Paus. 2.16.4: Acusilaus of Argos?

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Abstract: Pausanias (2.16.4) attribue un logos sur les origines généalogiques de Mycènes à Acousilaos d'Argos. Or, le mot Ἀκουσιλάῳ, admis par les éditeurs modernes de façon unanime, n'est pas la variante transmise par les manuscrits de Pausanias (ἀκοῦσι λόγον), mais une conjecture de Porson. La leçon ἀκοῦσαι, acceptée par les premiers éditeurs de Pausanias, doit être retenue comme originale. Par conséquent, un fragment substantiel d'Acousilaos devrait disparaître des éditions de ce mythographe.
Keywords: Pausanias, Acousilaos d'Argos, Mycènes, critique textuelle.

In giving his report on the mythical past of the city of Mycenae, Pausanias provides a number of conflicting accounts dealing with the origins of this toponym. Among other theories, two hero names are put forward as eponyms: Mycene and Myceneus. For the first one, the Periegete calls upon the Panhellenic epic authorities as a testimony – Homer and 'Hesiod' (2.16.4):

> Ὅμηρος δὲ ἐν Ὀδυσσείᾳ γυναικὸς Μυκήνης ἐν ἔπει τῷδε ἐμνήσθη· Τυρώ τ' Ἀλκμήνη τε ἐυστέφανός τε Μυκήνη (Hom. *Od.* 2.120). ταύτην εἶναι θυγατέρα Ἰνάχου γυναῖκα δὲ Ἀρέστορος τὰ ἔπη λέγει, ἃ δὴ Ἕλληνες καλοῦσιν Ἠοίας μεγάλας (Hes. fr. 246 Merkelbach/West)· ἀπὸ ταύτης οὖν γεγονέναι καὶ τὸ ὄνομα τῇ πόλει φασίν.

> Homer in the *Odyssey* mentions a woman named Mycene in the following verse: "Tyro and Alcmene and the fair-garlanded Mycene." She is said to have been the daughter of Inachus and the wife of Arestor in the poetry that the Greeks call the *Great Ehoeae.* So they say that the name of the citadel originated from her.[1]

As for the second genealogy, it goes back to a certain Myceneus, son of an unknown Sparton, who was the son of Phoroneus. This arrangement is objected to by Pausanias, as the Spartans did not know of any hero named Sparton. Their eponymous heroine is Sparte, a woman, represented by a statue in Amyclae:

> ὃν δὲ προσποιοῦσιν Ἀκουσιλάῳ λόγον, Μυκηνέα υἱὸν εἶναι Σπάρτωνος, Σπάρτωνα δὲ Φορωνέως, οὐκ ἂν ἔγωγε ἀποδεξαίμην, διότι μηδὲ αὐτοὶ Λακεδαιμόνιοι. Λακεδαιμονίοις γὰρ Σπάρτης μὲν γυναικὸς εἰκών ἐστιν ἐν Ἀμύκλαις, Σπάρτωνα δὲ Φορωνέως παῖδα θαυμάζοιεν ἂν καὶ ἀρχὴν ἀκούσαντες.

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1   The translations of Pausanias are those from Loeb's Jones, as edited, with revisions, by Gregory Nagy (under https://chs.harvard.edu/, consulted in Nov. 27th, 2019). I adapted the translations at some points.

But the tradition that is attributed to Acusilaus, that Myceneus was the son of Sparton, and Sparton of Phoroneus, I cannot accept, because the Lacedaemonians themselves do not accept it either. I say this because, although the Lacedaemonians have at Amyclae an image of a woman named Sparte, even they would be amazed at the mere mention of a Sparton, son of Phoroneus.

In the text just quoted, this λόγος ('account') is to be ascribed to the mythographer Acusilaus of Argos. Nevertheless, Ἀκουσιλάῳ is not the reading found in the manuscripts of Pausanias (ἀκοῦσι λόγον) – and it may be worth adding that Acusilaus of Argos is not cited elsewhere in the *Description of Greece*. As it happens, all the modern editors of Pausanias have accepted unanimously and uncritically Porson's *ope ingenii* conjecture as recorded by John Kaye back in 1814.[2] Accordingly, a new piece of evidence of Acusilaus' *Genealogies* was regained and conveniently included in the collections of fragments of this mythographer. Myceneus' genealogy was numbered and printed among the fragments of Acusilaus dealing with the mythical origins of Argos and the Argolid.[3] It is by a philological procedure such as this *coniectura* that a new fragment was 'produced'.

It is my aim to call into question this attribution. In my opinion, the name Acusilaus (and consequently a substantive fragment of this mythographer) should be expunged from the editions of Pausanias' *Description of Greece* and hence of Acusilaus' *Genealogies*. This proposal assumes that, if the manuscripts yield a reading that makes sense, there is no use in making any attempt to 'ameliorate' it. The days of hypercriticism in the editing of Greek and Latin authors are long past. A simple correction that is paleographically plausible should prevail over a more complicated and elaborate one. A misspelling ἀκοῦσι for ἀκοῦσ‹α›ι after προσποιοῦσιν can be easily explained as a *Perseverationsfehler*. In conformity with the earlier editors of Pausanias, this passage should read as follows: ὃν δὲ

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[2]   "For the discovery of this reference we are indebted to the acuteness of the late Professor Porson [...] the Professor with his accustomed ingenuity deduced the true reading" (Kaye 1814: 220, n. 5). The only editor that has expressed suspicions about Porson's correction is Musti in his Lorenzo Valla edition: *"fortasse* ἀκοῦσ‹α›ι *non excludendum, etsi forma activa* προσποιεῖν *minus frequenter cum hac significatione adhibetur"* (Musti/Torelli 1986: 86). However, see *LSJ*⁹, *s. u.* προσποιέω (I.3. = προσποιέομαι).

[3]   The fragment is number 16 in Müller's edition (*FHG*) and number 24 in the editions of Jacoby (*FGH*), Diels/Kranz (*FVS*), Fowler (2000), Toye (*BNJ*) and Andolfi (2019). Myceneus' genealogical arrangement is attributed uncritically and straightforwardly to Acusilaus by Tozzi (1967: 597–598), Pellegrini (1973–1974: 161–162), Brillante (1990: 98), Fontana (2012: 385), Kaplan (2014: 301), among many other scholars. Far-reaching conclusions have been drawn from this (philologically constructed) passage. An example: "A long-standing scholarly prejudice posits Acusilaus as a prominent celebrator of his native city, a view supported in antiquity by Pausanias"; "Responsibility for this long-standing opinion lies principally with Pausanias, who dealt in the second book of his *Periegesis* with the Argolid and its traditions" (Andolfi 2019: 19 and 21). See also Frateantonio (2009: 184–185), who takes for granted that Pausanias used Acusilaus' Argive traditions through Apollodorus' *Library*.

προσποιοῦσιν ἀκοῦσ‹α›ι λόγον.[4] As Facius, an eighteenth century editor of Pausanias translates it, "quam autem audisse contendunt famam etc.".[5] The reading ἀκοῦσαι (instead of Ἀκουσιλάῳ) should be retained for the following reasons:

a. The *logos* under consideration, which is mentioned after the epic authorities (Homer and 'Hesiod'), is in keeping with Pausanias' tendency to write down accounts that contradicted what was known from literary sources (like in this passage) or that were not widely known.[6] In fact, prior to Homer's quotation, a story dealing with the foundation of Mycenae is attributed to a certain local oral tradition (2.16.3: ἤκουσα δὲ καὶ ...). To these, or similar, local informants Myceneus' genealogy can be traced. Worthy of attention is the fact that, after sketching Myceneus' lineage, Pausanias claims that the Spartans would not accept it. And he goes into detail saying that they would be astonished upon merely hearing this *logos* (θαυμάζοιεν ἂν καὶ ἀρχὴν ἀκούσαντες), a wording that hints at the oral nature of this account.

b. Narratives in Pausanias referring to 'toponymic heroes' (for this notion, see section c) bear the trace of oral transmission and are specifically attributed to local informants.[7] Although it is true that phrases like 'they say' can be used by Pausanias as an introduction to any kind of quotation,[8] including literary works, epichoric accounts on heroic eponyms are not credited to literary sources in the *Description of Greece* (as would be the case with the emended Ἀκουσιλάῳ). Besides the text studied below (section d), a good example thereof is the account of the city of Epidaurus and its eponymous hero, the homonymous Epidaurus. Pausanias sketches the local genealogy after giving the version of the Argives and of 'Hesiod' (2.26.2). Take note that the verbal form used by the Periegete to refer to the local claims (προσποιοῦσιν) is the same one as in the passage in question:

κατὰ δὲ Ἀργείων δόξαν καὶ τὰ ἔπη τὰς μεγάλας Ἠοίας ἦν Ἐπιδαύρῳ πατὴρ Ἄργος ὁ Διός· Ἐπιδαύριοι δὲ Ἀπόλλωνι Ἐπίδαυρον παῖδα προσποιοῦσιν.

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4   See also n. 2.
5   Facius 1794: 236.
6   Pretzler 2005: 239. Cf. Pretzler 2018: 272: "The text therefore becomes a constant multiple discourse between different local, probably mostly oral, traditions and the literary tradition, moderated by the ostensibly elusive, but also actively interventionist narrator".
7   See, for instance, the foundation account of Abae in Phocis (10.35.1): "The people of Abae say that they came to Phocis from Argos, and that the city got its name from Abas, the founder". In some cases, the oral origin of the local account is implicit: καὶ τὸ ὄνομα ἀπὸ τοῦ Πατρέως ἐτέθη τῇ πόλει (for Patras: 7.6.2); Τίρυνθα δὲ ἥρωα, ἀφ' οὗ τῇ πόλει τὸ ὄνομα ἐγένετο, παῖδα Ἄργου τοῦ Διὸς εἶναι λέγουσι (for Tiryns: 2.25.8); Τημενίου δὲ ἀπέχει Ναυπλία πεντήκοντα ἐμοὶ δοκεῖν σταδίους, τὰ μὲν ἐφ' ἡμῶν ἔρημος, οἰκιστὴς δὲ ἐγένετο αὐτῆς Ναύπλιος Ποσειδῶνος λεγόμενος καὶ Ἀμυμώνης εἶναι (for Nauplia: 2.38.2). At 8.3 Pausanias gives the names of Lycaon's sons as city founders. No literary source is claimed (cf. also Zoeteus and Paroreus at 8.35.6).
8   Pretzler 2005: 245.

According to Argive opinion and the poem the *Great Ehoeae*, the father of Epidaurus was Argos, son of Zeus, while the Epidaurians maintain that Epidaurus was the child of Apollo.

A number of passages in the *Description of Greece* show traces of conflicting reports between local experts as well as Pausanias' discussions with them.[9] Indeed, at some points the author refers to contradictory versions of local eponymous traditions.[10] In my opinion, it is precisely to this sort of conflicting epichoric accounts that the passage under discussion refers to. Those who pretend to have heard the *logos* on Myceneus (προσποιοῦσιν ἀκοῦσαι λόγον) are in disagreement with those who say (φασίν) that the name of the *polis* originated from Mycene (ἀπὸ ταύτης οὖν γεγονέναι καὶ τὸ ὄνομα τῇ πόλει). (Note that the verb φασίν does not have Homer and 'Hesiod' as subject, as these authors are merely mentioning Mycene as a character and not as a city place; its subject are some local experts). Pausanias is actively intervening to this dispute (οὐκ ἂν ἔγωγε ἀποδεξαίμην).

c. Eponymous heroes like Myceneus, characteristically a 'toponymic hero', have the function, as Hall has explained, "to act as linchpins, pegging the genealogies to their consumer cities".[11] Myceneus should be seen therefore as a local (that is, Mycenaean) elaboration and as such there is no clear reason for what purpose Acusilaus, writing from Argos, should have produced it. Rather than a "chauvinistic subordination of Mykenai to Argos", as Fowler assumes,[12] this genealogy points to an independent and local Mycenaean account willing to guarantee a connection to Sparta – and dependence thereon. A coalition between both cities, as was the case in some moments of the sixth and beginnings of fifth centuries BCE, looms in the background.[13] At the same time, this arrangement provides a seal of reputable antiquity as long as the eponymous hero is grafted on the 'antediluvian' *Urmensch* Phoroneus. As Phoroneus is the father of Niobe and grandfather of Argos in the regular Argive *Stammbaum*, again one may wonder what would have prompted Acusilaus to include a competing lineage when he charted his Argive genealogies (on this argument see further below, section *d*).

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9   See, for instance, 6.24.9 and 8.42.12–13 (old men in Elis and Phigalia who are in possession of variant traditions of reputable antiquity). Cf. Pretzler 2005: 241–243; Pretzler 2007: 40. For the diverse kind of informants (expounders, guides, local antiquarians, etc.), see Jones 2001.

10   For instance in 5.5.4–5: "The city got its name, they say, from its founder Lepreus, the son of Pyrgeus [...] I have heard some who maintained that Lepreus was founded by Leprea, the daughter of Pyrgeus. Others say that the first dwellers in the land were afflicted with the disease leprosy and that the city received its name from the misfortune of the inhabitants".

11   Hall 1997: 88.

12   Fowler 2013: 237.

13   Mazzarino 1973: 61–62; Brillante 1990: 98 and 127.

d. A competing genealogy to the one being analysed (2.16.4) is provided by Pausanias himself some paragraphs below (2.34.4–5), when he turns to the foundation of the city of Hermione. And again a 'toponymic hero' is put forward – namely Hermion, the son of Europs. Noteworthy is the fact that this eponymous combination is once again attributed to a local oral tradition ('Ἑρμιονεῖς φασίν: see above, section *b*). But there is more at stake: according to the Hermioneans, Hermion is interestingly a grandson of Phoroneus – just as in the case of Myceneus above:

οἰκιστὴν δὲ τῆς ἀρχαίας πόλεως Ἑρμιονεῖς γενέσθαι φασὶν Ἑρμίονα Εὔρωπος. τὸν δὲ Εὔρωπα – ἦν γὰρ δὴ Φορωνέως – Ἡροφάνης ὁ Τροιζήνιος ἔφασκεν εἶναι νόθον· οὐ γὰρ δή ποτε ἐς Ἄργον τὸν Νιόβης θυγατριδοῦν ὄντα Φορωνέως τὴν ἐν Ἄργει περιελθεῖν ‹ἂν› ἀρχὴν παρόντος Φορωνεῖ γνησίου παιδός. ἐγὼ δέ, εἰ καὶ γνήσιον ὄντα Εὔρωπα πρότερον τὸ χρεὼν ἢ Φορωνέα ἐπέλαβεν, εὖ οἶδα ὡς οὐκ ἔμελλεν ὁ παῖς αὐτῷ Νιόβης παιδὶ ἴσα οἴσεσθαι Διός γε εἶναι δοκοῦντι.

The founder of the old city, the Hermioneans say, was Hermion, the son of Europs. Now Europs, whose father was certainly Phoroneus, Herophanes of Troezen said was an illegitimate child. For surely the kingdom of Argos would never have devolved upon Argos, Niobe's son, the grandchild of Phoroneus, in the presence of a legitimate son. But even supposing that Europs was a legitimate child who died before Phoroneus, I am quite sure that his son was not likely to stand a fair chance against Niobe's child, whose father was supposed to be Zeus.

Both passages show that accounts of the mythical origins of Argos and the Argolid were alive and burgeoning down to Pausanias' time. A number of lineages hover over the most ancient and reputable Argive figure, the 'cataclysmic' Phoroneus. At the same time, however, the authority and legitimacy of Argos as the acknowledged descendant of Phoroneus is constantly preserved – in this case, through the purported illegitimacy of Europs; or above (2.16.4) through the Lacedaemonian claim of an eponymous Sparte (instead of Sparton). In fact, other testimonies point to the same direction. From a scholium to Euripides (*Or.* 1246) and from the entry devoted to 'Mycenae' in Stephanus' *Ethnica* we are able to obtain new valuable pieces of evidence. Both texts provide genealogical arrangements showing striking resemblances to – but also differences from – the genealogy at issue. In the first one, Myceneus is the son of Sparton – who is however not the son of Phoroneus, but of Phoroneus' brother Phegeus. According to this genealogy, Phoroneus begot three sons besides Niobe: Aegialeus, Apis, and Europs (ἴσχει δὲ παῖδας ἐκ Πειθοῦς Αἰγιαλέα, Ἆπιν, Εὔρωπα, Νιόβην). But Argos keeps the power thanks to the fact that, upon Phoroneus' death, their sons spread out – except for Niobe.[14]

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14   Sch. Eur. *Or.* 1246: Φορωνέως δὲ ἀπολωλότος καὶ τῶν παίδων διασκεδασθέντων Ἄργος ὁ Νιόβης βασιλεύσας ὅλην τὴν ἐντὸς τοῦ Ἰσθμοῦ Ἀργείαν καὶ τὸ Φορωνικὸν ἄστυ Ἄργος ὠνόμασεν.

As for the genealogy recorded by Stephanus Byzantius, Myceneus is the son of Sparton, too, but in this case Sparton is Phoroneus' brother (ἀπὸ Μυκηνέως τοῦ Σπάρτωνος τοῦ Φορωνέως ἀδελφοῦ). In any case, Argos' direct connection to Phoroneus is again guaranteed.[15] As Fowler has established, "genealogies in oral cultures are fluid. They change constantly to fit new circumstances".[16] And yet the prestige and the status of the eponymous Argos as the primordial ruler of his homonymous city is never challenged. To sum up, it would be hardly comprehensible that Acusilaus, who took Argos and the Argolid as the focal point of his *Genealogies*, could have posited an eponymous hero (Sparton), concurrent to Argos, as a descendant of Phoroneus.

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[15] See also Eust. *Il.* 2.569 (1.446 van der Valk).

[16] Fowler 1998: 3.

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