

An Oracle of Apollo at Miletus

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AN HONORIFIC INSCRIPTION at Miletus, displaying letter-forms of the late second or the third century, praises a lady as *ἱέρε[ιαν]* *διὰ βίου τῆς πρ[ὸ πόλε]ως Πολιάδο[ς Ἀ]θηνᾶς αἰρεθ[εῖσαν]* ὑπὸ τοῦ ἀψε[υδε]στάτου θεοῦ Διδ[υμέω]ς Ἀπόλλωνος ἐπ[ὶ] *σωφροσύνη* καὶ *[σεμν]ότητι* ὑπὸ τῶν θ[εῖ]ων αὐτοῦ λογίων καὶ ἐγκωμιασθεῖσαν ο[ὔ]τως· after which there follows the text of the oracle, in hexameters. The end of the inscription informs us about the persons who arranged for its erection: *Μᾶρκοι Αὐρήλιοι Ἑρμείας καὶ Μιννίων οἱ Ἑρμείου τὴν γλυκυτάτην μητέρα.*

This document, found in 1900 or 1901, was recently published by P. Herrmann¹ with interesting observations concerning the prosopography of Miletus, and was subsequently discussed by R. Merkelbach,² who advanced the interpretation of several passages; but a few difficulties and points of interest perhaps deserve further study. The text of the oracle is given by Herrmann as follows (we have disposed it here by lines, not as it is laid out on the stone):

Ὅψι μὲν, ὦ ναέται, ζακόρου πέρι Κρατογενείης
ὀμφῆς μαντιπόλοιο θεοκλυτέοντες ἴκεσθε,
ἢ κορυφήν <ρ>ήξασα περιώφρονος [. . .] γενετῆρος
4 εἰνόπλιον κκι<ρ>τ[ῶς]α παρ' ἀθανάτοις χόρευεν,
ἔνθεν παντο[ι] . . . ἐφ[έ]πειν λάχεν ἀκροπόληας,
ἐσθλή{ν} μὲν πο[λί]ες[ι] βοθηθός, ἐν δὲ τέχνασι
εὐπάλαμος κλ[ε]ιτο[ί]σι ἐπιστάτις ἐργοπόνοισιν·
8 αὐτοφάν[ων]? γενε[?]*ῆς* γὰρ ἐχρῆν ἱερῆδα τειμῆν
θηλυτέρην δέξασθαι ἀφ' αἵματος εὐγενετήρων·
ἀλλ' ἐπὶ αἰσαν ἐλεῖν γεράων φθάσεν Ἀφρογενείης
ΔΙΙ[.]ΙΑ δὲ Κύπρις ποτὶ παρθένον Ἀτρυτώνην·
12 <ῆ> μὲν γὰρ θαλάμοιο καὶ {οὐκ} ἔστ' ἀμύητος ἔρωτος,
ἢ δὲ γάμοισι τέθηλε καὶ εὐκελάδοις ὑμεναίοις.
Τοίγαρ πειθόμενοι Μοίραις καὶ Παλλάδι σεμνήν
Σατορνείλαν θέσθε ἱερηφόρον ἀρήτειραν.

¹ *Chiron* 1 (1971) 291–98 and pl. II–III [hereafter cited as HERRMANN]. The stone was copied and squeezed but subsequently smashed and some of the fragments are lost.

² *ZPE* 8 (1971) 93–95 [hereafter, MERKELBACH].

One of the main themes of this oracle is set forth already by the first word, *ὀψέ*. The theme *ὀψέ . . . ἴκεσθε* occurs also in a well-known³ oracle of Apollo at Delphi preserved by Pausanias 9.37.4: when King Erginos as an old man came to Delphi *ἔρωμένω περι παίδων χρᾶ τάδε ἢ Πυθία·*

*Ἐργῖνε Κλυμένοιο πάι Πρεσβωνιάδαο
ὄψ' ἦλθεσ γενεῆν διζήμενος κτλ.*

In line 3 Herrmann established the correct reading *ῥ>ήξασα*,⁴ and Merkelbach⁵ (p.94) restored the meter by writing {π}ἔρικώφρονος,⁶ but there remains a lacuna of two letters before the word *γενετήρος*. Herrmann commented (p.292): “Vor *γενετήρος* ein runder Buchstabe, danach einer mit senkrechtem Strich: *OI?* in der Schede von Fredrich,⁷ *ἐκ* auf dem Blatt mit der Umschrift.”⁸ Merkelbach (p.94) restored here [*εὐ*]*γενετήρος*, explaining: “Der Gedanke ist: Wie Pallas Athena aus dem Haupt eines edlen Vaters geboren ist, so soll auch ihre Priesterin von edlen Vorfahren abstammen (Vers 9).” It is true that *εὐγενετήρων* used of the priestess’ family in line 9 reflects *γενετήρος* used of Athena’s father in line 3, but it is not likely that in this oracle, which displays much care in the selection of unusual vocabulary, such a rare word should be employed twice. Moreover, in the measure that this word is appropriately applied to ‘noble’ human families it is quite inadequate as an epithet of Zeus. We therefore suggest the

³ This oracle is evidently cited by Plut. *An seni* 784B, on a man who begins to deal with politics in old age: *ἵσως ἂν αἰτιωμένω τινὶ παράχοι τὸ τῆς Πυθίας εἰπεῖν “ὄψ' ἦλθεσ” ἀρχὴν καὶ δημογωγίαν διζήμενος*. Editors of Plutarch compare *Corpus Papyrologorum Graecorum* I p.444: *ὄψ' ἦλθεσ, ἀλλ' ἐς τὸν Κολωνὸν ἴεσο*.

⁴ He commented (p.292) that the stone has “nach *κορυφήν* vor *-ήξασα* ein kleines ο: da *θηξασα* nicht möglich ist, vermute ich Verschreibung für *ρήξασα*, wobei aber auf jeden Fall die Partizipialform nicht in das Metrum passt.”

⁵ This correction was also made independently by B. Snell (cf. Merkelbach 95).

⁶ The mason’s error is due not merely to careless copying of his original (as earlier in this line or in line 6), for it is also a substitution according to sense (as in line 12, where W. Bühler remarked to Herrmann on the erroneously inserted word *οὐκ* that “sein Eindringen mag mit einem Versehen im Hinblick auf die Negation, die in *ἀμύητος* ja ohnedies schon enthalten ist, zu erklären sein”): in place of the new word *ἐρικώφρονος* required by the meter, the mason substituted the equally rare *περικώφρονος*, which has the same meaning but a different metrical value (influenced perhaps by the existence of the word *περισσόφρων*). Also possible metrically, but less appropriate to the style of this oracle with its many new words, would have been *περίφρονος* (used in Homer only of women).

⁷ This copy had been made before the stone was broken (cf. Herrmann 291).

⁸ Among the material at Herrmann’s disposition was “ein unter den milesischen Papieren erhaltener Versuch der Textwiedergabe in Umschrift von einer mir unbekanntem Hand.”

restoration [οῦ] γενετῆρος. The combination of γενετῆρ immediately after the possessive pronoun is found fairly often, for instance (with the same word-order: adjective, possessive pronoun, substantive) in Nonn. *Dion.* 4.303 (of Cadmus):

ἀλλὰ πόθον Τυρίοιο τεοῦ γενετῆρος ἑάσσει

The same sequence is probably found again at 30.178:

νεκρὸν ἐμὸν γενετῆρα πάλιν ζῶοντα τελέσσω

In these phrases the possessive pronoun does not necessarily lay stress on the kinship expressed, though this may be the case here: at her birth the mighty goddess broke open the head of her own father.

The dance of the newborn goddess in line 4 is an allusion to one of the current explanations of her epithet Παλλάς. Because Athena was born from the κορυφή of Zeus she obtained as her lot the ἀκροπόληας.⁹ The thought expressed in such etymological allusions may be illustrated by passages in the discussion of Athena by the Stoic Cornutus, *De Nat. Deor.* 20: γενέσθαι δὲ καὶ ἐκ τῆς τοῦ Διὸς κεφαλῆς λέγεται . . . ἐπεὶ τοῦ μὲν ἀνθρώπου τὸ ἀνώτατον μέρος τοῦ σώματος ἡ κεφαλὴ ἐστι . . . (187) καὶ πόλεως γὰρ καὶ οἴκου καὶ τοῦ βίου παντὸς προστάτιν ποιητέον τὴν φρόνησιν (cf. lines 6–7)¹⁰ . . . Παλλάς δὲ λέγεται διὰ τὴν μεμυθευμένην περὶ αὐτὴν νεότητα . . . σκιρτητικὸν γὰρ καὶ παλλόμενον τὸ νέον. ἴδρυνται δὲ αὐτὴν ἐν ταῖς ἀκροπόλεσι μάλιστα. The enumeration of the δυνάμεις of the goddess in the long relative clause which begins with ἧ in line 3 and extends over five lines is a traditional stylistic element in such contexts,¹¹ to which is added here an acquaintance with philosophical literature perhaps indicated also by the epithet Κρατογενεΐη given to Athena at the end of line 1: this is a new word, but κρατογενής,¹² also

⁹ See Merkelbach 94; in line 5 he suggested παντοί[ων] rather than παντοί[ας]. Here the restoration [δι]έπειν is a possible alternative. Sanctuaries of Athena were usually located on an acropolis: cf. D. Knoepfler, *BCH* 96 (1972) 287. The use of the verb λαγχάνω to designate the functions 'allotted' to a divinity is traditional: see K. Keyssner, *Gottesvorstellung und Lebensauffassung im griech. Hymnus* (Stuttgart 1932) 64–65, with the example cited from Proclus 7.21 concerning Athena: ἡ λάχες ἀκροπόληα καθ' ὑμλόφοιο κολώνης. For the thought cf. Aelius Aristides' discourse on Athena (2.10.17ff): ἄτε δὲ ἐν κορυφῇ τε τοῦ Ὀλύμπου καὶ ἐκ κορυφῆς τοῦ Διὸς γενομένη πόλεων . . . πασῶν τὰς κορυφὰς ἔχει κατὰ κράτος ὡς ἀληθῶς ἡρηκυῖα . . . τηροῦσα τὸ σύμβολον τῆς αὐτῆς γενέσεως (cf. also 12.3–4).

¹⁰ Cf. *ibid.* 188: τοὺς δ' αὐλοὺς εὐρεῖν μὲν λέγεται, καθάπερ καὶ τᾶλλα ἐν ταῖς τέχναις γλαφυρά: ἀφ' οὗ καὶ ἐπιστάτις (cf. line 7) τῆς ταλαίουργίας ἐστί.

¹¹ See the examples discussed by E. Norden, *Agnostos Theos* (Leipzig/Berlin 1913) 169ff.

¹² The *Thesaurus s.v. κρατογενής* has also a cross-reference to the word κορυφαγενής, which occurs in Plut. *De Is. et Os.* 381E, a discussion of the Pythagorean name for the equilateral

a *hapax legomenon*, occurs in Porphyry's work of allegorical interpretation *De Antr.Nymph.* 32, where the word was clearly invented to explain *Od.* 13.346.¹³

In line 7 the restoration κλ[εινο]ίτιν is a possible alternative.¹⁴ The first editor's supplement in the following line¹⁵ was replaced by Merkelbach with the convincing restoration αὐτοφαν[οῦς κούρ]ης: the verb governing ἱερῆῖδα τειμήν is δέξασθαι in the following line, and the subject of δέξασθαι is clearly θηλυτέρη, here used as a noun¹⁶ as in an anonymous epigram on Agamemnon, *Anth.Pal.* 9.495:

θηλυτέρη μ' ἐδάμασσε, τὸν οὐ κτάνε δῆϊος Ἔκτωρ

Line 10, however, is still not in order. Neither syntax nor sense is clear, but Herrmann offers no translation or comment. To elucidate this line we must first examine its context. Now the three following hexameters¹⁷ describe an opposition said to exist between Athena and Aphrodite, and this opposition is based on the two goddesses' different attitudes toward love and marriage: Athena has nothing to do with such activities, which on the contrary form the central interest of

triangle. For κρατογενής beside (now) κρατογενείη, cf. ἀφρογενής beside ἀφρογένεια and κυπρογενής beside κυπρογένεια.

¹³ The verse reads αὐτὰρ ἐπὶ κρατὸς λιμένος τανύφυλλος ἐλαίη, and Porphyry comments Ἄθηνᾶς μὲν γὰρ τὸ φυτόν, φρόνησις δὲ ἡ Ἄθηνᾶ. κρατογενοῦς δ' οὔσης τῆς θεοῦ, οἰκείον τόπον ὁ θεολόγος ἐξεῦρεν ἐπὶ κρατὸς τοῦ λιμένος αὐτὴν καθιερώσας.

¹⁴ The adjective κλειτός (which is the Homeric form) is not elsewhere attested in the inscriptions of Didyma.

¹⁵ To support his restoration Herrmann cited (p.293) an honorific inscription referring to another oracle of Apollo (*I. Didyma* 243 line 7): γένους αὐτοφαν[ῶν προγόν]ων ὡς ὁ Διδυμενὲς ἐμαρτύρησ[εν], and explained (p.294) that αὐτοφαν[ῶν] is perhaps equivalent in meaning to αὐτόχθων. The parallel cited is itself a restoration, however, and therefore of no probative value, and on the other hand there exists no evidence to support the proposed explanation of αὐτοφανής: on the contrary, the word is used elsewhere not of men but of divinities (cf. L. Robert, *CRAI* 1971 p.611 n.1; Merkelbach comments that "Hier bezeichnet es die Göttin, die aus eigener Kraft in Epiphanie erschien").

¹⁶ This usage, not registered in LSJ or its *Supplement*, is mentioned in the *Thesaurus* (with the example from the *Anth.Pal.*).

¹⁷ On line 11 Herrmann remarked (p.292) "sollte δηριῆ gemeint sein, statt des zerdehnten δηριάξ?" Although the latter form is apparently not elsewhere attested (Herrmann cites no instances), examples of analogous lengthening from the poetry of Imperial times are cited by K. Meister, *Die homerische Kunstsprache* (Leipzig 1921) 68.1; nevertheless the interpretation offered by Merkelbach (p.95): δη[ρ]ιῆ "mit Dehnung des ι" is preferable, because it avoids assuming an error by the mason, who inscribed one *alpha* and not two (lengthening of the *iota* might have been facilitated by the long *iota* of the future and aorist in forms such as δηρισόμεθα and ἐδήριεν).

Aphrodite.¹⁸ It seems inevitable that three lines of this oracle were devoted to underlining this opposition only because it was in some way relevant to the conditions that governed the choice of a priestess of Athena.¹⁹

Merkelbach (p.95) made this suggestion: “Ich schreibe *φθάσε ἦ* (=φθάσ' ἦ) statt *φθάσεν*. Der Vers ist schwierig . . . Ich nehme als Sinn an: Man soll eine weibliche Person aus gutem Haus erwählen, jedoch (ἀλλ') ausserdem (ἐπι) eine solche, welche (ἦ) ihren Anteil an den Gaben der Aphrodite (*αἴσαν γεράων Ἀφρογενείης*) schon (*φθάσε*) erhalten hat (*ἐλεῖν*), ἦ(τις) ἔφθασε αἴσαν ἐλεῖν γεράων Ἀφροδίτης. Ein Relativum ist jedenfalls nötig um einen syntaktischen Zusammenhang herzustellen.” But Merkelbach himself drew attention to certain weaknesses: “Die Kürzung des langen Vokals (ἦ) im Hiat ist zwar korrekt, aber doch ziemlich hart. Die Wortstellung ist künstlich verschränkt.” Such objections do in our opinion render this suggestion unappealing.²⁰

¹⁸ The *locus classicus* for the antagonism between Athena and Aphrodite is of course the description of the battle between the gods in *Il.* 21.420ff; more relevant here is the beginning of the first Homeric hymn to Aphrodite, lines 9ff:

οὐ γάρ οἱ εὐαδεν ἔργα πολυχρύσου Ἀφροδίτης,
ἀλλ' ἄρα οἱ πόλεμοί τε ἄδον καὶ ἔργον Ἄρηος,
ὕσμῖναί τε μάχαι τε, καὶ ἀγλαὰ ἔργ' ἀλεγύνειν.
Πρώτη τέκτονας ἀνδρας ἐπιχθονίους ἐδίδαξε . . .

Artemis is described as γάμων ἀμήτορος in *Opp. Cyn.* 1.34, where she states her aversion to the ἀθύρματα *Ποντογενείης*.

¹⁹ Herrmann (p.293) attempted a different explanation of the “Frage nach der Bedeutung der Gegenüberstellung von Athena und Aphrodite in den späteren Versen, wo auf einen schon älteren Anspruch Athenas hingewiesen zu sein scheint. Wenn das eine Anspielung auf lokale Gegebenheiten ist, könnte man es so deuten, dass durch die vom Orakel geforderte Neubesetzung des Priestertums der Athena Polias ein in Milet bestehender alter Kult der Athena wiederbelebt und gegenüber dem jüngeren Aphrodite-Kult, der vielleicht grössere Bedeutung erlangt hatte, aufgewertet werden sollte.” But there is no indication in this text of an “älteren Anspruch Athenas,” and in general this oracle concerns the personal affairs of Satorneila rather than questions of public policy. The same editor offered also an alternative suggestion (p.294), that Satorneila “bereits Priesterin der Aphrodite war und nun zusätzlich auch das Priestertum für Athena Polias übernehmen sollte”; but he remarks himself that “freilich wird auf ein solches doppeltes Priesteramt in dem erhaltenen Teil der Ehreninschrift nicht hingewiesen,” and in any case the spectacle of two goddesses squabbling over the services of a priestess was surely not intended here.

²⁰ To support his restoration with its artificial word order Merkelbach cited *Callim. fr.* 43.50–53 (Pfeiffer):

οἶδα Λεοντίουος -----
καὶ Μεγαρεῖς ἕτεροι τοὺς ἀπένασσαν ἐκεῖ
Νικαῖοι Μεγαρήες, ἔχω δ' Εὐβοίαν ἐνισπεῖν
φίλατο καὶ κεστοῦ δεσπότις ἦν Ἐρυκα.

The sense thus expressed, however, is just what is required in this line, for it is stated here that the priestess of Athena must assume the obligation of sexual abstinence.²¹ On the other hand this obligation need not seem too harsh, because she has already enjoyed her full share of love. In order to express this meaning it is not necessary to alter what was inscribed upon the stone, for another solution makes it possible to obtain satisfactory meter and word order. Only the stop inserted by the first editor at the end of line 9 must be removed, and the second word in line 10 must be understood as a variant orthography, due to iotacism, of ἐπέι: “it was necessary that a woman with the blood of noble ancestors should receive the priestly honor, but after she had already obtained her full share of the gifts of Aphrodite.”

The mention of her two sons at the end of this inscription makes it clear that Satorneila²² had been married; and if she is assumed to be of a certain age at the time of her selection as priestess, it could fairly be said that she had already received her share of love.²³ Did Apollo in this oracle require her to leave her husband? A different solution is preferable, for the true situation may be deduced from the phrase *πειθόμενοι Μοίραις* in line 14. This is an oracle of Apollo and it concerns a priestess of Athena: why then does it state that the citizens of Miletus must obey the *Μοίραις*? The injunction is no mere rhetorical embellishment, but rather an allusion to the most important factor in Satorneila’s personal situation. The Fates were not beneficent deities but rather the bringers of inescapable doom, and that is why

But this is not an apposite parallel, for the basic structure of these lines is clear: *οἶδα* or *ἔχω ἐπισπεῖν* with an object in the accusative. Understanding of the unusual word order is therefore not really as difficult as it would be in line 10 here; furthermore Callimachus evidently desired to avoid monotonous enumeration, which is not a problem in the oracle.

²¹ Note in this context the adjective *σεμνήν* at the end of line 14, which is applied to *Σατορνεῖλαν* at the beginning of the following line rather than (as would also have been possible) to the preceding word *Παλλάδι*; the section in prose at the beginning of the inscription states that Satorneila was *αἰρεθ[εῖσαν] ἐπ[ι] σωφροσύνη καὶ [σεμν]ότητι*.

²² On the name (the Latin *Saturnina*) cf. Herrmann 295 n.11.

²³ A similar meaning would result from modification of Herrmann’s word divisions in line 10: *ἀλλ’ ἐπι αἰς’ ἀνελεῖν γέρα ὧν φθάσεν Ἀφρογενείης*, “but it is her fate (ἐπι for ἐπεσσι) to renounce the gifts of Aphrodite which she had enjoyed previously” or “to which (by her appointment) she had become superior”; but *φθάνειν τινός* has no real parallel in either of these senses, and this oracle has no hint elsewhere that Athena is in any way superior to Aphrodite.

they are mentioned here: Satorneila is a widow.²⁴ Only after the death of her husband did the Milesians consult Apollo about the choice of a priestess; thus the selection of this lady, with these special obligations,²⁵ may now be seen as peculiarly appropriate.

It is apparent that the difficulties encountered by previous editors in interpreting this oracle derive from the fact that it is constructed largely of delicate allusions to particular circumstances in the honorand's private life. A literal translation will make clear how we understand this text:

“Late, O townsmen, concerning a priestess of Athena
 have you come to hear the divine inspired voice—
 who split the head of her very wise father
 4 and leaping among the Immortals danced a martial rhythm
 whence she obtained as her lot to preside over . . . citadels,
 a noble helper of cities, and in the arts
 a skilled instructor for famed craftsmen:
 8 for it was necessary that the honor of the priesthood of the
 self-appearing Maiden
 be received by a woman with the blood of noble ancestors,
 but after she had previously obtained her share of the gifts
 of Aphrodite,
 for the Cyprian goddess vies with virgin Athena,
 12 since the one is uninitiated in love and the bride-chamber
 but the other rejoices in marriages and melodious bridal
 songs.
 Accordingly in obedience to the Fates and to Pallas
 appoint chaste Satorneila as holy priestess.”

The carefully chosen vocabulary and elegant structure of this poem find an equal elaboration. In his dialogue *De Pyth.Or.* 396c Plutarch

²⁴ On the employment of older widows as priestesses in cults which required chastity see E. Fehrle, *Die kultische Keuschheit im Altertum* (Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten VI, Giessen 1910) 95, with the examples there cited.

²⁵ Perhaps these obligations may have some connection with the reproach uttered at the beginning of the oracle, ὄψέ ἰκεσθε, because if applied regularly they might have rendered this priesthood less attractive and hence difficult to fill (note that ὄψέ in line 1 is explained by γάρ in line 8); but it is also possible that this was not an established custom (for then the explanation in lines 11–13 might have been unnecessary), but rather a special ordinance imposed here because it was appropriate for Satorneila. Herrmann (p.293) poses the question “ob dahinter eine längere Vakanz eines schon bestehenden Priestertums zu sehen ist oder ob es überhaupt um die Neueinrichtung eines nach Aussage des Orakels schon lange fälligen Kultes geht.”

remarks *πολλάκις ἔφη θαυμάσαι τῶν ἐπῶν ὁ Διογενιανός, ἐν οἷς οἱ χρησιμοὶ λέγονται, τὴν φαυλότητα καὶ τὴν εὐτέλειαν.*²⁶ To such complaints this oracle of Didyma presents a striking contrast. Repetition of words is carefully avoided (note that no goddess is mentioned twice by the same name). In the antithesis of lines 12 and 13 are four different expressions for sexual relations, and the central idea of the priesthood is expressed by *ζακόρον* in line 1, *ιερηῖδα τειμήν* in line 8, and *ιερηφόρον ἀρήτειραν* in line 15. The poem abounds in Homeric words and forms, and its tendency toward elevated language is responsible for the numerous words which occur here for the first time: *Κρατογενείης*, *ἐρισώφρονος*, *εἰνόπλιον* beside the well-attested *ἐνόπλιος*, *ιερηῖδα* used as an adjective,²⁷ *εὐγενετήρων*, which takes its place next to the already known *εὐγενέτης* and *εὐγενέτειρα*, and finally *ιερηφόρον*, which is not cited by the dictionaries beside *ιεροφόρος* and *ιεραφόρος*.²⁸ all in a poem of fifteen lines.

Such effective use of words, combined with the knowledge demonstrated of Stoic theology, betray a poet of considerable erudition and skill who has also given his work a very sophisticated structure. We have already noted the three different expressions for 'priestess' which occur in the first and last verses and again in the middle of the poem, emphasizing what is after all the central theme of this oracle; nor is this the only tectonic device. The first two lines consist of an address to the inhabitants of Miletus, revealing the topic concerning which they have decided to consult Apollo,²⁹ and the last two hexameters address the Milesians once more in order to give them the god's response. Enclosed between this beginning and end is a description of the birth, power and functions of Athena, whose cult forms the basis of the whole matter, to which there corresponds the elegant depiction of the rivalry between Athena and Aphrodite. These two

²⁶ In Lucian, *Iupp. Trag.* 6, Hermes, told by Zeus to make a proclamation in verse, replies that he is afraid of being laughed at like Apollo for his metrical mistakes (cf. Plut. *Mor.* 396D: *τοὺς δὲ πολλοὺς τῶν χρησμῶν ὀρῶμεν καὶ τοῖς μέτροις καὶ τοῖς ὀνόμασι πλημμελείας καὶ φαυλότητος ἀναπεπληγμένους*).

²⁷ Although this usage of the word is not attested elsewhere, the formula in which it occurs (always at the end of a line) is characteristic of Didyma: see L. Robert, *CRAI* 1968 pp.580–81, and Herrmann 293 n.4.

²⁸ LSJ cites no example of any of these three forms used as an adjective: but see J. and L. Robert, *BullEpigr (REG 63)* 1950 p.171 no.134 (now *IG X.2.1* 58).

²⁹ Note the emphatic position of the words *ὄψέ . . . ἴκεθε* forming a strong hyperbaton at the beginning and end of this two-line section; the words within this frame supply the details.

sections concerning the goddess surround the statement of the qualifications necessary for the new priestess. The whole oracle is thus arranged into five nearly symmetrical and mutually interlocking sections. Not only does it honor Satorneila, it also has considerable value as a poem; her sons did well to have it cut on stone.

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