The Festival of the Aloulaia, and the Association of the Alouliastai

Notes Concerning the New Inscription from Larisa/Marmarini

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Jean-Claude Decourt and Athanasios Tziaphalias have recently published a remarkable new inscription from the area of Marmarini near Larisa, which probably dates to the mid-Hellenistic period (ca. 250–150 BC). This highly detailed text is of the greatest importance for our understanding of the inner workings of foreign cults in ancient Greece. The edition proposed by Decourt and Tziaphalias offers an admirably careful and considered commentary on the cultic regulations contained in the text, though there is still much room for improvement. In particular, the decipherment of the text
needs to be more adequately established, and the background of the regulations — at
first glance now obscure due to the find of the opisthographic stele outside of any
archaeological context, in a dump — remains to be clarified. This article proposes to
focus especially on two aspects of the new inscription: first, a technical study of the
typology of the document and the two principal festivals mentioned in the regulations,
their chronology and elements; second, a wider consideration of the character and
context of the inscription as a whole, and more specifically of the body which might be
presumed to have issued it.

Two Major Festivals: the Nisanaia and the Aloulaia

The stele from Marmarini near Larisa has two detailed faces, outlining festival days and
punctual procedures for initiation on one side (face A, ca. 75 lines, very incompletely
preserved), and regulations concerning different scenarios of entry, purification and
sacrifice on the other (face B, exactly 82 lines, virtually complete except for a few
minor lacunae). The regulations on side B appear to have been collected rather
miscellaneously. On this face of the stele, we find rules for entry into various areas of
the sanctuary (ἐὶς τὸν ναὸν, lines B 1–6; ἐὰς τὸ πρόθυρον, subdivided into two
paragraphs, lines B 7–12 and 13–16); rules concerning collections (ἀγεῖρειν) performed
by worshippers and by the female cult officials called φοιβάτριαι, literally
“prophetesses” or “purifiers” (B 17–21); a short copy of an “inscription on the
peristyle” concerning preliminary sacrifices to Phylake and Mên (B 22–23); and finally,
3 a large set of casuistic regulations concerning sacrifice and purification (B 24–82,
divided into at least 9 paragraphs).

The latter regulations almost all begin with clauses in a hypothetical formulation (ἐὰν δέτις…), followed by a set of prescriptions in each
given case. That is to say, we read: if one wishes to sacrifice in such-and-such a way,
then do this; or if one commits this sort of infraction, then purify the sanctuary in
such-and-such a fashion.

Since face B of the stele, containing this relatively well-organised miscellany of
regulations, does not begin with any sort of title or preamble, it may be assumed that
the more badly preserved face A was the first or front side of the stele. As such, it
probably contained something of an introduction to the code of regulations, now lost
or illegible. Indeed, any potentially informative text at the beginning of face A is
regrettably difficult to decipher or simply irrecoverable: some 21 lines are badly
effaced according to Decourt and Tziaphalias. After this sizeable portion of apparently
illegible text, we next read several lines which are arranged chronologically (A 3–18)—
from at least the twelfth (τῆι δώδεκατη) to the nineteenth day of a month, with each
dated entry carefully demarcated by dicolon interpuncts (:). These lines outline the
sequential celebration of rituals in honour of a variety of different deities. After
another instance of dicolon punctuation in line A 18, the text then apparently
introduces a substantial section about the τελετὴ τῆς θεοῦ, literally “the initiation of
the goddess” (lines A 18–38 or perhaps more?); this concerns elaborate mystery rites,
involving shaving (ξυρεῖσθαι, line A 19 and passim), various abstentions, purifications
and other rituals, which were celebrated in honour of the principal goddess mentioned
in the text, who is almost certainly to be distinguished from another goddess in the
cult, Phylake (once, in A 16, called Artemis Phylake). The punctuation here marks a
separate section in the regulations, which is confirmed by the heading and the change
of subject matter. Given the poor state of the decipherment of side A, it is difficult to
fully evaluate whether this passage extensively discussing the initiatory rites was only
an excursus in the chronological order of the rituals treated on side A or whether it
formed an independent section in the regulations. Decourt and Tziaphalias appear to
favour the first of these options and support this by attempting to read further dates in
the remaining lines on side A, continuing from the 19th: “on the twentieth” (εἰκάδι) in
line A 44 and “on the twenty-sixth” (ἐκκοσι ἐκτης) already in line A 47. However, all
lines after A 38 are to be treated as extremely fragmentary and poorly deciphered, and
therefore both problematic and provisional. In line A 44, εἰκάδι is preceded by fragmentary traces and followed by two unintelligible letters, υο; this is, perhaps, a
misreading, and it cannot be confirmed on the published photograph. In A 47, εἰκοσι
ἐκτης comes surprisingly soon afterward and has been read in relative isolation by the
editors: again, it cannot be confirmed and it may well be the product of wishful
thinking. It is also worth noting that the published reading violates the expected form
of the ordinal, namely ἐκτη καὶ εἰκοστη (or, at a minimum, εἰκοστη ἐκτη). At any
rate, it is also problematic for this further presumed date that it is immediately
followed by a substantial concluding section on face A that apparently dealt instead
with oaths and various forms of penalties (lines A 48–55).

Accordingly, I would argue that, as far as we can now tell, side A contained at least one
festal calendar (lines A 3–18), which was then followed by a substantial but self-
standing discussion of the regulations pertaining to the initiatory rites (lines A 18–38 and
perhaps beyond, beginning after punctuation with the heading “τελετή τῆς Θεοῦ”).
There are further ways of supporting the argument that we have a short calendar for a
festival in A 3–18. Indeed, two passages from the regulations on side B of the stele are
particularly helpful for reconstructing the festivals celebrated as part of this cult and
their chronology. These complementary passages are:

Lines B 17–21 (Fig. 1):

| ἀγέφειν μηνὸς Ἰτωνίου \νουμηνία/ ἐπι τὰς ἄλους, εἰς δὲ σῖκλαν |
| mὴ ἀγέφειν μηδὲ εἰσεδρέειν τὰ ἅρα ἄμ μή τριῶν ἡμέ- |
| \ἀγέφειν δὲ τῆς δεκάτης ἔως δωδεκάτης/ |
| B 20 ρῶν προεἰθή, ἐὰν δὲ τις τῶν φοιβατρῶν ταύτα \μῆ/ ποιῆ, ἀπο- |
| τινέτω εἰς τὸ ἱερὸν ἄρνα καὶ τὰ ἐπὶ τούτῳ τὴν θυσίαν. |

B 17 \νουμηνία/ litt. inscr. supra ἐπὶ τὰς, scil. νουμηνίας Ἰτωνίου
Decourt et Tziaphalias (sed cf. 2015, p. 33). || B 19 litt. inscr. supra ἐὰν δὲ..., cp. id. \μῆ/ supra ποιῆ: [δ]εκάτη ἔως δωδεκάτη \νομιστ (i.e. τοῦ) μηνὸς D. et T.; ποιῆ D. et T.|| B 20 προε[τι]η D. et T.

and lines B 61–65 (Fig. 2):

| ὠσοὶ ἄν βούλωσιν Νισαναῖος ἢ Αλουλαίος καθε ἐς τὴν πομ- |
| πὴν τὸ ἱερεῖον [ἀ]γείν ἐστώ δὲ ἡ πομῆ Νισαναῖοι μὲν ἐὰν ἢ θεὸς ἀπὸ |
| ποιμαῖο ἐλθη, τῇ ἄριστον : Αλουλαίοις δὲ τῇ ἑπτάκαιδεκάτη τὸ πρῳ
As mentioned above, the first passage in B 17–21 is a short, separate section of the regulations concerning collections. Lines B 61–65 — the second passage — also occur as a separate section among the various types of sacrifices listed on face B (see n. 3 above): individuals who want to offer sacrifices as part of the festivals of the Nisanaia and the Aloulaia are to do so by leading their own animal in the procession; anyone who wishes can do so, and after having washed himself from the head down, can enter into the sanctuary, as far as the shrine of Phylake, in order to participate in the sacrifice.

From the second of these passages (B 61–65), it is clear that there were two major festivals in the cult: the Nisanaia and the Aloulaia. The second of these is more precisely dated. The procession of the Aloulaia is explicitly stated to occur on the 17th day of a month, “first thing in the morning”: τῇ ἑπτακαὶδεκάτῃ τῶν Πρωτ. Additionally, from the two small supralinear insertions to the first of the two passages (B 17–21), we learn that ritual collections are to take place at two specific times: on the first day of the month Itonios, the New Moon (ἀγείρειν μηνὸς Ἰτωνιόν γυναικῆ/ ἐπὶ τὰς ἄλους); and apparently on a further occasion, when mandatory proclamations in this regard are either to last for three days or, more plausibly, to announce that the second instance of collections is to last three days (ἐὰν μὴ [scil. ἀγείρειν] τριῶν ἡμέραν προείθη, lines B 18 and 20). Indeed, as the later correction in line B 19 has clarified, the second, lengthier collection, prefaced by a proclamation, is specifically to take place from the 10th to the 12th of a month, most probably again Itonios (/lice ἀγείρειν δὲ τῇ δεκάτῃ ἑως δωδεκάτην).

These elements of dating must thus be integrated into the festal calendar presented in lines A 3–18. From the two passages I have cited from side B, it can be deduced that these lines concern the festival called Aloulaia, here in the variant form Eloulaia (τῶν Ἕλουλαίων, line A 3). The second scenario of proclamation and collections (lines B 18–20) is to take place from the 10th to the 12th of the month: this matches particularly well the chronology found in A 3–18, since the extant rites are to begin on the 12th with a preliminary sacrifice (προθέειν) on the part of any initiate who wishes to offer it. The proclamation and collections undertaken therefore appropriately anticipate the beginning of the festival: they served to announce and introduce the rites, and helped to provide offerings in kind for them. Failure to perform these preliminaries correctly resulted in a tangible fine: each priestess held responsible was to offer a male lamb in the sanctuary and anything else needed as a complement for this sacrifice (ἀρνα καὶ τὰ ἐπὶ τοῦτον τὴν θυσίαν, B 20).

Our second passage from side B, lines 61–65, unequivocally states that the procession for the festival of the Aloulaia/Eloulaia is to take place on the morning of the 17th and to last into the night, when it becomes a torchlit procession (εἰς νύκτα δὲ λαμπαδεύεσθαι, line B 64). This demonstrates that the restoration or supplement proposed by Decourt and Tziaphalias in A 15 [ἐξδόμη καὶ δεκάτη] cannot be correct, since it proposes that the 17th is the day “after the procession” (they also fail to understand the “allusion” to the precisely dated procession of the Aloulaia/Eloulaia, cf. p. 43). In fact, no restoration of a date is warranted or even possible here. The
published photograph (p. 16, fig. 2), though difficult to read, shows that there is no lacuna in the phrase τῆι μετὰ τῆν πομῆν; the line as given in the edition of Decourt and Tziaphalias is simply too long. The correct interpretation is therefore that the procession was held on the 17th, as line B 63 clearly informs us, and that the day after the procession, τῆι μετὰ τῆν πομῆν, is — consequently, but only implicitly — the 18th. The main day of the procession of the Aloulaia/Eloulaia, the 17th, was therefore left unmentioned in the order of the days found on side A: it will no doubt have been described in sufficient detail elsewhere in the regulations (such as in B 61–65, in fact) or simply have been left implicit.

This portion of the regulations, lines A 3–18, thus offers a sequential outline of the festival of the Aloulaia/Eloulaia, a small calendar of the days from at least the 12th to the 19th. The festival, preceded by the proclamation and the collections made from the 10th–12th, will have run over the course of a minimum of 7 days as itemised in the calendar, or more properly 8 days counting the procession on the 17th which is not described in this section. That being said, though the text of lines A 3–18 must now be corrected at line 15, it is better to refrain from printing a provisional or revised text here, pending further work on the decipherment. Nevertheless, we can summarise the relevant passage as follows: perhaps some earlier days were mentioned in line A 2 (the days of the proclamation and collections, before τῶν Ἐλουλαίων in A 3); the rites for the festival proper commenced with preliminary sacrifices on the 12th and purifications on the 13th, followed by an adornment of the statue of the goddess on the 14th and a votive sacrifice; on the 15th and the 16th a greater variety of rites was held, notably the filling of a jar (χύτρα) with water during a nocturnal celebration; the celebrations culminated on the 17th, when the major procession for the goddess took place, lasting from the morning into the night; though this is not explicitly described in the calendar, it is clear from side B (lines 61–65) that the occasion included major sacrifices to the goddess (perhaps also to other gods); still further offerings to a plurality of gods continued on the 18th and 19th respectively. A tabulation of the rituals organised in the short calendar of this festival can be found here in Table 1.

About the Nisanaia, the other festival celebrated in the cult at Larisa/Marmarini, we are much more poorly informed, no doubt given the terrible state of preservation of side A of the stele. Since we find a further collection performed on the New Moon of the month Itonios (cf. B 17, cited above), it might be assumed that this event, too, marked the beginning of a festival or shortly anticipated it. If the Nisanaia occurred before the Aloulaia/Eloulaia, on the same month, then we would imagine that a short description of this first and earlier festival would have been proposed before the extant line A 3 on side A. That the Nisanaia and the Aloulaia/Eloulaia occurred on the same month of Itonios is a hypothesis tentatively favoured by Decourt and Tziaphalias. It might thus be possible to view the apparent date found in the fragmentary line A 1 (ἐπιπτη, the 5th) as part of a largely lost section on the Nisanaia. Yet, given the poor state of the text on face A, this must remain conjectural. Whatever the case may be, the Nisanaia were perhaps more flexibly dated, as the allusive phrase in B 62–63 in fact suggests: there, we read that the procession occurring during this festival is to take place “if the goddess returns from the river, on the next day” (ἔστω δὲ ἡ πομῆς Νισαναίας μὲν ἐὰν ἡ θεὸς ἀπὸ ποταμοῦ ἔληθι, τῇ αὔριον).

The Nisanaia and the Aloulaia/Eloulaia raise several interesting questions concerning the overall ritual calendar underlying the cult at Larisa/Marmarini and its equivalences
in the local or Thessalian calendar. As Decourt and Tziaphalias have ably noted, both the Nisanaia and the Aloulaia/Eloulaia derive their names from Semitic months, generally known in Latin orthography as Nisan and Elul respectively (they are still in use today, for instance in the Hebrew calendar). In the standard Mesopotamian lunar calendar of the mid-second and first millennia BC, Nisannu is the first month of the year, and Ululu or Elulu the 6th month; the names of the months persisted in the forms nysn and ’lul in the Judean and Palmyran calendars into the Roman period (and beyond). A further Semitic month to which an oblique reference is made in the inscription is Adar (the 12th month in the standard Mesopotamian calendar, Addaru; Judean and Palmyran ’dr). This allusion occurs in the name of the goddess Adara (line B 80), who is said to share an altar with Lilla. But it would appear that rites for this eponymous goddess are not preserved in the extant regulations; perhaps rites for Adara — taking place in the month of Adar, or its Thessalian equivalent — would have been defined elsewhere, in a currently undeciphered portion of side A.

14 Can these months and celebrations from the Near East be reconciled with the calendar in use at Larisa and in the nearby region, notably the calendar of the Thessalian League after 196 BC? Manifestly and remarkably, the cultic regulations demonstrate that they were (see Table 2 for a summary of the parallel calendars discussed here). The Thessalian month of Itonios, mentioned in B 17–21, was the first month of the League calendar, falling in August/September and thought to correspond to Athenian Skirophorion/Metageitnion. As it turns out, this dating of the Thessalian month is an ideal seasonal match for the Semitic month Elul, which occurs in the same period (5 months after the vernal equinox). The apparent coincidence is too good to ignore. Accordingly, we can reasonably infer that the specifications concerning the proclamation and the collections described in B 17–21, taking place on 1 and 10–12 Itonios respectively, correspond to the general period of the month Elul and, in the second case, to the beginning of the festival of the Aloulaia/Eloulaia more specifically. This reasoning additionally supports the reconstruction of the Aloulaia/Eloulaia proposed above: we can conclude that the Aloulaia/Eloulaia took place from 12–19 Itonios in the Thessalian calendar, over a period of 8 days.

15 This argument further entails that the collection on 1 Itonios cannot be tied to the Nisanaia, or with “the initiation of the goddess”. There are several clues that might help to elucidate the first collection on the New Moon of Itonios. The first day of Itonios in fact marked the beginning of the New Year in the Thessalian calendar (perhaps in the earlier calendar of Larisa too): the occasion must therefore have been an important one at Larisa and in neighbouring communities. Most intriguingly, the collections made by the worshippers and priestesses on this occasion take place within or near the local community (note the restrictive mention of εἰς ἔς ὅικὼν in B 17 and see below, n. 27), yet they are in fact to be confined to a specific area: ἐπὶ τὰς ἅλους. Given the early autumnal character of Itonios, the beginning of the Thessalian year and the Aloulaia/Eloulaia, we can only translate this phrase as “at the threshing-floors” (ἕλως). Though it must remain hypothetical for the time being, the overall context of the day of 1 Itonios might be reconstructed as follows: the new Thessalian year begins; it is the end of the summer and beginning of the fall; a local festival may take place, perhaps connected with the threshing of grain, now dry after the season of the harvest; the priestesses and other worshippers involved in the cult visit the farmers at their threshing-floors; they collect money or more specifically offerings in kind (e.g. grain),...
which will later be augmented by a further three-day collection, all of which will be
used in the cult and the rites of the Aloulaia/Eloulaia commencing some 10 days later.\textsuperscript{21}

To view both festivals, the Nisanaia and Aloulaia/Eloulaia, as taking place in the same
month would have represented an unusual foreshortening of the expected seasonal
sequence of the months and their associated rites. Instead, the festival of the Nisanaia
should be thought to fall at its proper place in the Semitic calendar, namely around the
time of the vernal equinox (ca. 21 March). A lemma of Hesychius attests that Nisan
corresponded to the Macedonian Artemisios, roughly the month of April; further
parallels between the Seleucid and Babylonian calendars substantiate this general
correspondence.\textsuperscript{22} Just as the Aloulaia-Eloulaia took place from 12–19 Itonios (or
approximately in September), then, the Nisanaia will have been dated in the Spring,
around or immediately following the time of the vernal equinox. This would most likely
have corresponded to a date in the Thessalian month of Aphrios (7 months after
Itonios, or approximately in April; see again \textit{Table 2}). Furthermore, it is clear that the
Nisanaia involved a significant purificatory ritual in the springtime: probably the
carrying of the statue of the goddess to the river, for its washing or other ablutions;
“if ” she returned, then a procession was held on the next day (lines B 62–63).\textsuperscript{23} The
dating of the Nisanaia thus remains somewhat unclear, but perhaps deliberately so. It
presents a (no doubt largely artificial) ritual uncertainty: the return of the goddess may
not have been completely predictable, but it was a good omen if and when it happened;
presumably, it almost always did, and was celebrated accordingly with a procession on
the following day.\textsuperscript{24}

To summarise, the festal calendar expounded in the stele from Larisa/Marmarini is best
envisioned as a traditional form of Semitic ritual calendar, to which corresponding dates
in the local calendar of Larisa or of the Thessalian league are attributed. In other words,
as with many other aspects of the cults described in the stele, the ritual calendar is a
hybrid, a snapshot of a meeting ground between at least two cultures. The calendar of
the rituals may to some degree mark the beginning of the Thessalian year (1 Itonios);
the festival of the Aloulaia/Eloulaia takes place a short time later, at its expected stage
in the early Autumn.\textsuperscript{25} An earlier passage of side A (lines A 1–2 and before; see above) is
likely to have discussed the Nisanaia, since Nisan traditionally anticipated Elul (note
particularly how the Nisanaia are mentioned before the Aloulaia in lines B 61–64). The
Nisanaia took place in the Spring, in the middle of the Thessalian year, but will
nevertheless have marked the beginning of a new ritual year for this cult at Larisa/
Marmarini.\textsuperscript{26} Given the incomplete decipherment of a side A, these must remain
general impressions. It is also very much to be hoped that specialists of Near Eastern
religion will be able to further elucidate the background or possible models for the
rituals found at Larisa/Marmarini.

The Alouliastai: A Parallel for a Semitic Association at Larisa?

In all of this manifold stele, with its multiplicity of regulations, no mention is made of
an issuing authority for the document: it is possible that this is also now missing in the
fragmentary top of side A. We only hear obliquely of various groups of participants
involved in the cult. These are, naturally, the cult personnel: a singular priestess
(presumably the priestess of the goddess), female ritual agents usually called
φοιβάτριαι, and the νεωκόρος (lines A 6–7, 23, 34, B 4–5, 20, 40); and individuals or groups, especially initiates (οἱ τετελεσμένοι, A 4, 7–8, 38) — but also impure individuals, οἱ ἄκαθαρτοι, presumably those who are not ἄγνοι τῆς θεοῦ and who have yet to be initiated (A 19–21; cp. also the frequent mentions of ἄμυητων/ἄμυητοι at B 1, 7, 13). Therefore, we cannot identify with absolute certainty the agent(s) which lies behind the publication of the stele.

It is of course possible that the stele and the regulations it contains were issued by the city of Larisa itself or by a nearby political community, in which case the unusual mystery cult detailed in the document will — quite remarkably — have been substantially integrated into the city or community in question. It is certainly clear that the text appeals to a large body of actual and potential initiates. However, the editors Decourt and Tziaphalias rightly express their doubts about the role of a city or subcivic group, underlining in particular one formula contained early in the festal calendar on side A, lines 3–4: προθέειν καὶ κοινῆ καὶ [ἰδ][ίαι]. The editors point out that one might have expected the phrase to have read δημοσίαι καὶ [ἰδ][ίαι] if a city were involved in the proceedings. Decourt and Tziaphalias’ objection is interesting, but not especially probative, since actions undertaken κοινῆ καὶ ἱδίαι can be invoked in the context of political decrees just as much as within the purview of private associations.

Though a political community cannot be completely excluded as part of the background for the rules, it cannot be assumed either. While occasionally oddly formulated, the text of the stele is composed in fairly fluent koine, rather than in the epicloric Thessalian dialect. The use of koine is documented in Thessaly as far back as the middle of the fourth century BC, becoming somewhat more common with the founding of the League, and only prevalent by the end of the second century BC. In keeping with this wider historical context, it is therefore probable that koine was used to write the rules on the stele specifically in order to increase their legibility and their accessibility, not only to local inhabitants but also to foreigners. The unusual phrases in the regulations and their careful inscribing in koine are not entirely paradoxical, but rather seem to reflect a diverse and multiethnic community focussed around a sanctuary.

In particular, it is striking how the rules stipulated in the stele appear to paint a picture of an established community of initiates (οἱ τετελεσμένοι), but also how flexibly this community is discussed in the regulations; by contrast, the priestly personnel are subject to more stringent rules and fines (e.g. B 21–20). Indeed, the rules for non-personnel are most often presented as facultative: for instance, the full phrase in lines A 3–4 actually reads: προθέειν καὶ κοινῆ καὶ [ἰδ][ίαι] τὸμ βουλόμενον τῶν τετελεσμένων, “those of the initiates who wish are to make a preliminary sacrifice, either collectively or individually”. Apart from θῶ and its compounds (or καθαίρω vel sim.), βούλομαι is one of the most common verbs in the text (cf. έὰν τὶς ἄλλος βούλησαι τὸ[ν] | τετελεσμένων — A 7–8, and passim). We thus seem to be in the presence of a cultic community which is not overtly hierarchical and whose rules are, to a substantial degree, intended to be both versatile and inclusive: non-initiates may join the cult through the ritual procedures described in the regulations (lines A 18ff.), they may then fully participate in the cult and its major festivals as initiates but are not necessarily required to do so (e.g. A 3–7, B 61–65). Even some limited access to the
sanctuary for the purposes of cult is granted to non-initiates, namely as far as the vestibule or portico (πρόθυρον, B 7–10).

22 Using a hitherto unrecognised point of comparison, one can in fact find a potential parallel for such a group: a cultic association perhaps not unlike the one that might have codified the singularly detailed stele from Larisa/Marmarini.31 Fairly recently published, a small, inscribed slab of white marble from the island of Kos (1st c. BC), has not attracted much attention.32 Segre interpreted the inscription as a boundary marker of the burial grounds of an association (thiasos), correcting its name to read “Anoubiastai”; this has now been accepted by scholars working on Egyptian and Greek religion.33 Such boundary stones of burial plots (thekaia) are abundantly attested on Kos, from the ancient town and especially the surrounding necropolis: they are attributed, using the genitive case, to individuals and families, as well as to associations.34 A small but good number of these boundary stones do indeed relate to groups involved in Egyptian cults, attesting to the importance of this form of worship on the island.35 But it remains striking that the name Anoubiastai, albeit not an unexpected formulation for worshippers of the god Anoubis, is nonetheless extremely rare for a cultic association.36

23 In any case, we now know better: the text of the inscription from Kos has been unduly corrected. In line 3, Segre, Tsouli, and now Hallof in IG, all plainly read ΑΛΟΥΛΙΑΣΤΑΝ on the stone. In the new light cast by the inscription from Larisa/Marmarini, which describes in detail a celebration called Ἀλουλαία (lines B 61–63) or Ἑλουλαία (line A 3), it may now be proposed that the deciphering of the stone on the part of its editors is indeed correct. We thus have here, on Kos, the first attestation of a cultic association apparently related to the same festival. The text should therefore read:

24 Ed. pr. Segre, ICos EF 458 (cf. SEG 57, 782; Maillot 2013: 225 no. 53).

25 Other editions: Bricault, RICIS 204/1011 (Suppl. II, p. 301); Tsouli 2013: no. 640c, with ph.; Hallof, IG XII 4, 2781.


26 The group on Kos was therefore called the Alouliastai or more properly the θίασος of the Alouliastai. The name may be analysed as follows: the element θίασος, though a relatively generic descriptive term, properly refers to a cultic group or association (it is virtually never found of a group that did not have a cultic vocation or purpose); the word Alouliastai is formed using a frequent suffix for such cultic groups and associations, namely as an agent noun ending in -της.37 That being said, the linguistic analysis of the name Alouliastai is not completely straightforward: it remains difficult
to determine whether the name can be thought to signify that of the festival, Aloulaia, or that of the month, Elul (here: Ἀλουλαία). Indeed, though this kind of name for an association is usually thought to be constructed from a theonym or an epithet, the agent noun can often be said to be ‘heortephoric’, formed from the appellation of a festival or the act of celebrating a god during cult (the root verb in -ζω). Yet, just as well, such names can sometimes also be considered ‘menophoric’, derived from the name of month. The latter may be an equally valid inference as far as the group from Kos is concerned, since, if it were built from the proper designation of the festival (Aloulaia), we might have expected the name to appear as *Aloulaistai or *Aloulaiastai.

27 Decourt and Tziaphalias struggle to find names echoing the month Elul outside of the Near East and dating before the Roman period. In addition to the inscription from Kos, it is worth adding that a personal name, Alulaios, is attested on Delos already in the middle of the third century BC. This sort of appellation is commonly viewed as a ‘birthday name’, constructed adjectivally from the month during which an individual was born; thus, such a name is also ‘menophoric’. Yet it might also be hypothesised that Alulaios is a theophoric name, implying a homonymous deity, but one which would remain to be further corroborated. In this regard, it is intriguing that the text from Larisa/Marmarini mentions an enigmatic deity called Alaia, only once, but in the context of the core rituals of the Aloulaia/Eloulaia (line A 15: τῆι μετὰ τὴν πομῆν, θείεν Ἀλαίαι καὶ βάλλειν).

28 An association relating to the cultic sphere of the Near East — rather than to Egypt — is not unexpected on Kos. From another part of the periphery of the city comes a boundary stone for the burial grounds of the θίασος of Zeus Soter and Astarte, the prominent Levantine and Near Eastern goddess. But given the limited information available about these groups on Kos, our conclusions must be modest. For example, we cannot tell who the individual mentioned alongside the group of the Alouliastai was: both Apollonios and Asklepiodoros are extremely common names. Was he perhaps the founder of the group, or simply its leader? At any rate, what seems clear is that individuals and groups with ties to the month Elul and its festival of the Aloulaia/Eloulaia had settled not only in Thessaly by the Hellenistic period, but also across the Aegean, such as on Delos and Kos.

29 With this new information in hand, we are perhaps one step closer to identifying a source for the promulgation of the rules and rituals in the newly published stele from Larisa/Marmarini. A cultic association, such as the one we now find on Kos, is a good possibility. That being said, though the group at Larisa/Marmarini may have been akin to the Alouliastai of Kos, it is more likely that its name was not so specific. As we have seen, the group of worshippers at Larisa/Marmarini celebrated at least two important festivals, the Nisanaia and the Aloulaia/Eloulaia, if not more. Therefore, its name and activities were probably more encompassing than the Koan Alouliastai.

30 What sort of a name might we think of, then, and what more can we say about the background of such a group? It may be possible to offer a few further avenues of investigation, though the overall picture must remain impressionistic for the time being. One relatively straightforward possibility is that the cultic community at Larisa/Marmarini was simply one comprised of initiates: τετελεσμένοι or μύσται are known to have occasionally formed coherent and independent associations in the Greek world. A further aspect worth underlining is that the text from Larisa/Marmarini at one point makes an appeal to a specific designation of Pan, “the Pan whom the Syrians call
NEISPLEN (?)" (lines A 9–10). The passage is either corrupt or unintelligible at the present time; it is to be hoped that further efforts of decipherment will clarify the exact reference here. What is clear, however, is that either the sanctuary at Larisa/Marmarini was in close cultural contact with Syrians (Σύροι) or that Syrians may have formed a part of the wider constituency of the group. Groups of Syrian worshippers and merchants are very well attested in the Hellenistic period across mainland Greece and the Aegean. Note, however, that it is almost impossible that the cult at Larisa/Marmarini involved a straightforward or ‘ethnic’ group of Phoenicians. The Phoenicians employed a different calendar and do not seem to have favoured the widespread Semitic ritual cycle underpinning the Nisanaia and the Aloulaia/Eloulaia.

Nevertheless, an intimate connection with cultic sphere of the Levant is palpable in the text: the two festivals, as we have seen, suffice to demonstrate this. The pantheon at play is another case in point. In the cult, gods from wider Anatolia and the Levant (Mên), are intermixed with ones which are either enigmatic (Mogga [?], Lilla) or more clearly Semitic (Alaia [?], Adara), and with still others which might, at least at first hand, appear more Greek ([Artemis] Phylake, Apollo Pylaos, Helios, Moira). Yet the principal figure, the main goddess in the cult — she is often vaguely or anonymously called ἡ θεός in the text — is at the heart of Semitic festivals called the Nisanaia and the Aloulaia/Eloulaia; much like Thea Syria or Hagne Theos, she almost certainly originated from the Near East.

The group at Larisa/Marmarini transcends several ethnic, religious and cultural categories: it celebrates festivals tied to the Semitic calendar, but these are dated according to the local Thessalian framework; it refers to a Syrian denomination for Pan, but it is not thereby Phoenician and still principally chooses to call this god Pan within a local context; it broadcasts rules in koine Greek, but these rules manifestly discuss rituals which cannot be exclusively Greek. On this last point, a full study remains to be undertaken (but see now Parker and Scullion in this volume). Preliminarily, one may take issue with Decourt and Tziaphalias’ conclusion (2015: 31): “il faut bien voir que presque toutes les pratiques évoquées dans le présent règlement peuvent parfaitement s’insérer dans un rituel grec”. Though indeed a variety of sacrifices and purifications mentioned in the text can readily be seen as ‘Greek’ — even, for instance, the collections made by the worshippers and the φοιβατρίαι (see above) — this conclusion nonetheless remains difficult to accept. Where is the place of initiatory shaving (lines A 18ff.) in normative Greek cult? At what sort of Greek sacrificial ritual does one “eat everything” from a series of animals (ἐσθεὶν πάντα, A 17)? In fact, such singularities are not wholly surprising in a text which at one point defines the perceived parameters of normative Hellenic sacrifice (lines B 35–45: ἐὰν δὲ τις θέειν βούλησαι τῇ θεώ ἐλ| λησθῇ νόμω...)%. In a more typical Greek cult, the exclusion of swine from sacrifice would be relatively unobjectionable; here, there is at least a possibility that the restriction was Semitic in origin. The same could also be said, for instance, for the use of flatbreads (λάγανα)—apparently dry, unleavened bread — mentioned several times in the regulations: though they could well be Greek, they also bring to mind feasts of matzah (such as during Passover/Pessach on 15–22 Nisan) and other Semitic rites.

In other words, caution must be urged and we should not try to fit the stele from Larisa/Marmarini into standard boxes or narrow models. As we have it, the text may well paint a portrait of what Decourt and Tziaphalias call an “acculturation incomplète”. But that may also assume too much: does this snapshot of a cult really
entitle us to speak of an ongoing historical process of Hellenic ‘interpretation’ or ‘acculturation’? Doubtless the forerunners of the cult at Larisa/Marmarini were (at least in part) foreigners and did to some degree adapt their forms of worship to a Greek and, more particularly, a Thessalian context. But, as we have it, the group which erected the stele and issued these compendious rules at Larisa represents a more complex and varied ‘middle ground’ than labels like ‘acculturation’ or ‘syncretism’ might imply. The overall picture is far from simple; it is, in fact, unique. What remains significant, to my mind, is how the sanctuary or its cultic group operated at Larisa/Marmarini: it issued comprehensive rules in Greek which were apparently designed to maximise inclusivity in the cult and in its major festivals. Such a broad appeal is a testament not just to the ‘integrative’ power of foreign cults and associations in Greece, but, more tellingly, to the capacious adaptability and malleability of ancient polytheism as a whole.31

Table 1
Reconstruction of the Calendar of Festivals at Larisa/Marmarini

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Festival</th>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Date/Day</th>
<th>Ritual Activity</th>
<th>Lines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aloulaia/Eloulaia</td>
<td>1. Itonios (~September)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>collection on the New Moon at the threshing-floors (ἐπὶ τὰς ἅλους)</td>
<td>B 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10-12</td>
<td>proclamation and further collections; on the 12th: preliminary sacrifice</td>
<td>B 17-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12th = 1st day of the festival</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2nd day of the festival</td>
<td>A 4-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>preliminary rites: washing of the hiera around the statue of the goddess; sacrifice to Mogga(?); purification of impure things (τὰ ἀχόδαιρα) in the sanctuary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2

Approximate Calendrical Equivalences in the Hellenistic Period

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Calendar:</th>
<th>Thessalian</th>
<th>Macedonian</th>
<th>Hebrew / Babylonian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>~ September</td>
<td>Ἰτώνιος (1)</td>
<td>Ὑπαβρεβεταῖος</td>
<td>Elul / Ululu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>~ October</td>
<td>Πάνημος</td>
<td>Δίος (1)</td>
<td>Tishrei / Tashritu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adar(?)
unknown month (but preceding the Nisanaia, Ἰτώνιος)
sacrifices to Adara implied
see B 80 for a shared altar with Lilla

Nisanaia
unknown month; probably 8. Aphrios
unknown day
purification of the statue of the goddess at the river
B 62-63

next day
procession
B 62-63
| Month     | Θεμίστιος | Ἀπελλάτιος | Marcheshvan / Arahšamnū | Αγαγύλιος | Λύδανιος | Kislev / Kislimu | Απολλώνιος | Περίτιος | Tevet / Ἀτευτή | Έρμιας | Δύστρος | Shevat / Ἰαβαν | Λεσχανόριος | Ξανδικός | Adar / Adarru | Αφρίος | Λατεμίσιος | Nisan / Nisannū (1) | Θυίος | Δαίσιος | Iyyar / ᾿Αιαρ | Ομολώνιος | Πάννυμος | Sivan / Simanu | Πιποδρόμιος | Λώνιος | Tammuz / Duzu | Φιλλικός | Γορπινός | Av / Abu |
|-----------|-----------|-------------|-------------------------|-----------|---------|------------------|------------|---------|----------------|--------|---------|----------------|---------------|----------|--------------|---------|----------|------------------|---------|----------|-------------|-----------|----------|---------------|----------|----------|----------------|---------|----------|--------------|---------|

NOTES

1. J.-C. DECOURT, A. TZIAPHALIAS, “Un règlement religieux de la région de Larisa : cultes grecs et « orientaux »”, Kernos 28 (2015), p. 13–51; cf. also the preliminary discussion in J.-C. DECOURT, A. TZIAPHALIAS, “Un nouveau règlement religieux de la région de Larisa”, in A. MAZARAKIS-AINIAN (ed.), Αρχαιολογικό Έργο Θεσσαλίας και Στερεάς Ελλάδας vol. 3, Volos 2012, p. 463–473. The letterforms described by DECOURT and TZIAPHALIAS (2015, p. 15) probably suggest an earlier date than the “milieu du IIe siècle av. J.-C.”, as they propose. Note particularly the smaller round letters (omicron and theta), as well as the slightly open sigma and omega, all of which are forms typical of the mid-Hellenistic period; omicron is inscribed well above the bottom register of the other letters, a further palaeographic criterion specific to this period; alpha virtually always has a straight horizontal bar. Generally speaking, the letters in the new stele from Larisa/Marmarini compare well with those in the inscriptions edited and discussed in B. HELLY, “La capitale de Thessalie face aux dangers de la troisième guerre de Macédoine : l’année 171 av. J.-C. à Larisa”, Topoi 15 (2007), p. 277–249, but they also parallel those contained in the earlier letters of Philip V to Larisa (IG IX 2, 517, with ph.; dated to 215 BC). Regrettably, the published photographs in edd. pr. (p. 16, figs. 2 and 3), of rather poor quality, do not readily help to confirm these observations, though this is now possible thanks to the new photographs made available by the Ephoreia. The letters are written in the same competent hand on both sides, with the exception, perhaps, of the intralinear insertion in lines B 17 and 19 (though this is not made clear in Decourt and Tziaphalas’ discussion).

2. Lines B 22–23 read in full: ἐπιγραφή εἰς τὸ περίστυλον: “προθύσαι πρώτη τῇ Φυλ[α]κῇ καὶ τῷ Μηνὶ θύματα λιβάνων” vacat. Note the large amount of empty space concluding line B 23. It thus seems clear that this is a direct quotation of a concise inscription which was engraved on
the peristyle of the sanctuary at Larisa/Marmarini. It advised worshippers and other visitors to make preliminary sacrifices of burnt incense before entering this inner part of the sanctuary, presumably a courtyard surrounding the temple (ναός). In this context, πρώτη may warrant some explanation: though it could be an adjective qualifying the goddess, it can also be explained as suggesting an implied adverbial or temporal phrase: “first” or even “on the first day” (the construction remains somewhat odd, however, cp. LSJ s.v. πρότερος B.III).

3. DECOURT and TZIAFHALIAS (2015), p. 15, have briefly and rather vaguely remarked that: “subsistent, bien visibles sur la face B, les traces d’un réglage”. In fact, the beginning of each subsection of this compendium of regulations on side B has been clearly indicated by a paragraphos at the left margin (these are clearly visible on the new photograph, and, for the most part, on the published photograph of side B: p. 16, fig. 3). More specifically, the paragraphoi occur before lines: B 7, 13, 17, 22, 24, 46, 50, 52, 54, 58, 62, 66, and 71. Some of the paragraphoi were particularly helpful in outlining separate clauses in the regulations that did not begin at the left margin and were not concluded by any space left empty (a vacat). Such instances of new sections were further demarcated by dicolon punctuation (;), as on side A; these have also not been noted by edd. pr., but occur in the following passages: line B 35, after παρη and before ἐὰν δὲ τις κτλ. (without a paragraphos in the margin); B 45: βουλόμενος ὧν δὲ τις κτλ.; B 49: γεῦται ἐὰν τις κτλ.; B 61: προβέβλητον οὖν; and finally B 70: λύχνον ἐὰν δὲ τις κτλ. These paragraphoi and punctuation marks thus carefully outlined the separate sections of the compendium on face B and facilitated consultation of the regulations. (The major exceptions to this general principle occur after lines 73ff., where expected paragraphoi no longer appear; near the end of B 74, for instance, we find χινύω: πρὸς δὲ κτλ. but not the anticipated paragraphos at the left margin before the next line; the same in B 79, which should read: κάθαρσιν ὡσαυτῶς δὲ κτλ.). Any traces of paragraphoi, if originally present on side A, are no longer visible on the published photograph. Further study of the stone may help to clarify these data.

4. The first twenty-one lines of face A are described by DECOURT and TZIAFHALIAS (2015), p. 15, as “totalement effacées”. In the absence of evidence about these lines, one may doubt DECOURT and TZIAFHALIAS’ hypothesis (2015), p. 45 (but cf. also p. 31, more cautiously): “On pourrait faire l’hypothèse qu’il existait une autre stèle, où apparaissaient l’autorité responsable de la gravure et éventuellement d’autres prescriptions rituelles, peut-être même des précisions sur le culte « non grec »”. Further documents relating to the cults, even in a language other than Greek, are certainly possible. But it is still highly probable that the stele had some form of heading or title at the top of side A. In this context, note also the phrase ὁπό πάντων τῶν προγεγραμμένων found early on side B (line 10), which suggests that a list of abstentions would have been specified in some fragmentary sections of side A or elsewhere. More damningly, the editors’ line of thought in this case appears to propose a dichotomy between Greek and foreign cults which is largely incompatible with the perceptibly ‘hybrid’ cultural character of the document.


6. Indeed, DECOURT and TZIAFHALIAS (2015), p. 33, view the whole of side A as a “calendrier cultuel, qui énumère cérémonies et actes liturgiques à accomplir au cours d’un mois”: this presumes too much from the poorly preserved remains of this face of the inscription.

7. Asyndetic ordinals apparently became increasingly prevalent in later Antiquity, and eventually crystallised into the current Modern Greek forms: thus, εἰκοστῆ πρώτη instead of μία καὶ εἰκοστῆ, etc; but cf. already Hipp. Epid. 1.3.26, which seems to have both kinds of ordinals: ἐπτακαιδεκάτη, εἰκοστῆ πρώτη, εἰκοστῆ ἐβδομή, τριακατά πρώτη.
8. The genitive plural τριῶν ἠμερῶν can be thought of as directly qualifying προείπη; however, if we presume that the infinitive ἀγερμοῖο is to be read again in this phrase (προείπην cum infinitivo; cf. LSJ s.v. III), then the sense no doubt becomes more natural, explaining the genitive of “time during which” and matching the supralinear correction. Cp. a public announcement giving notice of “three days” (with accusative rather than an infinitival construction), cited also by LSJ s.v. II.

9. For proclamations made before festivals, cf. e.g. the entry concerning 5 Pyanepson in the calendar of the deme of Eleusis, K. CLINTON, Inscriptions of Eleusis, 175.2–6 (ca. 330 BC): πέντει ἱεραμένου ίεροφάντη καὶ κήρυκι... τὴν ἐορθὴν ἁγιορεύουσιν τῶν Ἐποροσών; see also S. DOW, R.F. HEALEY, A Sacred Calendar of Eleusis, Cambridge MA/London, 1965, p. 14–20, for discussion. Noteworthy is the fact that the official announcement of festivals and collections of “assembly” of the ἀσυναγορασία (literally a ‘collection’, though in this case the reference is also to the ‘gathering’ or ‘assembly’ of the μυσταῖi, if we presume that the infinitive προκήρυσσεν, probably taking place on a day (15 Boedromion) called the ἀγερμοῖ (literally a ‘collection’, though in this case the reference is no doubt also to the ‘gathering’ or ‘assembly’ of the μυσταῖi prior to the rites); see J.D. MIKALSON, The Sacred and Civil Calendar of the Athenian Year, Princeton, 1975, p. 55–56, for the sources. On collections (ἀγερμοῖ) performed by priestly personnel, and particularly priestesses — frequently attested in Hellenistic ritual norms, see esp. P. DEBORD, Aspects sociaux et économiques de la vie religieuse dans l’Anatolie gréco-romaine, Leiden, 1982, p. 196, and W. BURKERT, Griechische Religion der archaischen und klassischen Epoche, Stuttgart, 2011 [1977], p. 160–161; cf. also N. ROBERTSON, “Greek Ritual Begging in Aid of Women’s Fertility and Childbirth”, TAPhA 113 (1983), p. 143–169, though his general interpretation must be cautioned; similarly to be deprecated is DECOURT and TZIAPHALIAS’ view (2015, p. 44) that the ἀγερμοῖ in the text from Larisa is a “particularité qui accentue le caractère « orientalisant » du rituel”. A direct parallel for collections lasting three days before a major sacrifice can be found in the contract for the priestess of Artemis Pergaia at Halikarnassos, LSAM 73.25–27 (ca. 250–200 BC): ἡ νύξ... θυροντείς, who give the more approximative “towards night”, citing X. Κυν. 11.4, HCG 4.6.7. The celebration (τῆς νυκτερινῆς, lines A 13–14) during which the χύτα is to be filled with water on the 15th is a different nocturnal occasion, for which a limited — though not necessarily philologically appropriate — analogy might be the musical rite for Dionysos known as (Ὀ) νυκτερινοῦ at IG XII Suppl., 400e (Thasos, beg. 3rd c. BC); cp. also LSJ s.v. νυκτέλλος (1–2).

10. Decourt and Tzaphalias translate εἰς νύκτα perhaps too precisely as “à la tombée de la nuit”, cp. LSJ s.v. νυξ, who give the more approximative “towards night”, citing X. Κυν. 11.4, HCG 4.6.7. The celebration (τῆς νυκτερινῆς, lines A 13–14) during which the χύτα is to be filled with water on the 15th is a different nocturnal occasion, for which a limited — though not necessarily philologically appropriate — analogy might be the musical rite for Dionysos known as (Ὀ) νυκτερινοῦ at IG XII Suppl., 400e (Thasos, beg. 3rd c. BC); cp. also LSJ s.v. νυκτέλλος (1–2).


12. DECOURT and TZIAPHALIAS (2015), p. 33: “Les Alouléa et les Nisanaia (B61) se seraient déroulées durant Ίτινιοι, soit en août/septembre, ainsi que, par hypothèse, les cérémonies d’initiation”. As described in — A 18–38, the initiations envisaged by the text were perhaps flexibly dated and did not necessarily occur in the month of Ίτινιοι. Yet despite the rather vague phrasing, it is also possible that they were dated to a specific period of three days: cf. A 18–19, τελούσατο τρεῖς ἡμέρας θεραπεύοντο, τῇ τρίτῃ ξυρείαν; A 20, ξυρείαθον ἐν τρισὶν ἡμέρας; A 25, ἀγερμοῖ τῇ τρίτῃ...; and A 28, ἐν τρισὶν... We also know that a non-initiate must make abstentions during *the* three days (τάς τρεῖς ἡμέρας), if he wishes to enter the πρόθυρον in order to make vows or prayers (cf. lines B 7–10). Since it is clear that at least one of these passages (A 25) involves a ritual of collection by initiates just like the ones preliminary to the Aloulaiia/Eloulaia on 10–12 Ίτινιοι (B 17–21, quoted above), it is tempting to connect the three days essential to the τελετή (τρεῖς ἡμέρας θεραπεύοντο) with those three pre-festival days. Note that such a sequence would have had the further advantage of allowing new initiates to more fully participate in the immediately following festival of the Aloulaiia/Eloulaia (see further below on the general inclusivity of the rites, but also on the specific role of the τετελεσμένοι in the early rituals of the...
festival: cf. lines A 3–4 and 7–8). However, a full assessment and discussion of these issues must await a complete revision of the stele, including a new decipherment of face A.

13. Contrast DECOURT and TZIAPHALIAS’ translation “quand la déesse arrive du fleuve”, but cf. their p. 36; see also below for further discussion. For τῇ αὐριον, i.e. τῇ αὔριον ἡμέρα, cf. LSJ s.v. αὔριον III (for the shorthand, see already S. Tr. 945 cited there).

14. DECOURT and TZIAPHALIAS (2015), p. 33–34. For the orthography of the month Nisan in Greek, see below n. 22 and cf. also the transliterated SEG 7, 445 (Dura-Europos, undated): δαρθήν γοβήν δασάτι(ν) βίδ αλάμα | βα νιον αα βαρζάκικη, which is translated as: “Deux lingots d’or sur la main de la statue, le 2 Nisan, Barzakike” (the latter is a personal name).


17. DECOURT and TZIAPHALIAS (2015), p. 32, n. 57, note in passing a possible equivalence between Adar and the Macedonian month of Dystros, citing J. AJ 12.412: ... τῇ τρισκαίδεκάτῃ τοῦ μηνός τοῦ λεγομένου παρὰ μὲν Ἰουδαίους Αδαρ, κατὰ δὲ Μακεδόνας Δύστρου. This synchronism was generally correct in the period ca. 46/7–176 AD, cf. A.E. SAMUEL, Greek and Roman Chronology: Calendars and Years in Classical Antiquity, Munich, 1972, p. 140–144, for the Seleucid/Macedonian and Babylonian equivalences (cp. e.g. SEG 60, 1682 from Palmyra). Adar is the last month of the standard Mesopotamian calendar, thus falling before the Spring equinox (our ca. 21 March), on which Nisan, in turn, properly begins. In the Hellenistic period (ca. 232 BC–15/6 AD), however, Dystros corresponded to Shabatu; Adar to Xandikos: cf. again SAMUEL, ibid., p. 143; see also S. STERN, Calendar and Community: A History of the Jewish Calendar, 2nd Century BCE to 10th Century CE, Oxford, 2001, p. 35–38, for a discussion of Josephus’ equivalences and STERN, a.c. (n. 15), p. 234–259, for the continued use of the Babylonian calendar — under the guise of the Macedonian calendar — by the Seleucids and in still later periods. For further occurrences of Adar in Greek, cf. SEG 2, 776 (Dura-Europos, 3rd c. AD); cp. also SEG 8, 282 (Beersheba in Palestine, 6th c. AD), a [κό]μ[η] Αδάρων.

18. On the Thessalian calendar, cf. esp. C. TRÜMPY, Untersuchungen zu den altgriechischen Monatsnamen und Monatsfolgen, Heidelberg, 1997, p. 216–229 § 172–182 (esp. § 172 for the chart of the calendar and its Delphic and Athenian equivalents). See also D. GRANINGER, Cult and Koinon in Hellenistic Thessaly, Leiden/Boston, 2011, p. 97–114, for the development of the calendar of the Thessalian league after ca. 196 BC. All four of the pre-Flamininus months attested at Larisa (Hippodromios, Panemos, Themistios, and Thyios) are also later found in the League calendar (GRANINGER, ibid., p. 96), thus making it difficult to say whether the use of Itonios in the text from Larisa/Marmarini antedates 196 or not. Given the approximative dating proposed here (cf. above n. 1), the inscribing of the stele was either anterior or posterior to the founding of the koinon: both possibilities should remain open until further evidence surfaces.

19. Cf. already the astute deduction of DECOURT and TZIAPHALIAS (2015), p. 34: “Les Aloulaia... on constate une correspondance calendaire entre le mois grec Itônion et le sémitique Aloul ”. Note also that the dates of 17–19 Itonios, the culmination of the festival of the Aloulaia/Eloulaia, might be presumed to have usually corresponded with the autumnal equinox on ca. 21 September or to have shortly anticipated it (reckoning 5 months and several weeks after ca. 21 March/1 Nisan, see above n. 17).

20. It is worth underlining that a length of a week or of 8 days can be considered as an instance of a paradigmatic duration for Near Eastern festivals, such as the occasionally seven-day-long
rituals held in Nisan (COHEN, o.c. [n. 15], 1993, p. 307; 2015, p. 389–408), as well as, of course, the Jewish Passover and the Christian Holy Week. On the Jewish calendar in the Hellenistic and Roman periods, see stern, o.c. (n. 17), 2001, esp. chp. 1.

21. For the phrase ζήτησις τάχες ἄλοις, contrast decourt and TZIAFHALIAS (2015), p. 25, who hesitatingly think of “piazzetta”. The period of the harvest in ancient Macedonia and Thessaly can be thought to have fallen in mid- to late summer, cf. Pol. 4.66.7 (concerning the year 220/219 BC): Φιλίππος... τῶν μὲν Μακεδόνων διαφῆκε πάντας ἐπὶ τὴν τῆς ὑπόωρης συγκομιδήν, αὐτὸς δὲ πορεύετο εἰς Θεσσαλίαν τὸ λοιπὸν μέρος τοῦ θρόου ἐν Δαρδηνησί διήγετο. The harvest of grain nowadays takes place fairly early on the Thessalian plain, but near the end of summer in the more mountainous regions, cf. P. HALSTEAD, Two Oxen Ahead, Malden MA/Oxford, 2014, p. 72: «June to early July in lowland northern Greece and late July to early September in the mountains of northwest Greece”. In any case, the drying and threshing of the grain would typically take place over the course of several weeks after the actual harvest; cf. again HALSTEAD, ibid., chp. 4. Note that, in and of themselves, the collections on 1 Itonios can be closely tied to the Aloulaia/Eloulaia. Indeed, collections could occasionally anticipate a festival or sacrifice by many days, as these clearly do (10 days before the second series of collections on 10–12 Itonios): cf. the priestess of Meter Phrygia at Priene who made collections in the company of other women on the 4th of themselves, the collections on 1 Itonios can be closely tied to the Aloulaia/Eloulaia. Indeed, the period of the harvest in ancient Macedonia and Thessaly can be thought to have fallen in mid- to late summer, cf. Pol. 4.66.7 (concerning the year 220/219 BC): Φιλίππος... τῶν μὲν Μακεδόνων διαφῆκε πάντας ἐπὶ τὴν τῆς ὑπόωρης συγκομιδήν, αὐτὸς δὲ πορεύετο εἰς Θεσσαλίαν τὸ λοιπὸν μέρος τοῦ θρόου ἐν Δαρδηνησί διήγετο. The harvest of grain nowadays takes place fairly early on the Thessalian plain, but near the end of summer in the more mountainous regions, cf. P. HALSTEAD, Two Oxen Ahead, Malden MA/Oxford, 2014, p. 72: «June to early July in lowland northern Greece and late July to early September in the mountains of northwest Greece”. In any case, the drying and threshing of the grain would typically take place over the course of several weeks after the actual harvest; cf. again HALSTEAD, ibid., chp. 4. Note that, in and of themselves, the collections on 1 Itonios can be closely tied to the Aloulaia/Eloulaia. Indeed, collections could occasionally anticipate a festival or sacrifice by many days, as these clearly do (10 days before the second series of collections on 10–12 Itonios): cf. the priestess of Meter Phrygia at Priene who made collections in the company of other women on the 4th of Artemision for a sacrifice on the 12th of the same month: D. KAH, H.-U. WIEFER, “Die Phrygische Mutter im hellenistischen Priene”, EA 44 (2011), p. 1–54 (here: p. 3–4, lines 19–29). For the more general idea that the New Moon might mark a regular gathering in the sanctuary at Larisa/Marmarini or in the community at large, cf. e.g. the rites held on this date in Athens, see MIKALSON, o.c. (n. 9), p. 14–15.


23. Decourt and TZIAFHALIAS (2015), p. 36–37 rightly underline the role of water in the cult and plausibly suggest that the river mentioned in this passage was a small tributary of the Peneus river in Thessaly, now called Megalorema; the sanctuary may thus have been located in the area to the southwest of Marmarini. But if our text originally belonged more closely to the area of the city of Larisa, the river in question may have been the Peneus itself. For the purification of Ishtar in a sacred river during the month Elul, see below n. 25. The purification of statues of goddesses in rivers is also well-attested in the Greek world, see M.J.P. DILLON, Girls and Women in Classical Greek Religion, London/New York, 2001, p. 132–136; for example, the Plynteria, a washing festival for the goddess Athena in Athens, also took place in the Spring, see MIKALSON, o.c. (n. 9), p. 160–161 and 163–164; R. PARKER, Polytheism and Society at Athens, Oxford, 2005, p. 478.

24. I owe this excellent suggestion to Robert Parker. See also above, n. 13.

25. Several Near Eastern rituals of the month Elul might potentially parallel the Aloulaia/Eloulaia. On the month, cf. COHEN, o.c. (n. 15), 1993, p. 321–326 and 2015, p. 421–424; its name may derive from ululu, “to purify”, or to “consecrate a deity”. Cohen lists a variety of sources, including the Assyrian astrolabe B which mentions: “The month Elulu, the work of the Elamite Ishtar, the goddesses purify themselves in the sacred river, they have their annual cleansing”. This not only forms a compelling parallel with the Nisanaia at Larisa/Marmarini, but it may also suggest an apt background for a large festival of the goddess: see in particular the rites described on 13–14 Itonios (Table 1). Note also the “festival of the akitu-house” celebrated by Ashurbanipal II (883–859 BC) in honour of Ishtar on the 17th of Ululu (COHEN, o.c. [n. 15], 2015, p. 423). Also particularly noteworthy is the series of ablutions (rimkām) and distributions of wine attested in Assyria during this month (COHEN o.c. [n. 15], 1993, p. 323 with n. 2): “on the 3rd for Anu, on the 15th for Adad, on the 16th of the month for Sin [cp. Mēn?] and Samaš [cp. Helios?] and the 18th for Aššur. A kettledrum performance (lilīsalāti) before the gods occurred on the 17th”; cp. also similar rites held in Nisan in Assyria, COHEN o.c. (n. 15), 1993, p. 308. For kettledrums used in month 7
(Ululu) at Babylon: cf. also E. ROBBINS, “Tabular Sacrifice Records and the Cultic Calendar of Neo-Babylonian Uruk”, JCS 48 (1996), p. 61–87, here: 81. To these kettledrums, compare most probably the τύμπανα mentioned in line A 5 of the stele from Larisa/Marmarini, and contrast DECOURT and TZIAPHALIAS’ interpretation of these τύμπανα as architectural elements (2015, p. 25; contradicting the primary sense found in LSJ s.v. τύμπανον).

26. On the month Nisan (lit. “First-Offerings”), see again COHEN (o.c. [n. 15], 1993, p. 305–309; 2015, p. 387–389). For a major spring festival occurring in Nisan at Nabataean Khirbet-et-Tannur (ca. 100–150 AD), involving sacrifices of animals, incense and cakes, see now J.S. MCKENZIE et al., The Nabataean Temple at Khirbet et-Tannur, Jordan, vol. 1: Architecture and Religion, Boston, 2013, p. 249. In Mesopotamia, the month was characterised by rites of “installation of the king” and was a sacred month for the god Sin; for a discussion of holocausts in Nisan, see now PARKER and SCULLION (2016), esp. with n. 97. Since Mên is the paredros of Artemis (Phylake) at Larisa/Marmarini (cf. DECOURT and TZIAPHALIAS 2015, p. 27–28), but not mentioned explicitly during the Aloulaia/Eloulaia, we might perhaps expect his cult to have been discussed as part of an earlier section on the Nisanaia. In Greece, Mên could be worshipped on the 7th day of the month, or more flexibly from the New Moon until the 15th, as we find in the foundation of his cult at Sounion, IG II' 1366.16–20 (1st c. AD?).

27. Note again that, though the sanctuary at Larisa/Marmarini was perhaps situated in the countryside, the text clearly assumes a nearby community. As part of their collections on 1 Itonios, the priestesses are not to enter any houses, nor to carry the hiera into them (B 17–18: εἰς δὲ οίκαν μὴ ἁγιείφθην, μηδὲ εἰσείρθην τὰ ἱερά; cp. again the hesitation of DECOURT and TZIAPHALIAS 2015, p. 25). The phrase εἰς οίκαν, without the article, must be taken as generic (assuming a plural referent, rather than a singular οίκος in the sanctuary). For collections where the priest or priestess is forbidden to approach or enter houses in a community, cp. again esp. the contract for the priestess of Artemis Pergaia at Halikarnassos, LSAM 73.27–28 (ca. 250–200 BC): οὐ εἰσέρχετο πρὸ τοῦ νύμφας τῆς ἡμέρας τρεῖς ἔπος οίκαν μὴ πόρευον μηδὲ τοιοῦτον.


29. Civic decrees: e.g. V. PETRAKOS, Hoi Epigraphes tou Oropou, 144 (ca. 240–180 BC) or IG XI 4, 539 (Delos, end 4th – early 3rd BC), line 5. Associations: e.g. IG II' 11263 (300/299 BC), lines 15–16.


32. IG XI 4, 539 (cf. SEG 57, 782; Χρυσός ἡ σαλαμεία θάλασσα | ἀνθρώπου ἡ ἱερὰ, ή ἱερὰ ἁρτοκλῆς). Segre describes it as a “Lastro di marmo bianco adatta ad essere infissa nel terreno”; height 49 cm, width 31 cm, depth 4.5 cm, letters 1.5 cm. The findspot is Platani-Kermetes, a neighbourhood to the southwest of the city of Kos, i.e. in the principal necropolis, which lies between the city and the Asklepieion. Cf. now the new edition by K. Hallof as IG XII,4 2781, on the basis of autopsy of the stone (in the storeroom of the Castle of Kos), a squeeze and a photograph (Hallof gives the measurements as: height 48 cm, width 30 cm, depth 7 cm). A text, with a photograph of the stone may also be consulted in C. TSOUΛΙ, Ταφικά καὶ Επιτάφια μνημεία τῆς Κόρης, diss. Athens, 2013, no. 640.

33. J.COS EF 458 (cf. SEG 57, 782; Χρυσός ἡ σαλαμεία θάλασσα | ἀνθρώπου ἡ ἱερὰ, ή ἱερὰ ἁρτοκλῆς). Segre describes it as a “Lastro di marmo bianco adatta ad essere infissa nel terreno”; height 49 cm, width 31 cm, depth 4.5 cm, letters 1.5 cm. The findspot is Platani-Kermetes, a neighbourhood to the southwest of the city of Kos, i.e. in the principal necropolis, which lies between the city and the Asklepieion. Cf. now the new edition by K. Hallof as IG XII,4 2781, on the basis of autopsy of the stone (in the storeroom of the Castle of Kos), a squeeze and a photograph (Hallof gives the measurements as: height 48 cm, width 30 cm, depth 7 cm). A text, with a photograph of the stone may also be consulted in C. TSOUΛΙ, Ταφικά καὶ Επιτάφια μνημεία τῆς Κόρης, diss. Athens, 2013, no. 640.
34. See Maillot (2013), p. 222–226, for a catalogue of the more than 40 inscriptions relating to the burial plots of groups (usually cultic groups, θανάτου) on the island (cf. now IG XII 4, 2772–2826, i.e. a total of 55 items). However, Maillot probably overestimates (p. 209) the extent to which expatriates were involved in forming such associations in order to secure plots for burial. Several inscriptions in her catalogue do not appear to relate to foreigners specifically (e.g. the apparent professional association in I.Cos EF 454 / IG XII 4, 2800, 1st c. BC–AD: ὃρος θεακαίων | θανάτου στό| με[τρων (?) —]). Additionally, note that some of the associations from Kos have names formulated in the Dorian dialect, for instance I.Cos EF 208 / IG XII 4, 2815 (late 1st–2nd c. AD): Ἀθανασίας τῶν σὺν Δυσηγένει, while others seem to favour koine, e.g. I.Cos EF 429 / IG XII 4, 2798 (1st c. BC–AD; cp. 2799): ὃρος θάνατου | Τύχης Αφροδίτης τῶν σὺν Τερέσιξ Αὐδῆικ Δαραθία.

To assume that the latter indicates that the association had ‘foreign’ roots remains conjectural, unless an identification of the provenance of the cult or the founder of the association is also possible (but that is seldom the case). Much of the context and the status of these groups in Koan society is now lost to us.


36. Cultic groups centered specifically around the god Anubis are extremely rare. To my knowledge, there is only one famous case, Ἀσμύρνα 765 (RICIS 304/0201, ca. 300–250 BC), beginning: Ἀνοῦθε | ὑπὲρ βασιλῶν | Ἑπτάνεων | Ἐφέσιοις Ἀρχιγένους | καὶ οἱ συνανωμασταί. Anubis is instead usually worshipped as a tertiary figure, alongside Sarapis and Isis; for a single dedication of this sort on Kos, see IG XII 4, 551 / RICIS 204/1002 (1st c. BC).

37. For the construction of the agent noun, cf. e.g. Αὐθηναῖσσω (Eust. 1742.2) — Αὐθηναῖσται (for participial forms, recall, inter alia, θεομοσφορία — θεομοσφορίαν, or the Ἀδωνικάσσω of Theoc. 15 [Ἀδωνικάσσων; Ar. Lys. 389]). On the names of associations, the best and most extensive treatment still remains that of F. Poland, Geschichte des griechischen Vereinigungskreises, Leipzig, 1909, p. 1–172 (“Namen und Arten”); on agent nouns more widely, see E. Fraenkel, Geschichte der griechischen Nomina agentis auf -τηρ, -τωρ, -της (-της), 2 vols., Strassburg, 1910–1912 (and esp. p. 175–178, with examples of associations from Rhodes).

38. Cf. esp. Poland (1909), p. 62, for names which I call ‘heortephoric’ here. Note esp. the frequent νοσμιστασταί (e.g. IGDP 96), or the koinon of θεοπλωσταστα from Tenos (IG XII 5, 872.114–118, ca. 400–350 BC; the epithet Theoxenios is an unicum at Paus. 7.27.4 and no doubt also derived from a festival, in this case involving Apollo). In many cases, it remains difficult to make a firm decision about the root of a name: Σωτηριτασταί, for instance (e.g. IG II 2 1343), might refer to the epithet Σωτήρ (cp. the Rhodian Διοσωστηριταστα, e.g. IG XII 1, 939), or perhaps better to a festival called Σωτηρία (Σωτηρία-σταί); obviously, the two possibilities are not entirely mutually exclusive, since they equally assume a root verb *σωτηριάζω.


40. The name belongs to the father of an individual called Ἐπάρκος τοῦ Ἀλλαζιου, attested a few times: cf. LGPN I.S.V. Αλλαζιος (ca. 240–230 BC). For another instance of this personal name in Roman Syria, see also Parker and Scullion (2016), with n. 14.

41. I.Cos EF 202 / IG XII 4, 2810 (cf. A. Mauri, NSER 496; 1st c. AD): ὃρος θηκαίων θανάτου | Δίος· Σωματοποίης καὶ Ἀσταρθης οὔ ὄρχης ἑφανταστά — — —. In this case, the group was therefore led by an official called archierianistas. Astarte is very occasionally associated with

42. One thinks principally of the exceptional example of the community known as the δῆμος τὸν τετελεσθένον on Lemnos (ASA A [1941–1943], nos. 2–4, 7 and 11, ca. 350–200 BC). Private associations of μύσται are especially attested in the early centuries AD for some Hellenistic exceptions, however, see the μύσται Αὐτόλλωνος Πλευρενοῦ (SEG 46, 1519, Sardis, ca. 150 BC; cf. also SEG 32, 1236) — in control of a sanctuary and connected to the Attalids — or those (probably of Dionysus Kathegemon) at Teos, BCH 4 (1880), p. 164 no. 21 (ca. 172–150 BC). For the popularity of mystery cults in the region of Larisa, see now M. MILI, *Religion and Society in Ancient Thessaly*, Oxford, 2014, p. 283–284.


44. On the traditional calendars of the Levant (Ugarit, Phoenicia, etc.) in the second and first millennia BC, see COHEN, o.c. (n. 15), 2015, p. 359–377.


46. For a wider discussion of the goddess at Larisa/Marmarini and the overall context of the cult, see PARKER and SCULLION (2016), in the present volume (cf. above, n. 5).

47. It might perhaps be possible to relate this cult of Pan to one already known in the area, at Homolion (Mt. Homole) on the other side of Mt. Ossa from Marmarini and Larisa; on this mountain sanctuary, see MILI, o.c. (n. 42), p. 41, n. 128.

48. Contrast DECOURT and TSIAPHALIAS (2015), p. 32: “elle [i.e. this restriction against swine] ne permet pas, à elle seule, de parler de culte oriental; du reste cette exclusion (B36) concerne explicitement le culte d’Artémis ”. See also now PARKER and SCULLION (2016), with n. 237.

49. Cf. DECOURT and TSIAPHALIAS (2015), p. 41, with further references. For ἄνθρωπος ἄξωμα in a Semitic ritual context, cf. LXX Le. 2.4. The modern Greek λαγάνα is employed specifically to refer to flat and unleavened bread consumed on ‘Clean Monday’ in late February / early March, 48 days prior to the Orthodox Easter. On these breads and other cakes in the text, see now PARKER and SCULLION (2016), with n. 162.


51. A final outlook may be considered, namely, how longstanding and widespread festivals similar to the Nisanaia and the Alouli<i>a</i>/Elouli<i>a</i> are, though they may be fast disappearing. To cite only one instance, the Yazidi, a monotheistic group from Mesopotamia — recently in the news due to their persecution by the Islamic state — are known to celebrate a Čejna Cemaiya or
“Feast of Assembly” from 23 ʿAylūl (i.e. Elul) to 1 Taʾṣrīn (i.e. Tishrei) again, a seven or eight-day occasion.

ABSTRACTS
Following the publication of the stele from Larisa/Marmarini in the previous volume of Kernos (28, 2015), this article proposes to focus on a pair of important aspects of this new and unique inscription. Alongside a brief survey of the document and more particularly a study of the typology of its contents, the task is twofold: first (1), a systematic analysis of the two principal festivals mentioned in the regulations, the Nisanaia and Aloulaia, which also enables some revisions of the first edition of the text; and second (2), with the use of epigraphic parallels, a wider consideration of the character and context of the inscription as a whole, and more specifically of the body which might be presumed to have issued it.

À la suite de la publication de la stèle de Larisa/Marmarini dans le précédent volume de Kernos (28, 2015), cet article propose de revoir en détail deux aspects importants de ce document unique. Grâce à un survol du contenu et, plus particulièrement, à une brève analyse de la typologie des règlements que la stèle contient, il s’agira : premièrement (1), de mener une analyse systématique des deux fêtes principales mentionnées dans le texte, les Nisanaia et les Aloulaia, permettant également de réviser l’édition de certains passages du texte ; deuxièmement (2), d’effectuer la recherche de parallèles permettant d’éclaircir le contexte du document, et plus particulièrement, de s’interroger sur le groupe qui pourrait l’avoir fait inscrire.

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