

Mnesimachos (841)

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841 Mnesimachos

Ken Dowden (Birmingham)

BNJ	Mnesimachus Phaselinus	Mnesimachos of Phaselis
Historian Number:	841	

841 F 1 - SCHOL. APOLL. RHOD. 2, 1015b	meta[[id="841" type="F" n="1"]]
Subject: Ethnography Historical Work: <i>On the Skyths</i> Source date: 1 c BC – 1 c AD ? Historian's date: 2-1 c BC ? Historical period: ---	Translation
<p>Ἴρὸν δ' αὐτ' ἐπὶ τοῖσιν ὄρος καὶ γαῖαν ἄμειβον, ἦν ἐνὶ Μοσσύνοικοι ἀν' οὐρα ναιετάουσιν μόσσυνας;</p> <p>τοῦτο καθήκον ἐστὶν εἰς τὸν Εὐξείνῳ Πόντῳ μέμνηται αὐτοῦ καὶ Κτησίας... καὶ Σουίδας... ἀκριβέστερον δὲ ὁ Ἀγάθων...</p> <p>ὁ δὲ Εἰρηναῖος Μνησίμαχόν φησι περὶ αὐτοῦ ἱστορεῖν ἐν τῷ ᾧ Περὶ Σκυθῶν ἀγνοῶν· ὁ γὰρ Μνησίμαχος ἐν τῇ Εὐρώπῃ μέμνηται †κειμένης τῆς Σκυθικῆς†, ὁ δὲ Ἀπολλώνιος καὶ οἱ προειρημένοι ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ καταλέγονται. τρίτον ἐστὶν Ἴερὸν ὄρος τῆς Θράκης.</p>	<p>Apollonios: Then, after them (<i>the Tibarenoi</i>), they (<i>the Argonauts</i>) passed by the Sacred Mountain and the land where the Mossynoikoi live in <i>mossynes</i> on the mountains.</p> <p>Scholion: This is the one reaching down to the Black Sea; it is mentioned by Ktesias (<i>BNJ</i> 688 F 56)... and Soudas (<i>BNJ</i> 602 F 3)... but Agathon (<i>BNJ</i> 801 F 1) is more precise...</p> <p>Eirenaios (F 21 Haupt) says wrongly that Mnesimachos gives an account of it in Bk 1 of <i>On the Skyths</i>. But Mnesimachos mentions †the Skythian land as being situated† in Europe, whereas Apollonios and the aforementioned list it in Asia. There is a third Sacred Mountain in Thrace.</p>

841 F 1 Commentary

Textual note: †κειμένης τῆς Σκυθικῆς† Dowden; <έκεῖ> κειμένης τῆς Σκυθικῆς? κειμένου [τῆς Σκυθικῆς]?

For commentary on this passage, see Martine Cuypers on Agathon *BNJ* 801 F 1, and Mary F. Williams on Soudas *BNJ* 602 F 3. For *mossynes*, wooden huts, see Apollonios 2.381-381b. The fragments of the grammarian Eirenaios, also called Pacatus, were collected by Moriz Haupt for lectures in 1871, and are found in his *Opuscula* 2 (Lepizig 1876), 434-40.

The passage is concerned to disambiguate Sacred Mountains (as Cuypers observes, to whose informative commentary on *BNJ* 801 F 1 the reader is referred). What, then, is the error of Eirenaios? The scholiast appears to think Mnesimachos could not have mentioned the Sacred Mountain next to the Mossynoikoi because they are in Asia whereas Mnesimachos' mention of it places it in Skythia which on his account is in Europe. But that is where Skythia is for everyone else anyway (except that Hekataios put the Issedonians in Asia *BNJ* 1 F 193)! The passage does not make adequate sense as it stands because what Apollonios and others place in Asia is not Skythia but the Sacred Mountain in question. Cuypers (q.v.) thinks ingeniously of emending the words '*On the Skyths*', but this fails because it is reinforced by the immediately following mention of 'the Skythian land'. What

Mnesimachos should have been represented as mentioning was the situation of the mountain, perhaps reading <ἐκεῖ> κειμένης τῆς Σκυθικῆς, which would yield the sense ‘But Mnesimachos mentions (it) in Europe, <because that is where> Skythia is situated’. It would be palaeographically easy (two haplographies: αἰ preceding ἐ, and κεῖ preceding κει).

In any case, the objection to Eirenaios is this: because his book is about Skythia, which is in Europe, he cannot have mentioned a Sacred Mountain that is in Asia. The argument of the scholiast is not based on a reading of Mnesimachos, only on the title, and the conclusion drawn is fallacious.

Thus a Mnesimachos wrote a work on Skythia in several books. Like F 2 and F 3, this comes from the Scholia to Apollonios and therefore this is likely to be the same man, Mnesimachos of Phaselis.

841 F 2 - SCHOL. APOLL. RHOD. 4, 1412/4	meta[[id="841" type="F" n="2"]]
Subject: Mythology Historical Work: <i>Diakosmoi</i> Source date: 1 c BC – 1 c AD ? Historian's date: 2-1 c BC ? Historical period: ---	Translation
εἴτ' οὖν οὐρανίαις ἐναρίθμοι ἔστε θεῆσιν εἴτε καταχθονίαις, εἴτ' οἰοπόλοι καλέεσθε, νύμφαι] τοῦτό φησιν, ἐπεὶ τῶν νυμφῶν αἱ μὲν εἰσιν οὐράναι, αἱ δὲ ἐπίγειοι, αἱ δὲ ἐπιποτάμιοι, αἱ δὲ λιμναῖαι, αἱ δὲ θαλάσσιαι. καὶ καθόλου δὲ τὸ τῶν νυμφῶν γένος εἰς πολλὰ διήρηται, ὡς φησι Μνησίμαχος ὁ Φασηλίτης ἐν Διακόσμοις.	Apollonios: Whether then you are to be counted among the goddesses of heaven or the spirits of the earth below or whether you are called shepherdess nymphs. Scholiast: He is saying this because nymphs can be heavenly, of the earth, of rivers, of marshes, of the sea and indeed in general the genus of nymph has many species, as Mnesimachos of Phaselis says in his <i>Diakosmoi</i> .

841 F 2 Commentary

Diakosmoi are also discussed by Michael Psellos in his *Theologika* §112, ‘About the *diakosmoi* and orders (*taxeis*) ordered after and around God’ (cf. Gregory, *Commentary on Ecclesiasticus* 7.15: ‘*diakosmoi* and *taxeis*’). Psellos talks of cherubim and seraphim, of Powers, of angels and archangels. Thus this ‘organising into ranks’, which is roughly what *diakosmos* should mean, can actually be about categorising of divine beings, namely in the case of Mnesimachos nymphs. The metaphor is of arranging an army by its various divisions and categories, as in the *Trojan Diakosmos* of Demetrios of Skepsis (about the catalogue of Trojan combatants in *Iliad* 2).

Phaselis is on the coast in SE Lykia (about 50 km SSW of Antalya). For a brief history, see *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Classical Sites* (1976): supposedly founded in 690 BC by Rhodians, it flourished under the Empire, with a notable visit of Hadrian in 129 or 131. It gives us no help on the date of Mnesimachos.

841 F 3 - SCHOL. APOLL. RHOD. 2, 476/83a	meta[[id="841" type="F" n="3"]]
Subject: Mythology Historical Work: <i>Diakosmoi</i> Source date: 1 c BC – 1 c AD ? Historian's date: 2-1 c BC ?	Translation

Historical period: ---

ὁ γὰρ οἶος ἐν οὖρεσι δένδρεα τέμνων
δὴ ποθ' ἄμαδρυάδος νύμφης ἀθέριξε λιτάων κτλ.]

ἄμαδρυάδας νύμφας Μνησίμαχος φησι διὰ τὸ
ἅμα ταῖς δρυσι γεννᾶσθαι, ἢ ἐπεὶ δοκοῦσιν
ἅμα ταῖς δρυσι φθειρεσθαι [νύμφαι
ἄμαδρυάδες λέγονται]. Χάρων δὲ ὁ
Λαμνακηνὸς ἱστορεῖ, ὡς ἄρα Ῥοῖκος,
θεασάμενος δρῦν ὅσον οὐπω μέλλουσαν ἐπὶ
γῆς καταφέρεσθαι, προσέταξε τοῖς παισὶν
ὑποστηρίξει ταύτην· ἢ δὲ μέλλουσα
συμφθειρεσθαι τῇ δρυὶ νύμφη ἐπιστᾶσα τῷ
Ῥοῖκῳ χάριν μὲν ἔφασκεν εἰδέναι ὑπὲρ τῆς
σωτηρίας... καὶ Πίνδαρος δὲ φησι, περὶ
νυμφῶν ποιούμενος τὸν λόγον, « ἰσοδένδρου
τέκμαρ αἰῶνος λαχοῖσα ».

Apollonios: For he (*the father of Paraibios*) felling trees, alone in the mountains, once disregarded the entreaties of a hamadryad nymph.

Scholion: Hamadryad nymphs are so called according to Mnesimachos because they are born together with (*hama*) oaks (*dryes*) or because they are thought to perish together with oaks. Charon of Lampsakos (*FGrH* 262 F 12) tells how Rhoikos, seeing an oak on the very point of falling to the ground, instructed his sons to prop it up. And the nymph that was about to perish with the oak stood over Rhoikos and expressed her gratitude for being saved... and Pindar (F 165 Schröder) says, talking about nymphs, 'gaining the finality of tree-equal lifetime'.

841 F 3 Commentary

Textual note: [νύμφαι ἄμαδρυάδες λέγονται] Dowden.

As E. Bux once remarked ('Mnesimachos (3)', *RE* 15.2 (1932), 2279), the whole passage appears to reproduce Mnesimachos, including the citations of Charon and Pindar. Charon therefore provides a lateish 5th century *terminus post quem*, if it were needed (see Biographical Essay).

The discussion of hamadryads sits nicely with the discussion of nymphs in the *Diakosmoi* (F 2) and likely comes from that work. The discussion of Rhoikos may well have included the rest of the story of Rhoikos. In one version, he was unfaithful to the nymph and was stung by bees, which can of course identify unfaithfulness, a story known to Pindar (F 252 (Plutarch, *Aitia Physika* 36), presumably continuing F 165). On Rhoikos, see O. Höfer, 'Rhoikos (3)', in W.H. Roscher, *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, 4 (1909-1915), 120-1. The name itself is derogatory, meaning 'crooked' (Hesychios s.v.), from which we can deduce that his failure, rather than his kindness, is the point of the story. For the full story see Charon of Lampsakos *FGrH* 262 F 12 (a more complete version of this extract) and Σ Theokritos 3.13c. For the interrelation of nymphs and trees including discussion of Rhoikos and hamadryads, see Jennifer Larson, *Greek Nymphs: Myth, Cult, Lore* (Oxford 2001), 73-8.

841 Biographical Essay

Phaselis produced few other figures of culture. I can only discover Theodektes, a 'rhetor and tragedian of the 4th cent. BC, active in Athens' (*BNP*, s.v.); and Kritolaos, the Head of the Peripatetic School in the 1st half of the 3rd c. BC. It is possible that Mnesimachos could have been a contemporary of either of these. The *terminus post quem* is Charon of Lampsakos (see F 2); the *terminus ante quem* is Eirenaeus Pacatus (perhaps early 1st cent. AD, see S. Fornaro, 'Eirenaeus, Irenaeus (1)', *BNP*). His incorporation in the Apollonios scholia also suggests no later than 1st century AD (as with Dionysophanes, see K. Dowden, *BNJ* 856 Biographical Essay)

At a guess he is late Hellenistic, say 2nd-1st cent. BC, particularly given his classificatory tendencies and given the metaphorical development of the word *diakosmos* in his hands (see on F 2) to describe the ranks of divinities.

Mnesimachos is not a historian but a writer of curiosities focusing on fine points of detail, an outgrowth from the culture of commentary and fittingly only preserved in a commentary, that on Apollonios of Rhodes. His *Diakosmoi*, which included the classification of nymphs (F 2, F 3) would be a handy reference book for the commentator.

841 Bibliography

E. Bux, 'Mnesimachos (3)', *RE* 15.2 (1932), 2279.