

ARCTOS

ACTA PHILOLOGICA FENNICA

VOL. LIV



HELSINKI 2020

ARCTOS – ACTA PHILOLOGICA FENNICA

Arctos has been published since 1954, annually from vol. 8 (1974). *Arctos* welcomes submissions dealing with any aspect of classical antiquity, and the reception of ancient cultures in mediaeval times and beyond. *Arctos* presents research articles and short notes in the fields of Greek and Latin languages, literatures, ancient history, philosophy, religions, archaeology, art, and society. Each volume also contains reviews of recent books. The website is at www.journal.fi/arctos.

Publisher:

Klassillis-filologinen yhdistys – Klassisk-filologiska föreningen (The Classical Association of Finland), c/o House of Science and Letters, Kirkkokatu 6, FI – 00170 Helsinki, Finland.

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ISSN 0570–734–X

Layout by Vesa Vahtikari

Printed by KTMP Group Oy, Mustasaari

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TWO RARE NAMES FROM INSCRIPTIONS IN THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM OF MESSENIA*

NIKOLETTA KANAVOU

A fragment of a Doric column, which is displayed in the Archaeological Museum of Messenia (inv. no. Λ 427), preserves a votive inscription offered by the priestess Archido, daughter of Chrysippos. Here is the text (as in *IG V 1 1414*):

Ἀρχιδῶ
Χρυσίππου
ἱέρεια (διὰ)
γέγους¹
(a divine name followed)

The inscription, which was found in ancient Asine, is dated to the second century AD. This is the only definite attestation of the name Ἀρχιδῶ and is recorded in *LGN IIIA*. There is a further probable attestation from Messenia, again from a votive inscription, of a much earlier date ([Ἀρ]χιδοὶ ἀνέθεκε; *SEG LXII 222*). Another attestation of a similar female name, Ἀρχιδία (*LGN IV*),² is roughly contemporary with that of the first Ἀρχιδῶ. The name is understood either as a short form of a name like Ἀρχιδάμα and Ἀρχιδίκη / Ἀρχιδίκα, or as a feminine form of Ἀρχιδας and Ἀρχιδης, which are rare names themselves (no more than three attestations between them, all from the Hellenistic and Imperial

* Thanks go to the anonymous reviewers of *Arctos* for their useful suggestions.

¹ Alternative reading γένομέ[νη] (proposed by Oikonomides, *SEG XXII 313. 4*).

² Name of a deceased wife in a bilingual (Greek–Latin) inscription from Perinthos (Thrace).

periods: see *LGPN* I).³ This group of names is derived from ἄρχω “to rule”;⁴ -ίδης / -ίδας is a standard patronymic ending. For the feminine form in -ώ, cf. Νικίδης / Νικίδας – Νικιδώ, Ἀλκίδης / Ἀλκίδας – Ἀλκιδώ, Γλαυκίδης / Γλαυκίδας – Γλαυκιδώ etc.

It would be tempting to regard Ἀρχιδώ as an appropriately significant name for a priestess, one that would denote her leading role in religious ceremonies. Ἀρχιδώ brings to mind another name, however distant in time and context, that of the leading chorus girl Ἀγιδώ in Alcman’s famous *Partheneion* (fr. 1), a song performed by Spartan maidens probably in a religious setting.⁵ While names of girls in poetry were, more often than not, intentional choices, it is hard to be sure whether real priestesses’ names, presumably given at birth, are to be regarded as “speaking names” (names were often given to honour a relative). The meanings of many of these names, however, suggest that they were chosen to reflect hopes or expectations about a girl’s future abilities and prospects, in some cases with direct relevance to a religious role.⁶ This is a possibility for Ἀρχιδώ – but a possibility on which the reading of l. 4 of our inscription has some bearing. (διὰ) γέγονυς would suggest that Ἀρχιδώ was a priestess by virtue of her descent group (*genos*), which might make it more likely that her name was purposefully chosen at birth.⁷ The same is not equally true of the alternative reading proposed by Oikonomides, γέγομ[ε]ν[η],⁸ which is perhaps more likely to be correct, as it spares the need to assume an omitted (διὰ). This reading would simply imply that she was at some point appointed as priestess, although this would not exclude the possibility that she still belonged to a descent group from which priesthoods were appointed.

³ For the single attestation of Ἀρχίδης (in the genitive Ἀρχίδου), there is some doubt as to whether Ἀρχίνου (name Ἀρχίνος) should be read instead; see the relevant entry in *LGPN* I.

⁴ F. Bechtel, *Die historischen Personennamen des Griechischen bis zur Kaiserzeit*, Halle 1917, 83–84.

⁵ On this poem, see F. Budelmann, *Greek Lyric. A Selection*, Cambridge 2018, 57–65, 74 on the name Ἀγιδώ (ἄγω), which “suggests pre-eminence”.

⁶ J. B. Connelly, *Portrait of a Priestess: Women and Ritual in Ancient Greece*, Princeton – Oxford 2007, 46, notes with regard to personal names of historical priestesses that they “often reflect their beauty or some other quality that sets them apart from other women”, and she gives the following examples: Καλλιστώ “Beautiful”, Μεγίστη “Great”, Χρυσίς “Golden”, Θεοδότη “God-Given”.

⁷ See J. H. Blok – S. D. Lambert, “The Appointment of Priests in Attic gene”, *ZPE* 169 (2009) esp. 119 n. 119: “It was a real-life feature of *gene* that girls born into them might be given appropriate priestly names, cf. Penteteris, priestess of Athena”.

⁸ See above (n. 1).

The fragment of an inscribed *stèle*, also at the Archaeological Museum of Messenia (inv. no. Λ 450), which mentions the name Ἀρώτιχος, poses more difficulties. This piece was found in the seaside village of Petalidi; the relevant museum label places it in the fourth or third century BC, making it an earlier specimen than the majority of the finds from Petalidi, which date to the Roman period. The clearly legible personal name is intriguing, while the surrounding text, which spans three fragmentary lines, is difficult to read. Here is the text provided by Arapogianni in her account of inscribed monuments at the Archaeological Museum of Messenia,⁹ and reprinted in *SEG XLVIII 514J*:

ΑΡΩΤΙΧΟΣ ΠΑΝΤΕ|ΕΟΛΑΙΑΣ.ΔΕΥ|ΕΠΕΙΔΗΜΗ

Arapogianni presents this inscription, among others from ancient Korone, in a further publication,¹⁰ in which she spells the name as ΑΡΩΤΥΧΟΣ; she does not explain the new spelling, and the inscription clearly has an I, not an Υ.¹¹ Arapogianni's survey of inscriptions from ancient Korone is recorded in *SEG LX 425*, with a note by Papazarkadas regarding the personal name ΑΡΩΤΥΧΟΣ: "No attested name springs to mind". True, no Ἀρώτιχος (or Ἀρώτυχος for that matter) is recorded in *LGN*, and the name is otherwise unknown. Similar names are hardly attested. The reading of the name Ἄρωτος in *IG XI 4 814* (Delos, second century BC) is likely, but not certain, and in *SB XXVI 16560, 96* (Arsinoite, second/third century AD) even less so.¹²

⁹ *ArchDelt* 50 (1995) B [2000] 173.

¹⁰ X. Arapogianni, "Αρχαιολογικά ευρήματα από την αρχαία Κορώνη", in P. Pantazopoulos – E. Kouloukea (eds.), *Ομηρική Αίπεια – Αρχαία Κορώνη – Πεταλίδι. Παρελθόν, Παρόν και Μέλλον* (Πρακτικά Επιστημονικού Συνεδρίου, Πεταλίδι, 5–7 Αυγούστου 2005), Petalidi, 103–4.

¹¹ This observation is based on my informal study of the inscription at the Archaeological Museum of Messenia.

¹² *IG XI 4 814. 3*: Ἄρωγος has also been proposed. *SB XXVI 16560, 96*: the most recent edition (A. Martin – R. Pintaudi, "Le journal fiscal *SB XXVI 16560*: une réédition", *Aegyptus* 95 [2015] 25–42) has Ἐρωτος (a genitive is needed at that place). Hesychius (7179) mentions an obscure Ἄρωτος as a Macedonian equivalent of Heracles; this form has been emended into Ἄρητος by editors, following Musurus' relevant correction on Hesychius' manuscript (see further J. N. Kalléris, *Les anciens Macédoniens. Étude linguistique et historique* Tome I, Athènes 1954, 111–13 in support of Ἄρητος). However, given the known use of this suffix in theophoric names (Ἀθάνιχος / Ἀθίνιχος, Ἀπολλώνιχος, Ἀσκλάπιχος, Ἐρμάιχος, etc.), our inscription may support the transmitted reading of

Meagre as the evidence above may be, it corroborates the impression that we have here a name in -(τ)ιχος, not -τυχος (as Arapogianni's alternative spelling would seem to imply). The name is indeed best explained etymologically as a compound of Ἄρω- with addition of the element -τ-, and the termination -ιχος, a construction which is not uncommon in personal names;¹³ cf. Ζώτιχος, Ἀμύντιχος, Λεώτιχος, Λεόντιχος, Βούτιχος, Μελάντιχος. Ἄρω- must be related to ἄρῶ "plow",¹⁴ whose derivatives include mainly forms with ο (ἄροτήρ "plowman", ἄροτος "plowing, plowed land", ἄροσις "plowing", ἄρόσιμος "arable" etc.), but also some with ω (e.g. ἄρωμα "farmland"; cf. the lengthened forms ἀρώσιμος and ἄρωσις). If so, Ἀρώτιχος must be a cognate of the attested name Ἀρότης (from Thasos, early Hellenistic period, *LGPN* I),¹⁵ and express occupation.

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Hesychius. The name Ἄρωτειός (*P.Tebt.* I 12, 5; 10; 118 BC) may well be of Egyptian origin.

¹³ On the element -τ-, see Bechtel (above n. 4) 187, and further P. Chantraine, *La formation des noms en grec ancien*, Paris 1933, 404 on the suffix -ιχος (particularly used in diminutive forms and pet names). See also previous note.

¹⁴ R. Beekes, *Etymological Dictionary of Greek* (2 Vols), Leiden 2010, s.v. ἄρῶ.

¹⁵ Ἀρότης is included by Bechtel (above n. 4) 519 in his list of names denoting profession ("Gewerbe").