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ARTICLE VII.

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

TRANSLATION OF A TABLET RECENTLY DISCOVERED IN GREECE.

In the middle of September last, the inhabitants of a small place called Constantini, in Messenia, Greece, while seeking for marble for the door-posts of their church (St. Constantine's), discovered among many interesting ruins two square tablets, the sides of each of which measured a French metre, containing very lengthy inscriptions regarding the exoteric rites pertaining to the Mysteries of the Great Goddesses. The two tablets had been originally one.

The place where these were found is undoubtedly the site of the Carnasian grove (Pausan. IV. 33. 4. 5.), where the mysteries of Demeter and Coré were solemnized and considered second only to the Eleusinian in sanctity. It is only a mile distant from the ancient Andania, which Pausanias identifies with the Messenic Oechalia of Homer (Il. 2. 596). I offer the following translation of the inscriptions:

TABLET I.

Concerning the Priests and Priestesses. Let the scribe of the councils swear straightway (unless any be sick) those who have become holy officers, as they pour out the sacrificial blood and wine, the underwritten oath: "I swear by the deities to whom the mysteries belong, to have a care that everything pertaining to the ceremonial be conducted in a godly and righteous manner, and that neither shall I myself do anything unseemly or wrong to the injury of the mysteries, nor shall I allow any other so to act, but shall follow the prescribed rules, and shall swear both the priestesses and the priest according to the established order. May I obtain the rewards of the pious, if I keep my oath, and the contrary, if I break my oath. And if any one will not swear, let him be mulcted in a thousand drachmas, and let another be chosen in his stead from the same tribe. And let the priest and the holy officers swear the priestesses in the temple of Carneius on the first day of the mysteries the same oath, and let them add the following: 'and I have passed my life as towards man holily and justly.' And her who will not swear let the holy officers mulct in a thousand drachmas, and let them not permit her to perform the sacrificial duties or to participate in the mysteries, but let those who have sworn perform these rites. And let those who have become holy officers and priestesses in the fifty-fifth year, swear the same oath in the eleventh month before the mysteries.

Of Transmittal. And the pot and books,¹ which Mnesistratus gave, let

¹ See Pausan. IV. 26. 7, 8.

the holy officers transmit to their successors, and let them transmit all else which may have been prepared for the mysteries.

Of Fillets. And let the holy officers and priestesses wear fillets of white wool, and those initiated in the first mysteries wear a stlengis; but when the holy officers make proclamation, let them all lay aside the stlengis and crown themselves with laurel.

Of Garments. Let the initiated stand barefoot, and wear white garments, and the women not wear transparent ones, nor fringes in their robes broader than a half-finger, and let the uninitiated women wear a linen tunic and a robe worth not more than a hundred drachmas, and the girls a calasiris or sindonites, and a robe not worth more than a mina, and the female servants a calasiris or sindonites and a robe not worth more than fifty drachmas, and the priestesses, the women a calasiris or hypodema without gathers and a robe not worth more than two minas, and the girls a calasiris and a robe not worth more than a hundred drachmas. And in the procession let the priestesses, the women wear an under garment and robe of wool with fringes not broader than a half-finger, and the girls a calasiris and robe not transparent. And let no women wear gold or rouge, or white paint, or chaplet, or braided hair, or shoes, except such as are made of wool or the skins of sacrificed animals. And let the priestesses have chariots round and—— and on them pillows or cushions white, without fringe, or purple; and let them who are to be prepared for the service of the deities have their garments as the holy officers may ordain. And if any have a garment other than that required, or do aught else that is forbidden, let not the officer of the women permit her to pass, and let her have an opportunity to cleanse herself, and let her be holy before the deities.

Oath of the Officer of the Women. And when the holy officers themselves swear, let them swear the officer of the women before the same holy officers: "I swear that I shall have a care concerning the garments and the rest of the matters commanded in the rules."

Of the Procession. And in the procession let Mnesistratus lead; then the priest of the deities, to whom the mysteries belong, after the priestess; then the judge of the games, the sacrificers, the flute-players; and afterwards the holy virgins, as they may be chosen by lot, leading the cars with the chests holding the holy mysteries upon them; then the female ruler of the feast of Demeter and those who are attached to her as assistants; then the priestess of Demeter by the hippodrome; then the priestess of Demeter at Aegila; then the priestesses one by one, as they may be chosen by lot; then the holy officers, just as the ten may ordain. And let the officer of the women allot the priestesses and virgins, and have a care that they take their place in the procession as they may be chosen by lot. And let the sacrifices be borne in the procession and let them sacrifice to Demeter a pregnant sow, to Hermes a ram, to the great deities a young female pig, to Apollo Carneius a boar, to Hagna¹ a sheep.

¹ Coré or Proserpine. (Paus. 4. 33).

Of Tents. And let not the holy officers allow any one to have a tent in the square larger than thirty feet, or to place either skins or curtains around the tents, and let them not allow any of those who are not holy officers to have a tent where the holy officers wear their fillets, and let no one of the uninitiated approach stealthily the place where they wear their fillets. And let them provide vessels for purification. And let them record both from what one must purify, and what one must not have to enter, and what one must have in the tents. Let no one have couches in the tent, nor silver vessels worth more than three hundred drachmas, and if otherwise, let not the holy officers permit it, and let the surplus be holy to the deities.

Of the Disorderly. And when the sacrifices and mysteries are performed, let all keep silent and hear the instructions, and let the holy officers scourge and drive from the mysteries the disobedient or misbehaving.

Of the Police. And let twenty of the holy officers stand as a police and obey those who officiate in the mysteries, and let them have a care that all things be done with propriety and order by those present, even as those appointed over these announce, and let them scourge the disobedient and misbehaving. And if any one of the police do not as is written, or act improperly in any other way to the injury of the mysteries, let him be judged by the holy officers, and if he be condemned, let him not participate in the mysteries.

Concerning the Income. And the received income of the mysteries let the five appointed by the deme collect. And let the rulers bring in (not twice the same persons) each worth not less than a talent, and let the senate of the appointed registers record the value of his property. And in like manner also the worth of the introducers; and let the treasurer administer the finances with the collectors. And when the mysteries are completed, let them calculate the sum total at the first regular meeting of the councils, and let them give an account to the steward immediately, writing in full the income produced from the purification, and the maintenance from those initiated in the first mysteries and any other revenue, and the defrayed expenses and so forth, and let them immediately make their reckoning to the receivers and let them give bonds, if they may be found defaulters—.

(The rest of the first tablet is defective.)

TABLET II.

(The first part of the second tablet is defective).

Of Offences. And if any one, in the days in which the sacrifices and the mysteries take place, be caught either having committed theft or any other offence, let him be brought to the holy officers, and let the freeman, if he be condemned, pay double, and let the slave be scourged and pay double the amount of the theft, and let the fine for the other offences be 20 drachmas; and if he do not pay straightway, let the master deliver the servant to the party wronged for his use, and if not, let him be responsible for double.

Concerning those who steal in the Temple. Let no one steal from the holy place. And if any one be caught, let the slave be scourged by the holy officers, and let the freeman pay as much as the holy officers adjudge, and let the discoverer bring them to the holy officers and let him receive——.

Concerning the refuge (?) for slaves. Let the holy place be a refuge for slaves, as the priests may appoint the place, and let no one receive the fugitives——— or give them employment. Let him who acts contrary to the rules be responsible to the master——— to the sum of 500 drachmas.

Concerning the Fountain. And of the fountain¹ called Hagna in the old inscriptions and the image¹ near the fountain let Mnesistratus have charge, so long as he lives, and let him participate after the holy officers in the sacrifices and the mysteries, and as much as the sacrificers may place upon the table near the fountain; and the skins of the victims let Mnesistratus take, and of the income, as much as the sacrificers present by the fountain and cast into the treasury when it is prepared, let Mnesistratus take the third part. But let the two parts and any special offering of the sacrificers be holy to the deities. And let the priest and the holy officers have a care that from the income offerings be prepared for the deities, whatever may seem best to the councils.

Of the preparation of the Treasuries. Let the holy officers who may be in office in the fifty-fifth year have a care with the architect that two closed stone treasuries be prepared, and let them place one in the temple of the great deities and the other by the fountain, in such place as shall seem safe to them, and let them make keys, and of the one near the fountain let Mnesistratus keep the one key, and the holy officers the other; and of the one in the temple let the holy officers keep the key and open them yearly at the mysteries, and the counted income from each treasury separately let them record and take, and let them give also to Mnesistratus the part of the income belonging to him, as is written in the rules.

Of the Holy Banquet. Let the holy officers take from the victims led in the procession from each that which belongs to the deities, and use the rest of the flesh for the holy banquet with the priestess and virgins, and let them join with them the priest and the priestesses and the priestess of Carneius and Mnesistratus and his wife and family and of the artists those that perform duty in the dances and render service to them———.

Of the Market. Let the holy officers appoint a place in which all commodities shall be sold, and let the overseer of the market who belongs to the city have a care that the sellers sell honestly and fairly, and use weights and measures agreeing with the standard, and let him order the prices and let no one buy on time or connect usury with his bargain (?), and with regard to those who do not sell according to these rules let him scourge the slaves and mulct the freemen in 20 drachmas and let the fine belong to the holy officers.

¹ See Pausanias, 4 33.

Concerning Water. And let the overseer of the market have a care also about the water that at the time of the great assembly no one injure either the ——— or the conduits or any other part of the water-works in the temple, and that ———; and if he take any doing aught that is forbidden, let him scourge the slave and mulct the freeman in 20 drachmas, and let the fine belong to the holy officers.

Of Unction and Bathing. Let the overseer of the market have a care that ——— charge the bathers no more than two chalcoi, and furnish fire ———, and that the furnisher of wood for the anointing room furnish wood both dry and sufficient for those using the unction daily from the fourth to the seventh hour. And let no slave be anointed. And let the holy officers give out the furnishing of wood for the anointing room. And if any of those thus appointed or of the bath-attendants do not according to the rules, let the overseer of the market scourge the slave, and let him mulct the freeman for each fault in 20 drachmas, and let the fine belong to the holy officers.

Of the Record of Judgment. When they (?) make any regulation in the great assembly or condemn any, let them bring the judgment in the prytaneum. And let them record ——— in the temple whom they may condemn and for what cause ———.

Of the Rules. Let those appointed to write the rules as they may be determined give a copy to the law-expounders, and let them take and show it to him who has need, and in the mysteries let there be joined in service to the priests the herald and flute-player and prophet and architect——.

(The rest is defective.)

As a distinction is constantly made between $\delta \iotaερεϋς$ and $οι \iotaεροι$, I have translated the latter "holy officers." Perhaps consistency would demand that $\iotaεροι$ be translated "holy women" rather than "priestesses." I have copied from an Athenian newspaper ($\Phiιλοπατρις$), and doubtless some of the *lacunae* are attributable to it rather than the condition of the tablets. I make no comment, but call the attention of those interested in archaeology to this very interesting discovery.

HOWARD CROSBY,
New York University

Feb. 3, 1859.