

## Euenus of Ascalon\*

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*GP* contains eleven epigrams attributed to a poet or poets named Euenus; nine of these were preserved in *AP*, two additional ones in *AP1* only. They are all in distichs and amount altogether to forty-six lines. One of the poems is assigned to Euenus of Ascalon, one to Euenus of Sicily, one to Euenus of Athens and one to Euenus the *grammaticus*;<sup>1</sup> in the rest the name appears without further qualification. Gow and Page<sup>2</sup> despair of resolving the question of authorship and of assigning the various poems to their authors. It is the

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\* I read an earlier version of this paper at a colloquium to mark the retirement of my teacher, colleague and friend Ra'anana Meridor. I would like it to be received as a small mark of affection and gratitude. It is a pleasure to thank again Ewen Bowie for his criticism of an earlier draft, as well as the Editors and their anonymous readers, who went far beyond the call of duty in improving this paper. As always, I alone am to blame for the remaining faults.

The following abbreviations will be used:

*AP* = *Anthologia Palatina*

*AP1* = *Anthologia Planudea*

*GP* = A.S.F. Gow and D.L. Page, *The Greek Anthology. The Garland of Philip* (Cambridge 1968).

*HE* = A.S.F. Gow and D.L. Page, *The Greek Anthology. Hellenistic Epigrams* (Cambridge 1965).

<sup>1</sup> 'Ascalonite', like the ethnic 'Siceliote', the designation *grammaticus*, as well as a host of such attributes in other poets, have been added by the corrector: for the good authority of the corrector see *GP* I, Introd., p. 1 f.

<sup>2</sup> The poems are printed at *GP* I, pp. 254-260, ll. 2296-2341; the commentary at *GP* II, pp. 289-294.

purpose of the present paper to investigate which poems and what characteristics are attributable to Euenus of Ascalon.

Euenus is one of the thirteen named poets in the *Proem* of Philip.<sup>3</sup> This in itself should create a very strong presumption in favour of the view that most, or all, of the epigrams ascribed to Euenus are the work of one poet. Gow and Page maintain that "there is an obvious and presumably not fortuitous correspondence between the order of the authors in the *Proem* and the number of epigrams" of each author preserved in the *Anthology*,<sup>4</sup> and indeed Euenus would hardly fit into the *Proem* — he is mentioned in the last, thirteenth place — were he the author of much less than the eleven epigrams with forty-six lines that are preserved under that name. Among the other poets mentioned in the *Proem*<sup>5</sup> fifteen epigrams of Parmenion, twelve of Automedon, ten each of Tullius Geminus and Antiphanes and nine by Zonas are preserved, while all the other poets are represented by considerably more poems. By total of lines Euenus' forty-six compare with forty-eight of Tullius Geminus, fifty of Parmenion, fifty-four of Zonas and fifty-eight of Antiphanes; again, all the other epigrammatists mentioned in the *Proem* are represented with considerably more lines. Clearly, Philip must have regarded the Euenus mentioned in his *Proem* as the author of more or less everything preserved under that name.<sup>6</sup>

A discussion of some of the features of the poems will strengthen this presumption and suggest that in all probability this poet was Euenus of Ascalon. Let us start with the epigram expressly mentioning that ethnic in the title (*AP* 9.75 = *GP* I, ll. 2308-9 [no. iii]). The attribution has never been doubted since the name of the city does not occur elsewhere in the *Anthology* and the assumption of a cor-

<sup>3</sup> *AP* 4.2.13 = *GP* I, l. 2640.

<sup>4</sup> *GP* II, p. 329.

<sup>5</sup> The solitary exception is Antigonus, who appears in the eleventh place though only one six-line poem by him is preserved: as far as I can see neither Gow and Page (see *GP* II, p. 329) nor any of the other commentators know how to explain his inclusion.

<sup>6</sup> "Only one [poem of Euenus] (*AP* 9.251 = no. i [i.e., *GP* I, ll. 2296-2301]) stands in an alphabetical sequence, the remainder owe their position to their themes or stand in quite miscellaneous contexts", (*GP* II, p. 289). For their policy of inclusion in the Garland of poems other than those in alphabetical sequences cf. *GP* I, *Intro.*, p. xii.

ruption would in effect conjecture a *lectio facilior*. In the two-line epigram, according to Gow and Page one of the cleverest in the *Garland of Philip*,<sup>7</sup> the vine speaks to the goat:

κῆν με φάγῃς ἐπὶ ρίζαν, ὅμως ἔτι καρποφορήσω  
ὄσσον ἐπισπείσαι σοί, τράγε, θυομένω.

Gow and Page's favourable judgment corresponds with that of antiquity: the epigram is quoted in Suet., *Dom.* 14<sup>8</sup> and appears on a Pompeian fresco depicting the scene;<sup>9</sup> its second line is identical with the last line of a six-line version of the theme by Leonidas of Tarentum (*AP* 9.99 = *HE* I, ll. 2161-2166 [no. xxxii]). Moreover, it has been translated by Ovid (*Fast.* 1.357-8),<sup>10</sup> although there it is not the vine that speaks. If the borrowing of the second line by Euenus is a compliment to Leonidas,<sup>11</sup> demonstrating at the same time his own elegant brevity, it accords well with the fact that the latter's influence is traceable elsewhere among the poems attributed to Euenus. Of course Leonidas had great influence, on nobody more than on Antipater of Sidon:<sup>12</sup> thus it is remarkable that two of the poems of Euenus (*AP* 165, 166 = *GP* I, ll. 2336-37 [no. x], 2338-41 [no. xi]), on the Cnidian Aphrodite of Praxiteles, are variations on a theme also dealt with by Antipater (*cf.* *GP* II, p. 294); two more are variations on a highly popular theme, Myron's statue of a

<sup>7</sup> *GP* II, p. 289.

<sup>8</sup> And much later in *Schol. Tzetzae Ar. Plut.* 1129, p. 227 Massa Positano.

<sup>9</sup> G. Kaibel, *Ep. Gr. ex lapidibus conl.* (Berlin 1878), no. 1106. It is found on the *via Stabiana*, north of the house of L. Caecilius Iucundus, and was first published by C. Dilthey, "Dipinti pompeiani accompagnati d'epigrammi greci", *Annali dell' Istituto di corrispondenza archeologica* 44 (1876), 294ff; our epigram is discussed at 307-311, facsimile on *Tavola P*. Note that the inscription has ποτὶ for ἐπὶ in the first line: Dilthey preferred this to the reading of P and of the indirect tradition.

<sup>10</sup> *Cf.* L.P. Wilkinson, *Ovid Recalled* (Cambridge 1955), 265. The common features of the versions of Euenus and Ovid as against that of Leonidas make it clear that Ovid translates Euenus' two-liner rather than the last line only of Leonidas' six-line epigram.

<sup>11</sup> It goes without saying that Leonidas, active in the first half of the third century, was earlier than any conceivable poet from Ascalon.

<sup>12</sup> *Cf.* *HE* II, p. 32.

cow (*AP* 9.717, 718 = *GP* I, ll. 2332-3 [no. viii], 2334-5 [no. ix]) introduced in all probability by Leonidas, on which six out of the thirty-six extant versions<sup>13</sup> are ascribed to Antipater of Sidon. It should be noted that Gow and Page, although they refrain from discussing the ascription of the various poems, are of the opinion that the four epigrams on works of art were probably composed by one author.<sup>14</sup> Whatever Antipater's influence on Euenus, his connexions with Ascalon are well established: he composed a long epigram in honour of the rich banker from Ascalon Philostratus the son of Philostratus, inscribed in Delos, where the latter's business was located.<sup>15</sup> Remarkably enough, Antipater of Sidon's plant in the introductory poem of Meleager is the *kypros* (= *henna*), according to Dioscorides best grown in Ascalon and Canope.<sup>16</sup> But the influence of both Leonidas and of Antipater of Sidon on Euenus need not depend on personal ties.

The translation by Ovid (see above) helps to reduce the time of composition of the poem from B.C.E. 90 - C.E. 40 (the dates of the *Garland of Philip*)<sup>17</sup> to B.C.E. 90 - C.E. 8 (the *terminus ante quem* for the relevant part of the *Fasti*).<sup>18</sup> The Late Republican and Augustan periods were times of flourishing intellectual activity in Ascalon, the birthplace of the famous philosopher Antiochus and his brother and successor Aristus and his elder contemporary Sossus, the grammarians Dorotheus and Ptolemy and the historian Artemidorus, who no doubt wrote his Bithynian History after the establishment of that province; it is highly probable that the other

<sup>13</sup> *AP* 9.713-742, 793-8.

<sup>14</sup> *GP* II, p. 289.

<sup>15</sup> *HE* no. xlii; cf. G. Mancinetti Santamaria, "Filostrato di Ascalone, banchiere in Delo", F. Coarelli, D. Musti, H. Solin, ed., *Opusc. Inst. Finl.* (Roma 1982), 79ff.; M. Leiwo, "Philostratus of Ascalon, his Bank, his Connections and Naples in c. 130-90 B.C.", *Athenaeum* 77 (1989), 575ff.

<sup>16</sup> Diosc. 1.95; cf. *HE* II, pp. 32 n. 1; 596; 603. Jos., *BJ* 4.469 describes it as growing in Jericho.

<sup>17</sup> *GP* I, Introd. p. xlv ff.; for the purposes of the present study the objections of those who prefer a later *terminus ad quem* (e.g. Alan Cameron, "The Garlands of Meleager and Philip", *GRBS* 9 [1968], 323) may be disregarded.

<sup>18</sup> *P. Ovidius Naso, Die Fasten*, ed. F. Bömer (Heidelberg 1957), i 11ff.

persons mentioned by Stephanus of Byzantium, the historian Apollonius and the Stoic philosophers Antibijs and Eubius also, belonged to the same period.<sup>19</sup> An elegant epigrammatist suits this milieu to perfection.

So much for the poem ascribed to Euenus of Ascalon. How many of the other ten epigrams is it possible to assign to the Ascalonite?<sup>20</sup> Could one and the same person have written all of them? Such a solution would require us to assume, in the first place, that the adjective Ἀσκαλωνίτου has been corrupted to Σικελιώτου, that Euenus moved at some stage to Athens and was henceforth regarded as a resident of that city, and that he was a *grammaticus* as well as a composer of epigrams. None of these assumptions is difficult. The first, the corruption of the adjective, would suggest the jettisoning of a *lectio difficilior* — moreover, one that occurs nowhere else in the *Anthology* — for the sake of a much more common attribute. For the second — the emigration of Euenus from Ascalon to a great cultural centre like Athens — a number of parallels could be found among Euenus of Ascalon's compatriots in the Late Republican and Augustan periods: Antiochus was active in Athens, Alexandria and Rome and Aristus followed in his footsteps; Sosos was a pupil of Panaetius, apparently in Teanum, and perhaps he was also active in Athens; and we are told that the *grammaticus* Ptolemy taught in Rome.<sup>21</sup> Clearly, the emigration of Euenus from Ascalon to Athens<sup>22</sup> would well suit the social circumstances of the

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<sup>19</sup> See Steph. Byz. s.v. Ἀσκάλων, who, however, does not mention Aristus. I have discussed these writers in "Greek Intellectuals from Ascalon", *Cathedra* 60 (1991), 5-16 (Hebrew). Stephanus seems to depend in this entry on Herennius Philo's *On Cities* (cf. Honigmann, *RE* IIIA, 2382ff s.v. Stephanus no. 12), and it is possible further to reduce the possible time-span of the persons mentioned by assuming that Herennius Philo himself used an Augustan source.

<sup>20</sup> Though there is some similarity in the conclusions, the present paper argues on lines entirely different from those of K. Preisendanz, "Zu Euenos von Askalon", *Philologus* 75 (1918), 476ff.

<sup>21</sup> For all these cf. my paper referred to in n. 19 above.

<sup>22</sup> It is not advisable to connect 'Athenian' in the ascription with the appearance of 'Chalkis' in the poem (*AP* 9.602, l. 7 = *GP* I, l. 2316 [no. iv, l. 7]), which is in any case an emendation.

times.<sup>23</sup> Lastly, in the epigram ascribed to Euenus the *grammaticus* (*AP* 9.251 = *GP* I, ll. 2296-2301 [no. i]) the bookworm suits well a *grammaticus*-epigrammatist, or else the attribute could have been easily inferred from the contents of the poem. Thus, it is possible to assign all eleven epigrams to Euenus of Ascalon: are there any positive arguments for such an attribution?

Gow and Page, who do not even attempt to ascertain the number of poets called Euenus, fail to discuss a characteristic feature of these epigrams, often noted by them elsewhere. Rare vocabulary and the coining of hitherto unknown words and phrases are fashionable traits of Hellenistic and later epigram, often becoming a mannerism. Thus the followers of Leonidas of Tarentum indulged in "the exercise of ingenuity in word-coining and phrase-making, extravagantly picturesque, applied to the description of commonplace objects or the narration of uncommon events. Such elaboration of vocabulary and phrasing, often over-strained and occasionally ludicrous, is applied also to descriptions of dedications or of works of art. The themes are as a rule conventional or novel variations on the conventional, and the epigram is designed simply to exhibit the composer's skill in the Leonidean style".<sup>24</sup> The eleven epigrams of Euenus, forty-six lines in all, contain no less than six *hapax legomena*. Though probably somewhat less than a valid statistical sample, it is worthwhile to compare this with some of the most explicitly mannerist poets of the Anthology. Antipater of Sidon, who seems to have influenced Euenus, and was "too fond of adjectives and especially of long compounds, with a number of which he enriched the lexica" (*HE* II, p. 32) has, by my cursory count, some twenty *hapax legomena* in 496 verses — less than one third of the ratio found in Euenus. Another near-contemporary, Argentarius, "often indulges, but seldom over-indulges, the fashionable taste for exotic vocabulary and phrasing" (*GP* II, p. 166). His 208 lines exhibit some eleven *hapax legomena*, a ratio of about 1:2.5 to Euenus. Close to Euenus is Maccius, whose seventy-eight lines contain seven words not found elsewhere, a ratio of about 2:3 to Euenus.

<sup>23</sup> The case of Ascalon was far from isolated: I have discussed a similar phenomenon of emigration from Gadara in "Athens in Syria: Greek Intellectuals in Gadara", *Cathedra* 35 (1985) 3-17 (Hebrew).

<sup>24</sup> *GP* I, *Introd.*, p. xxxiv.

He was “a blender of simple with exotic words, a coiner of ingenious and picturesque phrases” (*GP* II, p. 310). Some poets have an even higher ratio of *hapax legomena* per number of lines than the one found in the poems ascribed to Euenus. The ratio of Zonas, “an exceptionally skilful word-coiner and phrase-maker” (*GP* II, p. 413), is about one-and-a half times higher, that of Philip himself, who is “distinguished only by the exceptionally large number of new word-formations, mostly compound nouns, adjectives and verbs” (*GP* II, p. 329), has a ratio twice as high as Euenus. Nevertheless, it may be possible to discern some characteristic features in Euenus. His *hapax legomena* exhibit some aspects that could indicate the idiosyncratic usage of one poet. The six words are divided into two groups. The first contains the female adjectives and participles λωβήτειρα, λαλόεσσα and πανωπήεσσα and the second the *verbale Rektionskomposita*<sup>25</sup> σελιδηφάγος, Τρωοφθόρος and μελίθρεπτος. It goes without saying that such compounds belong to the most common in Greek: it is their accumulation that is remarkable. That these two groups do not derive from two different poets is made probable by the fact that the words σελιδηφάγος and λωβήτειρα are directed at the same book-worm of Euenus “the *grammaticus*”, while both μελίθρεπτος and λαλόεσσα appear in the same charming epigram on the swallow and the cicada (*AP* 9.122 = *GP* I, ll. 2318-23 [no. v]).<sup>26</sup> It should also be noted that πανωπήεσσα occurs in one of the epigrams on works of art, all four of which are assigned by Gow and Page to the same author.<sup>27</sup> Admittedly, the epigrams ascribed to Euenus could derive from a number of homonymous poets who all indulged in the same fashionable pursuit of word-coining, but assigning them all to the same author, who now acquires something of a personality is by far the more economical solution.

In addition to the possible influence of Leonidas of Tarentum and of Antipater of Sidon on the author of these poems (assuming there is only one), one may also detect that of Theognis: it has been noted that *AP* 11.49 = *GP* I, ll. 2324-9 (no. vi) “has some resemblance in

<sup>25</sup> E. Schwyzer, *Griechische Grammatik* I<sup>2</sup> (Munich 1953), 429.

<sup>26</sup> To the parallels of the theme adduced by Gow and Page add Longus, *Daphnis and Chloe* 1.26.

<sup>27</sup> *GP* II, p. 289.

theme to Theognis 467ff.”<sup>28</sup> and there is a borrowing of Theognis 240 W at *AP* 9.62.6 = *GP* I, l. 2307 (no. ii).<sup>29</sup> On the other hand there seems to be nothing significantly local in the poems of Euenus, unless we so understand the description of the swallow as belonging to the summer rather than to the spring.<sup>30</sup>

“Style and subject-matter, unreliable witnesses in this court”,<sup>31</sup> may receive some possible linguistic peculiarities as supporting testimony. Thus one would hardly endorse the suggestion of Gow and Page that the “commonplace and dull” epigram attributed to Euenus of Sicily<sup>32</sup> is not by the author of the clever epigram ascribed to the Ascalonite; similarly *AP* 9.251 = *GP* I, ll. 2296-2301 (no. i), “a vigorous and picturesque composition by a master of this style” can derive on the evidence of the similarly invented compounds  $\sigma\epsilon\lambda\iota\delta\eta\phi\acute{\alpha}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$  and  $\tau\rho\omega\omicron\phi\theta\acute{o}\rho\omicron\varsigma$  from the author of *AP* 9.62 = *GP* I, ll. 2302-2307 (no. ii), which itself is “an uninspired variation on a common theme” (containing, incidentally, the allusion to Theognis). Like other poets in the Anthology, Euenus may well have written with varying success in a very wide range of styles. On

<sup>28</sup> See *GP* II, p. 289 n.7 for a discussion of the problematic nature of the resemblance of the two passages. The ascription of Theognis 467ff. to Theognis rather than to Euenus of Paros is disputed: see e.g. Young’s apparatus to Theognis *ad loc.* and M.L. West, *Iambi et Elegi Graeci* II (Oxford 1972), Euenus frg. 8a-c with apparatus.

<sup>29</sup> Though *GP* II, p. 291 *ad loc.* speak of “ready made phrasing”, according to the *TLG* Theognis’ πολλῶν κείμενος ἐν στόμασιν, has its only exact parallel in Euenus’ πάντων δ’ Ἑλλήνων κείσομαι ἐν στόματι, the two phrases also occupying the same position in the line. There is also a late allusion in John Chrysostom, *adv. oppugn. vitae mon.* 2.5 (PG 47. 339).

<sup>30</sup> *AP* 9.122.4 = *GP* I, l. 2321 (no. v). For the swallow as the proverbial harbinger of spring see D.W. Thompson, *A Glossary of Greek Birds*<sup>2</sup> (Oxford 1936), 314ff.; O. Keller, *Thiere des classischen Alterthums in culturgeschichtlicher Beziehung* (Innsbruck 1887), 308ff. Though both quote from our epigram neither refers to the adjective  $\theta\epsilon\rho\iota\nu\omicron\varsigma$ . No connexion between the swallow and summer could be found in Jewish sources.

<sup>31</sup> *GP* II, p. 289.

<sup>32</sup> K. Hartigan, *The Poets and the Cities. Selections from the Anthology about Greek Cities* (Königstein/Ts. 1979), 70f. argues rather absurdly that the epigram on the fate of Troy must have been composed later than the city’s prosperity under Hadrian and thus not by a poet of the *Garland of Philip*. Consequently she retains for him the appellation Sicilian.

the present evidence it seems not implausible that most, and perhaps all, the epigrams of Euenus in the *Anthology* were written by a poet from Ascalon, perhaps a *grammaticus* who possibly also emigrated to Athens and some of whose poetic antecedents and linguistic peculiarities are still recognizable.

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