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Graeco-Latina Brunensia. 2018, vol. 23, iss. 2, pp. 171-178

ISSN 1803-7402 (print); ISSN 2336-4424 (online)

Stable URL (DOI): https://doi.org/10.5817/GLB2018-2-12
Stable URL (handle): https://hdl.handle.net/11222.digilib/138778
Access Date: 16. 02. 2024
Version: 20220831

Graeco-Latina Brunensia 23 / 2018 / 2
https://doi.org/10.5817/GLB2018-2-12

Authorship Controversy in Three Greek Epigrams: Phalaecus Revived

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Abstract

The author discusses authorship controversies connected with three Greek epigrams: *AP* VI 165, *AP* VI 193, and *AP* VII 650. There are several lemmas in these epigrams (e.g. Φαλάκκου in *AP* VI 165; Φλαικίου or Φλάκκου in *AP* VI 193; Φλάκκου ἢ Φαλαίκου in *AP* VII 650) which are ambiguous and they may refer to two different epigrammatists, namely Phalaecus of Phocis or Phlaccus (Lat. Statyllius Flaccus). It is suggested that these epigrams represent Phalaecus' literary output.

Keywords

Greek epigrams; *Palatine Anthology*; Phalaecus of Phocis; Statyllius Flaccus

Fourteen years ago I discussed the controversial problem of the authorship of the epigram *AP* VI 193, whose lemma seems uncertain or ambiguous (scribe A wrote: Φλαικίου [?], scribe C corrected it to Φλάκκου), cf. Witczak (2005: pp. 130–136). Now I would like to return to the question once more, as the problem of the authorship is more complex. There are three epigrams in the *Palatine Anthology* where the name of Phalaecus (Gk. Φάλαικος) seems to be contaminated in some way with the name of Phlaccus (Gk. Φλάκκος), i.e. Statyllius Flaccus (Gk. Στατύλλιος Φλάκκος).

The first instance is the epigram *AP* VI 165, where the author's lemma is evidently incorrect: Φαλάκκου. Such a writing suggests two possible alternatives: Φαλαίκου or Φλάκκου. It is completely uncertain who the author of the epigram in question was. Modern scholars hesitate whether Phalaecus of Phocis or Statyllius Flaccus should be assumed as the author of *AP* VI 165.[1]

The second controversy refers to the poetical masterpiece *AP* VI 193. The scribe A, copying the edition of Constantine Cephalas, introduced author's lemma Φλαικίου (?), but the scribe C (acting as a corrector) changed it into Φλάκκου. It is uncertain whether corrector's emendation was motivated or not.

The third problem is connected with the epigram *AP* VII 650. The Palatine codex contains an ambiguous author's lemma Φλάκκου ἢ Φαλαίκου ("[work] of Phlaccus or of Phalaecus"), whereas the Planudean codex, created in 1301 A.D. by Maximus Planudes, a Byzantine monk, gives a different (clearly incorrect) alternative: Φακέλλου ("of Phakellus").

1. Epigrams of Phalaecus

Phalaecus of Phocis was an early Hellenistic lyric and epigrammatic poet, who lived in the second part of the fourth century and the first part of the third century B.C. (Skiadas 1967–1968: pp. 65–67; Albiani 2007: p. 906; Appel 2017: pp. 13–18). Phalaecus' works were undoubtedly included into the *Garland* (Gk. Στέφανος), the first major anthology of epigrams, created by Meleager of Gadara (first century BC). However, the author of the *Garland* did not mention Phalaecus' name among other poets in the preserved preface (*AP* IV 1) to his anthology of the Greek epigrams (Tueller 2014: pp. 175–181). Only five of obvious Phalaecus' epigrams are still preserved in the Greek Anthology, the sixth one is quoted by Athenaeus (*Deipnosophistae* X 440d), cf. Skiadas (1967–1968: pp. 68–86).

It is worth emphasizing that the Aeolic lyric metre called commonly the Phalaecian verse (Gk. Φαλαίκειον) or the hendecasyllable (Lat. *versus hendecasyllabus Phalaeceus*) was named after him. The metre in question was older than the Hellenistic times and therefore Skiadas (1967–1968: pp. 67–68) suggests that Phalaecus of Phocis was not an

1 Waltz (1960: p. 91) after Bouhier attributes the epigram *AP* VI 165 to Phalaecus of Phocis, but he indicates a different opinion in his apparatus criticus ("Statyllio Flacco tribuunt Knaac, Sitzler, Wilamowitz"). Also Appel (2017: p. 15) informs about doubts of modern science: "it is assumed that he [i.e. Phalaecus] is the author of two further epigrams preserved in *Anthology* (VI 165 and VI 193), whose authorship is also attributed to another poet, namely Statyllius Flaccus" (my translation).

inventor of this lyric measure, but he frequently used it in his epigrams. Also the Roman poets adopted and used the same metre. Though the modern scholars know little about Phalaecus, there is a general agreement that he was one of the principal Alexandrian poets.

2. Epigrams of Statyllius Flaccus in the *Greek Anthology*

Statyllius Flaccus (Gk. Στατύλλιος Φλάκκος) is an epigrammatist of Roman origin. He lived in the first century BC and his epigrams were included in the Philip's *Garland* (Albiani 2004: p. 448). He is frequently identified with Statilius Flaccus, a supporter of epicureanism, who died in 42 BC at Philippi (Davico Bonino 2000: p. 287).

It should be noted that all these epigrams, which were obviously issued by Statyllius Flaccus, are generally signed with both a family name (Latin *nomen gentile* vel *nomen gentilicium*), i.e. Statyllius (Statilius), and a nickname (Latin *cognomen*), i.e. Flaccus. Only in two cases, the same nickname appears (*AP* VII 542; *AP* XII 12). Here is a list of all the epigrams of Statyllius Flaccus contained in the so-called *Greek Anthology*:

AP V 5 (Στατυλλίου Φλάκκου P);
AP VI 196 (Στατυλλίου Φλάκκου P, Pl);
AP VII 290 (Στατυλλίου Φλάκκου P, Pl);
AP VII 542 (Φλάκκου P, Pl);
AP IX 37 (Τυλλίου Φλάκκου P, Στατυλλίου Φλάκκου Pl);
AP IX 44 (Στατυλλίου Φλάκκου P^a and Pl; later added Πλάτωνος τοῦ Μεγάλου P^b);
AP IX 45 (Στατυλλίου Φλάκκου P; the Planudean codex assigns authorship to Plato or Antipater);
AP IX 98 (Στατυλλίου Φλάκκου P);
AP IX 117 (Στατυλλίου Φλάκκου P, Pl);
AP XII 12 (Φλάκκου P);
AP XII 25–27 (Στατυλλίου Φλάκκου P, then twice τοῦ αὐτοῦ P);
AP XVI 211 (Στατυλλίου Φλάκκου Pl).

The name of this Roman epigrammatist is not subject to corruption except for one case: the author's lemma of *AP* IX 37 in the Palatine codex is Τυλλίου Φλάκκου ('of Tullius Flaccus') instead of Στατυλλίου Φλάκκου ('of Statyllius Flaccus'). It is easier for the later copyists to alter the rather unusual name of Phalaecus than the surname of Statyllius Flaccus.

3. The authorship of *AP* VII 650

Having discussed the problem of the writer's lemmas concerning Phalaecus and Statyllius Flaccus in the preserved manuscripts of the *Greek Anthology*, I intend to review the problem of the authorship in three dubious instances. I begin my investigations from *AP* VII 650.

The text of the epigram runs as follows:

φεῦγε θαλάσσια ἔργα, βοῶν δ᾽ ἐπιβάλλευ ἐχέτλῃ,
εἴ τί τοι ἡδὺ μακρῆς πείρατ᾽ ἰδεῖν βιοτῆς·
ἠπείρῳ γὰρ ἔνεστι μακρὸς βίος· εἰν ἁλὶ δ᾽ οὔ πως
εὐμαρὲς εἰς πολιὴν ἀνδρὸς ἰδεῖν κεφαλήν.

App. crit.: Lemma Φλάκκου ἢ Φαλαίκου P : Φακέλλου Pl.

English translation: "Avoid busying thee with the sea, and put thy mind to the plough that the oxen draw, if it is any joy for thee to see the end of a long life. For on land there is length of days, but on the sea it is not easy to find a man with grey hair." Translated into English by Paton (1960b: p. 347).

The text is written in the epic (Ionic) dialect. Its essence and contents exclude the possibility of attributing it to Phalaecus or Statyllius Flaccus. Let's discuss writer's lemmas. The writing Φλάκκου ἢ Φαλαίκου ('of Flaccus or of Phalaecus'), attested in the Palatine codex, demonstrates clearly that a Byzantine copyist was not sure who the author of the epigram *AP* VII 650 was. The third lemma Φακέλλου [Fakélu], attested in the Planudean codex, could have been successfully created by distorting the name Φαλαίκου [Faléku] ('of Phalaecus') as a result of the erroneous metathesis of phonemes ($k - l < l - k$). It is extremely difficult to show how and why the lemma Φλάκκου could be distorted and changed into the saved form Φακέλλου. Therefore, the epigram *AP* VII 650 should be assigned to Phalaecus based on the author's lemmas in both (Palatine and Planudean) codices.

The modern editors attribute commonly the epigram *AP* VII 650 to Phalaecus of Phocis. So did Stadtmueller (1899: p. 445), Paton (1960b: p. 347), Waltz (1960a: p. 129), Gow & Page (1965: p. 464), Skiadas (1967–1968: p. 69), Page (1974: p. 74) and Appel (2017: p. 17). Others continue the ancient controversy, e.g. Ebener (1981: p. 176), who assumes: "Statilius Flaccus oder Phalaikos".

The British scholars comment on the controversy in the following way: "The variety presented in the author's name is plainly due to illegibility at some stage in the tradition. *A.P.*7.646–655 are, however, firmly Meleagrian, and Statyllius Flaccus may be ruled out as author. There seems therefore no reason to question the attribution to Phalaecus" (Gow & Page 1965: p. 464). I completely agree with their opinion.

4. The authorship of *AP* VI 193

The epigram in question, like the one discussed earlier (*AP* VII 650), is written in the literary Ionic dialect. It describes Damoetas, an old Greek fisherman, who, having reached a pensionable age, dedicates his nets to Priapus.

The Greek text runs as follows:

Πρίηπ᾽ αἰγιαλῖτα, φυκόγειτον,
Δαμοίτας ἁλιεύς, ὁ βυσσομέτρης,

τὸ πέτρης ἁλιπλῆγος ἐκμαγεῖον,
ἡ βδέλλα σπιλάδων, ὁ ποντοθήρης,
σοὶ τὰ δίκτυα τἀμφίβληστρα ταῦτα,
δαῖμον, εἴσατο· τοῦ σὺ θάλπε γῆρας.

App. Crit.: Lemma Φλαικίου (?) P (scriba A) : Φλάκκου P (scriba C). ‖ **1** αἰγιαλῖτα Saumaise : αἰγιαλῆτα P ‖ **2** βυσσομέτρης Reiske : κυσομέτρης P ‖ **4** βδέλλα J.-H. May : βδέλλαν P ‖ **5** τἀμφίβληστρα P (scriba C) (cf. Eur., *Hel.*, 1709) : παμφίβληστρα P (scriba A) ‖ **6** τοῦ σὺ θάλπε Desrousseaux : τοῖς ἔθαλπε P.

English translation: "Priapus of the beach, neighbour of the sea-weed, Damoetas the fisherman, the fathomer of the deep, the very image of a sea-worn crag, the leech of the rocks, the sea-hunter, dedicates to thee the sweep-net, with which he conforted his old age." Translated into English by Paton (1960a: p. 399).

Not all editorial corrections are obvious or necessary. The final phrase can be restored without any change (τοῖς ἔθαλπε γῆρας, in the sense of "these [sc. nets] teased old age") or slightly differently, e.g. τοί σ' ἔθαλπε γῆρας ("Old age really teased you") or τό ἰν ἔθαλπε γῆρας ("old age teased him").

Stadtmueller (1894: p. 325) and Waltz (1960: p. 103) reject Phalaecus as the author of the epigram *AP* VI 193 and, at the same time, they prefer the authorship of Statyllius Flaccus. Is this position correct? I don't think so.

Let us review afresh the problem of the authorship of the epigram *AP* VI 193. The writer's lemma Φλαικίου (P^1) contains an obvious diphthong -αι-, which appears in Phalaecus' name, but not in the name of (Statyllius) Flaccus. This is why the corrected lemma Φλάκκου seems wrong. The ending -ίου, instead of the expected one -ου, seems secondary. Note that the author's name Satyrios (Σατυρίου P^1) or Satrios (Σατρίου P), attested in the Palatine codex under the lemma of *AP* VI 11, appears instead of the Satyros name (Σατύρου), cf. Ławińska-Tyszkowska (1993: pp. 106–108).

Also the content of the epigram seems to speak for the early Hellenistic origin of the epigram. The bizarre terms referring to the Damoetas' profession (e.g. τὸ πέτρης ἁλιπλῆγος ἐκμαγεῖον 'the very image of a sea-worn crag', βδέλλα σπιλάδων 'the leech of the rocks') could have appeared in the erudite period of the Alexandrian era, when poetry was created by Phalaecus of Phocis, the poet from the fourth or third century BC. These unusual phrases could be derived from the tradition of the so-called "new dithyrambus", whose characteristic feature was the inclination to strange, unusual, even brutal assemblies (e.g. φυκόγειτον voc. sg. 'neighbour of the sea-weed', ὁ βυσσομέτρης 'the fathomer of the deep' and so on). The poets of the "new dithyrambus" preferred a style full of complex periphrases, metonymies, giving new meanings of words. It should be emphasized that the phrase τὸ πέτρης ... ἐκμαγεῖον in relation to man appears only in this epigram (Abramowiczówna 1960: p. 71). Also the poets in question used a very complex metric structure. Note that a free-form Phalaecian hendecasyllable appears in *AP* VI 193 instead of the most popular metrical form in epigrams, which was the elegiac distich. The linguistic experiments of the dithyrambic poets, especially of Timotheus of Miletus (ca. 450 – ca. 360 BC), seem to be still

present in the epigram *AP* VI 193. These observations point to Phalaecus of Phocis as the author of this votive dedication rather than to Statyllius Flaccus, a poet working during the era of Roman domination.

The third premise for Phalaecus' authorship is the metre used in *AP* VI 193, namely the so-called Phalaecian hendecasyllable (Lat. *versus hendecasyllabus Phalaeceus*). This metre was known and used already in the archaic period, but it received its name from the Alexandrian poet Phalaecus of Phocis (4th or 3rd c. BC) (Appel 1979: pp. 259–260; 2016: p. 15). This was probably called after him, because Phalaecus often had to use the metre in question and even in the general opinion he was regarded as its main propagator. In fact, he used various metrical forms, for as many as three of his epigrams went to the thirteenth book of the *Palatine Anthology* (*AP* XIII 5, 6 and 27), containing epigrams written in various meters. In one of them, Phalaecus of Phocis introduced the iambic trimeter (*AP* XIII 5), in the second he used the Phalaecian hendecasyllable (*AP* XIII 6), and in the third a fairly complex meter composed of dactylic epitrites (specifically the dactylic tetrameter with the ithyphallic) applied alternately with the hexameter and at the same time interlaced by iambic trimeters (*AP* XIII 27). Because the Phalaecian hendecasyllable (Lat. *versus hendecasyllabus Phalaeceus*), named after Phalaecus of Phocis, was used in the epigram *AP* VI 193, so in the case of the alternative lemmas Φλαικίου (?) (P^1) or Φλάκκου (scribe c), it is right to opt for the poet of Phocis as a more credible author of the epigram in question (Witczak 2005: pp. 130–136). This conclusion is all the more likely, as Statyllius Flaccus used only one meter in all epigrams firmly attributed to him (namely the elegiac distich).

5. The authorship of *AP* VI 165

The votive epigram *AP* VI 165, written in the Ionic dialect, describes a woman called Euanthe, who dedicates her corybantic instruments to Dionysus Bacchus.

Στρεπτὸν Βασσαρικοῦ ῥόμβον θιάσοιο μύωπα,
καὶ σκύλος ἀμφιδόρου στικτὸν ἀχαίνεω,
καὶ κορυβαντείων ἰαχήματα χάλκεα ῥόπτρων,
καὶ θύρσου χλοερὸν κωνοφόρου κάμακα,
καὶ κούφοιο βαρὺν τυπάνου βρόμον, ἠδὲ φορηθὲν
πολλάκι μιτροδέτου λῖκνον ὕπερθε κόμης,
Εὐάνθη Βάκχῳ, τὴν ἔντρομον ἀνίκα θύρσοις
ἄτρομον εἰς προπόσεις χεῖρα μετημφίασεν.
App. Crit.: Lemma Φαλάκκου P.

English translation: „Evanthe, when she transferred her hand from the unsteady service of the thyrsus to the steady service of the wine-cup, dedicated to Bacchus her whirling tambourine that stirs the rout of the Bacchants to fury, this dappled spoil of a flayed fawn, her clashing brass corybantic cymbals, her green thyrsus surmounted by a pine-

cone, her light, but deeply-booming drum, and the winnowing-basket she often carried raised above her snooded hair". Translated into English by Paton (1960a: p. 383).

The preserved writer's lemma of *AP* VI 165 in the Palatine codex (Φαλάκκου) is evidently ambiguous: Two obvious possibilities should be taken into account: Φαλαίκου ('of Phalaecus') or Φλάκκου ('of Flaccus'). In fact, classical philologists hesitate whether Phalaecus of Phocis or Statyllius Flaccus should be assumed as the author of *AP* VI 165.

In my opinion, the author's lemma Φαλάκκου (*AP* VI 165) makes it easier to agree with the name Φαλαίκου ('of Phalaecus') than with the alternative hypothesis of a corruption in the nickname Flaccus (Φλάκκου 'of Flaccus') by an erroneous inclusion of the letter α. The same statement is given by Stadtmueller (1894: p. 308), Waltz (1960: p. 91), Paton (1960a: p. 383) and Skiadas (1967–1968: pp. 74–76), who attribute the epigram in question to Phalaecus of Phocis. Also Page (1981: p. 47) observes that the epigram in question "is very different from anything else ascribed to Flaccus". He adds the following words: "The authorship of the epigram thus remains quite uncertain; perhaps there were two (or more) authors named 'Flaccus'" (Page 1981: 47). In this situation, it is desirable to include *AP* VI 165 to Phalaecus' literary output.

Conclusions

The analysis of three Greek epigrams included in the so-called *Palatine Anthology* (*AP* VI 165, VI 193, VII 650) makes plausible that:

(1) Statyllius Phlaccus cannot be treated as an author of these poetical masterpieces;

(2) two lemmas in the Palatine codex are generally corrupt (e.g. Φαλάκκου in *AP* VI 165; Φλαικίου, corrected to Φλάκκου in *AP* VI 193; should be: Φαλαίκου);

(3) the third lemma Φλάκκου ἢ Φαλαίκου in *AP* VII 650 contains clear traces of an old ambiguity (of ancient or mediaeval origin);

(4) the epigrams under discussion should be ascribed to Phalaecus of Phocis for lexical, metrical and formal reasons.

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