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Scripta Classica 7, 73-83

2010

Artykuł został opracowany do udostępnienia w internecie przez Muzeum Historii Polski w ramach prac podejmowanych na rzecz zapewnienia otwartego, powszechnego i trwałego dostępu do polskiego dorobku naukowego i kulturalnego. Artykuł jest umieszczony w kolekcji cyfrowej bazhum.muzhp.pl, gromadzącej zawartość polskich czasopism humanistycznych i społecznych.

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Abstract: There is a family of late mediaeval Greek texts that records an history of Gello — a female demon from Byzantium. Gello is an example of a female demon who attacks women in the travail of childbirth and their new born babies. Because of demon's adversary Gello story is divided into two types: Archangel Michael's type and a legendary saint Sisinnios. This article concerns the Sisinnios type and reveals Gello's connections to the demons of the ancient East as well as ancient Greece and Rome.

Key words: Gello, Gellou, demon, demonology, Byzantium, Pseudo-Psellos, The Testament of Solomon

There is a particular family of late mediaeval Greek texts which recounts the story of Gello, a female demon who stole new-born babies and attacked pregnant women or women either in childbirth or immediately after they had given birth. She seems to have been very popular or maybe even the most popular female demon in Byzantium. There are two types of the Gello story. In one of them Archangel Michael appears and in the other type, it is the legendary saint Sisinnios, who figures. The most important work on this theme is the article "Saint Sisinnios, the Archangel Michael and the Female Demon Gyllou: the Typology of the Greek Literary Stories" by Richard P.H. Greenfield¹. In this article Greenfield examines the thirty-two extant Greek manuscripts of Gello. Twenty-two of them represent the Michael-type of the story; seven are the Sisinnios-type; and the remaining three manuscripts contain both types of the story. The manuscripts ana-

¹ Richard P.H. Greenfield: "Saint Sisinnios, the Archangel Michael and the Female Demon Gyllou: the Typology of the Greek Literary Stories". *Byzantina* 15 (1989), pp. 83—142.

lysed by Greenfield date from 15th to early 20th century. The manuscript tradition of these thirty-two manuscripts is exceptionally complex; this is neither the right place nor time to examine it in the detail required. In this paper I would like to present the case of Gello and try to analyse the second type of her story.

The roots of the Byzantine female demons stretch back to ancient Assyria, where myths about Lilitu and Lamashtu came into being². One such myth was concerned with tempting men and then not satisfying them. The name for the demon who did this is derived from a word meaning ‘the wind’. The other demon myth was a demon who harmed pregnant women, lurking to kidnap and eat their children. It is possible that both these female demons were joined together by the ancient Hebrews and turned into Lilith, who combines features of both Lilitu and Lamashtu, but her name, apart from phonetic resemblance, is — according to some scholars — falsely derived from a Hebrew noun meaning ‘night’.

In Hebrew literature one finds tales about Lilith, when she was encountered by the prophet Elijah³. He made her promise not to harm anyone in any house, where a list of her names could be found. The Jews tried to defend themselves against Lilith by making charms, on which were written the names of the she-demon. The number of names is not identical in each version of the story, but all versions are unanimous in saying that omitting even one of the names from the list will cause the charm to be useless. If a house which contained a woman in childbirth contained such a charm of all the names of Lilith, the she-demon was able to harm neither woman nor her child. It was the same for Gello, as I shall relate.

According to the mediaeval rabbinic tradition, God sent three angels named Senoi, Sansenoy and Semangelof to bring Lilith back to paradise⁴. As they did not manage to do this, they were then to drown her in the Red Sea. The demon begged them for mercy, and out of their grace they let her live. In return, she promised that she would not harm any child protected by a charm bearing the names of the three angels. Furthermore, she had to agree that every day a hundred of her numerous brood, called *Lilim* or *Shiddim*, would die. The names of the three angels, Senoi, Sansenoy and Sammangelof/Samangelof, are very similar to the names of the saints from the story about Gello — Sisinnios and Sisinnodoros.

In ancient Greece the vast majority of demons was thought to be feminine (e.g. the *Erinies* (the Furies), *Lyssa* (Madness)) because of their ancestry and because

² See A.A. Barb: “Antaura, the Mermaid and the Devil’s Grandmother”. *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 29 (1966), pp. 4—6.

³ See M. Gaster: “Two thousand years of a charm against the child-stealing Witch”. *Studies and Texts in Folklore, Magic, Mediaeval Romance, Hebrew Apocrypha and Samaritan Archaeology* (London, 1925—1928), pp. 1005—1038; A.A. Barb: “Antaura...”, p. 4.

⁴ See R. Pathai: “Lilith”. *The Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. 77, no. 306 (Oct.—Dec. 1964), pp. 296—297.

they were supposed to inhabit darkness and to invade humans' mind⁵. It was obvious, allegedly, because of the connection between Mother Earth and a woman's womb. Human beings were born of their mother's womb and after death return to the womb of Mother Earth. Chthonic deities were connected either with fertility or with death. Similarly, deities from Celtic mythology had connections with both these aspects of life and/or death⁶. Women in antiquity were also considered to be impure, because of some aspects of their biology, and polluting to men, for example during menstruation and after giving birth. Moreover, in ancient Greek there was one word, *σπλάγχνα*, for defining two things — womb and mind. Probably that is because the Greeks were concerned about the location of emotion and intellect in the breast and stomach. As Ruth Padel mentions:

The *splanchna*, therefore, are a dark inward area which daemonic forces enter and inhabit. [...] Female *splanchna* obviously fill with dark liquid (blood, in Greek, is usually characterised by the word we translate 'black'); and women are commonly perceived as more easily enterable by daemonic passion⁷.

In Greek mythology there is a tale about a female monster stealing and eating babies. Her name is Lamia. She was an ordinary girl, with whom Zeus fell in love. Their relationship came to fruition in several children, but Hera, the jealous wife of the god, killed almost all the babies. From that time on Lamia became an evil monster devouring children (either her own or other women's) and sucking their blood⁸.

Other female demons sucking blood were the Empusas. They were numbered among Hecate's (the goddess of black magic) retinue. Sometimes Empusas were identified with Lamia.

In his *Ars poetica* Horace refuses to show the scene of worming a baby out from Lamia's stomach — a baby she had eaten for breakfast: *neu pransae Lamiae vivum puerum extrahat alvo*⁹. So, it appears that the ancient Romans thought that if Lamia was caught, the eaten babies could be restored alive. This belief was then borrowed by the Byzantines, which we can see in the stories about a female demon named Gello. Ovid¹⁰ describes winged female demons, who hunt for babies, snatch

⁵ R. Padel: "Women: Model for Possession by Greek Daemons". In: *Images of Women in Antiquity*. Eds. A. Cameron, A. Kuhrt. Detroit 1983, pp. 3—4.

⁶ S. Botheroyd, P.F. Botheroyd: *Słownik mitologii celtyckiej*. Trans. P. Latko. Katowice 1998, p. 42.

⁷ R. Padel: "Women...", p. 4.

⁸ Suda On Line, http://www.stoa.org/sol-bin/search.pl?db=REAL&search_method=QUERY&login=guest&enlogin=guest&user_list=LIST&page_num=1&searchstr=lamia&field=any&num_per_page=100.

⁹ Quintus H. Flaccus: *Epistles, Book II, and Epistle to the Pisones ("Ars poetica")*. Ed. N. Rudd. Cambridge 1989, p. 70, v. 340.

¹⁰ Publius Ovidius Naso: *Fastorum Libri Sex*. Eds. E.H. Alton, D.E.W. Wormell, E. Courtney. Leipzig 1978, pp. 141—142, B. VI 131—140.

them and then rend them limb from limb; and they do it by night. So, these demons act like Lamias, but the author uses the word *striges* to label them. The very same name appears in treatise *Περὶ στρυγγῶν* ascribed to John of Damascus¹¹. *Striges* are described here also as winged female demons, which in their spare time, of course during the night, suffocate children, at a pinch tear out their livers, which of course results in the children's death — the author even points out that it is impossible for a child to survive without a liver. He also mentions that *striges* are called Γελοῦδες as well; the term of course is derived from Gello's name.

Gello first appears in a poem by Sappho¹², as a demon devouring children. Later on, Hesychius of Alexandria, a grammarian from approximately the 5th century AD wrote a lexicon of preserved unusual and obscure Greek words and one of them is *Gello*. According to Hesychius' dictionary Gello is not only a child-stealing demon, but also an immature form of Empusa¹³.

In the *Suda* (a hybrid lexicon-encyclopaedia from the 9th/10th century AD) it is mentioned that Gello died as a young girl and from that time on her ghost appeared to children and to those who had suffered unseasonable deaths¹⁴.

There is a treatise *Περὶ δαιμόνων*, falsely ascribed to Michael Psellos¹⁵, the greatest authority on Byzantine demonology, who lived in the mid-11th century. This treatise says that demons are genderless — they can form themselves into human shape, appearing either female or male¹⁶. However, in texts dealing with Byzantine popular beliefs, there are many female demons, e.g. in the so-called *Testamentum Solomonis*¹⁷. *The Testament of Solomon* dates from the 1st to the 3rd

[...] *sunt avidae volucres, non quae Phineia mensis
guttura fraudabant, sed genus inde trahunt:
grande caput, stantes oculi, rostra apta rapinis;
canities pennis, unguibus hamus inest;
nocte volant puerosque petunt nutricis egentes,
et vitiant cunis corpora rapta suis;
carpere dicuntur lactentia viscera rostris,
et plenum poto sanguine guttur habent.
Est illis strigibus nomen; sed nominis huius
causa quod horrendum stridere nocte solent.*

¹¹ Ioannes Damascenos: *Περὶ στρυγγῶν*. PG 94, 1604.

¹² "Γέλλως παιδοφιλωτέρα". In: *Poetarum Lesbiorum Fragmenta*. Eds. E. Lobel, D. Page. Oxford 1963, fr. 178, p. 101.

¹³ Non vidi; see Oeconomides: "Yello...", p. 331.

¹⁴ *Suda On Line*: http://www.stoa.org/sol-bin/search.pl?db=REAL&search_method=QUERY&login=guest&enlogin=guest&user_list=LIST&page_num=1&searchstr=gello&field=any&num_per_page=100.

¹⁵ P. Gautier: "Le de Daemonibus du Pseudo-Psellos". *REB* 38 (1980), pp. 105—106.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 165—169, II 480—481, 514—519.

¹⁷ Ch.Ch. McCown: *Διαθήκη Σολομώντος. The Testament of Solomon*. Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament, Heft 9. Leipzig 1922.

century AD, but it enjoyed long popularity throughout the Byzantine period¹⁸. It is a kind of catalogue of demons summoned by King Solomon to help him build a Temple, and that is probably why the authorship of this treatise was attributed to King Solomon himself.

Graphic depictions of female demons are also to be found in the art of the Byzantine times, e.g. so-called “Beautiful from the Mountains” from the magical papyrus *Bononiensis 3632*. She is shown as a woman with long hair, a crown on her head and a fish-tail and feet armed with claws¹⁹.

In the article mentioned before Greenfield presents an edition of the text based on the manuscript *d’Orville 110*, which is kept in the Bodleian Library in Oxford. It is one of the Sisinnios-type texts; its title is *The Life and Public Activity (Βίος καὶ πολιτεία) of the Saints of God Sisinnios and Sisinnodoros, Saint Melitene’s Brothers*; and the story is more or less as follows:

Once upon a time, during the reign of king Laurentios in Arabia there lived a woman called Melitene. She had given birth to seven children, which were stolen by a female demon called Gellou. And soon she became pregnant again and when the time came for her to give birth to a child, she ordered a fortified tower built. Melitene hid herself inside the tower with her two maids and they took provisions for twenty-five years.

One day her brothers, saint Sisinnios and saint Sisinnodoros, who were soldiers somewhere in Arabia, desired to visit their sister. Unfortunately, she had just given birth to the next child and she did not want to let her brothers into the tower, because she was afraid of Gellou. But Sisinnios and Sisinnodoros begged her so much, that she succumbed and finally she let them into the tower. But Gellou came into the Melitene’s stronghold together with the saints Sisinnios and Sisinnodoros. Gellou had an ability to change herself into different shapes, and this time she had taken the shape of the dust, and at about midnight Gellou killed the child of Melitene.

When Melitene realized that her child has been abducted by Gellou, she started crying and lamenting, regretting that she had ever let Sisinnios and Sisinnodoros into her tower. The saints felt guilty and they prayed to God to give them His power against Gellou. The angel of God descended from heaven and said that the Lord had heard their prayers and sent His angel to give them His might. So they set out to the mountains of Lebanon to look for Gellou.

On their way saints Sisinnios and Sisinnodoros met a pine tree. They asked it, if it had seen Gellou, but the pine tree denied having seen her. Sisinnios and Sisinnodoros got angry and they cursed the pine tree, because it did not tell them the truth. Next Sisinnios and Sisinnodoros encountered an olive

¹⁸ A. Delatte, Ch. Josserand: “Contribution à l’étude de la démonologie Byzantine”. In: *Mélange Bidez. Annuaire de l’Institut de Philologie et d’Histoire Orientales de l’Université Libre de Bruxelles 2*. Bruxelles 1934, p. 207.

¹⁹ A.A. Barb: “Antaura...”, plate 1c.

tree and asked it the same question. The olive tree told the saints that Gellou had passed by and she had hidden herself near the sea, among the children's corpses. And Sisinnios and Sisinnodoros blessed the olive tree for telling the truth.

When Sisinnios and Sisinnodoros finally caught up with Gellou, they ordered her in the name of God to surrender. But Gellou did not listen to the saints and she started running into the sea. Sisinnios and Sisinnodoros galloped to catch the demon. When they managed to do so, Gellou asked them why they tortured her so much. Saint Sisinnios answered her that if she gave him back the seven children of Melitene, he would not torture her. Gellou said that she would give him back the seven children of Melitene if Sisinnios were able to return the milk which he had sucked from his mother's breast. Then Sisinnios started to pray to God to give him the strength to return his mother's milk and God heard his prayer and Sisinnios was able to do so. When Sisinnios returned his mother's milk, he told Gellou to give him back Melitene's seven children and she immediately returned the stolen children. Gellou begged Sisinnios and Sisinnodoros not to torture her and she also promised them not to harm anyone who would be able to write her names as a charm. She gave them a catalogue of her twelve names and she swore on many saints. Her first name is Gellou, the second Mothrus, the third Abidzus, the fourth Maramatotus, the fifth Marmanilla, the sixth Seleninus, the seventh Ariane, the eighth Salasaleutu, the ninth Egyptiane, the tenth Asbletus, the eleventh Haimabibon, the twelfth Ktarkarischu.

And Gellou swore to them by the Cherubim and Seraphim saying "Holy, Holy, Holy Lord Sabaoth" that she would spare the homestead of the servant of God so-and-so, from malice and poison, jealousy, magic, nosiness, revenge and all wickedness let the house containing the charm with her names written on it [be delivered].

These texts were probably used as exorcisms — in some of them there is a space to mention the name of a person who is to be protected from Gello — the homestead of the servant of God 'so-and-so'. However, the texts are quite long, so maybe they were used for something else as well.

Let us analyse this story about Gello. There is a woman called Melitene. What we know about her is that she had given birth to seven children and is going to have another child. She is afraid of Gello, a female demon whose occupation is stealing children and harming mothers-to-be and women just after delivery. In order to hide from Gello, Melitene orders a fortified tower built and she takes with her two servants, significantly both female. She has two brothers, each of them is a saint — Sisinnios and Sisinnodoros, and Melitene is a saint as well (though not in every version).

It would be unbelievable and awkward for a woman in Byzantium to have given birth to seven children and to be pregnant yet again and not to have a husband. We know nothing about her family, apart from the fact that she has two brothers.

She hides in a stronghold instead of being protected by her husband. It would be a real scandal in Byzantium for a woman to have children and not to be married. Moreover, how could such a woman with several children but without a husband be a saint? It is just impossible. Besides, if she were a saint, why did she not defend herself and the child? Sisinnios and Sisinnodoros derived all their strength against Gello from God, so Melitene could have prayed to God as well, and God would have heard her prayer and helped her.

In some of the texts Melitene is looking for a hideout in a tower or just in a house *after* she has given birth to a child. In one late version she builds tower *before* she gets pregnant and Sisinnios and Sinidoros come to visit her because God has sent them, after having heard her prayer. This one is really confusing — how could Melitene become pregnant, if she was locked in the tower *alone*? Even if she was there together with her husband it is not to his credit at all.

A man, whose name is Theodoulos, appears as Melitene's husband only in four manuscripts, the latest ones. It is probable that a scribe when copying the manuscript simply did not accept a lack of Melitene's husband in the story and made him up²⁰. It must have seemed indecent that Melitene was not married, but had several children. These four late manuscripts contain some further motifs that are different from other texts, e.g. they write about Melitene's *three* brothers (only one other manuscript apart from these late four does so).

As mentioned before, Melitene orders a tower built and hides in it. This raises many questions. Usually in stories women are locked in towers against their will and they want somebody to rescue them. For example Rapunzel from Brothers' Grimm fairy tale, who was locked in a tower without any doors or windows by a witch. Melitene by contrast does not want to be rescued at all (apart from one mentioned version). Additionally, she fortifies her tower so that nobody could enter her stronghold.

What is also strange is the fact that Melitene takes with her provisions for such a long time. As we know, Gello attacks only new-born babies and women just before or after delivery, so it seems pointless to make provision for twenty-five years.

The scene in which saints Sisinnios and Sisinnodoros ask Melitene to let them into the stronghold resembles the scene from another fairy tale, "The three little pigs". However, the brothers do not want to harm their sister in any way; their only intention is to help her.

Another interesting thing is that the children can be got back from Gello *alive* even though it is written that they have been killed by the demon. And if there were eight children of Melitene altogether, and Gello kills only new-born ones, it would appear that between the first and the last baby having been killed there

²⁰ It was a common activity for scribes to correct the text that they were copying in a way they thought to be right, by adding or omitting something.

were about seven years. It is curious and the texts says nothing about children's condition when they are returned by Gello, so it must not be so important. In fact in some manuscripts Gello returns not all the children, but sometimes only one.

Anyway, the restoration of children killed by Gello is a visible evidence of divine intervention, just like the motif with Sisinnios mother's milk. In some texts saints can also change their shape — they catch Gello flying in the air as hawks.

There are some motifs that differ, but the main sense of the story is the same in every version. Sometimes third brother is given to Sisinnios and Sisinnodoros and the spelling of their names is different. There is always a killed/stolen child, adventures during the chase for the demon, the recovery of the child, and the catalogue of demon's names. The number of names is different in different texts²¹, but there is unanimity that omitting even one of the demon's names would cause the charm to be useless. Some of the names are easy to understand (e.g. Seleninus, Haimabibon) and some seem to be a kind of a magic "hocus-pocus". Sometimes it is hard to see similarity between some variants of one name in different texts. The most frequently used names are variants of Gello and Abyzouth. The one that is of importance here is *stringla*.

The time the story is supposed to take place is hard to determine. Only two versions of the text mention that the events took place during the reign of a ruler who really existed — one of them is Trajan and the other is Aurelian. Actually, we do not know if this is significant, but if it were we could conclude that the story itself is much more older than the manuscripts in which it has been preserved. The places where the events take place are different in different versions of the story as well.

The number of trees encountered, questioned and then cursed or blessed by Sisinnios and Sisinnodoros also varies from two to four. What was the purpose of running this motif in the story, if the saints knew the right answer? Were these questions only rhetorical ones? What was the reason of choosing particularly these kinds of trees? The olive tree has very wealthy symbolism, and a very positive one. From an old legend one can find out that the Christ's cross was made of olive and cedar wood²². The olive tree symbolizes for example strength, purification and victory. In other versions of the Gello story we find also a willow and a briar.

²¹ From twelve (or twelve and a half) to twenty or to even seventy-two. Half a name was very popular in ancient Greek magic; see e.g. F. Pradel: *Griechische und süditalienische Gebete, Beschwörungen und Rezepte des Mittelalters*. Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten III. 3. Giessen 1907, pp. 73 and 78ff. Seventy-two names seem to refer to seventy-two names ascribed to God; see Jewish Encyclopaedia Online: <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/view.jsp?artid=52&letter=N>.

²² On olive's symbolism see J. Chevalier, A. Gheerbrant: *The Penguin Dictionary of Symbols*. Trans. J. Buchanan-Brown. London, 1996; A. Room: *Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*. London 2001, p. 848.

Gello herself seems to be an archetype of evil witch from fairy tales who steals children and then eats them. Just like in the story about Hansel and Gretel, although they are older than the children stolen and killed by Gello.

Another significant motif from Sisinnios-type of the story is that Gello, chased by saint Sisinnios and saint Sisinnodoros runs away into the sea. When looking at the name *Obyzouth/Abyzouth* one can find a parallel to a Greek word ἄβυσσος meaning 'the abyss'. Greeks borrowed this noun from Assyrians or Sumerians. Apsu/Abzu was, according to Mesopotamian mythology, a primeval ocean from which the world was made. It was genderless, but Babylonians divided its duties between Abzu and Tiamat. First one was representing sweet water and a masculine element, the other — salt water and a feminine element²³. So, it seems that Apsu/Abzu evolved and from genderless became first masculine and later on — feminine. But that is not all about the female demons' connections with the water. Pseudo-Psellos writes that the demons connected with water and the earth take a female shape, like the Nereids²⁴.

When Lilith, said to be the first wife of Adam, turned against him and ran away from Paradise she took up residence in the Red Sea²⁵. There are also preserved some Greek charms against migraines and other illnesses which are brought by female demons coming out of the sea. They are called Auras or Abras. In the antique versions of charms against them it is Artemis of Ephesos who appears, in mediaeval charms it is Jesus Christ who appears to drive them away²⁶. The texts of these charms against illnesses are similar to the texts about Gello (Michael-type) and texts containing mentions of Lilith.

The Sisinnios-type of Gello story contains some motifs known to us from fairy tales and actually this should not be surprising. As it was mentioned before, the earliest preserved manuscript of the story is from 15th century, but the story itself came into being much more earlier. It is hard to say when exactly, but I think it had been living in an oral tradition for centuries before being written down. And in every culture oral tradition has something from fairy tales. Paul Perdrizet in his work on Greek-Oriental demonology states that faith in preventive abilities of saint Sisinnios originate from antiquity. His statement is based on preserved late antique or early Byzantine magical amulets with images of saint Sisinnios killing a female demon²⁷. In a late Egyptian monastery in Bawit (Baut) there is a Coptic wallpainting presenting a man on a horseback slaying a female demon. The inscription names him as saint Sisinnios, and the demon is called Alabasdria. A.A. Barb writes that this name survived in a modern Turkish folklore in a changed version of

²³ A.A. Barb: "Antaura...", pp. 5—6.

²⁴ P. Gautier: "Le de Daemonibus..." pp. 169—171, II 545—548.

²⁵ R. Pathai: "Lilith"... p. 296.

²⁶ A.A. Barb: "Antaura...", pp. 2—3.

²⁷ P. Perdrizet: *Negotium Perambulans In Tenebris. Publications de la faculte de lettres de l'Universite de Strasbourg* 6. Strasbourg 1922, p. 15.

Albasti²⁸. She shares almost the same features as Lilith. The fresco shows another female demon called a daughter of Alabasdria and some animals, for example vipers, a scorpion and an owl, which is connected with Lilith. Both “ladies” are painted as pretty, the mother has a fish-tail and her daughter as well, but she (the daughter) is also... winged, as befits an evil female demon connected with both the sea and the wind.

There is one significant difference between the Sisinnios- and Michael-types of the Gello history. As I mentioned before, in Sisinnios type of the story there is a kind of introduction before the demon needs to be chased. In the Michael type there is no introduction like this. Neither Melitene nor her brothers appear in this type of story — a leading character is the Archangel Michael. He meets the demon when descending from heaven or Mount Sinai. The demon’s appearance is described and the Archangel makes her confess where she has come from and where she is going. Then the demon says that she is harming babies and women just before or after giving birth to a child, but that she can also do other bad things. In the end, the demon is coerced by the Archangel into doing the same thing as in the Sisinnios-type of the story — giving a list of her names and promising not to hurt anyone who possesses a charm with all her names.

As we can see Gello, whose name is first mentioned in Greek literature by Sappho, disappears (but only from literature) for several centuries in order to re-appear in Byzantine texts. Gello must have really enjoyed popularity since her fabulous story, which had originated from little mentions in literature and simple amulets, survived many centuries, first in oral tradition and then later in the written one. And not only in the Greek tradition – it is very popular for example in Romania. Moses Gaster gives a translation of a charm written on a basis of a Romanian peasants’ tale²⁹. The story is about the Archangel Michael encountering Avezuha, while he was descending from the Mount of Olives. She says that she is going to Betlehem, where Jesus Christ is to be born, to kill him. Then, threatened by the Archangel Michael Avezuha says in what shapes she can change herself (a dog, a cat, a fly, a spider, a raven, an evil-looking girl) in order to “enter into the houses of the people and hurt the women and bring trouble upon the children”. She gives the Archangel Michael a catalogue of her names and promise not to hurt anyone having these names written on an amulet.

What we have here is undoubtedly Michael-type of Gello story — it has the same construction. And what is interesting, in some of Byzantine versions of Gello story there was the mention of her attempt at killing the new-born Christ which was foiled by the Archangel Michael. The demon’s ability to change shapes is also significant. Gello’s names are different, however in *Avezuha* one can see changed form of *Obyzouth/Abyzouth*. The Sisinnios-type of Gello story is to be found in Romanian tradition as well.

²⁸ A.A. Barb: “Antaura...”, p. 7.

²⁹ M. Gaster: *Two Thousand Years...*, pp. 1008—1009.

Lamia, Empusa, Strix/Stringla — these are just a few from numerous Gello's "code names". And Gello seems to be only another Lilitu-Lilith's "incarnation". Within centuries she has traveled to many countries, she gained some new names, became a little bit more civilized. And finally she settled down in a forest, in a cottage made of gingerbread, or standing on a chicken's leg where she lurks waiting for Hansel and Gretel to fatten them and eat them — though this time not raw. But, there always will be somebody, not necessarily a saint, who will slay her, at least for a time.