

The Use of Sacred Context for Slave Consecrations and Manumissions in Boeotia, Macedonia and Anatolia

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Abstract. In this contribution I will focus on some observations on the typology of these categories of epigraphs, with emphasis on regional particularities and chronological landmarks. In the second part of the study, however, I will highlight the situations encountered in Boeotia at Chaironeia, in Asia Minor, particularly in connection with the sanctuary of Helios Apollo Lairbenos, and in Macedonia, at Leukopetra, where the dedications are addressed to the Autochthonous Mother of the Gods. It is therefore necessary to make a few clarifications concerning the typology of these inscriptions, their formal aspect, the terms used to define the act of dedication or consecration, the particularities generated by the types of conditions that had to be satisfied, and the ways of dating the existing epigraphic material.

Rezumat. În această contribuție mă voi concentra asupra unor observații privind tipologia acestor categorii de epigrafe, cu accent pe particularitățile regionale și reperele cronologice. În a doua parte a studiului voi evidenția însă situațiile întâlnite în Beoția la Chaironeia, în Asia Mică, în special în legătură cu sanctuarul lui Helios Apollo Lairbenos, și în Macedonia, la Leukopetra, unde dedicațiile sunt adresate Mamei zeilor autohtonă. Este deci necesar să facem câteva precizări cu privire la tipologia acestor inscripții, aspectul lor formal, termenii folosiți pentru definirea actului de dedicare sau de consacrare, particularitățile generate de tipurile de condiții care trebuiau îndeplinite și modalitățile de datarea materialului epigrafic existent.

Keywords: consecrations, manumissions, Autochthonous Mother of Gods, Helios Apollo Lairbenos, freedmen.

In his volume devoted to the manumission of slaves in a Jewish context in the Bosporan Kingdom, E. Leigh Gibson takes up and adapts the taxonomy used by Aristide Calderini in his work published at the beginning of the 20th century. He showed that, at least as far as ordinary Greek inscriptions are concerned, a distinction can be made between slave manumissions in a civil context and in a religious or sacred context, the difference between the two categories being made not in relation to the eponymous magistrates (since the mentions in question only help us as a dating element, possibly from a prosopographical point of view), but rather by reference to the presence or absence of religious markers.² It is a

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² LEIGH GIBSON 1999, 30-34.

distinction that may seem at first sight to be a very tenuous and insubstantial one, given the multitude of issues involved in defining the sacred and civil contexts. Can the sacral character be defined depending on the context in which the ceremony of entrustment or donation took place or in terms of involvement of a particular priest or *hieros*? Or in terms of the subsequent obligations of those consecrated? Or is the mere mention of the guarantor protective deity sufficient? Calderini and Leigh Gibson divide sacral manumissions according to the protection granted by the deity, the sale to the god or the consecration to him. Those in the first category could be subdivided into manumissions in which the deity is invoked to grant protection to the freedman and those which benefit from a so-called civil-religious mode.³

However, in some cases there are invocations addressed to the deities in certain inscriptions where there is no mention of donation or manumission in a sacred context, but the collective manumission of the slaves in question is the result of ordinary testamentary dispositions. The inscription discovered in 2001 at Büyütaşlı Höyük in the Cappadocian area, originally published by Murat Aydaş⁴ and re-edited with very relevant clarifications by Pierre Debord, is perhaps a revealing example in this respect.⁵ The inscription can be translated as follows: "I give these orders to the ones who were freed by me through this decision and whom I listed on the two tablets and codicils (of the will): their children should not be abandoned, for the family of the freedmen always remain united and for nobody should ever be put in my grave. And if one of the freedmen or their descendants does something wrong or takes to himself something of those, which have been given by me, or damages or abuses (the tomb), this person will pay as a fine nine pure virgins, nine boys, nine white bulls with golden horns, nine heifers, nine horses with golden bridles, nine white he-goats, nine she-goats, nine rams with golden fleece and nine white swallows to the goddess in Komana every year. May this person bring them to Zeus from Thymnasa, Zeus Pharnauos and Anaitis. (And even so) the aforementioned gods will not be appeased and neither the earth will give fruit nor the sky water nor the sun light. This person will also be liable to temple-robbery and his root will be completely destroyed. I set this tablet on my tomb."⁶ As is very clear from this funerary imprecation inscription of the 2nd century AD, we are dealing with the testamentary dispositions of a local aristocrat, as Debord also points out in his study (a wealthy landowner, probably a livestock breeder, a bit eccentric and "pour tout dire, mégalomane" and not a priest of the goddess Mâ, as Aydaş had initially considered⁷), but the sacred character is given by the provisions concerning the inviolability of the tomb of the deceased and by the assimilation of the destruction of the funerary complex in any form (lines 19-20) with *hierosylia*, i.e. sacrilege

³ LEIGH GIBSON 1999, 37.

⁴ AYDAŞ 2002, 25.

⁵ DEBORD 2005, 24-28.

⁶ MOGA 2019, 463-464, no. 6.9.1.

⁷ DEBORD 2005, 29-30.

committed by a person due to theft of sacred property. Moreover, the deities mentioned in the inscription are linked not to the protection given to the freed individuals and their descendants, but to the tomb itself. The atonement offerings were to be made annually to the goddess of the Cappadocian Comana, Mâ, but consecrated to Zeus of Thymnasa, Zeus Pharnauros (identifiable in Debord's view with Ahura Mazda) and Anaitis.

Equally difficult to categorize are the inscriptions at Chaironeia in Boeotia, mostly dating from the Hellenistic period, where that civil-religious aspect mentioned by Leigh Gibson is present, since manumission by consecration to the deity takes place in a civil context, involving the city authorities, according to local regulations whose provisions were not preserved.⁸ However, most of the inscriptions mention that the consecration was undertaken through the city council by law⁹ or under the authority of the council, according to law (*synhedrion* or rarely *boulē*, in only two cases¹⁰). However, we sometimes find that the manumission tax was raised by the treasurer in charge of religious issues.¹¹ Thus we notice on an inscription dating back to the 3rd-2nd centuries that "During the archontate of Kallikon, on the 15th day of the month Damatrios, Pourippos, son of Proxenos, consecrated his servant (*therapēnan*) Aphrodite to Sarapis as his *hiera*, on condition that she should remain with him and his wife Agatheine as long as they lived. He proceeded to consecrate her through the Council, according to the law, and immediately paid the fee of 20 drachmas to the treasurer of the sacred".¹²

Rarely at Chaironeia do we have mention of witnesses (*wistores*) in earlier inscriptions, but witnesses and the Council are never mentioned simultaneously in the same instance.¹³ In the case of Chaironeia, Claire Grenet believes that there are two procedural stages of manumission in a sacred context, namely the manumission proper and the consecration, since two of the dedications explicitly refer to freedmen (*apeleutheroi*): one in which Agathokles, son of Kallom, consecrated the freed slave Daos as a *hieros* to Sarapis, and another in which a female consecrates a slave with the help of those who had previously freed her.¹⁴ Another inscription from Chaironeia may lead us to the same idea, as we note that the daughter of Mnasias, Kaphisias, accompanied by her friends Asandros and Mnasias, sets free (*aphieiti*) her beloved child, Soso, by consecrating her to Artemis Eilithia, on condition that she remains with her for life.¹⁵

⁸ YOUNI 2010, 312.

⁹ DARMEZIN 1999, no. 16 and the following ones.

¹⁰ GRENET 2014, 404.

¹¹ DARMEZIN 1999, no. 18 and 21.

¹² DARMEZIN 1999, no. 18.

¹³ GRENET 2014, 405.

¹⁴ GRENET 2014, 396.

¹⁵ DARMEZIN 1999, no. 100. LEIGH GIBSON 1999, 34: a verb that can also be translated the verb as "send away" or "release".

The *paramonē* provision, was a suspensive clause which, in the event of non-compliance by the freedman, could have a resolutive character, in the sense that the person in question was liable to return to the previous legal condition, that of slave. Thus, we find at Stiris the following mention in relation to a situation as such: "If it does not happen as written above, the consecration shall be without effect, and they shall pay 30 silver minas."¹⁶ *Paramonē* is a fairly common condition in Greek inscriptions from the Hellenistic period throughout mainland Greece (Thessaly, Boeotia, Crete, etc.), but also at Leukopetra in Macedonia in the Imperial Roman period. In Asia Minor, however, the *paramonē* is not so common, but rather the exception.

Most of the inscriptions refer to the lifelong obligation of the freedman to remain with the former master, but a very small group of epigraphs stipulate such a contractual obligation for only 3 or 10 years.¹⁷ The ordinary lifelong obligation could also be accompanied by additional conditions, such as *gērotrophia*, which would require the freedman also to support his former master, or to pay for his funeral expenses.¹⁸ Thus, an epigraph from Stiris in the 2nd century shows that Eupraxis and her child, Dorion, had to "remain with Praxias and his wife Aphrodisia as long as they live, to see to their burial and to perform the customary ceremonies in their honour."¹⁹

An inscription from Delphi of 178/177 BC records, for example, that the only obligation of the freed and consecrated slave, i.e. of Euporia, to her former master, who also paid to the sanctuary of Apollo Pythios the manumission tax of 200 drachmas with the image of Alexander, was to join him on a longer journey: "She is to accompany Asandros to Macedonia and thus she will be free".²⁰ An additional safeguard was usually provided that the city authorities, the priesthood officials²¹ or any of the citizens could intervene to prevent the wrongful return to slavery by a third party,²² notably if that party was the descendants of the deceased.²³ The reason for this was that although the slaves manumitted by consecration to a deity were legally free, they were nevertheless considered the inviolable property of the god. It is to this type of perception that the Delphic sacral slave manumissions lead us, which had the procedural aspect of a direct fictive sale to the Pythian Apollo²⁴. I believe that an inscription from the 3rd century BC from Koroneia is also sufficiently explicit in this regard: "[---] on

¹⁶ DARMEZIN 1999, no. 149.

¹⁷ FOSSEY 1991, no. 4: "on condition that she (i.e., Parthena, the foster child) remains with them for 10 years, at which time the consecration will be effective".

¹⁸ YOUNI 2010, 321. DARMEZIN 1999, no. 127: "to take care of all of Paramona's needs".

¹⁹ DARMEZIN 1999, no. 151.

²⁰ DARMEZIN 1999, no. 142.

²¹ DARMEZIN 1999, no. 129: "the priestess is to intervene to protect him".

²² For instance DARMEZIN 1999, no. 133.

²³ DARMEZIN 1999, no. 137.

²⁴ SOSIN 2015, 328-329.

condition that they remain with him as long as he lives, and also with his wife, Harmodia, behaving blamelessly. When Heirotodos and Harmodia die, Onasios and Dioniosios are to take charge of their funerals and perform every year all the customary ceremonies for the deceased. Let not the heirs of Heirotodos nor anyone else in any way be allowed to return Dioniosios or Onasimos to slavery, the priestess of Charops Herakles and anyone else who wishes may bring them back and intervene to protect them, *for Dioniosios and Onasimos are free persons belonging to the sanctuary, along with any property they may acquire.*"²⁵ Consequently, these persons were declared free and consecrated to the god, and they could not be returned to slavery unless they failed to fulfil their contractual obligations, and whoever ventured to commit any abuse in this sense was held guilty of *hierosylia*, i.e. of stealing the sacred property of the deity: "Whoever returns her (Hermaia) to slavery shall be liable to the punishment prescribed for the theft of sacred property."²⁶

It rarely happens in the case of consecrations and manumissions of slaves in a sacred context to encounter an explicit mention in the inscriptions of the fact that these actions were carried out within the sanctuary, as we find in the Koroneia, with regard to the sanctuary of Sarapis.²⁷ In the case of the sanctuaries at Leukopetra in Macedonia, located near Beroia, and at Atyochorion in southern Phrygia, situated near the city of Hierapolis, we can deduce this because most of the inscriptions were found either within the sacred sites or in the nearby villages. Circumstances in these two sanctuaries are relatively similar and therefore often subject to comparison. The chronological sequence of the inscriptions is roughly the same, i.e. the interval from AD 124/125 to AD 257 for the Anatolian epigraphs and from AD 148 to the second part of the 3rd century for the Macedonian ones. Almost all inscriptions can be precisely dated, which removes ambiguities. From a formal point of view, we note that in both cases there is a specific typology of composition. However, there are also differences, one of the most important being that sacred slaves or hierodules appear mainly in the Anatolian region, which can be explained by the fact that this category is more common in the Eastern area of the Graeco-Roman world. Then, in Asia Minor we have in most cases the financial protective provision for the case of non-compliance, especially by a third party, of contractual obligations, which begins with the formula 'should anyone dare' and continues with the institutions into whose treasury the fines were to be paid (imperial treasury, sanctuary or treasury of the city in charge of the administration of the sanctuary), similar to the case of inscriptions containing funerary imprecations. In Leukopetra, however, more emphasis is placed on the subsequent obligations of those who were declared *hieros* or *hieros kai eleutheros*, not only to their former masters, but also to the sanctuary: that they should serve at the sanctuary on the customary

²⁵ DARMEZIN 1999, no. 133. Vezi si DARMEZIN 1999, no. 135.

²⁶ DARMEZIN 1999, no. 131, an inscription also from Koroneia, dated to the 3rd century BC, Hermaia being considered "*hiera* and free". Similar situation in DARMEZIN 1999, no. 126.

²⁷ DARMEZIN 1999, no. 121.

days or on those appointed for the sacred celebrations²⁸. There are instances where the release of the slave occurred after a certain period of time, in fulfillment of a taken promise: “may he belong to the goddess after my end.”²⁹

The terminology employed is relatively similar. The actual term used for purchase contracts (*onē*)³⁰ that would be suitable in the case of temple records is extremely rarely mentioned. It appears on an inscription datable to 170 AD: “In the year 201 (= Augustan era), which is also 317 (= Macedonian calendar), on the 25th day of the month Hyperberetaios, I, Euarestos, son of Nikolais, of Beroia, donated (*eukharisamen*) to the Autochthonous Mother of Gods the child named Philiste, of about five years of age, whose purchase deed (*onē*) I deliver in the hands of the goddess.”³¹ The verbs commonly used in the inscriptions of the two sanctuaries are usually *anatithemi*, *doroumai* and *kharizomai*, which indicate dedication/consecration, donation and entrustment.³² Two of the verbs involved, *katagrapho* (in Asia Minor) and *stellographo* (at Leukopetra³³), clearly indicate that the texts of the inscriptions are only transcribed copies of the original documents kept in the temple archives. Evidence of this is also found at Delphi, where an inscription from 182-181 BC records that “the magistrates (*bouleutēs*) shall provide for (the document) to be transcribed in the sanctuary, and the consecration will be valid.”³⁴ Similarly, at Leukopetra, we notice that “Fundanius Nikeros hereby confirm by oath that the persons who affixed the seal below have placed in plain view a donation tablet dated the 20th of the aforementioned month for ten consecutive days (and that) the following text has been verified (after the original) and countersigned.”³⁵

Analyzing the available inscriptions, it is most likely that there had to be a certain person to render/donate someone who was to become a hieros or sacred slave to the deity, who either had the role of guarantor before the deity for the dedicated person, or who had legal tutelage over the person to be consecrated. However, at Leukopetra we have an interesting circumstance in which a consecrated person delivered himself to serve the deity, giving his consent to the consecration, although the one who confides him is his own mother: “In the Augustan year 235, which is also 351, Ladoma, the daughter of Amyntas, offered her own son named Paramonos, whom she had promised when she was ill, to serve no one else but the goddess alone. Paramonos, the one mentioned, being present, offered himself. When Aelia

²⁸ *IL*, 12-21; 29; 33.

²⁹ *IL*, 31 (192-193 d.Hr.).

³⁰ YOUNI 2010, 319; GOFAS, HATZOPoulos 1999, 7. For comparisons with the meanings of *katagraphē*, see RICL 1995, 187-188, *IL* (Introduction, pages 57-59) and MIRKOVIĆ 2001, 954-957 ff.

³¹ *IL*, 3. With a different indication of the dedicator's name at YOUNI 2010, 318.

³² YOUNI 2010, 317; PAPAZOGLou 1981, 173-174.

³³ *IL*, 23.

³⁴ *CID*, 137.

³⁵ *IL*, 99.

Aureliane was priestess, (and) Aurelia Sappho was curator.”³⁶ We also note at Leukopetra that even the sacred slaves could make such consecrations. Thus, an inscription dated 193/194 A.D. records that a certain Mary, a slave of the Mother of the Gods, offered (*anatithemî*)³⁷ Thedotos, whom she had bought from birth and raised until the age of three, to the Autochthonous Goddess.³⁸

In Asia Minor there are no cases in which a certain person would voluntarily render himself or herself to the deity, even if the god sometimes explicitly demanded that he or she should come to his or her service by means of a divine command and report the event on a stele, thus advertising the power manifested by the deity or deities in question. A special case, however, is found in the Anatolian area at Ayazviran, in Lydia, in a confession inscription dated 118/119 AD.³⁹ Trophime, the daughter of Artemidoros Kikinnas, was asked to put herself into the service of the god, but she did not comply at once and therefore the god Mên Artemidoros Axiottenos, the master of Koresa, punished her with temporary insanity. But repenting and asking the advice of the gods Mên Artemidoros Axiottenos, Meter Tarsene and Apollo Tarsios about the matter, they commanded her to erect a stele and to put herself in the service of the gods. However, we do not know whether this consecration actually materialised in Trophime’s acquiring the condition of a *hiera*, given her status as a free person, since we are not aware of the existence of a *katagraphe* in this regard, but the possibility can be considered. Very interesting for the Asia Minor area is precisely the fact that in many cases the consecration of natural or adopted children takes place following such commands from the gods, the expressions commonly used being “upon the command of the god” (*kata epitagēn tou theou*) or according to the dream (*kat’onar*). But such orders also appear in the case of common dedications, not only in *katagraphai*⁴⁰. For example, Charixenos Dionysopolitanus is commanded to probably erect a statue (since the inscription is on a base) by the god Apollo Lairmenos, who is here called *theos epiphanes*⁴¹.

There are at least four instances in the sanctuary of Helios Apollo Lairbenos in Atyochorion where natural or adopted children were rendered to this god following a command or a dream. The first dates from the beginning of the third century and refers to the donation of an nurtured child (*threptos*) by a certain Markos, son of Dionysidaros of Motella, according to the command of Helios Apollo Lairbenos.⁴² Three other *katagraphai* refer to oniric instructions. Both Aphia of Hierapolis and Dion of Motella donate their own children, Roupos

³⁶ IL, 47 (203-204 d.Hr.).

³⁷ A term that could also have the meaning of ‘render’, ‘give’ or ‘donate’.

³⁸ IL, 39.

³⁹ MOGA 2019, 343-344, no. 4.2.11.

⁴⁰ DIGNAS 2003, 84; RITTI, ŞİMŞEK, YILDIZ 2000, 22-26, 28-31, 39-40, no. K5, K7, K11, K16, K23, K 30, K37, K49.

⁴¹ RITTI, ŞİMŞEK, YILDIZ 2000, 8, no. D4. The formula used for the first received order is *kata epitagēn*.

⁴² RITTI, ŞİMŞEK, YILDIZ 2000, 2000, 23, no. K7.

and Roupeinas and Papirianos respectively to Helios Apollo Lairbenos in the 2nd century AD.⁴³ In the latter case we do not know the status of Didymos, but we do know that he was specially sent to a hieros, Dionysios, at the beginning of the third century, by Neikephoros of Motella, to be consecrated to Helios Apollo Lermenos. He may have been a relative of the couple Dionysius and his wife or even their child raised by Neikephoros of Motella.⁴⁴

Although it would appear at times that these are two distinct practices using similar procedures, having as a guarantor the divinity or being linked to an element of a sacred nature, in reality the consecration of slaves and the manumissions in a sacred context are essentially the same type of legal practice involving the fictitious or real donation to a divinity, with different ends, each time adapted to the particularities of local societies.

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⁴³ RITTI, ŞİMŞEK, YILDIZ 2000, 22, nr. K4; RITTI, ŞİMŞEK, YILDIZ 2000, 22, no. K5. The wording used in these inscriptions is 'according to a divine dream' (*kata ton theion oniron*) and 'according to a dream' (*kat'oniron*).

⁴⁴ RITTI, ŞİMŞEK, YILDIZ 2000, 49.

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