AN EPIGRAM OF TYMNES

The reading φίλε λᾶρε in *A. P.* VII 199 (Tymnes) in maintained against Gow-Page's text.

At *A. P.* VII 199 (= Gow-Page, *Hell. Epigr.* 3612 ff.) we read:

"Ορνεον ὦ Χάρισιν μεμελημένον, ὦ παρόμοιον
ἀλκυόσιν τὸν σὸν φθόγγον ἰσωσάμενον,
ἡρπάσθης, φίλε λᾶρε, σὰ δ᾽ ἤθεα καὶ τὸ σὸν ἡδύ
πνεῦμα σιωπηραὶ νυκτὸς ἔχουσιν ὁδοί.

The text, in line 3, has the variants φιλέλαιε, given by *P* and *Pl.* (which has been divided into φίλε λαῖε or φίλ᾽ ἔλαιε by the critics) and φίλε λάρε, given by *C*.

Gow-Page (*Hell. Epigr.*, commentary on line 3614) accept φίλ᾽ ἔλαιε in their printed text, and state that «the guess of the corrector added to the lemma that a gull is meant is shown by 2 to be absurd, and when introduced into the text (no doubt *C*'s conjecture) involves a false quantity (λᾱρος)».

All the arguments used by Gow and Page are mistaken. First of all, however, let us examine the variant φίλε λαῖε or φίλ᾽ ἔλαιε. At first sight the variant seems possible, because both the λαῖος and the ἔλαιος are birds known to the ancients. However, if we read φίλε λαῖε or φίλ᾽ ἔλαιε there are problems left. To begin with, why should the bird (λαῖος or ἔλαιος) be said to be Χάρισιν μεμελημένον? The Χάριτες proverbially liked gentleness, as is well known, but neither the λαῖος nor the ἔλαιος was said in antiquity to be gentle. Moreover, why should specific mention of ἤθεα be made, in line 3? Of course, ἦθος can be used of birds (cf. LSJ, *s. u.* ἦθος, 3), but the word is «odd in the context», as Gow-Page must admit, if it refers to the λαῖος

or to the ἔλαιος, whose disposition was not in any way notable or praiseworthy. And why should the bird's πνεῦμα be ἡδύ?

Having observed that the reading φίλε λαῖε or φίλ' ἔλαιε presents problems, let us now refute the arguments alleged by Gow and Page. It is well known that C has often not altered the original text by conjecture, but preserved the original text (cf. QU 15, 1973, p. 11). As Gow-Page themselves note, C used, for his corrections of P, «an exemplar peculiar to himself», and «his corrections in the text» are «usually true» (Hell. Epigr., vol. I, p. XXXV-XXXVII). The reading λάρε (i. e. λᾶρε: on the accent, see below), present in C, could therefore well be the original text written by Tymnes. Secondly, a crucial point. Line 2 does not show that a gull would be «absurd» in the epigram, as Gow-Page maintain: very much to the contrary, line 2 demonstrates that the correct reading is λᾶρε. The song of halcyons (cf. Thompson, Glossary of Greek Birds, p. 47) was a «plaintive and melancholy note». Now, whoever has heard the voice of gulls knows that it is precisely a plaintive, monotonous note, resembling a human lamentation and never altering in tone. Already Jacobs (Animadv. in Epigr. Anthol., I 2 = VII, Leipzig 1798, p. 411), who accepted λάρε in his text, noted: «v. 3, λάρε. De gavia, quam quis domi suae nutriverat, accipiendum. De hujus aviculae cantu nihil legi, quod ad ejus commendationem pertineat. Querulum esse, intelligitur ex comparatione cum cantu halcyonis». The song of the halcyon was highly praised by the ancients, who regarded it as 'plaintive' (Thompson, loc. cit.); the song of the gull, λάρος, which is by its nature a plaintive note, as I have underlined, is praised by Tymnes, who compares it to the plaintive song of the halcyons. The voice of the gull, λάρος, is not only plaintive to the ear of any of us moderns who listens to it: as Dr. H. White acutely points out to me, it was felt to be plaintive by the ear of the ancients as well, because Leonidas, at A. P. VII 652 and 654, mentions the lamenting (τεθρήνηται, κέκλαυμαι) voice of the λάρος. Finally, the quantity λᾶρος is not at all «false»: on ancient grammarians stating that this bird-name could be scanned λᾶρος, cf. Thes., s. u. λάρος, 118 A [1] (if λᾶρος is «mensura attica», I need hardly

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[1] In Thes., loc. cit., it is already noted that Arcadius' statement to the effect that λάρος could be scanned λᾶρος is supported by the scanning λᾶρος at Arist., Aues 567. The scanning λᾶρος at Aues 567 was removed by editors (cf. e. g. Passow, Wört., s. u. λάρος, or Merry's commentary on Aues 567) for the sole reason that they could not find any other example of the scanning λᾶρος. Now that we have found λᾶρος at A. P. VII 199, 3, we can conclude that the two examples (Arist., Aues 567 and A. P. VII 199, 3) confirm each other, and, for good measure, are supported by Arcadius.

remind the reader that Atticisms are frequent in the language of epi-
grammatists[2]. C has, of course, written λάρε instead of λᾶρε, because
C and the other copyists of the Anthology, as is well known, often
place on the penultimate syllable of a word an acute accent, instead
of the circumflex we would employ[3].

Now, if we remember that the disposition of the λάρος (λᾶρος)
was said by the ancients to be «gentle and peaceable» (Thompson,
op. cit., p. 193), we realize that λᾶρος is the bird for whom Tymnes
has written the epigram. The λᾶρος sung by Tymnes was, precisely
because of his gentle and peaceable disposition, dear to the Graces
(Χάρισιν μεμελημένον), who love gentle and peaceable beings; the
mention of the bird's «disposition» (ἤθεα) is no longer «odd», but
—very much to the contrary— reveals itself to be an apposite com-
pliment paid by Tymnes to the bird, given the fact that the bird's
disposition was known to be laudably and praiseworthily gentle and
peaceable. In all probability, the epithet ἡδύ is to be referred, by
syllepsis, not only to πνεῦμα, but also to ἤθεα, although this is not
strictly necessary, in view of the fact that the «disposition» (ἤθεα) of
the λᾶρος was known to be sweet by its very nature. Τὸ σὸν ἡδύ
πνεῦμα, in any case, means «thy gentle (τὸ σὸν ἡδύ) soul (πνεῦμα)».
As I have already underlined, the disposition of the λᾶρος was gentle,
and his «soul» (πνεῦμα) is accordingly called ἡδύ by the poet. Πνεῦμα
in the sense «soul» of the deceased is common in epitaphs, of course
(cf. Kaibel, Epigramm. Gr., Index, s. u. πνεῦμα and Bauer, Wört. N. T.,
s. u. πνεῦμα, 'Lebensgeist', 'Seele', 'Gespenst', etc.; cf. also Thes., s. u.
πνεῦμα 'anima', 1254 A-D, and Lattimore, Themes in Greek... Epitaphs,
Urbana 1962, p. 30, 56). «Nach dem Tode... lebt das πνεῦμα als selb-
ständiges Wesen... in der Unterwelt» (Bauer, loc. cit.).

Herrlinger (Totenklage um Tiere, p. 25 f.) observes: «eine Möwe
(λάρε C, Öhler) kann unmöglich gemeint sein. Das Epigramm kann
sich nur auf einen zahmen (φίλε, v. 3) Singvogel beziehen». As we
have already seen, Jacobs thought that the gavia was tame (quam
quis domi suae nutriverat). Herrlinger is right in thinking that a gull

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[2] Cf. e. g. QU 15, 1973, p. 30 f.; Aulin, Eloc. Callim. p. 50; Loebe, Eloc. Callim.
I, p. 8; Waltz, De Antipatro, p. 66; Ouvré, Méléagre, p. 156 with note 3. For exam-
ples of long vowels used by epigrammatists, who followed thereby the usus atti-
corum (just as Tymnes used a long α in the word λᾶρος), cf. in particular Ouvré,
Quae fuerint dicendi genus ratioque metrica apud Asclepiaden, Posidippum, Hedy-
lum, Paris 1894, p. 87 ff.

[3] A few examples selected from Stadtmüller's apparatus: ἴσον A. P. VII 538,
2; Θυρεᾶτις A. P. VII 430, 3; κρηπῖδα A. P. VII 596, 5; σώστρα A. P. IX 378, 5;
μῆτερ A. P. IX 361, 1; ψάρας A. P. IX 373, 6; ὠδῖνος A. P. VII 467, 3.

can hardly be «zahm», but the fact is that the epithet φίλε, referred to the gull, λᾶρε, does not mean that the bird was «zahm». Tymnes has used φίλε with reference to λᾶρε in pointed, and accurate, allusion to the fact that λάροι, gulls, were regarded by ancients as «die besten *Freunde*» of humans (material in Keller, *Die Antike Tierwelt*, II, p. 243).

The reading φίλε λαῖε or φίλ' ἔλαιε arose as a trivialization, because someone wanted to eliminate the unusual, but, as I have just emphasized, perfectly legitimate scanning λᾶρε. On the other hand, I need hardly add that the reading φίλε λαῖε or φίλ' ἔλαιε could, of course, have arisen as a mechanical error, because confusion between ρ and ι is notoriously frequent. For a parallel case (where the reading εὐφυέες can be either a trivialization with respect to ἐκφυέες, or the result of a mechanical error, i. e. the letter κ having been misread as υ), cf. *QU* 15, 1973, p. 11 f.

Conclusion: φίλε λᾶρε is what Tymnes wrote; the arguments alleged by Gow-Page are, without exception, ungrounded.

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