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The Phrygian inscription from Dokimeion and its meter

The inscription from Dokimeion (W-11) was published for the first time by Brixhe in 2004. This is one of the longest Phrygian inscriptions and it is fascinating in several respects. It is written in the Greek script, and on the basis of paleography may be dated to the late 4th – early 3rd century B.C., that is, soon after Alexander’s invasion (Brixhe, o.c.: 11-12), thus being the oldest Phrygian inscription written in this alphabet.¹ Normally, Old Phrygian (OPhr.) inscriptions, attested from the 8th to 4th centuries B.C., are written in the native script in contradistinction to the New Phrygian (NPhr.) ones from the 2nd – 3rd centuries A.D. in the Greek script. In the scholarly literature, it is customary to represent the NPhr. inscriptions in the Greek script and to romanize the OPhr. inscriptions (with the exception of the disputed signs ↑, Φ and Ψ).

In his edition of the Dokimeion inscription, Brixhe has chosen to use the Roman script in order to stress its Old Phrygian character, but in my opinion, this decision is rather unfortunate: the spelling with <ou> for /u/ is misleading and some of the Greek letters are still left untransliterated (η, χ). Therefore, in the following, when discussing the text of the inscription, I will keep the Greek script of the original.

On page 24, Brixhe gives the text of the inscription as follows (the only difference is that the Roman characters are here substituted by the Greek ones):

- 1 μανκα μεκας σας κιυιν εν κε βιλταδε-
- 2 ναν νεκοινουν : ποκραιου κη γλουρεος γαμενονν
- 3 σα σοροι ματι μακραν : βλασκον κε τακρις κε λογγ-
- 4 ιου μροτις λαπτα ματι αιουνν : νικοστρατος
- 5 κλευμαχοι μιρος αιδομενου ματιν κισις μ-
- 6 κρος υιταν παρτιας πλαδε πορκορο οσ..-
- 7 ρρς παντης : πεν(-)νιτι ιος κορο αν(-)δετουγ
- 8 σρνν ομαστα ομνισιτ ους

The colon stands for a sign consisting of two vertical dots, which is reminiscent of the word separator in the OPhr. inscriptions, although the latter usually con-

¹ Yet another Phrygian inscription of the Hellenistic period in the Greek script may be the inscription from Prynnessos (Brixhe/Drew-Bear 2010), for which see further below.

sists of three or more dots. Obviously, the colon in our inscription cannot be a word separator, but what is then its function? Neither NPhr., nor Greek inscriptions of the area ever use punctuation. Brixhe points out (Brixhe 2004, 10) that

“Si nous sommes réellement au tournant du IV^e au III^e siècle, force est de constater que l’interponction est devenue rare dans l’épigraphie grecque contemporaine et se trouve utilisée à des fins très particulières: isoler un anthroponyme ou un numéral, marquer une abréviation.”

But this function is also hardly feasible in the Dokimeion inscription.

The function of the colon is of essential importance for understanding the structure of the inscription. What Brixhe has failed to notice is that the colon appears at regular intervals. If we assume that at the end of line 5, after *κισις*, there stands one more colon (the inscription is rather worn there, but the drawing on page 8 clearly shows the dots), the inscription turns out to be divided into six equal portions, which we can label (a) to (f):

- (a) *μανκα μεκας σας κισιν εν κε βιλαταδεναν νεκ οινουν :*
- (b) *ποκραιου κη γλουρεος γαμενονν σα σοροι ματι μακραν :*
- (c) *βλασκον κε τακρις κε λογγιου μροτις λαπτα ματια οινουν :*
- (d) *νικοστρατος κλευμαχοι μιρος αιδομενου ματιν κισις [:]*
- (e) *μο.κρος υιταν παρτιας πλαδε πορκορο οσ..ρος παντης :*
- (f) *πεν(-)νιτι ιος κορο αν(-)δετουγ ρον ομαστα ομισιτ ους*

There can be no doubt that we are dealing with a poem of six lines, the colon being a line separator.² Lines *a*, *b*, *d*, and *f* count 17 syllables. Also line *e* may count 17 syllables, if the worn part of *οσ..ρος* contains a vocalic segment, which is possible by all means. Only line *c* is slightly problematic. As edited by Brixhe, it contains 18 syllables, since *λογγιου* must be scanned in three syllables in view of trisyllabic scansion of *παρτιας* in *e*. The reading of the sequence *λογγιου* is uncertain, however. Especially, the *-ι-* is doubtful: as indicated by the editor (p. 10), we only see “un tracé vertical, légèrement serpentin (*i* ?)”. If we read any consonant instead of *-ι-* (for instance, another *v*), the line would also contain 17 syllables.

The lines of 17 syllables suggest that the poem is written in a meter reminiscent of the dactylic hexameter, with five feet of three syllables each and a spondee. Line *b* is a perfect hexameter, containing five dactyls (assuming that *ου* stands for a short vowel /u/ and that *ποκραιου* stands for /pokraiu/), but all other lines deviate from the dactylic pattern to a larger or smaller extent. Neverthe-

² Alwin Kloekhorst informs me that line separators are also found in a Lydian inscription (LW 10) and in two Mylian inscriptions (TL 44c/d and TL 55).

less, I do not think we should look for special metrical constraints or archaic Phrygian meters here. The historical context of the inscription (it is written shortly after Alexander's conquest and found near Dokimeion, a town founded by one of his generals), the fact that it is written in the Greek alphabet and that it contains the Greek names Νικοστρατος and Κλευμαχος – everything points to a very strong Greek influence. The quick pace of acculturation follows from the Greek epitaph of Tatis, the daughter of Νικοστρατος, discovered by Thomas Drew-Bear at the same location (Drew-Bear 1985, 259; Brixhe 2004, 26). This epitaph is not yet published, but Drew-Bear gives its Turkish translation: 'Nikostratos'un kızı, Theophilos'un karısı Tatis [Tatis, daughter of Nikostratos, wife of Theophilos]'. This means that Tatis, who bears a Phrygian name of Anatolian origin, married a Greek Theophilos and her epitaph is already in Greek.

Since the hexameter was often used for funerary epigrams in the Greek tradition, it must have been taken over or adapted by the Phrygian aristocracy. This Greek custom may further be reflected in the most common New Phrygian curse formula on the funerary steles. This formula, which normally accompanies a Greek epitaph, can be reconstructed as an original distich of two hexameter lines, as I have argued elsewhere (Lubotsky 1998):³

ιος νι σεμουν κνουμανει κακουν αδδακετ αινι τεαμας
 με ζεμελωσ κε δεωσ κε Τιη τιτετικμενος ειτου
 'Whoever does harm to this grave or to the stone,
 let him be accursed by Zeus among men and gods.'

The insight that the Dokimeion inscription represents an epigram and that the colon is a line separator has important consequences for our understanding of the inscription, although much in it remains obscure. A renewed analysis must remain a task for the future, and here I would only like to add two comments about the main protagonists of the inscription.

The first comment concerns the name of the deceased. Brixhe started from the assumption that in νικοστρατος κλευμαχοι, the first name "est évidemment celui qui fait construire le monument" (Brixhe 2004, 20) and the second is the "bénéficiaire", which is understandable if the inscription were a regular epitaph. In an epigram, however, it is appropriate to mention the deceased in the nominative, so that Nikostratos may be the man for whom the epigram has been

³ West (2003) ascribed the metrical organization of the NPhr. curses to Indo-European heritage, but it does not seem very probable to me that the poor Phrygian peasant population in the highlands would have preserved the traditional IE poetry and would have used it for funerary inscriptions.

commissioned, probably by his daughter Tatis who has already been mentioned above.

Another point concerns the sequence $\kappa\omicron\omicron$ (lines *e* and *f*), which occurs twice. Brixhe (2004, 21) suggests a borrowing from Greek $\chi\omega\omicron\varsigma$ ‘(funeral) ground’, a term which, again, would have been appropriate in a regular prosaic epitaph, but totally out of place in an epigram. Since $\kappa\omicron\omicron$ is both times found before a vowel, Brixhe (2004, 21) has taken it as a complete word in dat. sg., which can hardly be correct, since the ending of the thematic dative is $-\omicron\iota$ in this inscription ($\sigma\omicron\omicron\omicron\iota$, $\kappa\lambda\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha\chi\omicron\iota$). Instead of isolating $\kappa\omicron\omicron$, I would rather suggest a different segmentation. It seems much more attractive to read $\kappa\omicron\omicron\omicron$ in *e* and $\kappa\omicron\omicron\omicron\alpha\nu$ in *f*, and to assume that these sequences go back to $*koru\bar{o}$ and $*koruan$, respectively. We may further compare this word to the Greek word for ‘young girl, daughter’ (Att. $\kappa\omicron\rho\eta$, Ion. $\kappa\omicron\upsilon\rho\eta$, Dor. $\kappa\omega\rho\alpha$, $\kappa\omicron\rho\alpha$) from Proto-Greek $*koru\bar{a}$, as is especially clear from Arc. Cor. $\kappa\omicron\rho\bar{\alpha}$, Mys. *ko-wa*, and to its masculine counterpart Att. $\kappa\omicron\rho\omicron\varsigma$, Ion. $\kappa\omicron\upsilon\rho\omicron\varsigma$, Mys. *ko-wo* ‘young boy, son’ < $*koruos$.

In our inscription, $\kappa\omicron\omicron\omicron\alpha\nu$ can be acc.sg.f., but $\kappa\omicron\omicron\omicron$ is more difficult to analyze. It stands immediately after $\pi\omicron\omicron$, a preposition with an approximate meaning ‘for’ and unclear government: in OPhr. inscription W-05b, we read *[daesporma]te*, which may stand for *[e]daes por ma[te]ran* or *mater[ey]* ‘established for the Mother’. If this preposition is identical with NPhr. $\pi\omicron\upsilon\omicron$ (cf. 88. [...] $\pi\omicron\upsilon\omicron$ $\kappa\epsilon$ $\omicron\upsilon\alpha\upsilon\alpha\kappa\tau\alpha\nu$ $\omicron\upsilon\theta\alpha\upsilon\iota\omicron\nu$ $\delta\iota\omicron\upsilon\sigma\upsilon\sigma\iota\nu$ ‘for the heavenly king Dionysos’), it may govern an accusative, but it cannot be excluded that other cases were possible, too. In Phrygian, we find an enigmatic case in $-\omicron$, cf. NPhr. $\kappa\upsilon\alpha\iota\kappa\omicron$ ‘wife’ (116) or OPhr. *ka[va]rmo[yo]* (B-01) next to acc.sg. *ka[va]rmo[yn]* ‘?’ in the same inscription (Ligorio/Lubotsky 2013, 188), and our $\kappa\omicron\omicron\omicron$ may be yet another example of this case form.

At first sight, this analysis of $\kappa\omicron\omicron\omicron$ and $\kappa\omicron\omicron\omicron\alpha\nu$ is contradicted by the fact that $/\upsilon/$ is three times written as v in this inscription, i.e. $\kappa\upsilon\upsilon$, $\kappa\upsilon\upsilon\upsilon\varsigma$, $\upsilon\tau\alpha\nu$, but in all these cases, $/\upsilon/$ stands before an $/i/$, whereas in $\kappa\omicron\omicron\omicron$ and $\kappa\omicron\omicron\omicron\alpha\nu$, $/\upsilon/$ stands before a non-high vowel, which may account for the difference. It is remarkable further that $\kappa\omicron\omicron\omicron$ and $\kappa\omicron\omicron\omicron\alpha\nu$ must be scanned in three syllables, whereas $\kappa\upsilon\upsilon\upsilon\varsigma$ is disyllabic.

In Phrygian inscriptions written in the Greek alphabet, omicron is often used for indicating $/\upsilon/$. Most importantly, this is the case in the only other Hellenistic Phrygian inscription, the one from Prynnessos (Brixhe/Drew-Bear

2010), which reads: $\mu\omicron\varsigma \nu\iota \sigma\alpha \mu\alpha\tau\epsilon/\rho\epsilon^4 \kappa\alpha\kappa\omicron\nu \alpha\beta\beta\epsilon/\rho\epsilon\tau\omicron\iota \alpha\iota\nu\iota \sigma\epsilon\rho/\omicron\alpha \tau\omicron\varsigma \nu\iota \mu\epsilon$ $\zeta\epsilon\mu\epsilon\lambda\omega[\varsigma \dots]$ ‘whoever does harm to the Mother or to Serva (?)’. Also in NPhr. inscription 116, we find this spelling in $\omicron\alpha\nu \omicron\epsilon \alpha\upsilon\tau\alpha\iota$ ‘herself’.

If we assume that $\kappa\omicron\theta\omicron\alpha\nu$ in line *f* means ‘girl, daughter’, just like Greek $\kappa\omicron\theta\eta$, this would provide yet another indication that the Dokimeion stele was erected by Tatis, the daughter of Nikostratos. We can of course only speculate why she decided to put a Phrygian epigram on a stele for her father who had a Greek name: was he a Phrygian who had taken service in the Greek army or administration and assumed a Greek name?

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⁴ In his edition of the inscription, Brixhe reads this word as $\mu\alpha\gamma/\rho\epsilon$ or $\mu\alpha\pi/\rho\epsilon$, but on the photograph we can see the traces of the line-final ϵ . The preceding letter is damaged on the top, but can be a τ .