

BACCHUS AND DIOSCORIDES

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For the sake of brevity, I refer the reader to G.G. Vioque, *Dioscórides, Epigramas*, Universidad de Huelva 2001, where most of the relevant bibliography is listed and evaluated.

The problem which I think can be solved is clear. The speaker in Dioscorides' epigram *A.P.* VII, 707 is a satyr: on the other hand, the person who speaks in Dioscorides' epigram *A.P.* VII, 37 cannot be another satyr, as commonly assumed nowadays, because such a hypothesis creates insurmountable difficulties, not overcome by any of the critics.

The interpretation of *A.P.* VII, 37 offered by Salmasius, as Jacobs (in his commentary *ad.loc.*, p. 394 ff.) underlines, is correct insofar as it explains the text fully, without creating any interpretative problems: the speaker is a statue (on this "costumbre" cf. Vioque, *op.cit.* p. 280) of the god Bacchus.

However, Jacobs in his commentary (p. 398) thought that Salmasius' explanation, although arrived at "ingeniose" (p. 395) and accounting for every detail of the text of the epigram, was refuted by *A.P.* VII, 707, 2 «ἄλλος ἅπ' αὐθαίμων ἡμετέρων», which words he took to mean "*alius quidam ex fratribus meis*", i.e. to denote a satyr.

Jacobs' objection to Salmasius' elucidation of the epigram has been accepted as valid by all the subsequent scholars, who, following Jacobs, have forced into the epigram *A.P.* VII, 37 a satyr as its speaker, thus creating all kinds of incongruities and absurdities (cf. e.g. Gow-Page, *Hell. Epigr.*, *ad loc.*)¹.

1. Recent bibliography (listed by Vioque) is disappointing. S. Fortuna has indicated that D.F. Sutton (who goes as far as to assert that the two epigrams are not "closely" connected) emits "osservazioni ... prive di valore". Miss Fortuna's own suggestion, however, is unconvincing: she admits that "i Satiri sofoclei ... certo non dovevano vestire di porpora" (as Pohlenz and Gow-Page, examining Pollux IV, 118, have underlined), and

In reality, Jacobs' objection to Salmasius does not hold water: the latter's explanation of *A.P.* VII, 37 is absolutely faultless.

The satyr in *A.P.* VII, 707, whose "nombre parlante" in line 3 is Σκιρτός "Dancer" (cf. Vioque, *op.cit.*, *ad.loc.*), aptly designates as his brother, by means of the words ἄλλος ἀπ' αὐθαίμων ἡμετέρων, the god Bacchus, "der selbst bisweilen als Ziegenbock vorgestellt wird" (Gruppe, *Griech. Mythol. u. Relig.*, vol. II, p. 1389) and who was envisaged as σκιρτητής Σάτυρος according to the testimony of a famous Orphic Hymn (cf. Brucgmann, *Epitheta Deorum*, s.v. Διόνυσος p. 92: σκιρτητής Σάτυρος). Note the correspondence Σκιρτός *A.P.* VII, 707, 3 and ὄρχηστὴν πόδα *A.P.* VII, 37, 6.

In all probability, Salmasius knew the Orphic Hymn in question: puzzlingly enough, none other than Jacobs quotes it (*op.cit.*, p. 398: «σκιρτητής Σάτυρος *vocatur Bacchus in Hymno...*»).

Be that as it may, I hope that, by vindicating Salmasius, I have unravelled the problem concerning the relationship between *A.P.* VII, 37 and *A.P.* VII, 707.

sees herself compelled to surmise that Dioscorides, in attributing such "raffinata veste" to them, followed an erroneous belief which must have been current, although it is not attested, "in età ellenistica". The fact is that, as Dindorf, the editor of the *Thes. Ling. Graec.* comprehended (cf. Vioque, *op.cit.*, p. 283), the epigram *A.P.* VII, 37 makes sense only if we realize that Bacchus is the speaker.