Ϝείπατέ μοι τάδε φῦλα βροτήσια

This little fragment does not seem to have ever aroused much interest in scholars. And yet it poses several problems and is quite instructive. For instance, in spite of its short scope, it is enough to refute Rudolf Pfeiffer's dictum[1]) that φῦλον accompanied by an adjective (γυναικεῖον φῦλον etc.) as equivalent to φῦλον accompanied by a genitive noun is a relatively late 'Attic' idiom. However, the present note's business is with the grammatical construction of the fragment. In what way are we to interpret τάδε? Should we take it with the following phrase (φῦλα βροτήσια) and if so are the three words (1) vocative or (2) accusative? If accusative, who is being addressed? If (3) τάδε does not belong with the following phrase, the issue of who is being addressed is easier, but still not simple. What follows is merely an attempt to rank these possibilities in order of priority.

(1) τάδε φῦλα βροτήσια as vocative, with comma after μοι ('tell me, you mortal races here') can surely be dismissed as impossible Greek. What parallel is there for such a vocative ὅδε? Who would the vocative be? (2)(i) The same phrase as object of Ϝείπατε ('tell me these mortal races') seems to be the solution advocated by Calame in his recent edition and commentary[2]). At least he prints the fragment as above, with no punctuation, and observes "les Muses, au plur. ... représenteraient alors le sujet de εἴπατε et la formule d'invocation constituée par ce vers serait analogue à celle qui ouvre Od. 1,1, l'h. Ven. 1, les h. Hom. 14,1 et 19,1 etc., et surtout le catalogue homérique des vaisseaux (Il. 2,484)". Well, yes; but the *Odyssey* does not begin ἄνδρα μοι ἔννεπε τόνδε nor do any of the other epic passages cited by Calame provide a parallel for the pronoun[3]). We know from fr. 148 that Alcman in one of his compositions produced a catalogue of races (τοσαῦτα καὶ τοιαῦτα ἔθνη καταλέγει κτλ.), and one of our sources for this information is precisely the same author who cites fr. 106 in precisely the same context: Aelius Aristides. But this is hardly a strong argument in favour of taking τάδε φῦλα βροτήσια as direct object of an imperative verb addressed to the Muses at the start of some sub-section of this catalogue, for Aristides introduces our fragment by telling us it occurred 'elsewhere' (ἀλλαχῇ) from fr. 148. Another possibility in this

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1) Hermes 87 (1959) 3, in the course of his famous exposition of Alcman fr. 89.
2) Rome (1983) pp. 113 (text) and 468 f. (comment). Note too his translation (p. 278): 'dites-moi ces races de mortels'.
3) Calame adds "sur un emploi éventuel de τάδε dans un contexte analogue d'explication des sources d'inspiration du chant, cf. fr. [39.1] (supra p. 480)". This is doubly baffling, since p. 480 is not supra p. 469 and in both commentary and text Calame rejects Bergk's conjecture ἔπη τάδε ("le démonstratif τάδε est peu compatible avec une formule qui est censée terminer un poème"), and prefers Diehl's ἔπη δέ γε. The MS (of Athenaeus) has ἔπη γε δέ.

context (ii) is that an indirect question may originally have followed: 'tell me
Muses, as regards these mortal races: what is their x, y, and z?'
    (3) 'Tell me these things, you mortal races.' This would seem to be the most
popular interpretation of our fragment. The vast majority of editors print the
fragment with a comma after τάδε[4]); and this is how Campbell, for instance,
translates it[5]). M. L. West presupposes this rendering when he says[6]) of the phrase
βροτήσια ἔργα at Hes. Op. 773 "It gives the sentence an oracular tone, as if a god
were speaking", and compares our fragment, Parmenides B 6.4 f. DK, ἀπὸ τῆς (scil.
ὁδοῦ), ἣν δὴ βροτοὶ εἰδότες οὐδὲν / πλάττονται, δίκρανοι· ἀμηχανίη γὰρ ἐν
αὐτῶν / στήθεσιν ἰθύνει πλακτὸν νόον· οἱ δὲ φοροῦνται / κωφοὶ ὁμῶς τυφλοί
τε, τεθηπότες, ἄκριτα φῦλα / κτλ., and Ar. Av. 685 ff. ἄγε δὴ φύσιν ἄνδρες
ἀμαυρόβιοι, φύλλων γενεᾶι προσόμοιοι, / ὀλιγοδρανέες, πλάσματα πηλοῦ,
σκιοειδέα φῦλ' ἀμενηνά, / ἀπτῆνες ἐφημέριοι, ταλαοὶ βροτοί, ἀνέρες εἰκελόνει-
ροι κτλ. Perhaps one might further adduce the words of Silenus to Midas at Pind.
fr. 157 Sn. ὦ τάλας ἐφάμερε, νήπια βάζεις / χρήματά μοι διακομπέων and Ari-
stotle fr. 44 Rose δαίμονος ἐπιπόνου καὶ τύχης χαλεπῆς ἐφήμερον σπέρμα κτλ.
Note too the tone of Socrates' τί με καλεῖς, ὠφήμερε; (Nub. 223). In favour of this
interpretation it must be said that Aristides himself introduces our fragment as an
instance of what Alcman says when he has passed beyond mere divine inspiration
(ἔνθεος) and speaks ὥσπερ θεὸς τῶν ἀπὸ μηχανῆς. It really sounds as if he should
be doing more than invoking a plurality of Muses. All that remains to decide under
this heading is whether τόδε rather than τάδε[7]) would be not only more idiomatic
('tell me this, you mortal races') but what Alcman originally intended[8]).

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    4) E.g. Bergk and Diehl. It is Page (PMG p. 67) who omits any punctuation
(as a caution against over-hasty preference for option (3)?).
    5) Greek Lyric 2 (1988) p. 467. So too Behrs in his two-volume translation of
Aelius Aristides (2. 118).
    6) In his note on the relevant passage of Hesiod's *Works and Days*. The
fragment as interpreted by its quoter sounds as if it came from a monodic poem, an
eventuality not lightly to be discounted (cf. Gnomon 58 [1986] 387).
    7) An emendation that has independently suggested itself to several collea-
gues. This is not to say that τάδε is impossible (compare side by side with the epic
formula ἀλλ' ἄγε μοι τόδε εἰπέ such passages as h. Herm. 199: ταῦτά μοι εἰπέ),
merely less plausible.
    8) The corruption envisaged (assimilation to adjacent endings of words)
would be easy enough at the best of times. When Alcman's verses had been whitt-
led down to the five that Aristides happens to quote it would be almost inescapable.