ΕΠΕΝΙΚΤΟΣ

The text of the lead tablet of the fourth century before Christ from Phalasarna in western Crete (No. 9355, National Museum, Athens)\(^1\) is for the most part nonsensical. Different kinds of nonsense appear, chiefly the following four.

1) The Έφεσια γράμματα, lines 6 ff.: ασκικατασκι,\(^2\) etc.
2) Other barbaric groups of letters, line 3: πυξιναμαγαλις; lines 3 and 9: τετραγος, etc.
3) Greek words and phrases in no intelligible context, line 3: αιαί ἐγὼ δ' ἔλκει; line 8: μακάρων κατ' ἀμαζῑτὸν αἰδάν, etc.
4) Greek words more or less corrupt, line 5: δαντὼν for βάντων or δράντων; line 7: κταδες[.]α εδαθη καταλμαξιτον for κατάδεσμα ἐδόθη (οὲ δοθη) κατ’ ἀμαζῑτὸν, etc.

To Group 4 belongs the last line (11), except its end (οὔτε πατῶ γήι σύντορα πάντων α[-- --], which belongs to Group 3. By altering three letters we obtain a good hexameter and the beginning of another:

οὐ με καταχρί[στω]ι δηλήσεται οὔτε ἐπενίκτω
οὔτε ποτώι

οὐ με scripsi: tome tab. (this is no alteration; cf. line 5 αντο = αὐτο, line 6 κηπο = κήπο). καταχρίστω scripsi: tome tab. scripsi: ποτώι tab.

The last two emendations are supported by a parallel sentence in a Cnidian lead tablet of the second century before Christ:\(^3\)

εἰ τί ἡ ἐμοὶ πεποίκει( !) φάρμ[ακον] ἦ ποτόν ἢ κατάχριστων ἢ ἐπακτόν [ἡ τινι] ἡμῶν ---

As Ziebarth saw, κατάχριστος occurs only in these two texts.

Ένικτος is a legitimate, if unattested, verbal adjective from ἐν(ε)ικ -, the substitute for φέρω in some tenses; cf. προσενεκτέον Aristotle, Magna moralia, 1199 b 29;

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\(^3\) Griech. Dialekt-Inschriften, III, i, 3545; I.G., III, Part iii, Appendix (Defixionum Tabellae, ed. Wuensch), p. xii; Audollent, Defix. Tab., no. 8.
Socrates in Stobaeus, IV, xxv, 42 (Hense). Φερτός (σύμφερτος) is equally rare.

Cretan ἐπένικτος and Cnidian ἐπακτός are probably synonymous, characterizing a remedy as administered to the skin by being applied (as opposed to being rubbed in): cf. Theocritus, XI, lines 1 f., φάρμακον . . . οὔτ' ἐγχριστον . . . οὔτ' ἐπίπαστον; Hippocrates, Ηum., 5 (5, 484 L.), χρίμασιν ἐγχρίσμασιν ἐπιπλάστουσιν ἐπιπάστουσιν ἐπιδέτουσιν ἐπιθέτουσιν. But since neither ἐπιθέρω nor ἐπάγω is quoted from other pharmaceutical texts, it will be difficult to give a more precise explanation.4

The whole sentence is closely related to lines 227 f. of the Homeric hymn to Demeter, one of the few magical passages in early epic poetry:


The inscription may depend on the hymn; more probably both depend on a hexametric charm similar to those of the Philinna Papyrus which I have just reconstructed in vol. LXII of the Journal of Hellenic Studies.

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4 The magical sense of ἐπάγω, ἐπαγωγή, etc., where daemons are the object, does not fit a pharmaceutical context. I agree, however, with H. J. Stukey, Class. Phil., XXXII, 1937, p. 35, note 18 that ἐπακτός in Lex sacra Cyren., B 5, line 30 might be a spirit; cf. my Epidaurische Hymnen (1933), p. 139 and Orph. H., 36 (37), 7 f. But I cannot explain ἱκέσιος in this connection.