

DAVID R. JORDAN

A MEILICHIOS STONE FROM SELINOUS

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The J.Paul Getty Museum at Malibu houses an early *lex sacra* from Selinous, of which Michael H. Jameson, Roy D. Kotansky, and I are preparing an *editio princeps*. In its rituals it associates Zeus Meilichios and the Eumenides. Our attention has naturally been drawn to other Meilichios inscriptions from the city, one of which, in particular, has been subject to scholarly discussion that invites comment.

In 1927, in his report of his excavations at Selinous, Ettore Gabrici included Alessandro Olivieri's edition of a crude 6th- or 5th-century boustrophedon inscription on tufa (Palermo inv. N.I. 8764; H. 59 cm, W. 31-38, Th. 11-13, L.H. 3.5-6) found in 1903 in the Campo di Stele, between the south corner of the *temenos* of Meilichios and the northwest side of that of Demeter Malophoros:

Τὸ Διὸς τῷ Μ/ελιχίῳ ἐμί, / πρῶτα Εὐμε/νίδο τῷ Πε/διάρχο

"Sono l'offerta preminente di Eumenide, figlio di Pediarco, in onore di Zeus Meilichios."¹ Olivieri noted that the third letter in line 3 is ambiguous but apparently is to be explained as the mason's anticipating the following letter, τ, by inscribing a vertical but then correcting his work to ο; further, having already incised the α, he then squeezed the τ between the ο and the α; thus the lack of sufficient space for the horizontal of the τ.

A few years later, Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff pointed out that in Doric, "first" would be πρᾶτα, not πρῶτα, and that the genitive singular would be Εὐμενίδα; he called attention to the association of Zeus Meilichios and the Eumenides in the *Kyrenaika*² and proposed a different articulation of lines 3 and 4, πρὸ τᾶ(ν) Εὐμε/νίδο(ν).³ His translation: "'an stelle' oder 'für' die Eumenides des Pediarchos." Kathleen Forbes, adducing compounds in πρᾶτ- from Megara and her colonies, has defended Wilamowitz' articulation,⁴ and Mario Burzachechi too has accepted it.⁵ Carlo Gallavotti, on the other hand, without mentioning the evidence from the *Kyrenaika*, has objected that Wilamowitz "introduce nelle concezione del Milichios la nozione estranea e peregrina delle Eumenidi."⁶

¹ Il santuario della Malophoros a Selinunte (= MonAnt 32) (Rome 1923) 381-82, no.3; see his tav.II for a plan of the sanctuaries.

² In rock-cut inscriptions at Ain Hofra outside Kyrene, SEG 9.327-46.

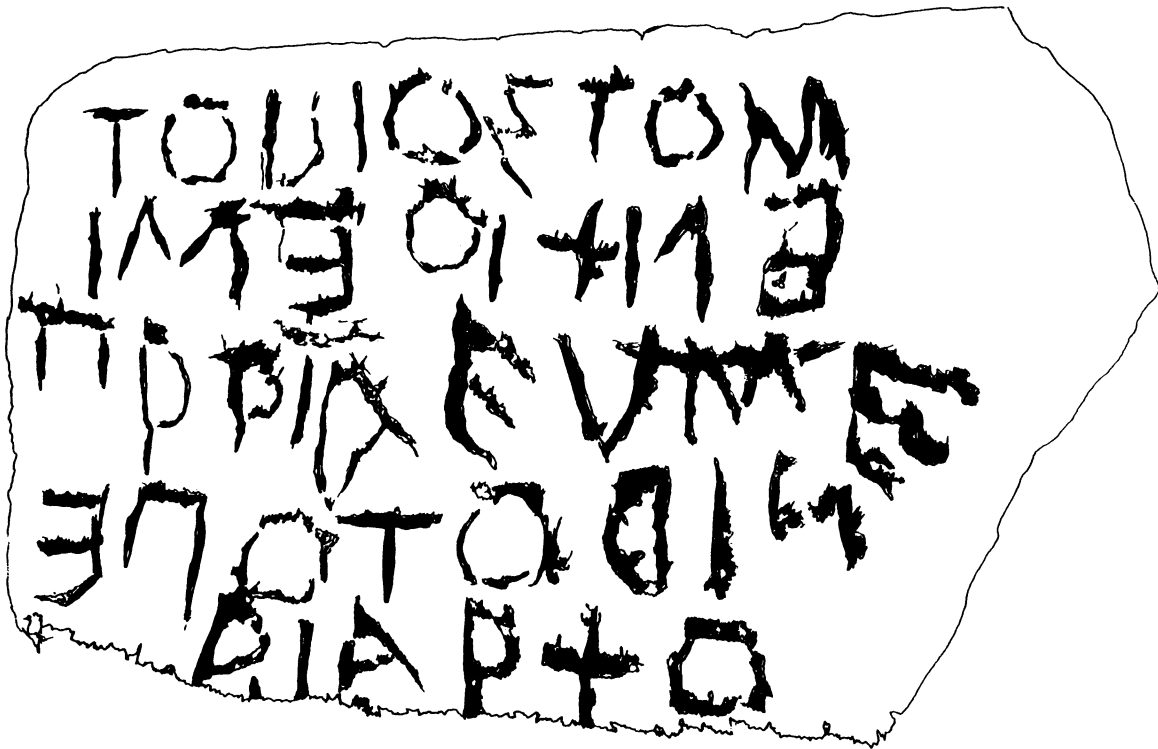
³ "Lese Früchte," *Hermes* 65 (1930) 241-58, pp. 257-58 (= *Kleine Schriften*, IV [Berlin 1962] 525-27). For Attic examples of the omission of final ν, extremely rare before a vowel, see L.L. Threatte, *The grammar of Attic inscriptions*, I. Morphology (Berlin/New York 1980) 636-37.

⁴ "Some Cyrenean dedications," *Philologus* 100 (1956) 235-52, pp.243-45; cf. SEG 17.441a.

⁵ "Oggetti parlanti nelle epigrafi greche," *Epigraphica* 24 (1962) 3-54, p.14.

⁶ "Scritture arcaiche della Sicilia e di Rodi," *Helikon* 15-16 (1975-76) 71-117, p.101.

Subsequent readings of lines 3 and 4 include Πρωτᾶ (genitive of Πρωτᾶς) Εὐμε/νίδο, proposed independently by Martin P.Nilsson in 1953⁷ and Lilian H.Jeffery in 1961⁸ — neither, apparently, knowing Wilamowitz' note — and προτᾶ (from πέπρωμαι: sc. λιθος προτᾶ) Εὐμε/νίδο "sono (la pietra) ..., offerta di Eumenides," proposed by Maria Teresa Manni Piraino in 1963.⁹ Fatal to Nilsson's and Jeffery's Πρωτᾶ and Εὐμε/νίδο are Wilamowitz' objections on the grounds of dialect. As for Wilamowitz' πρὸ τᾶ(ν) and Manni Piraino's προτᾶ, in 1976 Maria-Letizia Lazzarini offered, without comment or explanation, a different and more promising transcription of line 3.¹⁰ There is a good photograph of the stone in IGLMP, tav. XXXV, from which the figure below has been traced.



⁷ *Geschichte der griechischen Religion I*² (Munich 1955) 413 n.10.

⁸ *The local scripts of archaic Greece* (Oxford 1961) 270 n.5.

⁹ "Iscrizioni inedite e revisioni selinuntine," *Kokalos* 9 (1963) 137-57, p.153, no.4, repeated in her "Epigrafia selinuntina," *Kokalos* 16 (1970) 268-94, pp.279-80, no.4, and *Iscrizioni greche lapidarie del Museo di Palermo* (Palermo 1973) [henceforth: IGLMP], no.60.

¹⁰ *Le formule delle dediche votive nella Grecia arcaica* (= *MemLinc* 1976.2) (Rome 1976), no.880a.

It can be seen that the tail of the second letter in line 3, ρ, descends below the line. The third letter also has a tail, very much like ρ. It is not quite as large as the second letter, and its tail does not descend quite as far and may, as Olivieri assumed, be the result of a miscarving. Its body, on the other hand, is rather oval and can be contrasted with the larger, more rounded circles of the o's elsewhere on the stone. The best comparison for the letter is the indisputable ρ in Πεδιάρχο. The fourth letter, as seen in the photograph, is a vertical, with a high, slightly slanting, horizontal that is well above the body of the third letter and the apex of the following α. The raking light of the photograph is such that other horizontals on the stone have deep black shadows; this mark seems to be shallower, for it has hardly any shadow. As Olivieri remarked, the third and the fifth letters are in fact quite close to the vertical of the fourth; the cutter seems not to have taken the high horizontal into account in their spacing; we may contrast the ample space left for the horizontals of the τ's in lines 1 and 4. In a straight line with the horizontal over the fourth letter is a horizontal nick, unquestionably the result of damage, in the upper part of the υμ of ευμε-. Presumably the horizontal over the fourth letter is part of the same scar. All this suggests that the fourth letter is not τ but ι. Lazzarini, followed in 1989 by Laurent Dubois in his useful *Inscriptions grecques dialectales de Sicile* (no.50),¹¹ prints Π(υ)ρρία, Εύμε/νιδότο (elsewhere unattested), Πε/διάρχο, assuming genitives of three proper names.

In 1963 Manni Piraino proposed to read as Ξ's Olivieri's ε's in line 2;¹² she is followed by Dubois. This would make the inscription the only text at Selinous or any other Megarian city showing Ξ with a value *ei*.¹³ The spellings Μειλίχιος (IGLMP 66) and εἰμί (e.g. 62, 76) do occur in early texts from Selinous, but one finds, along with them, Μελίχιος (58) and ἐμί (61, 84, 85). I have not seen the stone, as Manni Piraino of course has, and am dependent on her photograph, but I would cautiously question whether her Ξ's are not simply retrograde ε's. In neither instance does the vertical at the left extend the full height of the letter, and in both it is much thinner than any other vertical on the stone; the lack of shadow in the photograph suggests that it is shallower as well. If it is in fact inadvertent or the result of damage, we may print and translate:

Τὸ Διὸς τὸ Μ-	→
ελιχίῳ ἐμί	←
Π(υ)ρρία, Εύμε-	→
νιδότο, Πε-	←
διάρχο.	→

"I am (the stone) of the Zeus Meilichios of Pyrrhias, Eumenidotos, Pediarchos."

¹¹ Collection de l'École française de Rome 119 (Paris/Rome 1989).

¹² Op.cit. (n.9 supra) 153.

¹³ Op.cit., tav. XLIV; R.Arena, "La lettera Ξ nell'uso greco più antico," *RendIstLombardo* 102 (1968) 3-33.

Other early stones at Selinous name Meilichioi as belonging to single persons (e.g. IGLMP 61 Λυκίϰο ἐμὶ Μιλίχιος) or to clearly defined groups (e.g. 58 Μελίχιος / τῶν Κλευλιδᾶν, 68 ἡο Μιλίχιος τᾶ/ς πατριᾶς τᾶν ἡε(ρ)/μίο [h(ε)ρ- M.P.] παιδῶν καὶ / τᾶν Εὐκλέα παιδ(δ)ν)¹⁴ but, unless 65 (τῶ Μιλ[ιχίο- -]/[- - -]ο []άϰονος) includes more than one person, our stone is unique in that its Meilichios belongs to several individuals with no explicit connection. The parallels, in any event, suggest that the genitives of the personal names go with the divinity, not as Dubois assigns them in his edition: "J'appartiens à Zeus Meilichios; (je suis la stèle) de Pyrrhias, d'Euménidotos et de Pédiarchos."

Dubois remarks there that "Εὐμενίδοτος serait un nom théophore comportant au premier membre le nom d'une divinité locale appelée Εὐμενίς dont l'existence est légitimement inférable du nom de mois Εὐμενιδεῖος qui apparaît dans les intitulés des décrets d'Entella."¹⁵ What the month-name suggests, rather, is an annual celebration that occurred within that month.¹⁶ The festival at Entella would have been called the Eumenideia, otherwise unknown but honoring no doubt the Eumenides.¹⁷ A divinity Eumenis, in the singular, remains unevidenced. The element Εὐμεν- of Εὐμενίδοτος does appear in at least one personal name from western Sicily, that of Eumenidas of Halikyai (1st cent. B.C.), mentioned by Cicero, Verr. 5.15.

If the new transcription of line 3 is correct, Wilamowitz' articulation is untenable and the stone should not be taken as independent evidence for the association of Meilichios and the Eumenides at Selinous. His instinct as to the possibility of the association there was, however, right, as the new *lex sacra* will show.

Athens, American School of Classical Studies

D.R.Jordan

¹⁴ For examples of such "ownership" of Meilichios stones outside Selinous see Nilsson, *op.cit.* (n.7 supra) 412.

¹⁵ SEG 30.1117-18, 1120 (= Dubois 204-5, 207), 3rd cent. B.C. He made this observation previously in an address entitled "Une Euménide à Sélinonte au VI^e siècle avant J.-C.: remarques sur quelques cultes siciliens," REG 90 (1986) xvii-xviii.

¹⁶ Most Greek month-names are in fact derived from festivals celebrated within the month; cf. H.W.Parke, *Festivals of the Athenians* (London 1971) 24. Thus in the Attic calendar, for example, the month Hekatombaion is named for the festival of the Hekatombaia, Metageitnion for the Metageitnia, etc.

¹⁷ The bronze decrees from Entella attest two month-names there in addition to Eumenideios: Panamos (SEG 30.1121, 1123, ASNP 17 [1987] 120-21) and Adonios (SEG 30.1192), the latter so far not occurring as such elsewhere (though cf. the months Adonion at Iasos, *Inscr. v. Iasos* [= IGSK 28] 42, 4th or 3rd cent. B.C., and Adonisios at Seleukeia, *Hemerol.Flor.*). The Panamia were celebrated at Thespiai (Schwyzer, DGE 491, 2nd cent. B.C.?), where the month Panamos is known (IG VII 1720-22, 1724-25, 1727, Hellenistic), and the Adonia at Athens from the 5th century B.C. (L.Deubner, *Attische Feste* [Berlin 1956] 220-22), at Argos (Paus. 2.20.6), and at Alexandria (Theokr. 15; cf. P.Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria* [Oxford 1972] I.198). The festivals are not yet explicitly attested at Entella, but we may assume that they were celebrated there and gave their names to the months Panamos and Adonios.