INSCRIPTIONS FROM PHLIUS

The inscriptions discussed in this article were found at Phlius during the investigations made there in 1924 by Dr. C. W. Blegen of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, under the direction of Dr. B. H. Hill.

The most important are a group of archaic inscriptions, now at Herakleion, where a bath of ancient Nemea has been converted into a small museum. They are cut on blocks of poros whose peculiar working is sufficiently significant to merit description (Fig. 1). The face with the inscription is, on the average block, 0.77 m. by 0.265 m.; the third dimension is 0.77 m. The top surface is square, with anathyrosis in front and back, and is otherwise smooth and flat. The left side has anathyrosis on the front, top, and back edges. The right side has a vertical channel, roughly cut, about 0.05 m. wide and 0.13 m. to 0.15 m. from the front edge, and a similar cut at an equal distance from the back edge. A vertical semi-circular channel 0.12 m. wide, also roughly worked, marks the centre of the surface. On the bottom there are two narrow grooves similar to those on the side and connecting with them, extending parallel to the face of the block. Between them the surface is worked smoothly in a shallow, gently curving, depression. The front and back surfaces are finished smoothly. In addition to the blocks bearing inscriptions, several others of the same description were found built into walls and graves of the Roman period. Those used in graves were generally placed as cover slabs for long, narrow, trench-like crypts, the walls of which were also, in part, built of the same blocks.

1. This inscription appears on a surface 0.81 m. by 0.265 m. The thickness of the block is 0.67 m. The text extends from left to right along the lower edge of the block, the top line

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of the letters being about 0.18 m. from the upper edge of the block. The omicron is a circle inscribed with a compass, having a diameter of 0.04 m. The other letters average 0.07 m. in height; the lower ends are in many cases obliterated by the mutilation of the lower edge of the block (Fig. 2, and Fig. 3, top). The inscription reads: ---]§ kai hI possui[ησ.  

Fig. 2. A drawing of archaic inscription No. 1

The recognized affinity of this alphabet with the Corinthian is the sole basis for the dating of the inscription, whose clarity of cutting, regular arrangement, and beauty of form make it rank high as an example of archaic writing. The three-bar iota, in the Corinthian vase inscriptions, falls in the first half of the sixth century; the four-bar form is characteristic of earlier periods, and the straight iota occurs with increasing frequency after the middle of the century, until at the beginning of the fifth century it becomes the standard form. Another significant letter is the xi. In this inscription the highest bar crosses the vertical line below its apex. This does not occur, apparently, in the Corinthian inscriptions, and may indicate that the form is early in the evolution of the Phliasian alphabet. The forms of the kappa, with high vertical bars and rather short arms, are also early.

2. This inscription appears on a surface 0.77 m. by 0.255 m.; the thickness of the block is 0.77 m. Across the lower edge of the block is the inscription, written retrograde. It is 0.15 m. from the upper edge of the stone. The omicron is a circle inscribed with a compass, having a diameter of about 0.03 m. The kappa is 0.055 m. in height; the other letters about 0.04 m. The beginning of the line, at the right, is missing (Fig. 4, and Fig. 5, bottom). The line reads: [ ]θοθοζ ενδιτο αι λη (λυ) τον το[- ----

Fig. 4. A drawing of archaic inscription No. 2

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1 No. 1 and No. 4 are also illustrated by Blegen, loc. cit., p. 27.
2 Roberts, Introduction to Greek Epigraphy, Cambridge, 1887, p. 137.
3 In view of the scarcity of archaic inscriptions on stone, most of the information must be drawn from the vase inscriptions. For these, and for the best and latest discussions of the Corinthian alphabet, see H. G. G. Payne, Necrocorinthia, Oxford, 1931, pp. 158ff. Also Agnes Newhall Stillwell, “Eighth Century b.c. Inscriptions from Corinth,” A.J.A., XXXVIII (1934), pp. 605–610.
Fig. 3. A photograph of inscriptions Nos. 1, 3, and 4, counting from top to bottom. (Nos. 3 and 4 are also illustrated by Blegen, loc. cit., p. 27)

Fig. 5. A photograph of archaic inscription No. 2 (below), and of the Christian monogram, No. 5 (above)
The *iota* again is the only definite clue for dating the inscription, which, like the first, would seem to fall about the middle of the sixth century. The *san* and the *mu*, the latter with the fourth bar at an angle, not extending to the base line, are early, but the evidence for their disappearance is not definitive.

A consideration of the character resembling the figure 8 leads to interesting results. The symbol consists of a circle inscribed with a compass exactly like the *omicron*, placed in the direct level of the line, with an exactly similar circle tangent to its lower edge but slightly to the left of the central vertical axis. It must be a vowel, following initial *lambda*, and it is possible that the lower circle is a mistake and that *omicron* only is meant.\(^1\) On the other hand, if the lower circle had been an error, it was a gross one, quite out of keeping with the general care and precision of the other cutting. Moreover, from its position slightly to the left of the upper circle, it would seem naturally to have been cut later in the progression from right to left. Everyone to whom I have shown the stone finds difficulty in believing that it is a slip on the part of the stone cutter, and I am convinced that this explanation can be used only as a last resort.

The combination of two *omicrons* to represent *omega* occurs to one, but produces no good reading. Furthermore, in *ἐνδέκυο*, *omega* is represented by the simple circle. *Eta* is the remaining possibility. In the Corinthian alphabet *eta* and *epsilon* were normally Β; Ε is sometimes *epsilon*, but more often *epsilon*-*iota*.\(^2\) The Sicilian form for *epsilon* is Χ. Special symbols for *eta* are lacking. In the Phliasian alphabet Ε represents *epsilon* and possibly the diphthong (cf. *ἐνδέκυο*). An attempt to distinguish *eta* might quite plausibly result in a modification of Β, Χ, or even the aspirate, Θ, to Θ to represent the required sound. One needs look no farther than Phlius itself to find the origin for this, but the presence at this time of a symbol for *eta* in Crete, Rhodes, and other islands, where the dialect is Doric,\(^3\) points to a parallel. The change in the islands seems to have been due to influence from Ionia, whereas the innovation here, unique to the mainland, seems to develop from the local problems and materials. It is worth pointing out, however, that the Ionic form πρότα instead of West Greek πρότα in No. 8 below may indicate an Ionic force at work in this region.

The sense of the line is, in any event, that the oath shall be binding if someone desires or is willing to do something.

3. A third similar block having a surface 0.74 m. by 0.26 m. and a thickness of 0.77 m., bears two inscriptions. Across the top runs a retrograde line of archaic letters, the epigraphical characteristics of which are exactly those of No. 2. The letters measure 0.04 m.

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\(^1\) In response to a letter from me, Prof. Carl D. Buck, who has seen the inscriptions, and to whom I sent a small photograph, kindly made an answer in which he inclines to this view. He considers that the lower circle was mistakenly cut first, and that the intention was to write λύει, third person singular optative with early contraction, on the analogy of *L.G.*, IV, 506, ἔμιμμενγεἰς.

\(^2\) Payne, op. cit., p. 158; C. D. Buck, Greek Dialects, ed. 2, 1928, p. 28, sect. 28; L.G., IV, 348, 358; 346.

\(^3\) Buck, op. cit., p. 27, sect. 25e. For Crete, *idem*, p. 261 note; cf. Roehl, Imagines, p. 7, nos. 1 to 3. For Rhodes, Buck, op. cit., p. 251, nos. 93 and 94; Roehl, Imagines, p. 32, nos. 1 and 2.
in height, with the exception of the san, which is 0.045 m. in height, and the kappa, which is 0.05 m. high. The omicron is a circle inscribed with a compass, and has a diameter of 0.03 m. (Fig. 6; Fig. 3, top line on bottom block). The line reads: --]ς Ἀστρατος ἄρξη[ν].

Fig. 6. A drawing of inscription No. 3

The first letter of the preserved text can hardly be anything but san. The two vertical lines are preserved, and although the V mark at the top which should connect them is not clear in the photograph, it can be detected on the stone. The lambda seems on the illustration to be a nu, but it is too close to the alpha, and the third bar was obviously caused by chipping. Following the alpha are three equidistant parallel vertical lines. The upper edge is so mutilated that the cuttings for the top cannot be determined with certainty, but the only possible restoration is san and tau. The date of this inscription is that of No. 2, and on the same grounds. The name Αστρατος is possibly a version of Αυστρατος.

Inscriptions 2 and 3 are similar to I.G., IV, 439, a, b and c. Of these, a and b were discovered by Fourmont, and recorded solely in his uncertain copies; c was found by Ross while looking for a and b (Fig. 7). I.G., IV, 439 c1 is built into the south wall of a church of St. Nicholas, just above the modern town of Nemea, formerly called St. George. The measurements of the letters agree perfectly with those of the inscriptions discussed above. The visible face of the block measures 0.75 m. by 0.26 m. The other dimension is not available, nor is it possible to observe the treatment of the other surfaces, but there can be no doubt that the block is, or originally was, exactly similar to the new blocks. The entire church, indeed, is built of such blocks, recut into smaller pieces, but the characteristic cuttings are still visible in several places. The “monastery” mentioned in the note is built in the same way. The text is probably, as in the Corpus: ἡράστθαι τοῦ τοῦ Ἰωάννη τοῦ ἅγιου τοῦ ἱπποτοῦ ἄνου ὅπερ. The aspirates of ήν and ἄ have been lost by psilosis.1

1 Struck by the similarity of epigraphical and textual elements of these inscriptions with those found at Phlius, I have searched for all of them at modern Nemea, but failed to find either a or b. According to Fourmont, the former was found in a wall of a monastery of Hagios Nicolaos of the Altar, near Hagios Georgios; the latter, he said, was in a monastery of the same name. I could find from the villagers no information concerning either a monastery or a church of this name. Not far from the church of St. Nicholas found by Ross and others, including myself, are some ruins identified by the villagers as those of a former church of St. Nicholas, but the remains fail to produce any inscription. A building below this ruin, at the edge of the village, is called an old monastery, but this has no inscription that I could find. A church at the peak of the mountain above the town is now known as the Prophet Elias, but is said to be the site of a former church of St. Nicholas. I could find no inscription here, either. Probably both a and b have disappeared.

2 Buck, op. cit., p. 49; esp. sect. 58 a.
Of a it is said in the Corpus that possibly two blocks are involved, the lower one upside down. Even in Fourmont's time they must have been badly mutilated. One may assume that his copy is fairly accurate, since his copy of b is perfectly reasonable, and his copy of a preserves all the defects that one might expect to find on a stone. In this case, the lower line of a may read, retrograde and inverted: ε[πὸ τοῖν ἥοναῖ (hóqιε). The sixth character seems more probably μn than san, as in the Corpus, and the other restorations of the Corpus do more violence than is necessary.

The upper line of a is more difficult. The first three characters, if properly recorded, may be delta, epsilon, and either omicron, phi or kappa; probably omicron. They must represent the end of a word, and on such uncertain readings it is scarcely worth while to attempt a restoration. The remaining letters may read thus: α ζαυια ζεξ[α (μνων?] or the like). The problems involved are solved by restoring the normal zeta of this group, ι, for the mark like an inverted T, in the fifth and tenth places. The alpha and iota in the eighth and ninth places must be reversed, but such a correction is common enough in epigraphy, and in this case we have a second hand with whose mental slips to deal. The use of zeta for delta in ζεξα (δεξα) is not unparalleled in early inscriptions,¹ nor can the fact that delta is used elsewhere rule too strongly against this restoration.² We have here what remains of the statement of the penalty for the violation of the oath.

I.G., IV, 439 b, again on the reasonable assumption that the copy is fairly correct, reads: δεξητα τοῖς ἥονος (τὸν ἥονον?).

The fact that we have here three archaic inscriptions from Phlius (Nos. 2 and 3, and I.G., IV, 439c), cut on similar uncommon blocks, epigraphically exactly similar, and textually similar in that the two which do not consist only of names concern ἥονο, is suggestive. The fact that other inscriptions from the same place (I.G., IV, 439 b, and the second line of a) have the same subject matter is also suggestive, although we have no way of comparing the architectural and epigraphical points. These inscriptions are retrograde.

We have also from this same place two inscriptions reading from left to right (No. 1 and I.G., IV, 439 a, first line). Of these, we know that number one is written in larger letters than the retrograde text, but is of the same approximate date, and is cut on the

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² An inscription from Camirus in Rhodes of the sixth century uses both delta and zeta in the same line. I.G., XII, i, 737.
same sort of block. Evidently, then, it was at least on the same building. That there may have been two inscriptions, or many, on one building is indisputable, but it is also possible that all these texts might go together, having to do with the regulation of the conduct of those devoted to a particular sanctuary, thus (perhaps boustrophedon throughout):

→ [-----] μαι ἡλπινοφάτ[ης] [-----]
→ [-----] δ[πὸ τοιν ἡφικια [-----]
→ [-----] ΛΟ δ[ζαμ[τή]ζευς [-----]
→ [-----] δ[εξεται τοις ἡφικιος (τον ἡφικιον) [-----]
→ [-----] φετ' ἡφικιον δτι [-----]
→ [-----] ἡφικιος ἐνδέτο ας λης τον το [-----]
→ [-----] ς και Λάσστρατος ἡκε[ν]

4. About 0.04 m. below the archaic inscription No. 3 are carved four lines of text reading from left to right in much later characters. The preserved text is evidently part of a much larger document, since it is incomplete at both ends, and the scant traces of a fifth line are visible along the bottom edge of the block. The letters are not stochiophonous, but are well cut. They are 0.025 m. high, and about 0.0225 m. wide. The omega is almost 0.03 m. wide at the base, with flaring apices. The single example of beta is rather crude, the upper half being much smaller than the lower (Fig. 3, lower part of bottom block).

[ἐπὶ τοῦ ---- ἐ]χοντος ὅστε θείνει τῷ Ἄπολλ[οιν ----]
[-----] ἐν τε τοῖς πρόφευον χρόνοις ἐδίδ[οσαν ----]
[-----] τῷ θείν τῶν χρατί[ο]τευντον βο[θὼν ----]
[-----] π[ρὸς βε καὶ ἐν τῷ ἔ]νστατασί ἐν [-----]
[-----] ^ἱφιόν^[-----]

The letters in general exhibit strong influence from the magnificent Roman majuscules, in their squareness and extreme regularity. The tendency towards apices on the ends of all vertical or horizontal bars; the broken cross bar of the alpha; the equal vertical hastae of the pi, and the extension of the top bar beyond the two hastae in that letter; the turn-up at the base of the omega; and the possible, although uncertain, separation of the central horizontal bar of the epsilon: all these indications suggest a date in the time of Augustus.

The sense is, in general, not difficult to determine. In line 1 the first word can scarcely be anything but ἐ[χοντος; part of the rho is preserved. The office of archon in Phlius is not, apparently, known. It is always possible that reference is being made here to a Roman authority, such as the χιλιάρχων (I.G., IV, 588, 596, 795, etc.). But we do have the word ἡκε[ν] above, used there, as this word probably is here, to give a date. It is possible that the official in question was one belonging to the particular sanctuary. This sanctuary was most probably that of Apollo, to whom sacrifice is decreed in this same line, and whose archaic (?) sanctuary at Phlius is mentioned by Pausanias (II, xiii, 7).
Line 2. The letters are easily discerned on the stone or a squeeze. Evidently the sacrifice had reference to something that had been done in former time. Perhaps a rededication of the sanctuary is involved, or a re-institution of former services, or the restatement of the former regulations.

Line 3. The first three words are certain on the stone. The kappa is fairly clear; a pock-mark at the juncture of the bars obliterates the cuttings. Rho is fairly certain; the curved portion is poorly cut, and it is perhaps a little smaller than the normal rho, but it could scarcely be anything else. The poor alternative is iota, attributing the loop to weathering. Alpha is certain, though faint; the same is true of tau and iota. The next letter is completely gone; a deep scar marks the stone here. The tau might be taken for an upsilon, but the horizontal cross bar does exist, and the lines which suggest the upsilon are very dim and higher than normal. The rest of the line is clear enough. The word ξατιστεῖοντες probably refers to the devotees of the sanctuary, or to a particular class of them. Perhaps the archon of line 1 and of the archaic text above is their official.

After this word come beta and omicron. A trace of a letter may exist at the point where one would expect the lower left hand corner of a letter which would possess such a corner, following the omicron. This trace, if original, is of a line extending diagonally upward, as in alpha, delta, or lambda. At the appropriate distance of two centimetres to the right, there is the barest pock-mark on the stone below the area of defacement, but in the base line of the letters. This may strengthen the case a little. There is no horizontal line, quite evidently, so that delta is eliminated. There are many words beginning βοςα and βολ but the most reasonable is something on the root of βοηθεω, to assist. The meaning of the line is not yet clear, but we may have here either an appellation of Apollo (compare I.G., IV, 357), or the statement that the ξατιστεῖοντες are to assist in some manner.

Line 4. This is fairly straightforward. All the letters are easily visible, except the two which are completely missing in the middle of the line, but these can be restored quite certainly as iota and epsilon. The meaning suggests that the part of the text which precedes recited what had been done in former times, and that the main part of the publication was to follow, concerning the immediate activity in question.

Line 5. Fragments of the letters of this line are preserved, but nothing can be made from them.

The fact that this text appears, with its prescript, immediately below the archaic inscription, which belonged to a longer text, and in such a position that both could be read together, is quite suggestive. That the archaic building was still standing in the time when the late inscription was carved is eminently probable, because an old block with letters on it would scarcely be used for an important new inscription. One might suggest that in the sixth century the “rule” of the sanctuary and its devotees was laid down, and that in Roman times the same sanctuary was still in use, and the same religious society republished and resanctified its constitution.
5. A Christian monogram is carved on a fragment of one of this series of blocks, which is now at Herakleion. The surface bearing the monogram measures 0.49 m. in width, 0.26 m. in height, and the thickness of the block is 0.67 m. The grooves with the shallow, curving depression appear on the top surface of the block in relation to the monogram. The latter is 0.09 m. from the left end, which is original, and 0.21 m. from the right end, which has been broken. It is 0.21 m. high. (Fig. 5.) The graffito can be seen clearly in the photograph, except that above the left arm there is a bird, probably the dove symbolizing the Holy Ghost. Below the arms are the alpha and omega, here reversed. If the date of this monogram could be established as fairly early, it would be useful in dating the destruction of the arcaic building, for the monogram was evidently cut after the block had been taken from its original position. It is probably from the 6th century A.D., being an elaboration of a late type. In any case, the fact that it is no more than a graffito would make close dating difficult.

6. A grave stle of calcareous sandstone is also at Herakleion. It is 0.92 m. high, and 0.27 m. wide. The height of the pediment is 0.12 m., and of the moulding 0.05 m. The letters are about 0.04 m. high (Fig. 8). It reads:

\[ \text{Mo\'\'c\'\'a} \]
\[ \text{\'\'c\'\'a\'\'\'Q} [\varepsilon] \]

The mu and sigma are cursive; the alpha has a broken cross bar. The date is therefore probably in or after the first century A.D., although the letters lack sufficient character to justify a confident dating in any early post-Christian century.

Mo\'\'c\'\'a is cut in a shallow band 0.085 m. wide and 0.001 m. deep. Its letter forms are not quite those of the \( \text{\'\'c\'\'a\'\'\'Q} [\varepsilon] \), and probably it is to be assumed that the stone was reused, the original name having been erased to make way for the extant one. The economical person thus saved himself the expense of carving his own greeting.

7. This inscription\(^2\) is cut on a block of poros with cuttings similar to those bearing the first five inscriptions. It is possibly part of the same document. It measures 0.32 m. by 0.26 m. by 0.22 m. The height of the letters, as preserved, is respectively 0.035 m., 0.053 m., and 0.033 m., the lower parts of all letters having been broken away a little. The inscription probably adds theta to the known Phliasian alphabet of the archaic period. (Fig. 9, a.)

8. This stone is said to have been roughly hewn, and probably not to have been connected with other stones. It measures 0.254 m. in height, 0.499 m. in length, and


\(^2\) This and the following inscriptions have disappeared, for the moment at least. They were stored with the first six in an old school house of modern Némea. At the time this building was torn down, the first six were removed to Herakleon, but the others were either lost or their storage place has been forgotten. It seems worth while, however, to take this opportunity of publishing them from the notebooks.
0.168 m. in thickness. The letters vary in height from 0.034 m. to 0.088 m. They are said to be well cut, but damaged in places and obscure. The text is retrograde and archaic. (Fig. 9, b.)

The first line defies restoration, but the second line probably reads: - -]πυδια σ[- -]. If this is true, the inscription must be a fragment of a larger one. πυδια is Ionic; πυδια is the normal West Greek form.

9. This inscription is cut on a stone 0.26 m. long, 0.145 m. wide, and 0.64 m. thick.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ΕΤΩΣ} \\
\text{ΑΙΜΩΣ}
\end{align*}
\]

10. This is a grave stele. Its length is 0.245 m.; its height, 0.29 m.; its thickness, 0.165 m. The letters are faint, and vary in height from 0.024 m. to 0.046 m.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ΑΕΙΔΑ} \\
\text{ΑΤΕΟΣ}
\end{align*}
\]

11. This is cut on a piece of black limestone 0.147 m. long, 0.11 m. high, and 0.061 m. thick. The \textit{nu} is 0.027 m. high; the \textit{upsilon} 0.025 m. high; the \textit{omicron} 0.028 m. high, and the \textit{sigma} 0.029 m. high.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ν} \\
\text{υος}
\end{align*}
\]

12. The stone is 0.34 m. by 0.40 m. The letters are 0.027 m. high. It was not found in the excavations, but brought in by villagers.

\[
\text{ΕΠΟΥΔΑΝΟΦ}
\]

13. This is probably from a grave stele. The fragment is 0.134 m. high, 0.201 m. long, and 0.114 m. thick. The \textit{alpha} is 0.029 m. high; the \textit{sigma} 0.034 m. It is said to be Hellenistic.

\[
\text{Α}
\]

14. This is another grave stele, of which the preserved fragment measures 0.295 m. in height, 0.197 m. in width, and 0.13 m. in thickness. The letters are well cut, with apices, and vary in height from 0.048 m. to 0.049 m. They are cut in a band 0.098 m. broad.

\[
\text{ΕΥΚ}
\]

15. Another fragment of grave stele is of poros, measuring 0.25 m. by 0.335 m. by 0.08 m. The letters are cut in a slightly sunken panel. The original top and right side of the stone is preserved. The letters are 0.044 m. and 0.053 m. in height, respectively.

\[
\text{ΟΞ}
\]

1 Buck, \textit{Greek Dialects}, sect. 114, 1.
16. Another grave stele of fine-grain poros is 0.252 m. in height, 0.195 m. wide at the top and 0.205 m. wide at the bottom, and 0.08 m. thick. The letters are about 0.02 m. high, and bear traces of red paint.

\[ \Xi\omega\xi\kappa\lambda\epsilon\omicron\sigma \]

17. A fragmentary inscription reads: ZEIO O \omicron o\sigma\phi\iota\alpha. (Fig. 9, c.)

18. Another fragmentary inscription consists of the letters:

\[ NOC\epsilon\eta\ ONOM\alpha \]

19. There is an inscription on a broken piece of marble measuring 0.325 m. in height, 0.38 m. in length, and 0.023 m. in thickness. The letters are well cut and set in a band 0.04 m. wide. The average height of the letters is 0.019 m. It is Byzantine. There is a bird on the upper part of the stone. (Fig. 9, d.)

20. Another Byzantine inscription appears on a fragment of coarse grey marble whose greatest height is 0.145 m., greatest width 0.11 m., and thickness 0.025 m. There is a groove on either side of the inscription. (Fig. 9, e.)

\[ \epsilon\gamma\gamma\epsilon\omicron\lambda\omicron\nu\tau\alpha \]

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