On the New Pergamene Lex Sacra

Franciszek Sokolowski

Michael Wörrle has recently published, among the inscriptions from the shrine of Asclepios in Pergamus, the remains of a code governing the ceremonies to be performed before the consultation in the dormitory. The text is known from the fragments of two copies dated by their letter forms to the second century of our era, while the code itself is of an undetermined earlier date. The text has been carefully established by the editor, but in his commentary many ritual items have not been fully clarified and explained. I shall try to contribute something further to the understanding of the document.

A

καὶ τραπεζούσθω εκ[ε]-

[λος δεξιῶν κ]αι σπλάγχνα κα[ι] λαβὼν ἄλλον στέφανον ἐλάσας π[ρο]-

[θυέσθω Δι] Ἀποτρποπαϊμ πόπανον ῥαβδωτὸν ἐννεόμφαλον καὶ ν[Δι Μειλιγίω] πόπανον ῥαβδωτὸν ἐννεόμφαλον καὶ Ἀρτέμιδ[ι]

B

Προθυέσθω δὲ Δι Ὕποτ[ρο]-

[παίων πόπαν]ον ῥαβδωτὸν ἐννεόμφαλον καὶ Δι Μειλιγίω πόπ[α]-

[νον ῥαβδω]ῦτον ἐννεόμφαλον καὶ Ἀρτέμιδι Προθυέσθω καὶ Ἀρτέμι-

[δι . . . . .] καὶ Γ[η] ἐκάστη τόπανον ἐννεόμφαλον. Ἐμβαλλέ-

[τῷ δὲ καὶ] εἰς τὸν θησαυρόν ὀβολοὺς τρεῖς. Περιθύνεσθε

[δὲ ἄλφιτοι]ς μέλιτι καὶ ἐλαῖοι δεδεμένοις καὶ λιβανωτῶι

These passages prescribe the performances of certain ceremonies called προθύειν\(^2\) and περιθύειν, morning and evening, before entry into the dormitory. There are numerous similarities between the two sections, but there are also serious discrepancies: (1) the latter section does not mention the sacrifice of a pig, which figures in the earlier part (A 6–8); (2) the sacrifice called περιθύειν mentioned in the second section (23–24, 27) does not appear anywhere in the first; (3) this latter ceremony is not linked with the payment of the cult fee, while three obols are required in connection with the ceremony of προθύειν (8, 23); (4) the prescriptions at 1, 2–3, 6–8 and at 19 and 22–23 of the second section are formulated in the singular, while the plural is used at 23 and 26.

How can we explain these similarities and divergences? One might suppose that the ceremonial of incubation underwent change in the course of time: new rites had been introduced and old cancelled. But this supposition cannot be derived from the general sense of the document, which seems to present one compact, valid code. I would suggest that these two parts are intended for two or even three kinds of visitors to the dormitory ward (or wards); the first applies to persons entering the sleeping hall for the first time, the second to those wanting to enter and consult on subsequent occasions. It is clearly stated in lines 15–17 that those who have already made one visit and return for further consultation on the same subject do not sacrifice another pig. And it is precisely this sacrifice that is omitted from the second section. We may therefore recognize that persons applying for a first visit were ushered to one dormitory (probably the larger),

\(^2\) I accept the suggestion of Wörkle to restore lines 26–27 προθυκάμενοι. The phrase εἰς τὸ ἐγκομιστήριον means in late Koine the same as ἐν τῷ ἐγκομιστήριῳ: cf. Mayser, Grammatik der griech. Papyri II 2, 373; Blass-Debrunner, Grammatik des neuest. Griechisch § 205. I propose also to restore at 14 ἀπάντῃς κλημαῖος; at 31 σύμπαντα. In the gaps at 5 and 22 should be restored something like Ἑκάτης or Ἑνόδια.
while those asking for another visit with reference to the same matter were escorted to another ward (probably a smaller one).

The rules at 23–29 instruct a group of people called $\theta\varphi\alpha\pi\alpha\pi\epsilon\iota\omicron\nu\tau\eta\varsigma$ to carry out the ceremony of $\pi\rho\theta\beta\nu\epsilon\eta\nu$. These were admitted for consultation together with another group seeking anew advice on the subject of their previous consultation during their first visit to the larger dormitory. These latter perform the same rites of $\pi\rho\theta\beta\nu\epsilon\eta\nu$ as they did in the course of their former visit but without sacrificing a pig. The first group offer rather modest gifts (some ground grain moistened with honey and oil and frankincense); the members of the second group present more expensive items (five big cakes each). In addition, the latter pay the cult fee, while the others pay nothing (lines 8 and 23). Because of these differences alone we can presume that the visitors treated less favorably were outsiders, while those enjoying privilege had a closer relation to the sanctuary. As for the ceremonies performed, Wörrle suggests that the verb $\pi\rho\theta\beta\nu\epsilon\eta\nu$ may designate some kind of sacrifice celebrated ‘around’ altars. On the other hand, the preposition $\pi\epsilon\rho\iota$ may indicate some kind of purificatory performance carried out ‘around’ the people participating in a ceremony, as F. Pfister once observed. We should bear in mind also, however, that the prefix $\pi\epsilon\rho\iota$, besides its usual meaning ‘around’, sometimes merely strengthens the force of the verb. Before rendering judgement on these opinions, we must first consider all the texts in which the verb $\pi\rho\theta\beta\nu\epsilon\eta\nu$ figures.

Plutarch, in his treatise De superstitione, describes the behavior of a man addicted to this extravagancy: $\alpha\nu\delta' \alpha'\rho\iota\varsigma\tau\alpha\pi\alpha\tau\tau\eta\varsigma\varsigma$ καὶ εὐνη πράως δειειδαιμονία περιθύμενος οἴκοι κάθηται καὶ περιματτόμενος. We can translate the phrase that interests us as "sacrificing for himself and smearing himself one time after another." Plutarch thinks of the spell of religious tension during which the sick man is constantly sacrificing.

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4 Quoting Paus. 5.15 and IG IV 1, 742 = F. Sokolowski, Lois Sacrées des cités grecques, Supplément (Paris 1962) no.25.3, Wörrle calls the ceremonial "Umgang" (p.182).

5 RE Supplb. 6 (1935) 149–50.

6 Schwyzer-Debrunner, Griechische Grammatik II 500.

7 Mor. 1680 (II pp.474–75 Loeb). The reading of the mss has been corrected to $\pi\rho\theta\epsilon\iota\psi\omicron\mu\epsilon\nu\varsigma$, I think wrongly.
The verb περιθύεω is used by St John Chrysostom in his commentary on St Paul’s Epistle to the Galatians.8 Discouraging on the abolition of the law of the Old Testament and on the new law of Christian faith, he writes: εἰ γὰρ καββατα τηρεῖς ἄι τι μὴ περιτέμνῃς; εἰ δὲ περιτέμνῃς, διὰ τί μὴ περιθύεις. Chrysostom alludes in this passage to the continued observance of the old Sabbath, of circumcision and of sanguinary sacrifice. He speculates on the cult practice recurring in the cycles of the week or month or year. We can, I think, translate the verb in question 'sacrifice regularly, repeatedly'.

The verb περιθύεω figures in an inscription from Astypalaia of the second century of our era, which lists the chiefs or eponyms in a certain cult association dedicated to Asclepios.9 In this record θεὸς Ἀσκληπιός is listed seven times as an eponym. Three men, each described as περιθύων, are mentioned three times in close association with the god. A certain Mousikos son of Ophelion was in one year eponym (line 3), and some time later is περιθύων with Asclepios when the god is eponym (line 10). The Roberts have reasoned that this term means that the men in question guaranteed the celebration of sacrifices which should have been celebrated by the god as eponym: usually the sacrifices were followed by a banquet or reception for the members of the association. This interpretation seems very plausible. The participle emphasizes the customary accomplishment of cult and social duties on the fixed days of the month or the year. The meaning of περιθύεω in the inscription is therefore close to that in the passage from St John Chrysostom.

The inscriptions from Asclepios’ shrine in Pergamus mention certain well-known and prominent persons, undoubtedly pilgrims to the sanctuary, called individually περιθύτης.10 Chr. Habicht has argued that they played some rôle in the cult performances, as did for instance the προδύτης in the cult of the Roman emperors and elsewhere.11 It seems to me more probable that their functions were similar to those carried out by the περιθύων in Astypalaia.

8 Migne, PG 10.818. I am indebted for this reference to Professor H. C. Youtie.
10 Cl. Pardalas περιθύτης dedicated to the god a small altar or dish described as περιθυτικὸν: Habicht, op.cit. (supra n.1) no.140. P. Afranius Flavianus was περιθύτης καὶ θεραπευτής, ibid. no.79. Iuventianus Alexander from Nicomedia was περιθύτης and possibly θεραπευτής and νεωτισκός and priest of Asclepios, ibid. no.152.
11 op.cit. (supra n.1) 142.
It is likely that the verb under inquiry figures in a small fragment of the *lex sacra* of Asclepios from Epidaurus.\textsuperscript{12} I propose to restore a few words to give to the phrase some sense:

\begin{verbatim}
27 εἰσέρχοντες τὴν ἔτεραν πρὸς ταῖς πρώτης θυεῖς


tερίδοις προσευχαίρειν


tοῖς τερίδοις προσευχάτοις
\end{verbatim}

The restoration cannot be certain, but the phrase as restored seems to mention the sacrifices celebrated in some succession of time.\textsuperscript{13}

According to line 25 of the code, the rites of *περιθύει* were accomplished by persons described as *θεραπεύοντες*. I suggested above that they stayed probably in a close relationship with the shrine of Asclepios. For a more precise view of their position in the temple we must consult Aelius Aristides and the inscriptions from Pergamus. In quest of a cure for his illnesses Aristides visited various centers of Asclepios and of Sarapis and made a rather long sojourn in Pergamus. He calls himself *θεραπευτής* and names his colleagues (some of them prominent rhetors, philosophers and high Roman officials) *συνθεραπευταί* and *συμφωνηταί* (Hier.Log. 2.27).\textsuperscript{14} In one of his many dreams he reports that he approached the Roman emperor. The sovereign was amazed that Aristides did not kiss him (probably his hand). But hearing that his subordinate had been dissuaded by Asclepios to pay such a mark of respect, the emperor said (1.23): “It is enough for me; to serve Asclepios is beyond all things.” In another dream Aristides records that he was standing together with his fellow therapeuts in front of the statue of Asclepios “when the *paian* is sung” (4.50); this indicates that they were participating in the most solemn ceremony of the temple. Once he offered an elaborate sacrifice and distributed pieces of the victims and wine to his companions (2.29). On another occasion he dreamt that he saw Asclepios himself approaching him in the form of the ex-consul Salvius, who happened to be staying in the sanctuary at that time (2.9 ὁ δὲ ἐτύγχανε προσεδρεύειν).\textsuperscript{15} Elsewhere (2.45)

\textsuperscript{12} IG IV\textsuperscript{2} 1, 742 C 28–29 = Sokolowski, *op.cit.* (supra n.4) no.25.

\textsuperscript{13} I do not think that the chain of oblations in the Pergamene *lex sacra* labelled *προδυκέσθω* (lines 19–22) has any relationship with the phrase *περιθύει* (line 23). Apart from the fact that they were accomplished almost simultaneously, the worshippers were certainly different from those carrying through the ceremonial of *περιθύει*. The latter did not deposit their gifts in the dormitory, as is said of the *προθυεῖς* (line 27).

\textsuperscript{14} Cf. Habicht, *op.cit.* (supra n.1) no.28.16.

\textsuperscript{15} For this verb cf. *AEM* 6 (1882) 23 no.46.12; Dittenberger, *SIG*\textsuperscript{3} 717.84; Sokolowski,
Aristides speaks of different groups of people busy in the service of the temple: οἱ περὶ τῶν θεῶν θεραπευταὶ καὶ τάξιν ἔχοντες. A fragmentary dedication from Pergamus published by E. Fränkel mentions the θεραπευταὶ and gives as a date the name of their secretary. In his collection of inscriptions from the Pergamene Asclepieion Habicht published a number of dedications by the therapeuts honoring gods, priests and fellow worshippers. It would be not far from the truth to infer from these testimonies that there existed in the Pergamene Asclepieion an organized body of the θεραπευταὶ mentioned in our lex sacra. They were busy usually in the temple activities, but in the meantime they applied for consultations in the sleeping ward.

This evidence about the therapeuts in Pergamus recalls strikingly the situation of the κάτοχοι in the sanctuaries of Sarapis in the Graeco-Roman world. We should not forget that while people went to his shrines for many reasons, a certain number of pilgrims naturally went seeking a cure for illness, particularly epileptics. Among the worshippers in the Sarapieion of Delos the following groups are specified: θεραπευταὶ, μελανηφόροι, and the βιακος of Sarapiasts. In an inscription from Demetrias in Thessaly, the ὑπόστολοι honor a priest of Sarapis for his benefactions to the θεραπευταὶ. The therapeuts, along with their chief or founder, are attested in the cult of Sarapis in Cyzicus.


16 Inschriften von Pergamon no.338.
17 op.cit. (supra n.1) no.47; 79; 122; 152.6.
18 Herzog (SB Berl [1935] 1007–08) thinks that Aristides was a member of a loose association of doctors and intellectuals sojourning in the sanctuary. There existed also a group of helpers whom Herzog compares to the stretcher-bearers in Lourdes, France (Die Wunderheilungen von Epidaurus [Philologus Supplb. 22 (1930)] 159). Sometimes ordinary pilgrims visited the shrine organized in a loose group called βιακος (ICr. I [XVII] Lebena no.11 A 6).
19 Cf. U. Wilcken, UPZ I pp.34ff; Delekat, op.cit. (supra n.15) 166ff.
21 IG IX 2, 1107.
22 RevArch 37 (1879) 258 = L. Vidman, Sylloge inscriptionum religionis Isiaceae et Sarapiaceae (Berlin 1969) no.318.
we know about the therapeuts living in the Asclepieion of Pergamus.23

Coming back to the lex sacra of Asclepios, we have good reason to think that three groups of persons applied for entry to the dormitory, or rather dormitories: those who came for the first time or for the first consultations on their respective subjects, those whose visit was not their first but concerned the same subject, and those persons who enjoyed a special status in the shrine. The first two groups were prepared for each consultation through an elaborate ceremony of προθύειν; those of the third group passed through a simple ceremonial before consultation.24

We must remember that our lex sacra was written not for use of the ministers of the cult, who surely had special texts to serve their own needs, but for the people. The fundamental matter for visitors was to know where to go, what to do and what to pay. On the other hand, the management of the sanctuary was eager to make its income safe and the taxation not too heavy. In this connection we recognize three dispositions: (1) full-scale duties on the first consultations, (2) lower charges for subsequent interrogations, and (3) favorable treatment reserved for the persons allowed to consult frequently, without limitation on subject or time.25

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23 E. Ziebarth (Das griech. Vereinswesen [Leipzig 1896, repr. Wiesbaden 1967] 203-04) and Poland (op.cit. [supra n.3] 35-36) did not share the opinion that the therapeuts formed a strictly organized body; instead, they were a loose group of worshippers. Since then our documentation on the associations has become more complete, and Habicht (op.cit. [supra n.1] 114-15) and P. M. Fraser (Ptolemaic Alexandria II [Oxford 1972] 618-19 n.419) think that they were set up as a κοινόν.

24 I would suggest reading lines 25-26 ἱερομυθήμων. The combination of functions of the priest and of this officer is attested in Epidaurus in the late Roman period (cf. Hiebing, RE 8 [1912] 1491). It seems to me that the presence of priest and of accounting manager in the introduction of visitors was needed not only to supervise the ceremonial but also to exercise some kind of control over the people entitled to favorable treatment. In this connection I cite the rules from other cults, forbidding worship in the absence of a priest:

[δι' αυτού μηθείσοντες] ἡμέρας τῆς ἱεράς (IG II² 1177=Sokolowski, op.cit. [supra n.3] no.30.3-7); μηθένα ἦσσεν ἄνω τοῦ καθελθομένου τῷ ἱερῷ (ibid. no.55.7-8). See also ibid. nos. 45.7-8; 69.29-41; 119.9-11; op.cit. (supra n.4) nos.36; 129.7-11.

25 The writer warmly thanks Professor Herbert C. Youtie for reading this paper and for his helpful suggestions.