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THE GREEK CURSE TABLETS OF EMPORION

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THE GREEK CURSE TABLETS OF EMPORION*

Around the beginning of the sixth century Massalia, perhaps in partnership with her own mother city Phokaia, founded, in the northwest corner of the Mediterranean, Emporion, a trading post as its name implies. Inscriptions from Phokaia are very few, with the result that we depend chiefly on texts from her colonies for evidence for her cults and dialect. As L. Robert has brilliantly shown, these colonial texts also tell us much about traditional Phokaian onomastics¹. Two inscriptions that he discussed are those of the lead curse tablets excavated from Hellenistic débris in the necropolis of Emporion and published by M. Almagro Basch with several inaccuracies². In January 1997, I had the opportunity to examine these inscriptions in the museum of Empúries; here I present new tracings and transcriptions of the texts, as well as some notes.

I

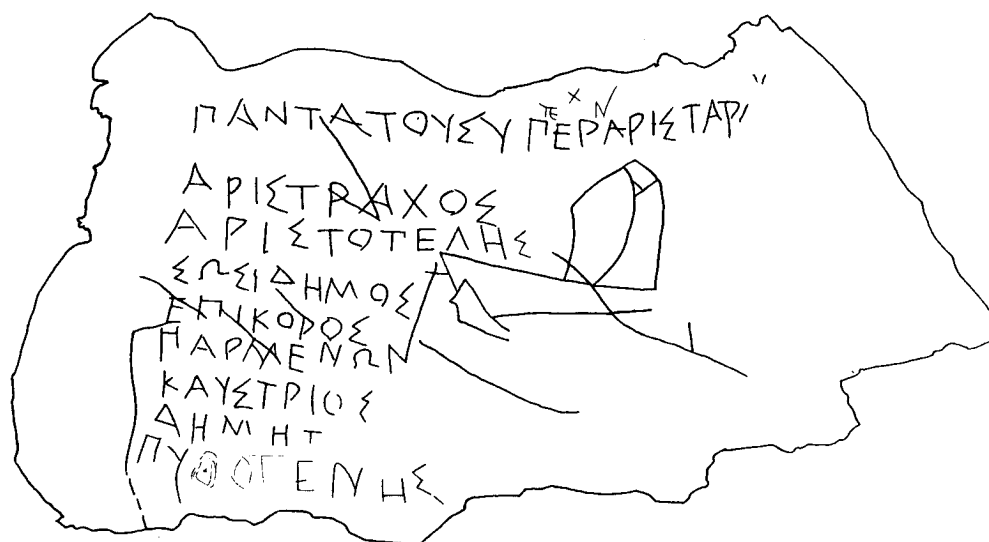


Fig. 1 (1:1.5)

The tablet (Almagro's no. 19) was folded twice toward the reader, along horizontal axes, first between lines 1 and 2, then between lines 5 and 6. The surface was marked with several lines apparently making no clear shape. The text consists of a list of names headed by that of Aristarchos and, above them, a generalizing phrase πάντας τοὺς ὑπὲρ Ἀριστάρχου. Because such generalizing phrases regularly follow rather than precede the names, David Jordan has suggested to me (per epistt.) that the scribe, on completing the list, noticed that there was no room and, therefore, wrote the last line on the top of the tablet; hence my numbering as I give it below. For the absence of the expected καί cf. e.g. Audollent,

* My thanks to Aurora Martín and her staff for facilitating my work in Empúries and to David R. Jordan for his suggestions.

¹ L. Robert, "Noms de personnes et civilisation grecque", *JSav* 1968, 197–213 (= *OMS* VII 141–157). Cf. also O. Masson, "Le curieux nom d'un Marseillais chez Aristote: Hermokaïkoxanthos", *JSav* 1985, 17–23 (= *OGS* 475–481).

² M. Almagro, "Dos plomos de Ampurias con inscripciones griegas", *Memorias de los Museos Arqueológicos Provinciales* 9–10 (1948–49) 287–289 and *Las inscripciones ampuritanas griegas, ibéricas y latinas* (Barcelona 1952) 19–20; cf. D. R. Jordan, *GRBS* 26 (1985) 183–184, nn. 133 and 135. The necropolis yielded a third inscribed tablet, which Almagro (n. 21) considered a *defixio*, but it is rather a private letter: J. and L. Robert, *BÉp.* 1955, 282.

Def. Tab. 61. Over line 9 there are traces of four smaller letters (TE X N), whose presence is difficult to interpret. Did the scribe write the generalizing phrase in some other form and then have second thoughts?

Empúries
Archaeological Museum (inv. 2618).

H. 10.7, W. 19.5 cm.

IV–III^a

- 9 πάντα(ς) τοὺς ὑπὲρ Ἀριστάρχ[ου].
vacat
1 Ἀρίστραχος,
2 Ἀριστοτέλης,
3 Σωσίδημος,
4 Ἐπίκορος,
5 Παρμένων,
6 Καύστριος,
7 Δημήτ[ριος].
8 Πυθογένης,

1: read Ἀρίστραχος (cf. Φύρνιχος for Φύρνιχος in IG III 3, 89). 3: Σωζίδημος Almagro, corr. J. and L. Robert *BÉp.* 1955, 282. 7: Δημήτ[ριος] Almagro 1948–49; Δημήτριο[ς] idem 1952 (in his tracings the name is complete). 8: Πυ[. .]νης Almagro. 9: πάντα Almagro; πάντα(ς) J. and L. Robert, *BÉp.* 1955, 282.

II



Fig. 2 (1:1)

The tablet (Almagro's no. 20) was folded twice towards the reader, first along a vertical axis and then along an horizontal axis in the area of line 6. The vertical fold rather obscures the last letters of Σωσίπατρος (4) and of Τιντίνων (1). After the text was written several straight lines were traced: two lines mark the top and left margins of the text; one cuts almost diagonally across the tablet from the top left corner to the lower right corner. In the lower right quadrant there is one line cutting the diagonal line perpendicularly. Unlike that of tablet I, the lettering has a tendency towards the cursive.

Empúries
Archaeological Museum (inv. 2668).

H. 7.4, W. 7.5 cm.

III^a or later

- 1 Τιντίνων,
- 2 Ποσιδωνᾶς,
- 3 Ἐ'όρτων,
- 4 Σωσίπατρος,
- 5 Ἐρμοκάϊκος,
- 6 Παρμένων.

1: Τιντιναξ Almagro. 2: read Ποσειδωνᾶς. 3: Ωρτων Almagro (Ωρδων in the *editio princeps*, misprint); the initial E is a later addition. 4: Σωσίπατρο(ς) Almagro.

The principal foe among the persons cursed in tablet I is Aristarchos; he heads the text and he also appears in the generalizing final phrase. The name is banal, but it is also the name of the Phokaian magistrate in the monetary agreement between Mytilene and Phokaia (IG XII 2, 1, IV^a), and it appears again on a coin presumably from Phokaia³. Ἀριστάρχη, we may note, is the name of the woman appointed by the Ephesian Artemis to lead the Phokaian settlers to Massalia and to establish the cult of Artemis in this city (Str. 4.1.4). The name Παρμένων occurs on both tablets (I 5 and II 6), but it is unlikely that it alludes to the same man. In fact, the writing of II may point to a later date than that of I, and, more important, the name Παρμένων was, no doubt, quite frequent in Phokaian milieu: J. Coupry and M. Giffault have collected ten examples from the Massaliote colony of Olbia (along with a Πάρμνων and a Παρμενίκα)⁴. The Phokaian and Ionic character of the onomastics is indeed evident throughout the texts.

The most interesting names of these two tablets are Καύστριος (I 6) and Ἐρμοκάϊκος (II 5), the latter remarked on several times by L. Robert (*op. cit.* 212–213; *BÉp.* 1955, 282; 1965, 507). Ἐρμοκάϊκος is formed from the names of the Lydian river Hermos (which empties into the sea south of Phokaia) and the Aiolian Καϊκος. It may be compared with the Massaliote names Ἐρμοκάϊκόξανθος (Arist. *Po.* § 21) and *Xanthermus* (CIL XIII 4487), which include the name of a third river, the Ξάνθος, probably that in the territory of Kyme, north-east of Phokaia (O. Masson *op. cit.*). Καύστριος (I 6), which is well documented in Ionia, has been considered a derivative in -ιος of the river name Κάυστρος (F. Bechtel, *HPN* 539), but it can also be the Homeric and Herodotean name of this river used as a personal name (cf. the personal names Ἐρμος, Κάϊκος, Σκάμανδρος, etc.). Both Καύστριος and Ἐρμοκάϊκος, in any case, show the persistence of Ionic onomastics in Emporion (L. Robert *op. cit.* 213).

The names Πυθογένης (I 8) and Ποσιδωνᾶς (II 2) are much less characteristic, but they have, nevertheless, a Ionic flavor. Theophoric names of Poseidon are, in fact, quite frequent in the western colonies of Phokaia⁵. Although the documentation for a cult of Poseidon in Phokaia is slight⁶, the onomastics of the colonies point to its importance, which may be due to the fact that, at the federal festival of the Πανιώνια, Poseidon Helikonios was worshipped by all the Ionians. Theophoric names

³ R. Münsterberg, *Die Beamtennamen auf den griechischen Münzen* (Hildesheim–New York) 100.

⁴ J. Coupry – M. Giffault, “La clientèle d’un sanctuaire d’Aristée aux îles d’Hyère (Ier siècle avant J.C.)”, *PP* 37 (1982) 360–370, 367.

⁵ Ποσειδερμος (I.Lindos 184 [Massalia II^a]; SEG 34, 954 [Massalia III–II^a]; Coupry–Giffault, *op.cit.* 367 [two examples, Olbia II–I^a]); Ποσειδωνᾶξ (J. Baillet, *Inscr. gr. et lat. des tombeaux des Rois ou Syringes à Thèbes*, Le Caire 1920–23, n. 1936 [Massalia hell.]; Coupry–Giffault, *op.cit.* 367 [four examples, Olbia II–I^a]); Πόσις (L. Dubois, *Inscr. gr. dial. de Grande Grèce*, Genève 1995, 66 [Elea hell.?]); Ποσ[-], Ποσει[-], Ποσειδων[-] (Coupry–Giffault, *op.cit.* 367 [Olbia II–I^a]). Almagro considered the ending of Ποσιδωνᾶς Doric, but it is rather Ionic: see e.g. O. Masson, *ZPE* 64 (1986) 177 (= *OGS* 501).

⁶ F. Graf, *Nordionische Kulte: Religionsgeschichtliche und epigraphische Untersuchungen zu den Kulturen von Chios, Erythrai, Klazomenai und Phokaia* (Rome 1985) 409.

also attest to the popularity of Apollon in Phokaia and her colonies. Thanks to onomastics we do, in fact, know of a cult of Apollon Oulios in these cities⁷, but the most frequent theophorics here are those alluding to Apollon Pythios, as does our Πυθογένης⁸. Curiously, in none of these cities do we know of theophoric names of Apollon Delphinios (such as Δελφίνιος and Δελφινῶς), although this cult is documented for Massalia (Str. 4.1.4).

In II 3 the scribe wrote OPTΩN and then added a small E at the beginning of the line. A name Ὀρτων may be related to the Ionic form ὀρτή (for ἔορτή), documented in Anakreon, Herodotos and Ionic inscriptions⁹. This form with hyphaeresis is indeed found in proper names, as we see in Ὀρτιος for Ἐόρτιος on Samos: G. Dunst, *AM* 87 (1972) 113 (VI^a?). Similar names are occasionally found in imperial times. An inscription from Aphrodisias (IIP) has preserved the name Ὀρτάσιος for Ἐορτάσιος¹⁰, and a bishop *Ortasius* from Sardis (c. 360P) is mentioned in two passages of the *Historia Tripartita* of Cassiodorus-Epiphanius (5.36 and 7.25), which are the Latin translations of texts of Sozomenos and Socrates¹¹. Now the small letter added at the beginning of the line shows that at a first moment our scribe indeed wrote the Ionic form Ὀρτων, and that later he corrected this local form by adding an initial E in order to have the κοινή-form Ἐόρτων. It seems that, in the period when these texts were written, the Ionic traditions (Ἐρμοκᾶϊκος, Κάϋστριος) and cults (Ποσιδωνῶς, Πυθογένης) were better preserved than the dialect, which was being displaced by the κοινή.

I do not know of other examples of Ἐόρτων in Greek texts, but there is a possible example in a Latin inscription from Rome, CIL VI 17361, where L. Vidman, *GLO* 6 (1973) 141, interpreted the name *Euortoni* as a variant of *Heortoni*, the dative of *Heorto* (Ἐόρτων). Vidman could not adduce convincing parallels, but in support of his interpretation we may cite the form *Euortius* for *Heortius* (Ἐόρτιος), the name of the saint of 7 September in the earliest testimonia: P. Maas, *JThSt* 7 (1946) 205–206 (= *Kleine Schriften* 673–674). As Maas saw, these variants could be due to the apparent analogy of the numerous names in *Eu-* (*Euagrius*, *Euodius*, etc.).

The name Ἐπίκορος of I 4 is striking. Since F. Solmsen, *KZ* 30 (1890) 600–601, it is generally accepted that ἐπίκουρος is not derived from *ἐπί-κορφος, as one might think at a first moment, but from *ἐπί-κορσος, meaning “one who runs to help” (cf. H. Frisk’s and P. Chantraine’s dictionaries s.v.). Since a development *κορσ- > κορ- has no parallels in Greek, the form Ἐπίκορος must be explained either as a result of the fluctuation in the spelling of /ρ/ (cf. e. g. τούς) or as an artificial variant of Ἐπίκουρος (whatever its etymology) inspired by pairs such as Διόσκουροι – Διόσκοροι or ξεῖνος – ξένος: conceivably, the form Ἐπίκουρος was considered dialectal, and it was replaced by Ἐπίκορος, a form which does not seem Ionic (cf. the correction of Ὀρτων to Ἐόρτων). In this case, our Ἐπίκορος could point to an originary form *ἐπί-κορφος rather than *ἐπί-κορσος (the form ἐπίκουρος would be a Ionic form adopted by the rest of the dialects).

The only non-Greek name on these tablets is Τιντίων (II 1), which is clearly related to the gentilicium *Tintinius*, well documented e.g. in the Venetic region, but also known in Gaul (CIL XIII 10001.439 and 10010.1910)¹². The suffix -ων is found also in the Celtic names Κομέντων and Τρέκκων in the

⁷ O. Masson, “Le culte ionien d’Apollon Oulios d’après des données onomastiques nouvelles”, *JSav* 1988, 173–81.

⁸ Πυθαγόρης (Almagro, *op.cit.* 21 [Emporion V^a]; SEG 34, 954 [Massalia III–II^a]); Πυθάρρατος (IG XI 4, 652 [Phokaia 240–230^a]); Πυθέας (Robert, *op.cit.* 199 [Phokaia hell.]; *RE* XLVII [1963] 314–66 [Massalia IV^a]); Πύθερμος (Hdt. 1.152 [Phokaia V^a]); Πύθης or -ος (Münsterberg, *op.cit.* 100 [Phokaia]); Πυθηίς (IG II² 2559 [Lampsakos hell.]); Πυθίας (SIG³ 585.10–11 [Massalia 196–5^a]); Πύθις (Münsterberg, *op.cit.* 100 [Phokaia III^a]; Coupry–Giffault, *op.cit.* 368 [Olbia II–I^a]); Πυθογένης (I.Ilion 107.12 [Lampsakos I^a]); Πυθόδωρος (Plb. 18.52 [Lampsakos 196^a]); Πυθοκλής or Πύθης (*RE* XLVII [1963] 600 [Lampsakos VI^a]); Πυθόκριτος (P. Ghiron-Bistagne, *Études Massaliètes* 3, 1992, 151–154 [Massalia I–III]); Πυθῶναξ (I.Lampsakos 2.4 [two examples, Lampsakos hell.]; IG VII 293 [Lampsakos III^a]; Coupry–Giffault, *op.cit.* 368 [three examples Olbia II–I^a]); Πυθα(-) (Coupry–Giffault, *op.cit.* 368 [Olbia II–I^a])

⁹ A. Thumb – A. Scherer, *Handbuch der griechischen Dialekte* II (Heidelberg 1959) 250.

¹⁰ J. Reynolds – R. Tannenbaum, *Jews and God-Fearers at Aphrodisias* (Cambridge 1987) B 2 and 49.

¹¹ Our Greek texts of Sozomenos (4.24.3 and 11) and Socrates (4.12) give the name as Ἐορτάσιος. The occurrence of Ὀρτάσιος in Aphrodisias may indicate that the Latin version of Epiphanius, as in other cases, has preserved the original form, and that the name found in Socrates and Sozomenos is the result of a correction.

¹² W. Schulze, *Zur Geschichte lateinischer Eigennamen* (Göttingen 1904) 209, 243.

sanctuary of Aristeus at Olbia¹³, and in the Italic (?) name Στρίντων on a Greek inscription from Lucania (SEG 34, 1019, VI^a). In these cases it seems that the suffix -ων has been used to hellenize non-Greek names.

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¹³ J. Coupry – M. Giffault, “Onomastique non hellénique dans l’anthroponymie Olbienne et Massaliète, en Ligurie Marseillaise, à la fin de l’époque hellénistique d’après les exvoto du sanctuaire d’Aristée à l’Acapte”, *Hommages L. Lerat* (Besançon 1984) 212 and 215.