A bottom left corner of a limestone stele, found in the early 1970s, built into the chapel of Hagios Elias (Αγι/ομΛκρόν-Λιάς), situated on a hilltop, ca. 200 m. east of the archaeological site of Lycosura. The stone is built into a window frame on the south side of the chapel. It is cut on the right and somewhat unevenly on top; the left side and probably the bottom are intact. The text covers less than one half of the preserved stele. The inscribed face is fairly well preserved but a fresh coat of stucco applied just before my visit in August 2001 made letters at the edges difficult to read and concealed the left side.

H. 0.40, W. 0.42, Th. 0.14. L.H. 0.015–0.02. Interlinear space ca. 0.01


Cf. L. Dubois BE 1988 no. 627; SEG XLVII 435.2

Photograph: Matthaiou and Pikoulas 1986, pls. 10 and 12 (good).

ca. saec. II a.

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Q[----------------------------- Δεσπ]
2 οίναι ἰδίοι μὲν δέκα ἄμ[ές] - - - - γυναικί
dε λεχοί ἀποθί ἐμεν ἈΝ[------------- -]
4 δέκα ἀμέρας ἀλλοτροίοι δέ[---------- πέν]-
te άμερας τά δέ λοιπά ΕΥ[----------- -]
6 οὐ[ην καθώς ἄν ὁ ἱερεὺς [εἴπηι (vel sim.) - - -]
vacat 0.225

Restorations. Suppl. Matthaiou et Pikoulas.

1 For a photograph of the chapel before the restoration during which the inscription was discovered see Jost 1985, pl. 42 fig. 2.
Epigraphical Commentary. I have seen the stone. The letters are quite thick but not very deeply cut. Alphas with both straight and broken crossbars appear; some omicrons have a middle dot; no serifs. In lines 2 and 4 Dubois (BE 1988 no. 627) read ωι for ω_nick in the photograph. The omicrons are, however, clear on the stone.

Commentary

This is the second sacred law coming from the sanctuary of Despoina in Lycosura, the first being the better, though still imperfectly preserved, LSCG 68.3 The indications of numbers of days (lines 2, 4, 5) and the reference to childbirth (line 3) suggest that the present document belongs to the same class as no. 7 above. In its present state the text defies translation. Only line 6 makes any coherent sense: ‘[- - -] (shall) sacrifice according to what the priest (says, prescribes,’ vel sim.). Although it seems clear, as the first editors realized,4 that the fragment deals with cathartic requirements, the details remain conjectural.5 For ιδίοι vs. ἀλληλοτριαίων (lines 2, 4) cf. LSCG 124.4; LSS 119.36 LSAM 12.4–6.7

Language. The dialect is on the whole Arcadian, but the Doric infinitive ἐμεν (i.e. ἐμέν) is found alongside the Arcadian infinitive ἔμεν. Dubois (BE 1988 no. 627) postulated, accordingly, that the letter cutter was Dorian.8 The adverb ἀποθετ (line 3; ‘far away’, ‘apart’)9 is altogether new. Matthaiou and Pikoulas (1986, 76) suggested that γυναικὶ δὲ λεκαίνετ = ἀποθετ γυναικός λεχοῦς.10 It would therefore have the force of a postpositive rather than that of an adverb. Dubois pointed out that ἀποθετ may equally be taken with ἐμεν which would thus be an imperative infinitive. The restoration [Δεσπ]οιναίνει in lines 1–2 is almost

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3 See further immediately below.
5 For cathartic requirements see above no. 7.
6 Referring to pollution contacted through contact with a corpse, the dead being a family member vs. someone else. Cf. LSAM 18.7–9; 84.6–9.
7 Distinguishing between sexual intercourse with one’s own/not one’s own spouse as a source for pollution.
8 ἐμέν appears in an inscription from Tegea (IG V 2, 159 (= Buck, GD no. 70) 4, 6), but the dialect of that inscription is not Arcadian. See Hiller von Gärtringen and Buck’s commentaries ad loc. On the Arcadian infinitive see Buck, GD 163; L. Dubois, Recherches sur le dialecte arcadien, Louvain-la-Neuve, 1986, I 111 (p. 175).
9 LSJ suppl. s.v.
10 LSAM 51.5–8. On ἀποθετ with the dative see Buck, GD 136.1. For childbirth as a source of pollution see above commentary on 7.6.