A Dedication and More Manumissions from Khaironeia

In Collaboration with Laurence Darmezin

Introduction

Study of this stone has had a chequered history. We shall show below that it was originally found early in the 20th century by Soteriadhis at the church of Ayía Paraskeví in the vale of Lykoúressi in the hills bordering the South side of the Kephisos valley a little to the East of the village of Kápraina (= ancient Khaironeia). It was subsequently moved—exactly when is unclear—to the Museum of Khaironeia where it was studied by one of us (JMF) in 1971; some of the texts (nos. 4–6) were included in his 1976 dissertation for the Université de Lyon II but removed from the version of the thesis published a decade later (Fossey, 1988) since in the meanwhile, as a follow-up to their joint publication of other similar Khaironeian texts (Roesch & Fossey, 1978; reprinted as chapter 10 in Fossey, 1991), it had been decided that the whole set of inscriptions should be published by Fossey together with the late Paul Roesch; accordingly Roesch had examined the stone in 1981, together with the other author of the present paper who was able to make use of the texts in her dissertation also for the Université de Lyon II (Darmezin, 1982; cf. now her monograph, 1999). As a result of the subsequent illness and death of Paul Roesch, there the matter lay for the best part of another decade until our decision to publish the following pages. It will be understood that what follows draws, therefore, upon quite a variety of information sources: photographs and notes of Fossey from the early 1970’s, the squeezes and field notes of Roesch from 1981, and the notes of Darmezin from the year 1981–1982. We were able to work with Roesch’s squeezes and field notes in the archives of the Maison de l’Orient Méditerranéenne at Lyon during a brief visit there by Fossey in the summer of 1998. Now another decade (and more) later, we finally move towards the publication of the results of our thinking about this stone.

Although Paul Roesch had not worked up the commentary at all he had been able to reconstruct parts of the three texts (especially nos. 2 and 3) on the front of the stone that were not legible to either of us both on the stone and on the squeezes and photographs. Since we have been unable to verify these readings we felt it advisable to distinguish his supplementary readings within
texts 2–3; accordingly in those texts letters are dotted or bracketed following his version but those letters of his which we were unable to read are printed in italicised type face; for the other five texts which are much better preserved this sort of distinction is unnecessary. In what follows we divided the primary tasks of preparation between us according to our different interests (Fossey on the stone and its history, the cultic implications and the prosopographic and onomastic commentary; Darmezin on the nature and formulation of the manumission texts and their context in Boiotia and Central Greece) but we have produced the final version together and thus take joint responsibility for the end result.

While we were working on the publication of these texts we became aware that Dr. Elizabeth A. Meyer (University of Virginia) was also working on them. Dr. Meyer presented a paper on them to the 9th International Conference on Boiotian Antiquities (Winnipeg 1998). After much discussion about how to deal with the rival claims to the material, the idea had been mooted that, since some of her conclusions and ours differed considerably, it might be good to publish the two papers side by side in the Proceedings of that conference; since, however, the publication of those Proceedings was destined not to be accomplished, the idea came to nought. That ill-fated arrangement would have allowed other scholars to judge for themselves the pro’s and con’s of the two sets of results. This situation explains why Darmezin (1999: 73–76, nos. 103–108) gives the ed. pr. of the manumission texts (our nos. 2–7) as “J.M. Fossey et L. Darmezin, Boeotia Antiqua VII/VIII, nos. 2–7”.

In the meanwhile Elizabeth Meyer (2008) has published her study of these texts and some comment is needed where appropriate on our variant readings, especially in the first three texts. Meyer has already done some of this comparing her readings with ours as published in L. Darmezin’s monograph (1999). It is, however, necessary to clarify a detail. Meyer says “her (sc. Darmezin’s) readings depend at least in part on notations made by Paul Roesch on the squeezes kept in the Istitut Fernand Courby; mine (sc. Meyer’s) are based on examination of the stones (sic.—stone) made in the summers of 1995 and 1997”. The fact is that the squeezes in question were made by Paul Roesch himself and were an integral part of his study, with L. Darmezin, of the texts; it is we two who, during final work on this paper, were able to revisit his squeezes (LD having been with him when he made them) and compare them with his notes. Elizabeth Meyer has indeed studied the stone itself but so have we and so had Paul Roesch; although only two of us actually publish the current study it is the result of work by three people, one of whom (unfortunately no longer with us) was the undoubted master of Boiotian epigraphy.