

## Dóra Pataricza: Phlegon's Book of marvels (Abstract)

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The 1st-2nd century Greek writer Phlegon from Tralleis in Asia Minor was a freedman of the emperor Hadrian. Only a few of his works survived, in a single manuscript copied in the 9th-10th century. Codex Palatinus Graecus 398, which is in the Universitätsbibliothek of Heidelberg, contains *Περὶ μακροβίων καὶ θαυμασίων* (*On long-lived persons and marvels*), however these are two works in reality. The latter paradoxographic writing includes 35 stories.

Paradoxography is a genre which flourished in the Hellenistic period describes and collects strange, marvellous and abnormal natural or human phenomena (Greek: θαυμάσια or παράδοξα, Latin: *mirabilia*) which differ in certain aspects from the usual. Thus they seem to be of interest to the author and the reader as well.

One of the main characteristics of paradoxography is focusing on extraordinary features. In order to catch the reader's attention, exaggeration is often used. Nevertheless, according to certain modern approaches, the short, so-called *paradoxa* concentrating on curious, unusual events can also be regarded as a way of discovery and inspection. This kind of realistic attitude allows us to sift out data from the descriptions that are otherwise not available.

Phlegon's work differs from those of other authors since he was mainly interested in sensationalistic wonders. It is still unexplained, why Phlegon was more concerned with human phenomena than natural wonders. He might have focused on human nature with an intention to innovate.

The themes of Phlegon's work are wide ranging: ghost stories, hermaphrodites and sex-changers, as well as extraordinary births (male pregnancies, monsters, multiple births etc.). He has also recorded discoveries of huge bones, which might have been ancient paleontological findings. This dissertation is the first Hungarian translation of Phlegon's work, and it also contains a detailed commentary which examines the possible core of truth to each of the stories.