

XV. On the *Lex Sacra* of Physcus

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In Ziehen's collection of regulations for Greek cults we have an interesting document from Physcus in the Rhodian Peraea, which, in spite of the efforts of many scholars, is still not fully comprehensible.¹ Wilhelm in his comment on the term *logeia*, which figures in this text, remarked briefly that lines 7–8 of the inscription are not correctly restored.² Ziehen could not remove the difficulty. Meanwhile our knowledge of the institutions of Rhodes and her Peraea has been considerably advanced by the publication of new inscriptions.³ With the help of the new documents and studies I should like to try to give to our *lex sacra* a more correct form.

The main subject treated in the inscription is to be found in lines 5–10, which have to be restored. Stengel supposed that the embassy sent by Physcus to Lindus was concerned with the levy of a tax on the grazing of animals (brought for the sacrifices) on the pasture land of the sanctuary. Accordingly he restored in line 8 ἐπελασάντ]ων. Indeed, we find in Greek cult regulations certain items referring to the grazing of flocks on temple grounds,⁴ but there is no mention of any tax paid for the temporary feeding of victims destined for use in the cult. On the contrary, the animals on such occasion were usually allowed to be fed free.⁵ This consideration led Ziehen to restore in line 8 πιπρασκόντ]ων and to suppose that the tax in question was levied on the sale of victims needed for the sacrifices. We know that in many cult

¹ L. Ziehen, *Leges Graecorum sacrae* 2, no. 150. The inscription was first published by G. Cousin and G. Deschamps, *BCH* 18 (1894) 31, no. 10; then by Hiller von Gaertringen with the assistance of P. Stengel, *AM* 21 (1896) 63–6. It figures also in the collection of F. Bechtel, *SGDI* no. 4156.

² *AM* 23 (1898) 416–17, note 3.

³ Chr. Blinkenberg, *Lindos II: Inscriptions*, vols. 1–2 (Berlin–Copenhagen 1941); P. M. Fraser and G. E. Bean, *The Rhodian Peraea* (Oxford 1954) 1–49; M. Segre and G. Pugliese Carratelli, *Annuario* 27–9 (1949–51) 141–318; 33–4 (1955–6) 156–81.

⁴ Ziehen (above, note 1) nos. 62, 76, 96, 100 and pp. 111, 145, 294. Cf. A. Wilhelm, *JOAI* 8 (1895) 10–12; *SBWien* 224 (1946) 19–20.

⁵ Ziehen (above, note 1) 194. Cf. Xen. *Anab.* 5.3.11.

centers the animals were not brought by the worshipers from their homes but purchased on the spot, and that a sales tax on such transaction could be levied by the state.⁶ Indeed, an exemption from the sales tax on sheep was granted by Attalus III to the sanctuary of Apollo Tarsenus in Mysia.⁷ But, as Feyel has rightly observed, this was an exceptional favor accorded on the occasion of a festival. Greek feasts were usually connected with fairs, and an exemption from sales tax was quite often proclaimed to draw the people to the sanctuary.⁸ But in our document there is no mention of feast or of gathering of people; on the contrary, the habitual cult practice seems to be assumed. I think, therefore, that here it is a question of the usual contribution to the cult. As we can conclude safely from the decree of Camirus of the early third century B.C., the cities and commonalties of the Rhodian Peraea contributed in kind and money to the cults in their mother cities.⁹ The control and the management of the public cults were debated at the meeting of the *mastroi*, or delegates, who represented the territorial and religious subdivisions called *ktōinai*. Among other items the expenditure for the public cults was certainly discussed. As for raising the contribution itself, there was a twofold system in operation in the financial administration of the Greek cities: (1) the appointment of well-to-do citizens, called *chorēgoi*, who had to assume the cult expenses; or (2) the levy of a tax imposed on the whole body of citizens. The first system was traditional and more widely practiced. The decree of Lindus—of a later date—deals with the appointment of the *chorēgoi* for the celebration of the feast of Dionysus *Sminthius*.¹⁰ I think that we have the same situation in the *lex sacra* of Phycus. Consequently, I should like to restore the end of line 7 and the beginning of line 8 as follows: ἀπὸ / [τῶν χοραγεῖν αἰρημέν]ων.

The question brought before the people of Lindus for a decision concerned the contribution for the common cults. The mother

⁶ Ziehen (above, note 1) 249. Cf. *Geogr. Graeci* 1.194m.

⁷ C. Bradford Welles, *Royal Correspondence* (New Haven 1934) no. 47, 5–6. Cf. M. Feyel, *REA* 42 (1940) 137–41; A. Wilhelm, *Griech. Königsbriefe*, “Klio Beih.” 48 (1945) 35 ff.

⁸ Ziehen (above, note 1) 256; A. Wilhelm, *Beiträge zur griech. Inschriftenkunde* (Wien 1909) 196–7; F. Sokolowski, *Lois sacrées de l'Asie Mineure* (Paris 1955) 97.

⁹ *IG* xii.1.694 = *Syll*³.339. Cf. P. M. Fraser, *La Parola del Passato* 7 (1952) 194–5; G. Pugliese Carratelli, *ibid.* 4 (1949) 158–61.

¹⁰ *IG* xii.1.762 = Ziehen (above, note 1) no. 146.

city was petitioned to let it be collected, as had been done previously, from the well-to-do citizens whom the people of Phycus had chosen. This question is still more explicitly treated in the next part of the inscription. Stengel restored in line 10 *κοι]νῶι* and linked this adverb with the sacrifices "celebrated in common." Ziehen read *διατάγματι κοι]νῶι*, but the restoration does not seem appropriate to the style and wording of the document. I suppose that the reading *ἐν τῶι κοι]νῶι* would be the most suitable. According to the recent study of Fraser and Bean, the territories of the incorporated Peraea, attached as they were to the three Rhodian cities as demes, preserved and even developed their local, political and religious organizations called *koina*. The inscriptions recently published mention *koinon Amiōn*, *Tymniōn* and perhaps *Physkiōn*.¹¹ I think that the *koinon* of Phycus, comprising the city itself and its surroundings, is hinted at in our inscription. The term perhaps denotes a *dēmos* incorporated in Lindus.

Lines 11–15 of the *lex sacra* give us still more details on the tax to be collected. The levy of the contribution seems to be committed to the persons described as *hoi ōnoumenoi*. This term designates the professional tax-collectors to whom the state farmed out the gathering of taxes. The possibility is not excluded that such collectors in Rhodes were called *hierōnai*.¹² The levying of tax by the professional collectors was nearly always linked with abuse and extortion. It seems that the *koinon* of Phycus does not approve this manner of collecting, but asks to keep its previous system of obtaining contributions from the well-to-do citizens.

The matter treated in the *lex sacra* of Phycus seems to reveal an attempt made by Lindus to interfere in the internal affairs of the incorporated commonalty. We know many instances of such interference linked with material profits for the ruling city. Fraser and Bean rightly emphasized the fact that the central Rhodian government and the three mother cities on the island exercised a strict control over the incorporated territories.¹³ The profit of the feast of the Castabeia, for instance, had to be paid to the treasury of Rhodes. The contracts and leases issued by the

¹¹ Fraser and Bean (above, note 3) 50, 91, 97, 124 ff. A. Laumonier, *Les cultes indigènes en Carie* (Paris 1958) 142, 194–5, 197–9, 214–5 ff.

¹² Blinkenberg (above, note 3) no. 449, 12; *IG* xii. suppl. 120, 13. Cf. L. Robert, *Le sanctuaire de Sinuri* (Paris 1945) 70, note 10.

¹³ Fraser and Bean (above, note 3) 125–6.

commonalties of the Peraea had to be approved by the central authorities, and new stipulations could be imposed. Various compulsory taxes were collected, as was usual in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt.¹⁴ The inscription of Physcus discloses the endeavor of the people of Peraea to maintain their religious and political autonomy in the face of harsh treatment by Rhodian authorities.

In the light of the present discussion I propose to restore the *lex sacra* of Physcus as follows:

- [Ἐπ' ἱερέως τ]ᾶς Ἀθάνας τᾶς Λινδίας καὶ
 [τοῦ Διὸς] τοῦ Πολιέως Φιλοκράτευσ
 [.....] Ἀρταμιτίου δωδεκάται
 [ἔδοξε μάστροι]ς καὶ Λινδίοις· ἐπιστατᾶν
 5 [γνώμα υ προεσβε]ῖαν προεσβεύσαντος
 [τοῦ δεῖνος ποτὶ τ]ὸν δᾶμον υ ὅπως ἂ λογεί-
 [α, καθὼς εἴθιστο πρό]τερον ἐν Φύσκωι, ἀπὸ
 [τῶν χοραγεῖν αἰρημέν]ων τὰ ἱερεῖα καὶ τὰ λοι-
 [πὰ εἰς τὰς δαμοτελεῖς] παρὰ Λινδίοις καὶ Φυσ-
 10 [κίοις θυσίας, ἐν τῷ κοι]νῷ λογεύηται, κα-
 [θάπερ ὁ δᾶμος ἐψαφίσα]το καὶ μηθὲν
 [τέλεσμα γίνηται καταβα]λλόμενον ὑπὸ
 [τῶν συνδαμετᾶν ποτὶ τ]οὺς ὠνουμένους
 [τὰν ὠνὰν τᾶς λογείας πα]ρὰ Λινδίων καὶ Φυσ-
 15 [κίων..... συνεχώρησεν] ὁ δᾶμος ἐπακο-
 [λούθως -----]λοισ υ

¹⁴ A problem similar to that in our inscription seems to be treated in *Pap. Hib.* 1.77.