

# A PURITY REGULATION FROM THERASIA PURIFIED

(PLATE 44)

A small fragment of gray volcanic stone in the Epigraphical Museum in Athens with four lines of writing, recently reedited by F. Sokolowski, has had a curious history in modern scholarship.<sup>1</sup> According to the inventory of inscriptions of the Greek Archaeological Society, the stone was given to the Society on March 18, 1859, by Nikolaos Barbaregos, together with two inscriptions from Amorgos, and it is clearly stated to come from Therasia.<sup>2</sup> A brief excerpt of the inventory entry, made by P. Wolters, was published by Hiller von Gaertringen in *I.G.*, XII, 3, 1054 (1898) among the inscriptions from Therasia, but without a text. However, in *I.G.*, XII, 5, 646, published in 1909, Hiller gave a text of the inscription without reference to the earlier mention in *I.G.*, XII, 3, and with the note: “Cei inventum, postea Athenas translatum in Museum Nationale, ubi mihi monstravit A. Wilhelm. Exscripsi.” The restoration published in *I.G.*, XII, 5, 646 was made by H. Schoene after a passage in Galen, on the hypothesis that the text is medical and deals with a method for expelling a dead foetus by inducing menstruation.<sup>3</sup>

In the files of the Berlin Corpus are two squeezes of this inscription marked “Keos,” and the second bears the additional notation “Wilhelm.” It is likely, therefore, that the attribution to Keos originated with him.<sup>4</sup> We do not know how he came

<sup>1</sup> EM 11,578. F. Sokolowski, *Lois sacrées des cités grecques*, Paris, 1969, (École Française d'Athènes, Travaux et Memoires, vol. 18), p. 193, no. 99.

I wish to thank Dr. Markellos Th. Mitsos for much help in tracking down the inscription, Professor Günther Klaffenbach for information from the files of the Berlin Corpus, and Mrs. D. Peppa-Delmouzou for obtaining a photograph of the stone for me and the Greek Archaeological Service for permission to publish it (Pl. 44). Mr. P. M. Fraser kindly referred me to his article, cited below in note 9.

<sup>2</sup> The Epigraphical Museum in Athens possesses an official copy of the inventory of “*Lithina*” of the Archaeological Society, handwritten by Th. Pappaioannis in 1912, signed and stamped at beginning and end and complete with pp. 258. The entries go from March 18, 1859 to November, 1894 and appear to be somewhat abbreviated. Only one item precedes our three inscriptions, and it is undated. There are two sets of inventory numbers, and the present inscription is no. 3, old style, or no. 12, new style. The two inscriptions from Amorgos were published by S. A. Koumanoudis in *Ἐπιγραφαὶ Ἑλληνικαὶ κατὰ τὸ πλεῖστον ἀνέκδοτοι, κτλ., φυλ. Α'* (Athens, 1860, all published), nos. 32 and 71, the latter wrongly said to be from Thera; they are now *I.G.*, XII, 7, nos. 416 and 470. Nikolaos Barbaregos is no doubt identical with the *philomousos bouleutes Theras K(yrios)* Barbaregos who had given many antiquities to the University of Athens in this period, whence they went to the Archaeological Society; see *Συνοπτικὴ Ἐκθεσις τῶν Πράξεων τῆς Ἀρχαιολογικῆς Ἑταιρείας ἀπὸ τῆς 20 Ἰουλίου 1858 μέχρι τῆς 24 Μαΐου 1859*, = *Πρακτικά*, XIV, 1858-1859, p. 26. The family of Barbaregos is a distinguished family from Thera originally of Italian extraction.

<sup>3</sup> Galen 4.477 Kuehn.

<sup>4</sup> Letter from Professor Klaffenbach, December 14, 1961.

to this conclusion, but the version adopted in *I.G.*, XII, 5 contains the Ionic form *καταμηνίην*. No date is assigned the inscription. The Berlin Corpus has still a third squeeze of our inscription, with the notation: "ΘΗΡΑΣΙΑ. Leonardos. accepti 7/5/1922." To this squeeze were pinned two slips, one from the hand of Hiller, the other by Leonardos and dated 9/5/1922.<sup>5</sup> Both slips make reference to *I.G.*, XII, 3 (Therasia) and are clearly independent of *I.G.*, XII, 5 (Keos), since they contain new readings and restorations: first a tentative one by Hiller, then Leonardos' excellent readings and minimal restorations, and finally a more complete restoration made by Hiller presumably after receipt of Leonardos' note. Hiller also notes the late date of the inscription (he calls it "christlich"). I would guess that Leonardos had come upon the stone in the museum, had identified it from the inventory with *I.G.*, XII, 3 (Therasia), and had advised Hiller of the identification. Both were unaware at that point that the inscription had also been published in *I.G.*, XII, 5 (Keos).

In 1929, J. Zingerle dealt with the inscription in an article, where he cited it as *I.G.*, XII, 5, 646 (from Ioulis in Keos) and noted that it had been falsely (*sic*) attributed to Therasia in *I.G.*, XII, 3.<sup>6</sup> He also published a photograph of a squeeze sent him by O. Walter (p. 282), although as we shall see he did not make good use of it. Zingerle saw that the inscription was not a medical text, but part of a *Lex Sacra*, and he corrected the medical part of it to deal with an abortion, i.e. with the expulsion of a *live* foetus by inducing menstruation, as he thought he could read, with the use of hellebore. It was perhaps as the result of this article that Hiller wrote in the supplement to *I.G.*, XII, which appeared in 1939, p. 91: "(IG XII 3), 1054: Nunc inter titulos Ceos est: IG XII 5, 646. Cf. Zingerle *Arch. Rel.* XXVII, 281 (*Rev. ét. gr.* 1930, 204)." So far as I know, no more was said about the matter, until the inscription was republished by F. Sokolowski in 1969.<sup>7</sup> He follows Zingerle in giving the provenance as Keos and in dating the inscription in the third century after Christ. He also reproduces the extant letters as given in *I.G.*, XII, 5 and by Zingerle, but his restoration differs. He proposes to read a purity regulation for a woman who has submitted to an abortion: she will be pure if she submits to purificatory rites on the fortieth day.

The material of the stone is described in the Athenian inventories as *σιδηρόλιθος*, which is used there to describe the volcanic stone of Thera, such as the famous *Arkhagetas* inscription, *I.G.*, XII, 3, 762. Our stone is lighter in color, but otherwise very similar to that block. It is thus very likely that the inscription is from Therasia and not from Keos. It is difficult to determine the type of monument from which the fragment comes. The stone is small, H. 0.33 m., W. 0.36 m., Th. 0.17 m., and

<sup>5</sup> I want to thank Professor Klaffenbach for loaning me the originals of these slips.

<sup>6</sup> J. Zingerle, "Leges Sacrae," *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*, XXVII, 1929, pp. 278-289; our inscription, pp. 281-289. Cf. L. Robert, *R.E.G.*, XLIII, 1930, p. 204.

<sup>7</sup> Above, note 1.

worked smooth on both front and back, so far as the material allows it. The thickness seems to exclude a stele and suggests a screening or wall enclosure. The stone is broken all around, but enough of a *vacat* remains both above and below the four lines of writing to show that there never were any more lines on this portion of the stone. The last line shows only one word, with a *vacat* preceding; this word may have been centered or written at the end of the line. The letter forms clearly indicate a date in the late second or third centuries after Christ. Note especially, on the squeeze published by Zingerle, the prolonged tops of alpha, delta, and mu, the bracket-shaped sigma, and the cursive omega in line 2 (on the last, see below).<sup>8</sup>

The reading presented below is my own, from stone and squeezes, but in the comments I note also readings from *I.G.*, XII, 5, the slips of Hiller and Leonardos, Klaffenbach's letter, and F. Sokolowski:

--]ος· ἄν ΔΕΜΕΒΟ[--  
 -- τῶν] καταμηνίων ἡ Ἰ [--  
 --] ἡ ὑὸς καθάρη με[τὰ τοῦ?]  
 καθαρμο[ῦ].

Line 1: ΕΛΛΕΒΟ[-- , i.e. ἐλλεβό[ρῳ], Zingerle, but the letter is clearly a mu. μ(ῆ), i.e. ἐάν (*sic*) δὲ μ(ῆ) βο[ύληται, etc., *I.G.*, XII, 5. βο[υλομένη, Sokolowski. ]ος· ἄν δ' ἐμὲ βο[ύληται, Hiller, slip.

Line 2: καταμηνίην, *I.G.*, XII, 5, Zingerle, Sokolowski. κ]αταμηνίων Leonardos (the N incomplete), Hiller, on slips; Klaffenbach. The omega is clear on stone and squeezes. The photograph, Plate 44, does not show this letter clearly, but see the photograph of a squeeze published by Zingerle, *op. cit.*, p. 282. I can also see the slanting strokes of kappa; cf. the drawing in *I.G.*, XII, 5. Another slanting stroke, which cuts diagonally into the first bar of the mu is probably an error. The last letter in line 2 has a vertical and perhaps a slanting stroke; the rest is lost. Leonardos too gives the vertical, as does the drawing in *I.G.*, XII, 5. The restoration of a word beginning with alpha by Zingerle and Sokolowski is thus to be rejected.

Line 3: κ]ύος, *I.G.*, XII, 5. "· Ἰ Ο □ and -]πιος Leonardos, πτος Hiller. [κ]ύος, Zingerle; κύος, Sokolowski. The first letter looks like an eta with short and somewhat slanting horizontal and with the second vertical shortened at the bottom. This is probably an eta, less likely a pi, but certainly not kappa. The last letter of line three has a rectangular outline, but is poorly preserved. Leonardos merely indicates a trace of a letter, while Hiller on his slip gives a vertical stroke. καθάρη, *I.G.*, XII, 5, Hiller's slip. καθαρη, Leonardos. Hiller also noted on his slip: "καθαρημα?" καθάρη, Zingerle, Sokolowski. με[τὰ, *I.G.*, XII, 5. μ[-- , Leonardos. Mu and a vertical stroke, Hiller's slip. μ[ῆ, Zingerle, Sokolowski.

Line 4: καθάρμ[ατος], *I.G.*, XII, 5. καθαρμ[α -- , Leonardos (the left half of the omikron indicated in dotted outline). καθαρμόν, καθαρμο, Hiller, slip. καθαρμ[οῦ], Zingerle. καθαρμοῦς, Sokolowski. My reading agrees with Leonardos'. The omikron is uncertain and alpha is not excluded. The extra rho seen by Zingerle in this word does not exist.

It is quite clear that the stone shows in line 2 καταμηνίων and not καταμηνίην. Since the restorations of Schoene in *I.G.*, XII, 5, of Zingerle, and of Sokolowski are

<sup>8</sup> Zingerle, p. 282.

all based on the accusative singular, they are to be rejected. They also assume such large gaps in the text that they are highly speculative (as Sokolowski recognizes) and are not quoted here. The entry in *LSJ s.v. καταμηνίη*, which cites only our inscription, is to be eliminated, for the inscription uses the regular word for menstruation, τὰ καταμήνια. Likewise to be eliminated from *LSJ* is the reference to our inscription, *s.v. κύος*. Since the letter which precedes the upsilon cannot be a kappa, we probably have here the genitive of “pig.” This disposes of all attempts to find in the inscription reference to a foetus, dead or alive, or to abortion. Given the date and provenance of the inscription, the letters ΚΑΘΑΡΗ in line 3 must stand for the aorist subjunctive of καθαίρω and not for the Ionic form καθάρη; here Schoene in *I.G.*, XII, 5 was right against Zingerle and Sokolowski. In the last line, I would prefer καθαρμός to κάθαρμα, partly on epigraphical grounds, but mainly because the word for “purification (rite)” is more suitable than that for “defiled matter.”

There can be little doubt that we have here a short purity regulation. Of the items listed menstruation and pigs are preserved, but there must have been some others.<sup>9</sup> The restoration of the last three lines presents little difficulty: — — τῶν] καταμηνίων ἦ. [— —] ἥ ὑὸς καθάρῃ με[τὰ τοῦ?] καθαρμο[ῦ]. The verb may or may not be governed by the αὖν of the first line. It is the first line, however, which constitutes the real crux of the text. For if we retain the reading of the stone, ME, this can be read only as μέ or ἐμέ. In that case, the inscription is not a purity regulation from a sanctuary, but possibly a tomb inscription, as Professor Raubitschek has suggested to me. It is no wonder that nearly all previous attempts at restoration have substituted μή for μέ. This writer feels that so short a text cannot be fully restored with confidence if we have to correct one of the few remaining words.

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<sup>9</sup> For menstruation in purity regulations, see Sokolowski's commentary (above, note 1), and P. M. Fraser, *Bulletin de la Société d'Arch. d'Alexandrie*, XL, 1953, p. 48, note 2. For prohibitions against contact with pigs, see F. Sokolowski, *Lois sacrées des cités grecques, supplément*, 1962, no. 54, line 3, commentary.



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