

A NEW METRICAL INSCRIPTION FROM CRETE

(PLATE 55)

A sepulchral metrical inscription on limestone (Pl. 55) is in the possession of Nikolaos Metaxas, Esq., a civil engineer residing in Herakleion, Crete, who has kindly granted me permission to publish it. The stone came originally from Ampelouzos, an area of Roman Gortys.

Height, 0.51 m.; width, 0.58 m.; thickness, 0.15 m.

Height of letters, 0.025 m. Distance between lines, 0.015-0.02 m. The letters are uniformly, carefully, and handsomely incised with apices; the letter forms tend to date the inscription in the second to third century after Christ.

Ἑλλάδι σῆμα σοφῆ πινυτὸς δώμησεν | Ἀλεξᾶς Ϝ
ὠκυμόρου καταθεῖς καλὸν ἄγαλμα | κόρης
ἣν ὄλεσεν σὺν παιδί μογοστόκος Εἰλειό|θυια
καὶ πατρὶ καὶ γαμέτη πένθος ἐφεισαμένη·||
πουλὴ γὰρ ἀμφότεροι βλεφάρων ἄπο δάκρυ χέ|ουσι
Ἑλλάδος ἀρπαγίμης εἶνεκεν ἡλικίης.

Prudent Alexas had this tomb built for accomplished Hellas when he buried the beautiful body of the young woman whom Eileiothuia, the assistant at the pangs of birth, destroyed with child, clothing both a father and a spouse with grief, for both shed many a tear from their eyes because of the age at which Hellas was snatched away.

This inscription is a sepulchral dedication written for a young recently married woman named Hellas, whose tragically untimely death at childbirth caused immeasurable grief both to her husband Alexas and to her father, who is unnamed. The inscription consists of three sets of elegiac distichs. The first hexameter line is separated from its pentameter line by an ivy leaf. The second hexameter line is preceded by a space with a stop-point. Its pentameter line begins after a slight space without a stop-point. The third hexameter begins a new line so that no space or stop-point is needed between it and the preceding pentameter. At the end of the third hexameter line there is a pronounced space with a stop-point to separate it from its pentameter.

Two instances of ligature are observed, and these in the same word: the mu and epsilon, and the nu and eta, of *ἐφεισαμένη* (line 4). There is an instance of assimila-

tion of nu to mu in *σὸν παιδί* (line 3). There are no errors of spelling, but there are mistakes on the part of the stonecutter. The cross-bar of the alpha of *καλόν* (line 2) is lacking, thus giving the appearance of two lambdas. Likewise in the word *γαμέτη(ι)* (line 4) an iota appears instead of gamma, probably an omission of the horizontal bar. In the word *ἀρπαγίμης* (line 6) the extremity of the gamma and the upper part of the iota just about fused to give the appearance of pi. Finally, the cross-bar of the second eta in the word *ἡλικίης* (line 6) extends all the way through the sigma.

Ἑλλάς as a woman's name is not found in any other preserved inscription of Crete. The name Ἑλλάδιος, however, occurs in an inscription from Gortys.¹ The name Ἀλεξᾶς (line 2) occurs in an inscription from Chersonesos.² The epithet σοφῆ(ι) (line 1) applied to Hellas implies her dexterity in handling the matters of everyday living.³ The word ἄγαλμα (line 2), referring to the body of a person who has died, occurs in a Christian Cretan prose inscription from Kastelli Kissamou.⁴ It is also used with this meaning in two non-Cretan metrical inscriptions.⁵ Obviously the word κόρης (line 3) is here used in the sense of a young newly married woman.⁶ This inscription presents still another form of the name of the goddess of birth pangs, *Εἰλειόθνια* for *Εἰλείθνια* (lines 3-4), possibly for metrical reasons. It is doubtful that the omikron is the stonecutter's error. The goddess is characterized by the epithet *μογοστόκος*,⁷ which is also used of Artemis.⁸ The aorist participle *ἔφεσσαμένη* (line 4) could result from either of two verbs: *ἐφίζω* and *ἐφέννυμι*. It is the latter, however, which furnishes the right sense for this inscription.

The syntactical use of *ἔφεσσαμένη* is also of interest since it gives an instance of an aorist participle expressing an action that is not antecedent to but coincidental or identical with that of the main verb (*ὄλεσεν*). Thus the death of the young mother and the clothing of her husband and her father with grief express two aspects of the same thing.⁹ The same syntax can possibly be applied to *καταθείς* (line 2), unless the latter is to be understood as expressing antecedent action so that the meaning is that after Alexas put his wife into the grave he had a tomb built for her. The verb *κατατίθημι* is here used in the sense of "bury."¹⁰

¹ M. Guarducci, *Inscriptiones Creticae*, IV, p. 399, No. 461, 3.

² M. Guarducci, *op. cit.*, I, p. 36, No. 5, 5.

³ A. Nauck, *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*, p. 113, No. 390.

⁴ M. Guarducci, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 98-99, No. 3, 2.

⁵ G. Kaibel, *Epigrammata Graeca*, p. 131, No. 336, 8; p. 204, No. 511, 9.

⁶ *Iliad*, VI, 247; *Odyssey*, XVIII, 279; Euripides, *Hecuba*, 485; Aristophanes, *Aves*, 1675.

⁷ *Iliad*, XI, 270; XVI, 187; XIX, 103.

⁸ Theokritos, XXVII, 30.

⁹ H. W. Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, p. 420; W. W. Goodwin, *Moods and Tenses of the Greek Verb*, p. 52, 150; E. Burton, *Syntax of the Moods and Tenses in the New Testament Greek* (on the use of the aorist participle), pp. 59-70.

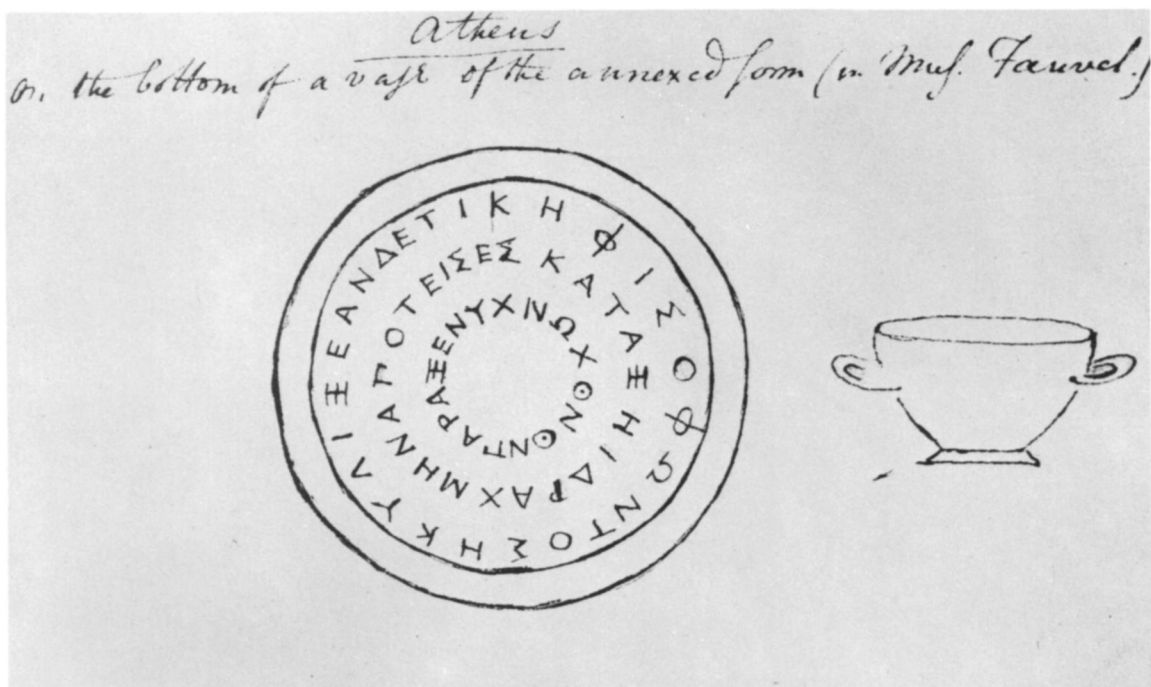
¹⁰ St. Mark, *Ἐθαγγέλιον*, XV, 46 (active); *Odyssey*, XXIV, 190 (middle).

The epic forms in the inscription are quite clear: non-use of augment in δώμησεν (line 1) and ἔλεσεν (line 3); use of πινυτός (line 1), γαμέτη(ι) (line 4), and ἄρπαγίμης (line 6);¹¹ long alpha in καλόν (line 2); the lengthening of omikron to omikron upsilon in πολύ (line 5); anastrophe of the preposition ἀπό (line 5); and the eta sigma for alpha sigma in ἡλικίης (line 6).

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¹¹ Kallimachos, *Hymn to Demeter*, 9.



EUGENE VANDERPOOL: ΚΕΦΙΣΟΦΟΝ'S KYLIX



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