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A NOTE ON THE MEANING OF THE TERM ΜΟΝΟΚΤΙΣΤ(ΗΣ)*

In December 2000 a Jordanian team working in Rihab, a small village located some 50 km north of Amman, uncovered the remains of a Christian oratory. Among the most prominent of the remains of this building was a large mosaic pavement. Atop the rectangular mosaic and encased within its eastern border could be found a brief dedicatory inscription written in Greek that marked the completion of the building. While the inscription was subsequently published as *SEG* 51 2045, this edition contained a number of uncertainties and errors owing to the fact that the inscription was transcribed incorrectly in a number of places in the initial archaeological report.¹ Consequently, in an attempt to improve the reading of the inscription Denis Feissel and Pierre-Louis Gatier have recently suggested a number of modifications to the inscription.² Based on these improvements the inscription ought to be read as follows:

ἐν ὀ(νό)μ(ατι) τῆς ἀγ(ίας) τριάδος
ἐκ προσφ(ορᾶς) Θωμᾶ Γαιανοῦ
μονοκτίστ(ου) ἐτελιώθη {θη} τὸ
εὐκτέρ(ιον) τοῦ ἀγ(ίου) Γεωργίου ἐν
5 μη(νὶ) Ἀπελλέῳ χρ(όνων) ἢ ἰνδι(κτιῶνος) ὑκδ̄ ἔτ(ους)
σπουδῆ Σεργίου παραμ(οναρίου)

While Feissel and Gatier both felt that the likely reading at the beginning of *l.* 3 was *μονοκτίστ(ου)*, the genitive of *μονοκτίστης*, they expressed some doubt concerning this reading since it appeared to constitute a *hapax legomenon* whose meaning was not discernible.³ As they noted, “Le dédicant, Thomas fils de Gaianos (mal lu Thomas ‘higoumène’), est qualifié, semble-t-il, de *μονοκτίστ(ης) ?* hapax de sens douteux.”⁴ Yet, notwithstanding the doubts expressed by Feissel and Gatier the context of the inscription suggests that *μονοκτίστης* is not only the correct reading but must also have the meaning of “sole founder”. There are a number of Greek verbs, nouns and adjectives composed with the prefix *μονο-* that mean “to do (the action of the implied verb) alone” or “without assistance”. Accordingly, the meaning of *μονοκτίστης* must be something like “sole founder” since the masculine noun *κτίστης* means a “founder” or even a “builder”.⁵ Therefore, the addition of this otherwise unattested epithet to the name of the donor simply told those who read the inscription that he was not one of several benefactors of the oratory of St. George but the person who had financed the entire building on his own.

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¹ Abdel-kader Al-Hissan, *The New Archaeological Discoveries of the al-Fudayn and Rahāb – al-Mafraq Excavation Projects, 1991–2001*, *ADAJ* 46 (2002): 88. Owing to errors of transcription Al-Hissan subsequently argued that the oratory could be objectively dated to the year A.D. 230 and therefore constituted the oldest extant Christian building. Samer Abu-Ghazalah and Abdel-kader Al-Hissan, *Discovery of the Oldest Church of the World*, *ASR* 45 (2002): 295–98. This erroneous argument has been refuted in Lincoln Blumell and Jenn Cianca, *The Oratory of St. George in Rihab: The Oldest Extant Christian Building or Just Another Byzantine Church?*, *Biblical Archaeology Review Online Archives* (<http://www.Bib-Arch.Org/online-Exclusives/oldest-Church.Pdf>) (2008).

² *REG* 118 (2005) 564–65.

³ In the initial transcription contained in the published archaeological report Al-Hissan transcribed the beginning of *l.* 3 as *μονοκτεστε* . . . In *SEG* the beginning of the line was rendered *ὑδοκτιστ* . . .

⁴ *REG* 118 (2005) 565.

⁵ See LSJ s.v. *κτίστης*. Within the context of the inscription the translation “sole founder” should be preferred to “sole builder” since it is unlikely to suppose that the church would have actually been built by a single individual.

HERACLES ON OETA (TRGF ADESP. 653 KN.–SN.): TWO SUPPLEMENTS¹

P.Oxy. 2454 (= *TrGF Adesp.* 653 Kn.–Sn.) consists of the fragmentary remains of two columns, the first containing the line-ends of thirty iambic trimeters, the second the beginnings of another thirty. They belong to a tragedy about the last moments of Heracles’ life composed, according to most scholars,² in post-classical, rather than in classical,³ times. In this fragment the hero first recalls the great rivals he has defeated (lines 1–32), and then, after a two-line interruption by another character or by the chorus (ll. 33f.), he complains of the harassment of Hera and laments that it is a woman who has killed him (ll. 35–60). In order to understand this last section better I shall propose two supplements based on comparison of this fragment with the two extant tragic versions of the same episode, namely Sophocles’ *Women of Trachis* and the *Hercules Oetaeus* attributed to Seneca.⁴

1. In the second section of Heracles’ speech (ll. 35–60) the goddess Hera appears four times, maybe in line 43 (δ.β..καθηρα.) and certainly in lines 40 (τεύξη τιν’ Ἡρα .[]), 50 (Ἡρα με πλεῖον χάρμ[ι])⁵ and 57 (Ἡρα ζῆλο[ι]).⁶ In the last instance Heracles laments that his death has been caused by his wife Deianeira, “a woman who (*the verb is missing*) Hera’s jealousy” (γυνὴ τὸν Ἡρα ζῆλο[ι]).⁷ Once more we find the connection between Hera’s harassment of Heracles and Deianeira’s plot, which we know especially from the *Hercules Oetaeus*, where the already defeated hero declares that if destiny had sanctioned his death at the hands of a woman, he would have preferred to fall to “Juno’s jealousy”, and invites the goddess

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² The post-classical dating has been favoured by E. G. Turner (ed.), Anon(ymous), *Heracles on Oeta, The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, vol. 27 (London 1962) 29; H. Lloyd-Jones, review of *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, vol. 27, in *Gnomon* 35 (1963) 439; R. Kannicht – B. Snell (edd.), *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*, vol. 2 (Göttingen 1981) 226; G. Xanthakis-Karamanos, *Studies in Fourth-Century Tragedy* (Athens 1980) 179. The arguments in favour of this dating and against the authorship of Aeschylus are collected in J. L. López Cruces, P.Oxy. 2454 (= *TrGF adesp.* 653): *cuestiones de datación, género y autoría, Myrtia* 19 (2004) 5–22 (pp. 8–11).

³ L. Colombi, P.Oxy. XXVII (1962) Nr. 2454, *Dioniso* 38 (1964) 12–22, assigned the fragment to the *Prometheus unbound* of Aeschylus, and Q. Cataudella, *Il papiro Ossirinichita 2454 e gli Eraclidi di Eschilo, REG* 79 (1966) 38–63, to his *Heraclidae* because of the coincidences of the fragment with the final section of the *Hercules Oetaeus* (1337ff.), in which the author diverges from Sophocles’ *Women of Trachis*. Nonetheless, such coincidences do not support Aeschylus’ authorship, as A. Lesky pointed out in *AAHG* 20 (1967) 106; see also Kannicht–Snell (n. 2) 226; Chr. Walde, *Hercules Labor. Studien zum pseudosenecanischen Hercules Oetaeus* (Frankfurt am Main–Bern–New York–Paris 1992) 7 n. 7; S. Marcucci, *Analisi e interpretazione dell’Hercules Oetaeus* (Pisa–Roma 1990) 9–10, 66–7.

⁴ Parallels between this tragedy (the attribution of which to Seneca is rejected by many scholars) and the papyrus fragment have been collected by Cataudella (n. 3) 46–7, 52–4, and by L. Alfonsi, *Sul fr. tragico POxy 2454 (POxy vol. XXVII) e su possibili echi in autori latini, Aegyptus* 46 (1966) 3–12 (pp. 6–9). The comparison with the *Hercules Oetaeus* has proved useful for *PFayoum* 2, maybe part of Aeschylus’ *Heraclidae* (= fr. **73b Radt), which was completed by Nisbet (presumably R. G. M.) as οἰδοῦν]τα καὶ λοπῶντα φαρμάκου μένει (l. 5) from the description that Hercules gives of the effects of the poison in his body in *H.O.* 1219–24: *urit medullas . . . tumidi uigor pulmonis arentes fibras distendit, ardet felle siccato iecur . . . primam cutem consumpsit*; see Nisbet in H. Lloyd-Jones’ “Appendix” to H. Weir Smyth (ed.), *Aeschylus*, vol. 2 (Cambridge, Mass.–London 1957) 589; also Cataudella (n. 3) 51.

⁵ Ἡρα με πλεῖον χάρμ[ι] ἐποίησ’ ἐλπίδος *ex. gr.* Cataudella (n. 3) 55, cf. Sen. *H.O.* 1675–7 *Iuno cur laetum diem / te flente (i.e. Alcmene) ducat? paelicis gaudet suae / spectare lacrimas*. Taking into account that in tragedy Heracles often laments dying without glory and being laughed at by his enemies, as later in line 56 (γυνὴ καθέϊλε δυσκλίεστατοι μὲροι, suppl. Lloyd-Jones) and also in Eur. *HF* 284–6 (ἡμᾶς δ’, ἐπειδὴ δεῖ θανεῖν, θνήσκκειν χρεῶν / μὴ πυρὶ καταξανθέντα, ἐχθροῖσιν γέλων / διδόντα) and 1383 (ἐχθροῖς ἐμαυτὸν ὑποβαλὼν αἰσχροῦς θάνα), I would propose *ex. gr.* Ἡρα με πλεῖον χάρμ[α γ’ ἐχθροῖσιν ποεῖ] (or, as Williams now suggests, *χάρμ[α τοῖς ἐχθροῖς ποεῖ]*, that is, “Hera is turning me into a greater source of joy for my enemies”).

⁶ See Cataudella (n. 3) 54–5.

⁷ Cataudella (n. 3) 56, suggested completing the line this way: γυνὴ τὸν (= *quem*) Ἡρα ζῆλο[ι] οὐκ ἐδάμνατο, but the majority of editors (E. G. Turner, H. Lloyd-Jones, R. Kannicht – B. Snell) have (rightly) interpreted τὸν Ἡρα ζῆλο[ι]ν as a syntactical unit.