

GLEN W. BOWERSOCK

A NEW FUNERARY EPIGRAM FROM LAODICEA AD LYCUM

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A NEW FUNERARY EPIGRAM FROM LAODICEA AD LYCUM

For Alan Cameron¹

In view of a hitherto unreported squeeze available to me I discuss here a relatively new but difficult metrical inscription. It is an undated funerary epigram from Laodicea on the Lycus River in Asia Minor. In the 1990s Thomas Corsten copied the inscription in Turkey and first published a provisional text and photograph of it in *Arkeoloji Dergisi* 3 (1995), 217–218, no. 2, with plate 55 (image 3). It was republished by R. Merkelbach and J. Stauber in *Steinepigramme aus dem griechischen Osten* vol. 1 (1998), p. 272, no. 02/12/11 as now at Hierapolis (Pamukkale) in the collection of the Denizli Museum. The *Fundort* is given as *unbekannt*. Corsten's text was reprinted as *SEG* 45. 1754, with a suggestion for a new reading at the end of the last line (more below). I would guess from the letter forms that the stone was cut in the late Hellenistic or early imperial periods, but certainty is impossible.

The inscription appears as follows in Merkelbach–Stauber:

Πανδαμάτωρ φιλόκαινε [
τίπτε με ένδεχέτη παιδί[ον ?
Ζώσιμον ούνομ· Ἄτα τὸν έν έκκλ.[
4 εἰς Αἴδαυ έρατὸν κοῦρον [e.g. ένοσφίσατο]
ἤλπίζον δ' έπ' έμοἰ γονέες ύμέναι[ον άείσαι]
οὐκ έπ' έμοἰς θρήνοις τύμβον άνοικ[οδομεῖν.]
χαίροις, ὦ παροδίτα, καὶ άν τιν' έπὼν πα[ραμείψαις]
8 εἰς μέγα πλούτου ίκοις γήρας .E[.]EY[

Mordliebender Allesbezwinger - - - wie konntest du mich 11jährigen Knaben - - - namens Zosimos. Das Verderben hat den - - - lieblichen Jungen in den Hades geführt. Meine Eltern hofften darauf, mir den Hochzeitsgesang zu singen, nicht zum Wehklagen über mich ein Grab zu erbauen. Wanderer sei begrüsst, und wenn du mir mit einem freundlichen Wort antwortest, mögest du zu grossem Reichtum gelangen und hohes Alter erreichen.

It happens that Jeanne and Louis Robert had taken an excellent squeeze of this inscription at Laodicea in 1962 when they were working on the inscriptions discovered by Canadian archaeologists from Laval University. The epigram was not one of the Laval finds. The Roberts' squeeze is now in Princeton at the Institute for Advanced Study, among the many treasures given to the Institute by Jeanne Robert in 1992, seven years after her husband's death. With the aid of this squeeze and reflections of my own I hope to illustrate what can be done with just one of the many metrical fragments from antiquity that come to light every year.

I give here a diplomatic text based upon Louis Robert's squeeze (*fig. 1*), now in Princeton:

¹ These observations were originally presented to my friend of more than half a century at a symposium (6 December 2008) at Columbia University's Center for the Ancient Mediterranean on the occasion of his retirement. I chose this subject in recognition of his exceptional contributions to the study of Greek epigrams. In preparing these notes, I have once again profited from discussion with C. P. Jones.

ΠΑΝ. ΑΜΑΤΩΡΦΙΛΟΚΑΙΝΕ
 ΤΙΠΤΕΜΕΕΝΔΕΧΕΤΗΠΑΙΔΙ
 ΖΩΣΙΜΟΝΟΥΝΟΜΑΤΑΤΟΝΕΝΕΚΚΑ
 Ε.ΣΑΙΔΑΝΕΡΑΤΟΝΚΟΥΡΟΝ
 ΗΛΠΙΖΟΝΔΕΠΕΜΟΙΓΟΝΕΕΣΥΜΕΝΑΙ
 ΟΥΚΕΠΕΜΟΙΣΘΡΗΝΟΙΣΤΥΜΒΟΝΑΝΟΙΚ
 ΧΑΙ.ΟΙΣΩΠΑΡΟΔΙΤΑΚΑΙΑΝΤΙΝΕΠΩΝΠΑ
 ΕΙΣΜΕΓΑΠΛΟΥΤΟΥΙΚΟΙΣΓΗΡΑΣΕ.ΕΥΒ

We may begin with the first line up to the break, Παν[δ]αμάτωρ φιλόκαινε, which Merkelbach–Stauber render as *Mordliebender Allesbezwinger*, reversing the order of the Greek. Obviously some deity or cosmic power is being invoked, and a glance at what follows reveals without any doubt that the issue is the untimely death of a young boy, who is represented as asking why he should have died. The power that is being invoked is clearly all-conquering. But does this power also love killing (*mordliebender*)? Evidently the editors think that the second word φιλόκαινε is formed from the verb κáινω, meaning slay or kill, but this would be a very odd formation. Words of this kind normally involve a noun or an adjective in a substantival function after φιλο-, as in φιλορόμαιοσ, φιλόβιβλοσ, φιλόδωροσ, φιλόπαισ, φιλόσοφοσ, etc. The κáιν- element here should be a substantival sense of the familiar adjective for “new”. The word would therefore mean loving innovation. As it happens, this is far from being a *hapax legomenon*. Its earliest appearance in a literary text seems to be in Polybius (36.13.3), but it goes on to a rich career in Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Ant. Rom.* 15. 6 [7], *De Demosth. Dict.* 48), Philo (*De Joseph.* 36, *De vita Mosis* 1. 213), Plutarch (93d, 731b), and Lucian (*Icar.* 24, *Calum.* 21). It appears twice in the novelist Chariton (4.4.2 and 4.7.6). How this word and its attestations could have escaped Merkelbach, Stauber, and the editors of *SEG* is hard to understand.

An all-conquering power that loves innovation is, therefore, invoked in this epigram to explain why it chose to carry off an 11-year-old boy called Zosimus. What is this supernatural power or divinity? The epithet “all-conquering” is associated famously with Time in Simonides’ epigram (frg. 26) on the fallen at Thermopylae, where we are assured that not even ὁ πανδαμάτωρ χρόνοσ can expunge their valor. There are other instances of this phrase, but an invocation to all-conquering time in the Laodicea epigram would not comport easily with the death of an 11-year-old child. The adjective is also found with envy (φθόνοσ), as in *IK Sinope* 170. Although envy might be more plausible, if the boy was sufficiently handsome, we must remember that this lethal force also loved innovation, and that does not seem to describe envy in any evident way. The two instances of φιλόκαινοσ in Chariton, however, seem to point to a plausible identification. In one case the force is Eros (4.7.6: φιλόκαινόσ ἐστίν ὁ Ἔρωσ), and in the other Tyche (4.4.2: ἡ φιλόκαινοσ Τύχη). Again with a pre-pubescent boy Eros does not make very much sense, but Tyche is a perfect fit. Tyche does indeed favor novelty, and Tyche can be destructive. Somewhere in the remainder of the opening hexameter the name of Tyche must lurk, perhaps immediately after the two words we have (since it would scan there).

The second line is unexceptionable, even with the chi for kappa in ἐνδεχέτη and the neuter termination in eta. The line clearly asks “Why have you taken me away, an 11-year-old child?” The next line gives his name, but Corsten’s presentation of what follows after οὐνομ- is a lesson in epigraphical error. A fundamental criterion of all textual work, as Housman and other critics have often insisted, is that a text must be assumed to make sense, and the author to have known

what he was doing. The lame translation *Das Verderben hat den ...* reflects Corsten's desperation in trying to wrest the noun ἄτη out of what survives on the stone, even though there is not the slightest reason why it should have been spelled ἄτα here.

The second and fourth lines are clear, including the reference to the lovely youth's passage to Hades. The letters in the third line are equally clear until they break off, and the second foot shows every indication of being simply οὔνομα, not the noun with the alpha omitted. In fact the caesura in the third foot is feminine, after TATON. The last visible letter on the stone is, as the squeeze shows, not a lambda but an alpha. This suggests that we have to do with a participle and therefore that the ἐν is the beginning of that participle. It has to be ἐνεκκά[μενον].² Fortified with this reading we can see that the letters before the participle are a form of ταύτόν in which there has been crasis together with aphaeresis of the upsilon, and the neuter termination in nu is allowable for metrical reasons (*LSJ* s.v. *ad init.*). What the epigrammatist is saying is that the child bore the same name as his father, and with that in mind we can restore with near certainty the entire line as follows: Ζώσιμον οὔνομα τᾶτόν ἐνεκκά[μενον γενετῆρι]. Hence we have recovered the first quatrain as follows:

Παν[δ]αμάτωρ φιλόκαινε ὃ - ὃ ὃ - ὃ ὃ - ὃ - x
τίπτε με, ἐνδεχέτη παιδί[ον] - ὃ ὃ x
Ζώσιμον οὔνομα τᾶτόν ἐνεκκά[μενον γενετῆρι,]
εἰ[ς] Αἴδαν ἐρατόν κοῦρον ὃ - ὃ ὃ x

Corsten read the next two lines accurately, as the squeeze proves, and their restoration was a comparatively simple matter: "My parents expected to sing a wedding song for me, not to raise up a tomb with lamentations over me." But the final two lines are much more treacherous, once the deceased has saluted, in traditional fashion, the person who is passing by his tomb. Corsten does violence to the Greek that follows in order to produce what is undoubtedly the desirable general sense, "If you answer me with a friendly word, may you attain great wealth and an advanced old age." The Greek he proposes for the second part of the penultimate line is very bizarre, with a strange partitive of ἐπῶν construed with τιν (for τινῶ) and an unlikely verb he has excavated out of Liddell and Scott. Epigraphy, like textual criticism, is not something that can be done mechanically. Metrical inscriptions place demands upon epigraphists that are not unlike the demands placed upon textual critics.

The sense required here certainly has to do with a reply from the passer-by, who is hailed by the deceased at the end of the epigram. The παροδίτης is invited to say something back to the dead boy in the tomb, and this is clearly what the letters ἀντι indicate. It is absurd to wrench out the first two letters to make ἄν. This is part of a participle ἀντιπέπων, "speaking back", in which the first epsilon of ἐπέπω has been lost before the iota of the prefix of reciprocation. This is a form of aphaeresis that is well documented.³ The following pi and alpha hardly introduce the grotesquely inappropriate verb that Corsten has provided (παραμείψαις) but rather the highly apposite πα[ρὰ τύμβῳ], just as it appears in parallel contexts in the epigraphy of Asia Minor (e.g. *SEG* 29. 1218 [Kyme] at the end of the hexameter in a couplet, *IK Iznik* 1293).

² For the assimilation of gamma before kappa, see F. T. Gignac, *A Grammar of the Greek Papyri of the Roman and Byzantine Periods* (1981), vol. 1, pp. 171–172.

³ F. T. Gignac, *A Grammar of the Greek Papyri of the Roman and Byzantine Periods* (1981), vol. 1, pp. 319–20: "occurs frequently".

All-conquering, novelty-loving [Fortune] ..., why [have you taken] me to Hades, an eleven-year old child, a beloved boy, bearing the same name, Zosimos, as my father ... My parents expected to sing a wedding song for me, not to raise up a tomb with lamentations over me. May you fare well, O passer-by, and if you say something back to me alongside the tomb may you reach old age in wealthy prosperity.

The inscription substantially enriches our already abundant supply of funerary epigrams, and it gives us a precious glimpse into the inventiveness of minor practitioners of verse on the borders of Phrygia and Caria in the hellenistic or early imperial age. It shows that copying, restoring, and interpreting a verse text, however insignificant, is an exacting exercise in judgment.

Özet

Makalede, Laodikeia'da (Denizli) bulunan ve şimdi Pamukkale Müzesi'nde korunmakta olan ve önce Th. Corsten (*Arkeoloji Dergisi* 3, 1995, 217–218, no. 2 = *SEG* 45, 1754), daha sonra da R. Merkelbach – J. Stauber tarafından (*Steinepigramme aus dem griechischen Osten* I, 1998, 272) yayınlanan mezar şiirinin restorasyon ve anlamına ilişkin düzeltmeler yapılmaktadır. Yazar, geç Hellenistik ya da erken imparatorluk dönemine tarihlediği bu şiiri şöyle çevirmektedir:

“Ey, herşeye hükmeden ve değişikliği seven [Kader]! ..., neden beni, babası ile adaş olan 11 yaşındaki sevimli Zosimos'u alıp Hades'e götürdün ? ... Ana-babam benim için bir düğün şarkısı söylemeyi isterlerdi, yoksa gözyaşları arasında üzerime bir mezar yaptırmayı değil. Sen, ey yolcu, mezarımın başında bana birşeyler söylersen, zenginlik içinde sürdüreceğin uzun bir ömrün olsun!”

Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton

Glen W. Bowersock

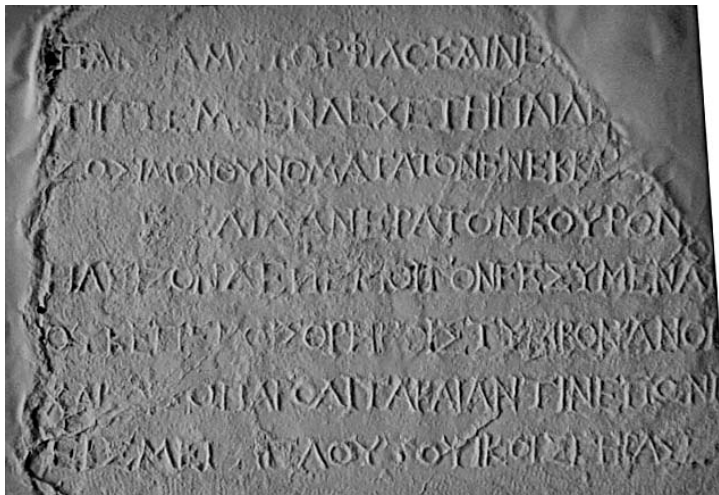


Fig. 1



Fig. 2