

Menyllos

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Fragment 295 F 1

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Text

έν Αύλιδι τῆς Βοιωτίας τὰ περὶ Ἴφιγένειαν ὁμοίως ἱστορεῖ Μένυλλος ἐν πρώτῳ Βοιωτικῶν¹.

Translation

And the fate of Iphigeneia at Aulis in Boiotia is narrated by Menyllos in the first book of his *Boiotian stories* in a similar way (to the narrative of the sacrifice of Metella by Pythokles in the third book of his *Italika*, *Parall. min.* 14a).

Critical Apparatus

1. Μέρυλλος ΦΠ (and De Lazzer 2000); Μέυλλος Xylander (1572), 756, followed by Müller, *FHG* 4.452, Nachstädt, Jacoby, Boulogne, Bernardakis 2009, Ibáñez Chacón 2014; Μέυλος Hercher, *Plutarchi Libellus De Fluviis* (Lipsiae 1851), 18; Δέρκυλλος Vossius *apud* Westermann; Δέρκυλος Westermann (in Müller and Hercher).

Commentary on the text

The well-known story of the sacrifice of Iphigeneia in Aulis was meant to serve as the parallel for a Roman story concerning the sacrifice of a Metella, narrated by Pythokles of Samos ([BNJ 833 F 1](#)); however, while in the *Parallela minora* the Roman story usually precedes the Greek one, here the two are inverted. The inversion is probably a mechanical error by the copyist of the archetype of the *Parallela*, to be connected with the loss of the story itself (so F. Jacoby, 'Die Überlieferung von Ps. Plutarchs *Parallela Minora* und die Schwindelautoren', *Mnemosyne* S. 3.8 (1940), 94); or the mechanical loss of most of the story may have brought along the change in disposition. As A. Cameron, *Greek Mythography in the Roman World* (Oxford 2004), 134 notes, if the manuscripts of the *Parallela* abbreviate many stories – this is a particularly striking instance –, they however rarely omit the source reference for the story: references, the more obscure the better, and with them the recourse to written authority are central to the enterprise of the *Parallela*.

It is typical of Pseudo-Plutarch to mention as authority for the story of Iphigenia an unknown author, and not Euripides (see the comment of A. Wyttenbach, *Plutarchi Chaeronensis Moralia* 7 (Oxonii 1821), *Animadversiones* 83: 'Iphigeniae decantatam rem quis ex Meryllo, nusquam nisi in istius libelli officina nato, probet?'); yet he cannot have ignored Euripides's *Iphigenia in Aulis* (and indeed he does refer to Euripides as source elsewhere, e.g. 310d, 312a – see below on [F 2](#)). Because of passages such as this one, where the obvious authority is studiously ignored, R. Hercher, *Plutarchi Libellus De Fluviis* (Lipsiae 1851), 18 developed the theory that the infrequent references to well-known authors in the *Parallela minora* had been inserted in the place of original references to 'nomina ex Meryllorum et Pyrandrorum familiis' by the Epitomator, who would have been responsible for the version of the *Parallela minora* that we have, or by a later reader or a copyist, in places where, in their copy, the original (bogus) citation had been lost (for this second possibility see A. Cameron, *Greek Mythography in the Roman World* (Oxford 2004), 132).

A further difficulty here is that the name of the author mentioned as source, in the manuscript family that preserves it, is Μέρυλλος, a name not otherwise attested. Μέυλλος (an attested, although rare, personal name) is a correction of Xylander (in the Greek edition of Plutarch's *Moralia*, Basileae 1574), accepted by the majority of modern editors (but not by A. De Lazzer, *Plutarco. Paralleli minori* (Naples 2000), 70, who prefers to maintain the transmitted text, and thus prints Μέρυλλος). As for the work, it is an example of the relatively well-attested genre of *Boiotika*, on which cf. [BNJ 376-88](#).

Commentary on F 1

The passage is part of the *Parallela minora*, a short work of uncertain authorship and uncertain date (between the end of the first century AD and the end of the second century AD). Its 41 chapters contain each a Greek and a Roman story; its avowed intent is to give credibility to the ancient (Greek) myths by comparing them with more recent (Roman) historical events (while this is the purpose stated, there are numerous instances in which the Roman story is definitely earlier than the Greek one). A work of this title is included in Lamprias' catalogue of Plutarch's writings; but because of its style, scholars almost unanimously agree that the *Parallela minora* cannot have been written by Plutarch (note however the position of J. Boulogne, *Plutarque, Oeuvre morales* 4 (Paris 2002), 240, for whom the *Parallela* might be the work of the 'team of secretaries that Plutarch must have employed to exploit a considerable historiographical library').

The text and tradition of the *Parallela minora* presents a number of problems; furthermore, in terms of content, the *Parallela minora* appears to specialise in unattested stories, or surprising tweaks on well-known ones; finally, the credibility of its source-citations is disputed (discussion in A. De Lazzer, *Plutarco: Paralleli minori* (Naples 2000), 1-38; K. Dowden, *BNJ* 54, 'Biographical essay'; see further below, 'Biographical essay').

Besides the fundamental edition of W. Nachstädt, *Plutarchi Moralia* 2.2 (Leipzig 1935), 1-42, there are three modern editions of Pseudo-Plutarch's *Parallela minora*: A. De Lazzer, *Plutarco: Paralleli minori* (Naples 2000); J. Boulogne, *Plutarque, Oeuvres morales* 4 (Paris 2002); P.D. Bernardakis and H.G. Ingenkamp, *Plutarchi Chaeronensis Moralia editionem maiorem* vol. 2 (Athens 2009), 354-382 (but see on this edition the negative remarks by A. Ibáñez Chacón, '¿De *minora* a *maiora*? Los *Parallela minora* en la nueva *editio maior* de los *Moralia*', *Ploutarchos* n.s., 9 (2011/2012) 37-48); see also the PhD dissertation by A. Ibáñez Chacón, *Los *Parallela minora* atribuidos a Plutarco (Mor. 305A-316B): introducción, edición, traducción y comentario* (Malaga 2014) (<https://riuma.uma.es/xmlui/handle/10630/8488>). The text with introduction, translation and notes by F. Carlà-Uhink, in E. Lelli and G. Pisani, *Plutarco. Tutti i Moralia* (Milano 2017), 570-591 and 2610-2616 is also worth consulting.

Fragment 295 F 2

ID	295 F 2
Source	Pseudo-Plutarch, <i>Parallela minora</i> 26b
Work mentioned	Italian stories book 3
Source date	2nd century AD
Source language	English
Source genre	mythology, Greek
Fragment subject	mythology, Greek
Textual base	Jacoby

Text

Σεπτίμιος Μάρκελλος¹ γήμας Σιλουίαν τὰ πολλὰ κυνηγίω προσέκειτο. τὴν δὲ νεόνυμφον ἐν σχήματι ποιμένος Ἄρης βιασάμενος ἐγκύμονα ἐποίησε, καὶ ὠμολόγησεν ὅστις ἦν, καὶ δόρυ ἔδωκε, τὴν γένεσιν τοῦ μέλλοντος τίκτεσθαι φάσκων ἐν αὐτῷ ἀποκεῖσθαι· † ἀπέκτεινε γοῦν Σεπτίμιος Τουσκῖνον². Μάμερκος³ δ' ὑπὲρ εὐκαρπίας θύων θεοῖς μόνης ἠμέλησε Δήμητρος· ἡ δὲ κάπρον ἔπεμψε. συναθροίσας δὲ πολλοὺς ἐκεῖνος κυνηγέτας ἀνεῖλε, καὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν καὶ τὸ δέρος τῆι κατηγγυημένῃ γυναικὶ κατεχώρησε· Σκυμβράτης δὲ καὶ Μουθίας⁴ οἱ μητράδελφοι περιείλοντο τῆς κόρης. ἀγανακτήσας δ' ἀνεῖλε τοὺς συγγενεῖς· ἡ δὲ μήτηρ τὸ δόρυ κατέκαυσε, ὡς Μένυλλος⁵ ἐν τρίτῳ Ἰταλικῶν.

Translation

Septimios Markellos, who had married Silvia, mostly attended to hunting. Ares, taking the aspect of a shepherd, violated the young bride, made her pregnant, declared who he was, and gave her a spear, stating that the life of the child that was to be born lay in it. *** and Septimios killed Touskinos. Now Mamerkos while sacrificing to the gods for fruitfulness, neglected Demeter only; and she sent a wild boar. And he having assembled many hunters slew it and gave the head and the hide to his betrothed bride; but Skymbrates and Mouthias, his mother's brothers, took them from the maiden. In anger, he slew his kinsmen; but the mother burned the spear; so Menyllos in the third book of his *Italian Stories*.

Critical Apparatus

1. Μάρκελλος codd.; Μάμερκος? Schlereth, Nachstädt, Jacoby.
2. Boulogne 2002 and Ibáñez Chacón 2014 accept in the text the proposal of Herwerden, ἀπέτεκεν οὖν Σεπτίμιῳ Τουσκῖνον; other possibilities are ἀπέκτεινεν οὖν Σεπτίμιον Τουσκῖνος Anon; ἀπεκάλεσε γοῦν Σεπτίμιος Τουσκῖνον Schlereth; ἀπεκύησεν οὖν Σεπτίμιον Τουσκῖνον Nachstädt. De Lazzer 2000 prints the transmitted text, with a crux.
3. Μάμερκος codd.; Μάρμερκος δ; Μάκερκος η; Μάρκελλος? Schlereth, Nachstädt, Jacoby.
4. Σκυμβράτης – Μουθίας most codices and editors; Σκυμβράτης – Μουθίας Wyttenbach, Hutten (Scimbrates, Muthias Xylander), Θυμβρώτης – Μούκιος Nachstädt
5. Here FΠ (i.e. the Parisinus Graecus 1957, of the 11th century, and related codices) have Μένυλος, accepted by most ancient editions and by Hercher; ΦΕ have Μένυλλος, accepted by most recent editors, included Boulogne, but not by De Lazzer.

Commentary on the text

This otherwise unknown Roman story forms the Roman pendant of the story of Meleagros, which was narrated in *Parallela minora* 26a; it is clearly modelled on it, while using characters and stories (Silvia and her union with Ares) taken from ancient narratives of the origins of Rome (discussion of the relationship between the two accounts in P. Grossart, *Die Erzählung von Meleagros. Zur literarischen Entwicklung der kalydonischen Kultlegende* (Leiden 2001), 208-9). The story of Meleagros, in the Pseudo-Plutarchan version, is almost

completely lost, so that we cannot know how it was narrated (the source given for it is Euripides's lost play *Meleagros*); a lacuna (possibly of a limited extension), and difficulties with the names disturb also the Roman story. In particular, the central sentence ('and Septimios killed Touskinos') does not make sense in the context of the story; various alternative solutions have been canvassed, ranging from 'Touskinos then killed Septimios', to 'and she bore Touskinos to Septimios' (Herwerden), to 'and Septimios called him in disparagement Touskinos' (Schlereth), none being clearly superior to the others.

The main problem is to ascertain who Touskinos is, whether the son of Silvia, as is most likely, or someone else, for instance a shepherd; see on this the detailed discussion of J. Schlereth, *De Plutarchi quae feruntur Paralleli minoribus* (Freiburg 1931), 94-6. It is also unclear whether the Mamerkos mentioned as the cause of the anger of Demeter is the same as the Septimios Markellos mentioned in the opening: in terms of plot, one would expect them to be the same, because in the Greek story as known from Pseudo-Apollodoros, *Library* 1.8.2-3 (65-71), it was Meleagros's father, Oineus, who forgot to sacrifice to Artemis; hence the proposals to correct one name or the other in Markellos or Mamerkos. The name may have been Markellos throughout (A. de Lazzer, *Plutarco. Paralleli minori* (Naples 2000), 347 points out that the variant Μάρμερκος attested in δ speaks for an original Markellos; but this is not a very strong argument, for δ, i.e. the Vat. Reg. Gr. 80, is actually, on De Lazzer's own analysis (*Plutarco. Paralleli minori*, 117-120), unlikely to preserve much that is ancient), or also Mamerkos. This second possibility is on the whole more likely, as the name Mamerkos fits the cultural landscape of the other names, Touskinos in particular, very well. Touskinos's name is clearly derived from Tuscus ('the Etruscan'); it is attested as a *cognomen* for persons of Etruscan origin (see J.M. Blázquez, 'Etruscos en la Hispania romana', *Atti del Secondo Congresso Internazionale Etrusco* (Rome 1989), *Supplemento di Studi Etruschi* 3, 1495-1500). As for Mamerkos, tradition saw in him a son of Numa (Plutarch, *Life of Numa* 8) or of Pythagoras (Plutarch, *Life of Aemilius* 2.2), who would have given his surname to the family of the Aemilii; but according to Festus, *On the Meaning of Words* 130.2 Lindsay, 'Mamercus is an Oscan *praenomen*, deriving from the fact that they call Mars Mamers'.

An alternative possibility, adopted by D. Ricard, *Oeuvres morales de Plutarque* 4 (Paris 1785), 156, is to see in Mamerkos the son of Silvia, and to assume that Septimios killed an otherwise unknown Touskinos for reasons that would have been explained in a fuller version of the text (R.H. Klausen, *Aeneas und die Penaten: die italischen Volksreligionen unter dem Einfluß der griechischen* 2 (1840), 982-3 n. 1968, made a full novel out of this, with Mamerkos – son of Silvia, receiving his name from that of his father Mars – falling in love with the daughter of a(n Etruscan) king Touskinos, and Septimios killing Touskinos because of an insult by the latter against Silvia). Finally, a third possibility is outlined by J. Boulogne, *Plutarque. Oeuvres morales* 4 (Paris 2002), 439 n. 184, who suggests that Mamerkos here indicates Touskinos (this makes sense, because Boulogne accepts the textual proposal of Herwerden: Touskinos is the son of Silvia, and he is also called Mamerkos). This would imply a variation in respect to the story of Meleagros as we know it, because the hero would be here the cause of his own undoing; such a variation would not be surprising in the *Parallela minora* (although we would still be missing an explanation of

the double name), and it is all the more sad that the Greek parallel for this story is so mutilated.

A further significant twist is in the fact that the offended goddess is Demeter and not Artemis (in Homer, *Iliad* 9, 533-535 Artemis sends a plague on the people of Kalydon, because Oeneus, Meleager's father, had not offered her the first-fruits of the harvest). As A. Ibáñez Chacón, *Los Parallela minora atribuidos a Plutarco (Mor. 305A-316B): introducción, edición, traducción y comentario* (Malaga 2014), 365-367 points out, the entire narrative is heavily romanised, through the role given to Mars, and through the gift of the spear (rather than the fatal brand or log of the ancient Greek story).

A last difficulty is in the transmitted names of the uncles, which are rather odd (all scholars have accepted that there must be a corruption here; Nachstädt for instance proposes to correct Μουθίας in Μούκιος).

What can we make of this story? For Klausen, *Aeneas und die Penaten* 2, 983, the names Silvia, Marcellus, Mamercus and Tuscinius, as well as the significant role played by the spear, meant that this story was 'echt italisch'. But already by the end of the 19th century the opinion had swung; the story is now felt to have been modelled upon that of Meleagros (so e.g. already R. Peter, 'Mamercus', in W.H. Roscher, *Lexikon der Griechischen und Römischen Mythologie* 2.2 (Leipzig 1894-97), 2307-8; see also Jacoby, *FGrH* 3a 399), and to be a later invention, whether by Pseudo-Plutarch or by some earlier author (a context may be easily imagined: see e.g. T.P. Wiseman, 'Legendary Genealogies in Late-Republican Rome', *Greece & Rome* S. 2.21.2 (1974), 153-164, and 155 for Mamercus).

Italika would seem a reasonable title for works telling stories concerning striking events and characters of Roman history; yet as pointed out by K. Dowden, Dositheus, [BNJ 54 Biographical Essay](#), 'there is exceptionally little evidence for *Italika* outside the *Parallela minora*' – but abundance of *Italika* in the *Parallela*, mostly ascribed to otherwise unknown authors, and mostly being cited from book 3 (see the table in Dowden's entry).

Commentary on F 2

See above, commentary on F 1.

Biographical Essay

The *Parallela minora* attribute a famous Greek story, the sacrifice of Iphigeneia, to a 'Meryllos' author of *Boiotika* in at least two books (the reference here made to a first book implies the existence of at least a second one), and an unknown Roman story, modelled on the Greek story of Meleagros, but with elements that reflect current lore on the origins of Rome, to a 'Menylos' (or Menyillos) author of *Italika* in at least three books. Neither in the first nor in the second passage is the origin of the author mentioned – something rather infrequent in the *Parallela minora*. The two names, Meryllos and Menylos, are very close to each other; none is attested outside Pseudo-Plutarch. For this reason most scholars (and in particular Nachstädt and Jacoby) have considered that these two names reflect one person only, and have proposed to correct the two names in Menyillos (a relatively rare name, but attested as such, in both literary and epigraphical sources: e.g. the commander of the

Macedonian garrison installed in Athens by Antipater, Plutarch, *Phocion* 28.1 and 28.7, Plutarch, *Sayings of Kings and Commanders* 188f, Diodoros of Sicily 18.18.5; the Menyllos of Alabanda friend of Polybios, Polybios 31.10.4, 12.8, 14.8, 20.2, 20.3; the pilot of a ship in the *Letters of Themistocles* 7. A search in the electronic *Lexicon of Greek Personal Names* yields a total of 46 Menylli, from all over the Greek world, against one Menylos from Thessaly – no Merylli are attested).

A. de Lazzer, *Plutarco. Paralleli minori* (Naples 2000), 70 has however recently argued for retaining the transmitted text, and for distinguishing between Meryllos, the author of *Boiotika*, and Menylos, author of *Italika*. It is true that the majority of the sources quoted as authority by Pseudo-Plutarch tend to specialise in either Greek stories (16 authors) or Roman ones (10 authors); but there are some 6 instances of authors that cover both fields, and Menyllos may have been meant as one of them (statistics in F. Jacoby, 'Die Überlieferung von Ps. Plutarchs *Parallela Minora* und die Schwindelautoren', *Mnemosyne* S. 3.8 (1940), 127). As in both the Pseudo-Plutarchan passages the manuscript tradition presents evident problems, and as on the whole Pseudo-Plutarch tends to play with existing names, while totally unattested names are not something one would expect from him, it seems best to restore an attested and viable name. It is difficult to say more of Menyllos: as E. Bux, 'Menyllos (3)', *RE* 15.1 (Stuttgart 1931), col. 970 concludes, most likely he is a creation of the author of the *Parallela minora*. Even one of the staunchest defenders of the reliability of the source-references of Pseudo-Plutarch, J. Schlereth, *De Plutarchi quae feruntur Paralleli minoribus* (Freiburg 1931), 118 admits that 'quid de Menyllo ... sentiendum sit, non liquet'. For further discussion of the problems posed by the authors mentioned in the *Parallela minora* and the *On rivers* attributed to Plutarch, see A. Cameron, *Greek Mythography in the Roman World* (Oxford 2004), 127-34; [BNJ 22 Biographical Essay](#); and [BNJ 56 F 1b](#) for a slightly different view.

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