

A Euclidean Expression in Lucian

In Lucian's *Dialogue of the Dead* between Menippus and Chiron (26 Jacobitz), the Centaur explains to the Cynic that he voluntarily renounced immortality and came to the House of Hades to avoid the monotonous regularity of pleasures in the world above. Menippus cautions him that he may fall into the same trap down below – and might then start looking for a change *ἐντεῦθεν εἰς ἄλλον βίον, ὅπερ, οἶμαι, ἀδύνατον*.

Neither Hemsterhuys nor Jacobitz *ad loc.* has noted that Menippus' conclusion is formulaic: it is the triumphant *reductio ad impossibile*, ἡ εἰς τὸ ἀδύνατον ἀπαγωγή, of Euclidean geometry: e.g. Eucl. *Elem.* 3.7 (1.182.9 Heiberg) ὅπερ ἀδύνατον; cf. 1.7, 3.8, 3.10 (1.26.5 f., 1.188.19 f., 1.194.14 f. Heiberg).

The influence on Lucian's work of the *grammaticus* and the *rhetor* is, of course, abundantly clear; apparently no notice has as yet been taken of this slight echo from the lecture-hall of the *mathematicus*.