

MARTIN FERGUSON SMITH

ΝΗΣΟΣ AT OINOANDA IN LYCIA – MISSPELLING OR GENUINE VARIANT?

aus: Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik 130 (2000) 127–130

© Dr. Rudolf Habelt GmbH, Bonn

ΝΗΣΟΣ ΑΤ ΟΙΝΟΑΝΔΑ ΙΝ ΛΥΚΙΑ – ΜΙΣΣΠΕΛΙΝΓ ΟΡ ΓΕΝΟΥΙΝΟ ΒΑΡΙΑΝΤ;¹

In a passage of his gigantic Greek inscription, carved on the wall of a stoa in his home-city in northern Lycia, the Epicurean philosopher Diogenes of Oinoanda, attacking the Stoic view that the world was made by the gods for their sakes or for ours, points to its defects as proof that it cannot be a divine creation (fr. 20.III.8–fr. 21).² One of his arguments is that the sea, as well as being unsafe and undrinkable, occupies an inordinate amount of space, “reducing the inhabited world to a peninsula”: *χερρόνησσον ποιοῦσα τὴν οἰκουμένην* (fr. 21.II.1–2).

When I first published frs. 20–21, soon after their discovery in 1974,³ I did not notice the second sigma in *χερρόνησσον*, being guilty of reading what I expected to be on the stone rather than what was actually there; and I did not pick up the double sigma in my edition of the inscription published in 1993.⁴ It was only when I was making a scale-drawing of fr. 21 for a companion-volume to my edition, containing illustrative material, that I observed the peculiarity.⁵ Believing that the stonemason had made a mistake, I printed *χερρόνησ{σ}ον*, though in a note I suggested, as a possible alternative, *χερρόνησ[σ]ον*, because the second sigma is rather faint (a circumstance which, in combination with the smallness and crampedness of the lettering, helps to explain, though it does not excuse, my earlier overlooking of it), and I thought that the stonemason might have attempted a correction.

However, I am now convinced that there is no stonemason’s error, corrected or uncorrected, here, for the same spelling occurs in two other Oinoandan inscriptions – one probably of similar date to that of Diogenes, the other executed several decades later. The exact date of Diogenes’ inscription is not known, but it is very probable that it was set up in or close to the reign of Hadrian.⁶

One of the inscriptions was first published by R. Heberdey and E. Kalinka⁷ and has been republished by R. Cagnat,⁸ by A. Hall and N. P. Milner,⁹ and by N. P. Milner and S. Mitchell.¹⁰ The inscription, carved on a semi-circular exedra for C. Iulius Demosthenes and his relatives, was a private one, set up in honour of Demosthenes by his cousin Moles II, grandson of Loubasis. Demosthenes, now famous from the 117-line festival-inscription discovered near Oinoanda by J. Borchhardt in 1967 and published by M. Wörrle in 1988,¹¹ had been procurator of Sicily under Trajan, and, in referring to this office, Moles’ inscription mentions not only Sicily, but also “the other islands included with it”: *τῶν*

¹ I am very grateful to Claude Brixhe and Nicholas P. Milner for reading drafts of this article and making valuable suggestions, to David S. Levene and Guy Vottéro for making computer-searches for occurrences of *νήσσοσ/νῶσσοσ*, and to Francesca Longo Auricchio for answering an inquiry about *PHerc.* 1007.

² Fragment-numbers are those of M. F. Smith, *Diogenes of Oinoanda: the Epicurean Inscription* (Napoli, 1993). In 1997 the passage immediately preceding fr. 20 was discovered (NF [New fragments] 126–127) – a passage which includes the first part of Diogenes’ argument against the Stoics (NF 126–127.VI.5–IX). NF 126–127, along with eight other fragments brought to light in 1997, have been published by me in *Anatolian Studies* 48 (1998) 125–170.

³ More New Fragments of Diogenes of Oinoanda, in J. Bollack and A. Laks (eds.), *Études sur l’épicurisme antique* (Lille, 1976) 279–318, at 284–295.

⁴ See n. 2 above.

⁵ *The Philosophical Inscription of Diogenes of Oinoanda*, *Denkschr. Akad. Wiss.* 251 (Wien, 1996) 81–82.

⁶ See *Diogenes of Oinoanda* (n. 2 above) 37–48.

⁷ *Bericht über zwei Reisen im südwestlichen Kleinasien*, *Denkschr. Akad. Wiss.* 45 (Wien, 1897) 47 no. 62.

⁸ *IGRR* III.487.

⁹ Education and Athletics: Documents Illustrating the Festivals of Oenoanda, in D. French (ed.), *Studies in the History and Topography of Lycia and Pisidia, in memoriam A. S. Hall* (London, 1994) 7–47, at 32 no. 21.

¹⁰ An Exedra for Demosthenes of Oenoanda and his Relatives, *Anatolian Studies* 45 (1995) 91–104, at 94–97 Inscr. 1.

¹¹ *Stadt und Fest im kaiserzeitlichen Kleinasien: Studien zu einer agonistischen Stiftung aus Oinoanda* (München, 1988).

ἄλλων τῶν Σι[κελί] συντελουσῶν νήσσω[v]. Milner and Mitchell regard νήσσω as an error, for they enclose the second σ within hooked brackets. Cagnat takes the same view, placing the letter inside angled brackets – the sign which he uses to indicate erroneously-inserted letters. Heberdey and Kalinka themselves have a bracketed “sic” after the word, thus signalling something unusual, but not necessarily something incorrect. Hall and Milner, who do the same, comment: “Note double sigma in νήσσω (cf. no. 15, Kroissos)”; and their note on Κροίσσου in their no. 15.7 reads: “Note double sigma in Kroissos, not repeated in nos 19 and 20 below”.¹² So they do not explicitly label νήσσω a misspelling, though they seem to imply that it is.

The other Oinoandan inscription in which νήσσοσ/-νησσοσ occurs is the famous genealogical text which occupied the eastern façade of the mausoleum built late in the second century A.D. by Licinnia Flavilla. This too mentions C. Iulius Demosthenes and his procuratorship of Sicily (II.52–60), and again the islands included with Sicily appear as τῶν συντελουσῶν νήσσω (II.59). Heberdey and Kalinka, the first editors, again gloss νήσσω “sic”,¹³ and Cagnat again brackets one of the sigmas.¹⁴ Admittedly the mausoleum-inscriptions do contain three dittographies: δευτέρου | {υ} Λικιννίου (III.25–26); ἱερα{τ}|τεύσα¹⁵ (III.32–33); [Λ]ό[ν]γου {Λόνγου} (III.63). But each case of the repetition of a single letter coincides with a line-division, where such errors are particularly common.¹⁶ Of course, if νήσσω were unparalleled, it would be natural to regard it as another mistake, but the occurrence of the double sigma in the three Oinoandan inscriptions, the only three in which there is mention of “island(s)” or “peninsula(s)”, strongly suggests that there is no mistake, and that the double-sigma spelling was acceptable, and indeed probably the accepted one, in Oinoanda in the second century A.D. In this connection, it is important to note that the three inscriptions are not a set commissioned by one individual and/or carved by one stonemason, but were carved for different people at different times by different masons. It is to be noted, too, that all three were, in general, carefully executed.

I was reinforced in my opinion that there is no mistake in the Oinoandan inscriptions, when further investigations revealed that their spelling is far from rare. At first I thought that it must be very uncommon, for, although Herodian, writing in the second half of the second century A.D., complains that “writers continue to misspell *nēssos* with a double sigma, like *thalassa* and *melissa*”,¹⁷ the spelling receives little or no mention in most of the standard works of reference: for example, there is no mention of it in the main volume of Liddell-Scott-Jones (9th ed.) or in the *Supplement* published in 1968, though the *Revised Supplement*, published in 1996, does record (s.v. νήσοσ) an occurrence of νᾶσσοσ. However, computer-searches have yielded over thirty occurrences in inscriptions and papyri (mainly in inscriptions) from many parts of the Greek world, and the spelling is not uncommon in codices.

The inscriptions which I have been able to check (the great majority), and which can be dated, range from the second century B.C. to the fifth century A.D. Some of the texts are prose, others verse. νήσοσ occurs in, for example, inscriptions from Eleusis (*IG* II² 3652.13), Piraeus (*IG* III 1397), Boeotia (*IG* VII 2249.2), Laconia (*IG* V.1 730.3), Delos (F. Durrbach and P. Roussel, *Inscriptions de Délos* 1892.7, 2364.8), Thasos (*IG* XII Suppl. 438.5), Syros (*IG* XII.5 660.15,18). Lepisia (*Arch. Ephemeris* ser. 2 1 (1862) col. 265–266 no. 238β.2), Cos (W. Paton and E. L. Hicks, *The Inscriptions of Cos* 418.1),

¹² Hall and Milner (n. 9 above) 22.

¹³ *Bericht* (n. 7 above) 44.

¹⁴ *IGRR* III.500 p. 189. On this occasion Cagnat brackets the first sigma.

¹⁵ One marks the first tau, not the second one, erroneous, because the retention of the first one would violate a rule of syllable-division.

¹⁶ The only certain examples of dittography in the inscription of Diogenes of Oinoanda occur at line-divisions (fr. 13.II.8, 73.I.6, 7), though there is probably a mid-line dittography in fr. 20.III.1.

¹⁷ Herodian, *Περὶ τῶν ζητουμένων κατὰ πάσης κλίσεως ὀνόματος*, in J. A. Cramer (ed.), *Anecdota Graeca e codd. manuscriptis Bibl. Oxon.* III (Oxford, 1836) 249.30–250.1: ἔτι ἀμαρτάνουσιν οἱ γράφοντες νήσοσ διὰ δύο σσ, ὡς θάλασσα καὶ μέλισσα.

Gortyn in Crete (M. Guarducci, *Inscriptiones Creticae* IV 325.5), Cyzicus (*Ath. Mitt.* 5 [1880] 390 no. 2.4), Smyrna (*IGSK* 23 536.7), Halicarnassus (*Annuario della r. scuola arch. di Atene* 4–5 [1921–1922] 468 no. 9.10), Rough Cilicia (G. E. Bean and T. B. Mitford, *Journeys in Rough Cilicia* 49.21), and Phrygia (*SEG* 6 119.6). νᾶσσοϛ is found in several inscriptions from Rhodes (*Tit. Cam.* 72.6, 78c.3, 78.4 = *IG* XII.1 701.4; *Clara Rhodos* II 18.18). From Smyrna we have Προκοοννήσσιος (*IGSK* 23 238b.2–3), from the Rhodian Peraea and the north coast of the Black Sea Χερρόνησσοϛ/Χερσόνησσοϛ/Χερσόνασσοϛ (*IGSK* 38 161.1, 507.4, 508.6; B. Latyshev, *IAOSPE* I 22.2), and from Rhodes and Chersonesus Taurica χερσονασσο(ε)ίτης (C. Blinkenberg, *Lindos* II 384b.6; E. I. Solomonik, *NEPCh* I 5.2).

As for papyri, νῆσσοϛ occurs in a text from Herculaneum (*PHerc.* 1007) – Philodemus *Rhet.* I 179.17 Sudhaus, in a quotation of Homer *Od.* 10.195.¹⁸ It occurs also in a first-century A.D. document from Egypt (*SB* I 5252.11). It may occur in two other texts (*PLond.* VII 2082.4, *CPR* XV 51.1.12), but in each case there is uncertainty because of a lacuna.

Occurrences of the double-sigma spelling in codices have been conveniently listed by Crönert.¹⁹ In most cases the editors of the relevant texts have adopted the orthodox spelling, though in the verse-quotation in Athenaeus 15 695b νήσσοιϛ, the reading of A, is adopted by Kaibel. Crönert's list is lengthy, but not complete. One omission is Aratus *Phaen.* 982, where the manuscripts have νησσαῖοι ὄρνιθεϛ (“island-birds”), though in this case the second sigma may well have come in under the influence of νῆσσοι οἰκουροί (“domestic ducks”) twelve lines above (970).

Not only the not-uncommon incidence and wide geographical distribution of the double-sigma spelling, but also and above all its occurrence in “good-quality” documents such as the papyrus from Herculaneum and the three inscriptions from Oinoanda, strongly suggest that it is usually (the occurrence in Aratus is a rare exception) to be regarded not as an inadvertent misspelling, but as a deliberately-chosen variant,²⁰ which at certain times and places – for example, in the second century A.D. at Oinoanda – seems to have been considered the normal form.

When and how did the form originate? One thing which one can say with confidence is that it is not ancient: it does not appear to predate the second century B.C. Now, in documents written in the Koinē it is not uncommon to find either the reduction of double consonants to a single one or the doubling of a single consonant,²¹ and the doubling of sigma is particularly common. However, it is unlikely that the spelling νῆσσοϛ/νᾶσσοϛ is in any way connected with this geminating tendency: its occurrence in what I have called good-quality documents – documents which maintain a good standard of spelling and contain no other doublings of single sigmas – suggests that we should look for another explanation.

The explanation, kindly communicated by him in a letter of 5 September 1999, is provided by Claude Brixhe. Pointing out that “la forme semble liée au registre supérieur de la langue (textes poétiques, documents publics . . .)”, he thinks that “νῆσσοϛ/νᾶσσοϛ pourrait bien être une hyper-correction ‘chic’, tardive, inspirée par la langue poétique . . ., née d’une analogie: on aurait créé νῆσσοϛ à côté de νῆσοϛ sur le modèle d’un couple tel que τόσσοϛ (langue écrite poétique de l’époque) / τόσοϛ (langue écrite courante), la forme courante νῆσοϛ apparaissant dès lors comme la forme ‘basse’ et νῆσσοϛ comme la ‘haute’”. Thus in the Rough-Cilicia inscription cited above (Bean – Mitford 49), an inscription written in elegiac couplets, we have νῆσσον (21) alongside στῆθεσσι (9), ἀγασσάμενοϛ

¹⁸ Quotations of Homer in Philodemus are listed and discussed by T. Dorandi, L’Omero di Filodemo, *CronErc* 8 (1978) 38–51. The quotation of *Od.* 10.195 is mentioned (p. 49), without discussion, under “Versi senza varianti”, so that it seems that Dorandi did not notice νῆσσον for νῆσον.

¹⁹ W. Crönert, *Memoria Graeca Herculaneensis* (Leipzig, 1903; repr. Hildesheim, 1963) 93–94 n. 3.

²⁰ Cf. Crönert (n. 19 above) 93. He calls the spelling “certam potius consuetudinem quam vitium temere commissum”.

²¹ See e.g. E. Mayser, *Grammatik der griechischen Papyri aus der Ptolemäerzeit* I.1, 2nd ed. revised by H. Schmoll (Berlin, 1970) 186–194; F. T. Gignac, *A Grammar of the Greek Papyri of the Roman and Byzantine Periods I: Phonology* (Milano, 1976) 154–165; and, with particular reference to the situation in Asia Minor, C. Brixhe, *Essai sur le grec anatolien au début de notre ère* (Nancy, 1987²) 31–33.

(10), ἄνυσσα (17), and τόσσον (22) – a list in which νῆσσον is the odd one out, both in that it alone is not found in early Greek poetry and in that its double sigma makes no metrical difference.²²

It must be conceded that, if the double-sigma spelling of νῆσος was a hypercorrection, it was originally a misspelling and so, in that sense, a “mistake”, even if it was deliberately rather than accidentally introduced. But, however it was introduced, it is clear that many people – well-educated people too – came to use it consciously as an elegant and/or poetical variant, and, as I have suggested, in some places at some times it may well have become the dominant form. Herodian’s complaint that νῆσσοζ is a misspelling of νῆσος probably has little more validity than a complaint from a writer on modern-English usage that “focussed” is a misspelling of “focused”.

I conclude by returning to the geographical area where I began. It would be interesting to know whether νῆσσοζ was the regular spelling throughout Lycia and Pisidia in the second century A.D., but, so far as I can find, there is no occurrence of νῆσος or νῆσσοζ in the Lycian fascicles of *Tituli Asiae Minoris* (II.1–3) or in the Termessus fascicle (III.1); nor have I found the word in any other Lycian or Pisidian inscription, though the search which I have made has not been exhaustive. I guess that Oinoanda was not unique, in this area at this time, in favouring the double sigma.

Isle of Foula, Shetland Islands

Martin Ferguson Smith

²² At an early stage of my inquiry I wondered whether the introduction and continued use of νῆσσοζ/νᾶσσοζ might not have been partly influenced by the very common occurrence of the -ssos termination in place-names. Such names, which are pre-Greek, are found in many parts of the Greek world. Well-known examples are Parnassos and Halikarnassos. The conjecture seemed rather attractive in the case of Oinoanda, which was the starting-point of my investigation, for -ssos is a very common termination in place-names in its locality: the city was founded by colonists from Termessos in Pisidia; places in Lycia with the termination include Akalissos, Artymnessos, Idebessos, Karmylessos, and Telmessos; and the names of at least four places in Oinoanda’s own territory had the same termination – Arissos, Elbessos, Nigrassos, and Ornessos. I still think it possible that the preference for νῆσσοζ/νᾶσσοζ may sometimes have owed something to the existence of so many toponyms ending in -ssos.