged 2011, 345–349.

Phaedrus and the Medieval Tradition. *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 52 (2012), 173–189.

Pesti Gábor állatmeséinek forrásai. in: *Filológia és textológia a régi magyar irodalomban. Tudományos konferencia. Miskolc, 2011. május 25–28.*, szerk. KECSKEMÉTI Gábor, TASI Réka, Miskolc 2012, 101–111.

The Medieval Tradition of the Fables of Romulus. *Graeco-Latina Brunensia* 18 (2013) 185–197.

Phaedrus és a középkori szöveghagyomány. in: *Szöveg és Hagyomány. Tanulmányok.* PPKE BTK 2013, 171–197.

A Codex Wissemburgensis meséinek sorrendjéről. Esettanulmány. *Corollarium* 1 (2014) 38–48. Online folyóirat. szerk. TAR Ibolya, HAJDÚ Attila, GELLÉRFI Gergő. <http://www2.arts.u-szeged.hu/cia/Corollarium/index.htm>