An Emendation in Hesychius

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In an article in this journal (9 [1968] 267ff) entitled "New Fragments of Ancient Greek Poetry," M. Naoumides published for the first time a number of glosses from an overlooked X/XI century MS of the Lexicon Cyrilli. One of these (no.8, p.280) is the entry:

\[ \text{o} \text{píyov} \quad \text{tò} \quad \text{tēs} \quad \text{γυναικός} \quad \text{αίδοῖον}, \quad \text{Μακεδόνες}. \]

As the author observes, this word has not found its way into LSJ (nor indeed into the recent Supplement), although Hesychius also has an entry under ὀπίσιον, which, however, is glossed λάχανον ἀγριον. ἡ τρυφέτον. ἡ ταπιστον. He remarks also on the sexual euphemisms in Greek derived from words for plants, vegetables, etc. (e.g. σέλινον, βληχών, κνέωρον of the female, ἐρέβυθος, καυλός of the male), but notes that Hesychius "does not record the meaning preserved in our MS."

Almost certainly, however, the corrupt last word ἄπιστον in his gloss on ὀπίσιον should be the variously spelled δέπισεον, δέπεισον or ἐπίσιον, a word glossed in Hesychius' own lexicon (in the first of these spellings) ἐφηβισαν, καὶ τὸ αίδοῖον ἀνδρός τε καὶ γυναικός. The word appears mostly in the medical writers and lexicographers, although attested—dubiously—in a fragment of Archilochus (140 Bergk, 187 Lasserre), in Hecker's emendation of the corrupt ἐπισιον, and certainly in the form ἔπεισαν in Lycophron 1385, with schol. ad loc.

The corruption to ἄπιστον suggests that ὀπίσιον had been the spelling originally used here—as in Aristotle, Historia Animalium 493a 20, etc.

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2 Origo vocis obscura est, adeoque et orthographia incerta (Pierson on Moeris, p.141). The Etymologicum Magnum (363.58) hazards a derivation παρὰ τὸ ἐλισέανα!