



Hellenistic times I cannot guess, but it should not be more unacceptable than the Christian halo, of which I expect it is the ancestor. Still it would be worth examining original statues of all periods of Greek art to find out how regularly the *meniskos* was used.

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#### Demeter on a Knossian ring-inscription

In a recent issue of this *Journal* (XCV, 1975, pp. 231-2), R. F. Willetts reviews the excellent publication of J. N. Coldstream, *Knossos, the Sanctuary of Demeter* (BSA, Suppl. Pap. 8, 1973). He draws attention to a boustrophedon inscription on a silver ring bezel, which he transcribes, after Coldstream:

→Νοθοκάρτης | ←νικέτας F | →Μάτρι

The reading seems to support Willetts' own views on the cult of Demeter as a Mother-Goddess in Crete.

May I express some doubts about the actual reading of the dedication? I recently had the opportunity of examining the Knossos ring in the Heraklion Museum, by courtesy of the Director, Dr Alexiou, and of his Assistant, A. Lebesi. Magnifying techniques and contrasted lighting were available in the now well-equipped laboratory of the Museum. It appears that the lettering of the inscription is not exactly what Coldstream believed, although his photograph and facsimile are fairly accurate. First, the supposed *digamma* is a true *alpha*, with parallel strokes, as often occurs on archaic stones: the figure is quite similar to the other *alphas* of the text if you read it in the proper sense, i.e. as the first letter of the second direct line. Secondly, the last *sigma* of the retrograde line, with its two short angular strokes at sharp angles at each end of the *hasta*, seems most unlikely. There is actually a kind of cross-hatching on the surface, which is rather deceiving, but upon it you can distinguish the three bars of a *delta*, a very clear, although small and slightly debased one. The *hasta* forms one of these bars, and one other is the upper stroke of the so-called *sigma*.

So we must read the inscription as follows:

→Νοθοκάρτης | ←Νικέτα Δ | →αμάτρι.

*Νικέτα* represents Nothokartes' patronym, a name not previously known in Crete, but quite correct in Ancient Greek. The dedication is a trivial one to Demeter, without any hint of games or contests at her sanctuary. I am sorry to put forward such a plain reading. It does not contradict the value of Coldstream's work about the Knossos sanctuary, nor the interest of Willett's study on *Cretan Cults and Festivals*, even as regards Demeter. But it may be convenient not to allow further speculations upon a misleading transcription of this document.

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#### Textual Problems in the *Periplus Maris Erythraei*

In a short paper<sup>1</sup> I have tried to show that passages of the *Periplus Maris Erythraei* which seemed incomprehensible to, and were altered by, critics and editors, are in reality perfectly sound, when examined in the light of the *usus auctoris*, late Greek prose usage or the context. I should like to offer a few more examples here.<sup>2</sup>

At §26 we read:

Εὐδαίμων δὲ ἐπεκλήθη (scil. Εὐδαίμων Ἀραβία), πρότερον οὖσα πόλις, ὅτε, μίῃ ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰνδικῆς εἰς τὴν Αἰγύπτου ἐρχομένων μηδὲ ἀπὸ Αἰγύπτου τολμῶντων εἰς τοὺς ἔσω τόπους διαίρειν ἀλλ' ἄχρι ταύτης

<sup>1</sup> 'On the Text of the *Periplus Maris Erythraei*', *Mnemosyne* 1975, p. 293 ff. The present paper is the result of a *δευτέρος πλοῦς* through the same material.

<sup>2</sup> Unless otherwise stated, the bibliography quoted by me is contained in H. Frisk, *Le périple de la mer Erythrée*, Göteborg 1927 (*Göt. Högsk. Årsskr.* 1927, 1), to which I refer the reader for the sake of brevity.