The New Posidippus, Asclepiades, and Hecataeus' Philitas-Statue

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When, before I had actually laid eyes on it, I was contemplating what I might contribute to an initial discussion of the new Posidippus, I expected that I might speak at some length about what the text had to say about the relationship between Posidippus and his contemporaries, and in particular Asclepiades of Samos. Asclepiades and Posidippus, after all, were closely associated with one another in antiquity. They appear together in a proxenic inscription from Delphi dating from the mid 270s (*Fouilles de Delphes* iii 3 no. 192), and Meleager in the introductory poem to his collection treats them as part of a triad along with Asclepiades' fellow Samian Hedylus (*AP* 4.1.45–6). More important, a number of poems unambiguously attributed to Posidippus in the *Greek Anthology* are manifestly connected by theme and language to poems ascribed to Asclepiades, and indeed six poems are ascribed alternatively to either Asclepiades or Posidippus.[1] To explain the phenomenon of double ascription, Reitzenstein, taking his start from a reference to a work called the *Soros* in the Iliad scholia (Σ^ *Il.* 11.101 μὴ ἐμφέρεσθαι δέ φησιν ὁ Ἀρίσταρχος νῦν ἐν τοῖς Ποσειδίππου ἐπιγράμμασι τὸν Βήρισον, ἀλλ' ἐν τῷ λεγομένῳ Σωρῷ εὑρεῖν) suggested that a collection by this name contained epigrams of Asclepiades, Posidippus, and Hedylus, without any indications of authorship. Meleager, in turn, drew on this collection for his *Garland*. There are substantial problems with this theory, and Alan Cameron has offered the alternative suggestion that Hedylus produced a work of his own poetry in which he included epigrams of his predecessors Asclepiades and Posidippus.[2] Kathryn Gutzwiller, on the other hand, suggests that the *Soros* might have been a collection of Posidippus' poems written in imitation of Asclepiades.[3] However the case may be, one might reasonably have anticipated that the new Posidippus would provide interesting evidence for the relationship between Asclepiades and Posidippus, and that in a collection of some six-hundred new verses there would be many points of contact with the extant Asclepiadean corpus. This turns out not to be the case at all. In all the new Posidippus, there is so far as I can see only one poem that shares verbal connections with an epigram possibly by Asclepiades. I will look more

[1] These are printed as Asclep. xxxiv–xxxix Gow-Page.
[2] *The Greek Anthology from Meleager to Planudes* (Oxford, 1993) 369–76.
[3] *Poetic Garlands* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1998) 169–70.

closely at this poem in a moment, but for now let me note that the very absence of further connections may be revealing *per se*.

When one considers the previously known Posidippan epigrams that share clear points of contact with Asclepiades, as well as those epigrams attributed alternatively to one or the other author, it becomes clear that most belong to the category we would call "amatory." This category does not occur in the section of papyrus that has been preserved. Now, it is also true that the majority of the extant poems attributed to Asclepiades belong to this category, so it may be that the absence of connections in poems of other types is simply a product of Meleager's bias in his selection of Asclepiades. It is worth remembering, too, that there is some reason to think that the collection preserved in the papyrus was not intended to include all Posidippus' epigrams, since some poems known from other sources are not found in the places they seem most appropriately to belong. On the other hand, many of the poems of Asclepiades included in Meleager's *Garland* and through it in the *Greek Anthology* are cited in conjunction with parallel or related poems by Posidippus—indeed, they may have been included precisely for the parallelism—and if there were indeed more closely related poems in existence, it is worth noting that Meleager—or Meleager's source—seems to have been interested primarily in the erotic pairs.[4] All these considerations make it perilous to push *ex silentio* arguments about the absence of connections between the new Posidippus and the extant text of Asclepiades too far. Nonetheless, it is surely curious that there are not more connections even at the verbal level between the some 600 new lines of Posidippus and the Asclepiadean corpus, and the possibility must be considered that the actual links between Asclepiades and Posidippus were in reality less striking than Meleager's selection makes it appear. It may even be that Posidippus was most indebted to Asclepiades in his erotic poetry.

However that may be, there is at least one major connection between a poem in the new Posidippus and an epigram possibly if not probably by Asclepiades, and it is to that link that I now turn. Column X. 16–25 belongs to the section of the papyrus labelled *andriantopoiika*, and contains an epigram on a statue of Philitas of Cos by Hecataeus:

τ̣όνδε Φιλίται χ̣[αλ]κ̣ὸν [ἴ]ς̣ο̣ν̣ κα̣τὰ πάνθ᾽{α} ῾Εκ̣[α]τ̣αῖος

[4] As evidence of Meleager's selective interest, one might notice that the only Posidippan epigram on precious stones extant prior to the publication of the papyrus reached us not through Meleager and the other collections that culminated in the Palatine and Planudean anthologies, but through Tzetzes—some Posidippan epigrams survived till the middle ages, but they survived through an alternative transmission.

ἀ]κ̣[ρ]ι̣β̣ὴc ἄκρουc [ἔπλ]α̣σ̣ε̣ν εἰc ὄνυχαc,
καὶ με]γ̣έθει κα̣[ὶ cα]ρ̣κ̣ὶ τὸν ἀνθρωπιcτὶ διώξαc
γνώμο]ν', ἀφ' ἡρώων δ' οὐδὲν ἔμειξ'{ε} ἰδέηc,
ἀ̣λλὰ τὸν ἀκρομέριμν̣ον ὅλ[ηι κ]α̣τεμάξατο τέχνηι
πρ]έ̣cβυν, ἀληθείηc ὀρ̣θὸν [ἔχων] κ̣ανόνα·
αὐδήc]οντι δ' ἔοικε̣ν̣, ὅcωι π̣ο̣ι̣κ̣ί̣λ̣λεται ἤθει,
ἔμψυχ]ο̣c̣, καίπερ χάλκεοc ἐὼν ὁ γέρων·
ἐκ Πτολε]μ̣αίου δ' ὧδε θ̣εοῦ θ' ἅμα καὶ βασιλ<ῆ>οc
ἄγκειτ]α̣ι̣ Μουσέ{ι}ων εἵνεκα Κῶιος ἀνήρ.

Hecataeus accurately made this bronze equal to Philitas in every respect with the utmost carefulness [or, "to the tips of his fingernails"]. In size and body he followed closely the one discerning (?) in a human way, and he mixed in nothing from the form of heroes. But he copied with all his skill the exactingly careful old man, holding the yardstick of truth straight. Although made of bronze, the old man seems like one about to speak, with so much character is he decorated, endowed with a soul/breath (?). Thus by the order of Ptolemy, god as well as king, the Koan man is dedicated on account of the Muses.

This poem is fascinating in many respects, and before we consider the intertextual link with Asclepiades, I'd like to look more closely at some—though by no means all—of its features, by way of suggesting the artistry that individual epigrams in the collection may exhibit. Two preliminary points are worth making. The first is that Posidippus's praise of Hecataeus' realism, in emphasizing the sculptor's care and precision, sets up a self-conscious parallelism between the sculptor and his subject, to whom the epigram also attributes exacting precision. Note particularly that while Hecataeus is called ἀκριβής, Philitas himself is ἀκρομέριμνος, a hapax legomenon clearly meaning "taking the greatest care." The point is especially clear in the hexameter of the third couplet. There the description of Philitas as τὸν ἀκρομέριμνον in the first hemistich is opposed to the account of Hecataeus' accomplishment, ὅλῃ κατεμάξατο τέχνῃ, in the second half of the line. This opposition is perhaps already set up in the first pentameter, where ἀκριβής is juxtaposed to ἄκρους in the conventional phrase ἄκρους εἰς ὄνυχας, whether we take the latter to mean "from head to toe" or (like Latin *ad unguem*) in the sense "with the greatest artistry." The parallelisms in the opening couplets cannot be accidental, and it seems clear that what Posidippus has done is to attribute to the sculptor the very

exactitude for which Philitas himself was otherwise well known, and at which the anonymous author of a fictitious funerary epigram from the Hellenistic period (adesp. *FGE* 1612–13 (ap. Ath. 9.401e) pokes fun:

> ξεῖνε, Φιλίτας εἰμί· λόγων ὁ ψευδόμενός με
> ὤλεσε καὶ νυκτῶν φροντίδες ἐσπέριοι.
>
> Stranger, I am Philitas. The word wrongly used and nights' evening-thoughts destroyed me.

The second point to be made at the outset is that the terms in which the artist's realism is described are themselves significant. In particular, the epigram insists that Hecataeus added "nothing from the form of heroes" (ἀφ' ἡρώων δ' οὐδ`ἐν ἔμειξ'{ε} ἰδέηc) but used the "straight yardstick of truth" in representing Philitas' true size and appearance. The artist is thus praised for not introducing into his statue elements taken from the heroic tradition in a way that distorts the work's "truthfulness." Given the parallelism between Hecataeus and Philitas set up in the poem, this claim has programmatic value. As is well known, Philitas was much admired by early Hellenistic poets as an accomplished forebear. An important text in this regard is the famous and much debated passage of Theocritus' seventh idyll—to which I will return in a moment—in which Simichidas remarks that he is not yet a match for Philitas or Asclepiades, and Lycidas replies that Simichidas is a "sapling of Zeus shaped for the truth" and that (*inter alia*) he hates those who crow against the bard of Chios (Theoc. 7.39–48):

> οὐ γάρ πω κατ' ἐμὸν νόον οὔτε τὸν ἐσθλόν
> Σικελίδαν νίκημι τὸν ἐκ Σάμω οὔτε Φιλίταν
> ἀείδων, βάτραχος δὲ ποτ' ἀκρίδας ὥς τις ἐρίσδω.'
> ὣς ἐφάμαν ἐπίταδες· ὁ δ' αἰπόλος ἁδὺ γελάσσας,
> 'τάν τοι', ἔφα, 'κορύναν δωρύττομαι, οὕνεκεν ἐσσί
> πᾶν ἐπ' ἀλαθείᾳ πεπλασμένον ἐκ Διὸς ἔρνος.
> ὥς μοι καὶ τέκτων μέγ' ἀπέχθεται ὅστις ἐρευνᾷ
> ἶσον ὄρευς κορυφᾷ τελέσαι δόμον Ὡρομέδοντος,
> καὶ Μοισᾶν ὄρνιχες ὅσοι ποτὶ Ζῆνα ἀοιδόν
> ἀντία κοκκύζοντες ἐτώσια μοχθίζοντι.
>
> Not yet am I able to beat in my singing
> good Sicelidas of Samos [i.e. Asclepiades]
> Or Philitas, but like a frog I compete against crickets.
> So I spoke, intentionally. And the goatherd, laughing sweetly,

> said, "I give you the staff, for you are
> a shoot of Zeus all shaped for the truth.
> Since hateful to me is the craftsman who seeks to build
> a house equal to the peak of Mt. Oromedon,
> and as many of the cocks of the Muses who,
> crowing against the Chian bard, toil in vain.

The terms of the discussion in Theocritus bear an interesting resemblance to our passage. Simichidas is praised for having been formed (πεπλασμένον) ἐπ' ἀληθείᾳ, and whatever that problematic phrase means exactly (cf. Gow ad loc.), it seems probable in light of the Posidippan passage that it should be taken in opposition to what follows: Lycidas, who admires Simichidas' aspiration to rival Philitas, loathes those who seek to rival Homer—that is, by writing in a crudely epic manner. It cannot be said that Philitas added entirely "nothing from epic" to his own verse—indeed he is known to have been an assiduous student of archaic usage—but it clearly could be said that he did not do so in a grandiose or crude way. What I am suggesting, therefore, is that we can see in Posidippus' praise for Hecataeus' refusal to inflate the size and appearance of his Philitas statue by imposing on it false elements from the heroic tradition a comment on Philitas' own verse, and by extension on aesthetics in general and in particular on the use of the heroic in both poetry and visual arts.

Seen against this background, the final couplet of the poem takes on new interest. According to Posidippus, the statue of Philitas was dedicated "from (ἐκ) Ptolemy, god and king," which must be to say that it was set up through an order of Ptolemy, since Hermesianax in an elegy reports that the Koans themselves erected the statue (Hermes. fr. 7. 75–8, p. 100 Powell), though if so the phrase is notably ambiguous. What is more striking for our purposes is that the poem's rather pointed insistence that Ptolemy is both god and king sets the monarch in sharp opposition to the man honored by the statue. On the one hand, Philitas is represented as conspicuously human (cf. v. 3 ἀνθρωπιστί). On the other hand, Ptolemy, the man responsible for the dedication, has surpassed the limits of ordinary humanity. He is both βασιλεύς and θεός—in other words, he resembles closely the very heroic figures said not to have been a model for the Philitas statue. To put it differently, Posidippus, in his own description of Ptolemy, has done something very much like what he praises Hecataeus for not doing: it cannot be said that Posidippus' Ptolemy has "nothing from the form of heroes." Thus the final couplet of the poem turns

on its head what seems at first to be the straightforward literary program of what precedes. It is easy to see connections between Posidippus and his fellow poet Philitas, on the one hand, and the careful craftsman Hecataeus, on the other. In the final lines, these connections are called into question: Posidippus does what Hecataeus had refrained from doing in representing the poet—that is, he shows him as more than human.

With all this in mind, let us turn to an important intertext for Posidippus' epigram. *AP* 16.120 (*HE* 1010–13) describes a statue of Alexander by Lysippus:

> τόλμαν Ἀλεξάνδρου καὶ ὅλαν ἀπεμάξατο μορφὰν
> Λύσιππος· τίν' ὁδὶ χαλκὸς ἔχει δύναμιν.
> αὐδάσοντι δ' ἔοικεν ὁ χάλκεος ἐς Δία λεύσσων·
> "γᾶν ὑπ' ἐμοὶ τίθεμαι, Ζεῦ, σὺ δ' Ὄλυμπον ἔχε."
>
> Lysippus copied the boldness of Alexander and his whole form. What power this bronze has! The brazen one seems like someone about to say, looking at Zeus, "The land is under my control; Zeus, you may have Olympus!"

The epigram, printed by Gow and Page as Asclepiades xliii, is of uncertain authorship, since it is ascribed by its lemma alternatively to Asclepiades or to a certain Archelaus. No other poems are attributed to the latter in the Anthology, but a poet called Archelaus is known from fragments preserved elsewhere to have written epigrams detailing the generation of various creatures from the dead bodies of other species (*SH* 125–9). Given the paucity of our knowledge of Archelaus' work, stylistic arguments for and against Asclepiadean authorship are unpersuasive. Arguments from its placement in the Anthology are equally unhelpful. The epigram is immediately preceded in the Anthology by epigram by Posidippus on a Lysippan Alexander statue, a poem to which we will return in a moment. On the one hand, as I have said, Meleager regularly juxtaposed epigrams on related themes by Asclepiades and Posidippus, and the conjunction of this epigram with one unambiguously ascribed to Posidippus might be thought to speak for Asclepiades' authorship. On the other hand, the frequency with which epigrams by the two poets are juxtaposed could also explain why some supposed this poem to be by Asclepiades, and indeed it could be argued that the attribution to Archelaus is far less likely to be conjectural.

To the issue of authorship, the Philitas-statue poem has something to contribute. Whether or not the editors are correct to supplement αὐδήσοντι in the fourth hexameter of that epigram, it is clear that one poem was written with the other in mind. Note the connection between ὅλῃ κατεμάξατο τέχνῃ and ὅλαν ἀπεμάξατο μόρφαν, between]οντι ἔοικεν and αυδάσοντι ἔοικεν,[5] and between χάλκεος in both epigrams. I will spare you a detailed discussion of the relative chronology of the two poems, and only say there seems to me good reason for supposing that—as often in cases where there are connections between his work and poems attributed to Asclepiades—independent reasons exist to think that Posidippus is the borrower. If so, given the frequency with which Posidippus drew on and expanded Asclepiades in the poems preserved in the *Greek Anthology*, it seems likely that we have yet another example of the phenomenon here, despite the double ascription to Archelaus, and notwithstanding the cautions I raised earlier about the actual extent of borrowings by Posidippus from Asclepiades.

If so, the allusion to a poem on Lysippus' Alexander statue in the context of a poem praising a realistic image of the physically humble Philitas constitutes something of a complex game. I have already suggested that Posidippus' poem self-consciously juxtaposes the explicitly human Philitas and the more-than human king—and god—Ptolemy. At this point, we should add that the line separating god and heroes from real human beings is precisely what is at issue in Asclepiades' poem, and indeed Andrew Stewart has argued that the poem engages in a debate about the appropriateness of representing Alexander (and his Hellenistic successors) as a god in art and elsewhere.[6] It is true that the Lysippan Alexander of Asclepiades is imagined to acknowledge that he is to be king only on earth, and to relegate Olympus to Zeus, but Alexander's manifest arrogance clearly pushes the outer limits of that distinction. That Posidippus should have used a poetic description of such a statue as a model for his account of Hecataeus' statue of Philitas is striking. The allusion, I would argue, underscores the differences between text and intertext. It is well known that Alexander, whose line was thought to have traced from Heracles, represented himself and was flattered by his contemporaries as a neo-Achilles and a successor to epic heroes (e.g. Arr. 7.14.4). Posidippus takes the haughty Alexander of Lysippus' statue and Asclepiades' poem down to size by reapplying

[5] Despite Gow-Page ad loc., there is, however, some reason to print Doric αὐδασοῦντι in *APl* 120.
[6] *Faces of Power: Alexander's Image and Hellenistic Politics* (Berkeley, 1993) 23.

Asclepiades' description to a notably more humble man. In this sense, Posidippus' epigram does precisely what Hellenistic poets—and indeed presumably Philitas himself—do so often, namely to take material used more grandly in an antecedent and reapply it to less "heroic" figures. In this regard, it may be worth noting that whereas Asclepiades imputes to the Alexander-statue a specific speech, Posidippus restricts himself to observing that the statue of Philitas appears to be going to speak. In so doing, he deprives of words of his own a man whose greatest concern was verbal precision, but at the same time eliminates the hubris of Alexander's speech.

Two more point are worth making. The first is that Asclepiades' Alexander statue, for all its apparent arrogance, observes a distinction between gods and men which is not upheld by Posidippus' own description of Ptolemy as king and god, and the allusion may have something interesting to say about Posidippus' treatment of Ptolemy as a god. Second, we have already looked briefly at the famous passage of Theocritus 7 in which Simichidas holds up Philitas and Asclepiades as role-models he aspires to rival. I would not wish to suggest that Posidippus has that passage specifically in mind (though allusions throughout the papyrus show that he knew his Theocritus well).[7] Nonetheless the Theocritean passage is interesting for the way it suggests that, in the minds of some early Hellenistic poets, at any rate, Asclepiades and Philitas were linked as literary predecessors. Posidippus may well have had a similar view. If so, then in his poem praising Hecataeus' Philitas statue, and by extension the poet himself, Posidippus has honored one admired predecessor by alluding to the work of another.

Finally, let me say something about the position of the Philitas-statue poem in the collection. As is clear from Kathryn's talk, it is unlikely to be an accident that the poem on the unheroic Philitas statue is followed by a poem on an overtly heroic subject, Cresilas' statue of Idomeneus,[8] and then by another praising—of all things—the way a statue of Alexander by Lysippus has captured the former's fearsomeness. This poem, which was already known from the *Greek Anthology* before the discovery of the papyrus, again lauds the *ethopoiia* of a work of art. Significantly, like the poem on Cresilas' Idomeneus, it does so in terms that recall the epic tradition, since the final verse, which treats Alexander as a metaphorical lion—a reference to the supposed leonine quality of

[7] E.g. *P.Mil.Vogl.* VIII 309 col. III 35–6.

[8] *P.Mil.Vogl.* VIII 309 col. X 26–29 αἴ]νεέ γ' {ε} 'Ιδομεν<ῆ>α θέλων χάλκειον ἐκεῖν[ον / Κρήσιλ<α>· ὡς ἄκρως ἠργάσατ' εἴδομεν εὖ· / γ]αρύ[ει] 'Ιδομενεύς· 'ἀλ[λ'] ὦ 'γαθὲ Μηριόνα, θεῖ / [.....] πλασται δὰν [ἀδό]ντος ἐών.'

his appearance—and the Persians as metaphorical bulls, must, after all, surely suggest the lion similes of early Homer.[9]

Precisely what we are to make of these juxtapositions is not yet clear to me. At the very least, they are evidence that an artful hand, a hand at least *like* that of an author's, was involved in the arrangement of the collection. But it is also worth noting (as Alan Cameron reminds us) that even if the collection was produced by Posidippus himself, it need not be the case that individual poems in it were written with the ultimate shape of the collection in mind. Rather, the poet likely selected at least some of the epigrams from among his existing poetry in artful ways. This is an important consideration, because it means that we should look at individual poems as if they were free-standing pieces as well as part of an artful collection.

I have spent some time on a single poem in the new Posidippus in order to suggest how richly each of the hundred new poems may repay closer study over the years to come. The papyrus marks a major step forward in our understanding of ancient poetry books, and of Hellenistic poetry in general. It is certain to keep us busy for a long time.

[9] *AP* I 19 (*HE* 3150–3 = *P.Mil.Vogl.* VIII 309 col. X 30–3) Λύσιππε, πλάστε Σικυώνιε, θαρσαλέη χείρ, / δάιε τεχνίτα, πῦρ τοι ὁ χαλκὸς ὁρῇ / ὃν κατ' Ἀλεξάνδρου μορφᾶς χέες. οὐκέτι πεμπτοὶ / Πέρσαι· συγγνώμη βουσὶ λέοντα φυγεῖν.