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# Authorship Controversy in Three Greek Epigrams: Phalaeus 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; Φλακίου 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 Phalaeus of Phocis or Phlaccus (Lat. Statyllius Flaccus). It is suggested that these epigrams represent Phalaeus' literary output.

## Keywords

Greek epigrams; *Palatine Anthology*; Phalaeus 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 Phalaeus (Gk. Φάλαϊκος) 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 Phalaeus of Phocis or Statyllius Flaccus should be assumed as the author of *AP VI 165*.<sup>1</sup>

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 Phalaeus”), 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 Phalaeus

Phalaeus 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). Phalaeus' 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 Phalaeus' 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 Phalaeus' 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 Phalaeian 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 Phalaeus of Phocis was not an

1 Waltz (1960: p. 91) after Bouhier attributes the epigram *AP VI 165* to Phalaeus 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. Phalaeus] 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* (Albani 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<sup>a</sup> and Pl; later added Πλάτωνος τοῦ Μεγάλου P<sup>b</sup>);
- 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 ἐχέτλη,  
εἰ τί τοι ἦδ' μακρῆς πείρατ' ἰδεῖν βιοτῆς·  
ἠπίρω γὰρ ἔνεστι μακρὸς βίος· εἰν ἀλί δ' οὐ πως  
εὐμαρὲς εἰς πολὴν ἀνδρὸς ἰδεῖν κεφαλὴν.

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 Phalaeus or Statyllius Flaccus. Let's discuss writer's lemmas. The writing Φλάκκου ἢ Φαλαίκου ('of Flaccus or of Phalaeus'), 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 Phalaeus') 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 Phalaeus based on the author's lemmas in both (Palatine and Planudean) codices.

The modern editors attribute commonly the epigram *AP VII 650* to Phalaeus 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 Phalaeus” (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' αἰγιαλίτα, φυκόγετον,  
Δαμοίτας ἀλιεύς, ὁ βυσσομέτρης,

τὸ πέτρης ἀλιπλήγος ἐκμαγεῖον,  
 ἢ βδέλλα σπιλάδων, ὁ ποντοθήρης,  
 σοὶ τὰ δίκτυα τὰμφίβληστρα ταῦτα,  
 δαῖμον, εἴσατο· τοῦ σὺ θάλπε γῆρας.

App. Crit.: Lemma Φλακίου (?) P (scriba A) : Φλάκκου P (scriba C). || 1 αἰγιαλίτα Sau-  
 maise : αἰγιαλήτα P || 2 βυσομέτρης Reiske : κυσομέτρης P || 4 βδέλλα J.-H. May : βδέλλαν  
 P || 5 τὰμφίβληστρα 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 comforted 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. τοῖ 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 Phalaeus 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 Φλακίου (P<sup>1</sup>) contains an obvious diphthong -αι-, which appears in Phal-  
 aeus' 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 second-  
 ary. Note that the author's name Satyrios (Σατυρίου P<sup>1</sup>) 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  
 ἀλιπλήγος 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 Phalaeus 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. φουκόγειτον voc. sg. ‘neighbour of the sea-weed’,  
 ὁ βυσομέτρης ‘the fathomer of the deep’ and so on). The poets of the “new dithyram-  
 bus” 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 Phalaeian  
 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 dithyram-  
 bic 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 Phalaeus 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 Phalaeus' authorship is the metre used in *AP VI 193*, namely the so-called Phalaeian 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 Phalaeus of Phocis (4th or 3rd c. BC) (Appel 1979: pp. 259–260; 2016: p. 15). This was probably called after him, because Phalaeus 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, Phalaeus of Phocis introduced the iambic trimeter (*AP XIII 5*), in the second he used the Phalaeian 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 Phalaeian hendecasyllable (Lat. *versus hendecasyllabus Phalaeceus*), named after Phalaeus of Phocis, was used in the epigram *AP VI 193*, so in the case of the alternative lemmas Φλακίου (?) (P<sup>1</sup>) 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 θιάσιοιο μύωπα,  
καὶ σκύλος ἀμφιδόρου στικτὸν ἀχαιίνεω,  
καὶ κορυβαντείων ἰαχήματα χάλκεα ῥόπτρων,  
καὶ θύρσου χλοερὸν κωνοφόρου κάμακα,  
καὶ κούφοιο βαρὺν τυπάνου βρόμον, ἡδὲ φορηθὲν  
πολλάκι μιτροδέτου λίκνον ὑπερθε 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 Bacchantes 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; Φλακίου, 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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