

# NOTE ON A SAMOTHRACIAN INSCRIPTION

(PLATE 14)

FRAGMENTARY building inscription of Thasian marble, complete at top and bottom (both upper and lower moldings being preserved) but broken at each side. Accession number 48.286.

Height, 0.372 m.; preserved width, about 0.61 m.; thickness, 0.055 m. to 0.07 m., increasing from top to bottom. Height of letters, 0.035 m. to 0.04 m.

Edited from a squeeze and a field drawing.<sup>1</sup>

The circumstances of the discovery of the inscription are recorded in the expedition Diary of July 18, 1948: "The members of the expedition went to the village of Halonia, half an hour SSW of Chora where Constantinos Kales had informed us that he had found on his property the ruins of a building including marble blocks and an inscription. . . . The few fragments of the building in a vineyard revealed that it was a concrete structure. A marble pillar with two half-columns of the type used in Byzantine windows had been found and was measured and photographed. The inscription, of Byzantine character, was brought to the Museum."

- 1 [...] τὸ λοετρὸν [...]  
[... θεομη]νεία πρὸ ἐτών β' [...]  
[... ἄ]νανεούτε εὐτ[υχῶς ...]  
4 [...] ἐπὶ Ἰου]στινιανοῦ ἔτου[ς ...]

. . . the bath . . . (destroyed by an earthquake [?]) two years previously . . . was restored with good fortune . . . in the time of Justinian in the year . . .

Line 1. The form λοετρὸν for λουτρὸν is found both in Byzantine literature<sup>2</sup> and in an undated inscription in the bath at Aphrodisias in Caria.<sup>3</sup> There is disagreement as to whether λοετρὸν is a learned form taken from the Ionian dialect which came to be employed also by uneducated persons (the opinion of Hatzidakis), or is merely a vulgar form (the opinion of Krumbacher).<sup>4</sup>

Line 2. The restoration [θεομη]νεία, representing a common misspelling of

<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to my colleague Paul A. Underwood for making the drawing (based on the squeeze) which is reproduced here in Plate 14, and also for a valuable suggestion as to the reading of the second line.

<sup>2</sup> S. B. Psaltes, *Gramm. der byz. Chroniken* (Göttingen, 1913), § 124, pp. 62-63; see also Hesychius, *s. v.* λοετρὸν.

<sup>3</sup> *Recueil des Inscr. gr. chrét. d'Asie Mineure*, ed. H. Grégoire, I (Paris, 1922), no. 277.

<sup>4</sup> See Psaltes, *loc. cit.*

*θεομηνία*, is suggested by the circumstance that there was a severe earthquake in this region on 6 Sept. A.D. 543, which destroyed half of Cyzicus;<sup>5</sup> and if the shocks had this effect at Cyzicus, they might well have been felt at Samothrace. The hypothesis that it was an earthquake which caused the damage which necessitated the restoration of the bath fits the text well, for it is not unnatural to suppose that two years might elapse before a modest bath in a place like Samothrace would be restored. There is evidence for another earthquake, in August of 554, which is said to have been felt at Constantinople and throughout the Empire, but there is nothing in the preserved records to suggest that this earthquake might have had any particular effect at Samothrace.<sup>6</sup>

Line 3. The only plausible explanation of the letters ANANEOTTE is that they represent a barbarous misspelling of *ἀνενεώθη*. *Tau* is not uncommonly substituted for *theta* in uneducated usage in Byzantine times.<sup>7</sup> Instead of *εὐτ*[*νχῶς*] one might restore *εὐτ*[*έχνωσ*], but the former restoration seems more in keeping with the character of the inscription.

Line 4. It is to be presumed that the emperor named is Justinian I (527-565) rather than Justinian II (685-695, 705-711). Justinian the Great had, as we know from Procopius' *De aedificiis*, an unusual interest in building activities, and the relative prosperity of his reign, as compared with the circumstances of the reigns of Justinian II, makes it seem much more likely that a modest bath on Samothrace should have been rebuilt under Justinian I than under Justinian II.

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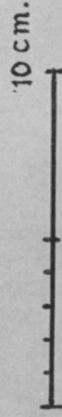
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<sup>5</sup> Malalas, p. 482, 12 Bonn ed.; Theophanes, A.M. 6036, I, p. 244, 11 ff. ed. De Boor.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Agathias, II, 15, p. 95, 18 Bonn ed.; Malalas, p. 486, 23 ff. Bonn ed.; Theophanes, A.M. 6046, I, p. 229, 5 ed. De Boor; Cedrenus, I, p. 674, 12 ff. Bonn ed.

<sup>7</sup> Psaltes, *op. cit.*, § 139, p. 69.

ΤΟΛΟΕΤΡΟΝ  
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