

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:

ὄπισον· τὸ τῆς γυναικὸς αἰδοῖον, 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 *ὄπισον*, which, however, is glossed *λάχανον ἄγριον. ἢ τρωκτόν. ἢ ἄπιστον*. He remarks also on the sexual euphemisms in Greek derived from words for plants, vegetables, etc. (e.g. *σέλινον, βληχών, κνέωρον* of the female, *ἐρέβινθος, καυλός* of the male),¹ 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 *ὄπισον* should be the variously spelled² *ἐπίσειον, ἐπέσειον* or *ἐπίσιον*, a word glossed in Hesychius’ own lexicon (in the first of these spellings) *ἐφήβαιον, καὶ τὸ αἰδοῖον ἀνδρὸς 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 *ἐπιόιον*, and certainly in the form *ἐπέσειον* in Lycophron 1385, with schol. *ad loc.*

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

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¹ See J. Taillardat, *Les images d’Aristophane* (Paris 1965) 72–75, and for equivalent expressions in English, cf. Eric Partridge, *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English*⁵ (London 1961) s.vv. ‘garden’, ‘green-grocery’, ‘greens’, ‘parsley (-bed)’, etc.

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