The phrase καταχθείσης τριακονθημέρου in an inscription from Macedonian Lefkopetra

RICL M. University of Belgrade
http://dx.doi.org/10.12681/tekmeria.209

Copyright © 2000

To cite this article:

M. RICL

THE PHRASE ΚΑΤΑΧΘΕΙΣΗ ΤΡΙΑΚΟΘΗΜΕΡΟΥ IN AN INSCRIPTION FROM MACEDONIAN LEFKOPETRA

On the occasion of the long-awaited publication of some two hundred inscriptions from the sanctuary of the Autochthonous Mother of Gods discovered in 1965 near the village of Lefkopetra in Central Macedonia1, I devote this note to a phrase from one of the texts. Like nearly all of the other inscriptions engraved on the columns, door-posts, sides of sacrificial tables, altars, slabs and stelae from this remote rural sanctuary, this one also records an act of donation of a slave to the Mother of Gods2: ...Αὐφήλλος Κάσσανδρος ... δωρούμαι κορώσιον ... Ἀνδρίσκαν ... Μητρὶ θεῷ Αὐτόχθονι, καταχθείσης τριακοθημέρου κατά τὴν ἀπόφασιν Τερ-
tυλλίσαντο 'Ακυλα.

In her study of manumissions by consecration3, F. Papazoglou correctly translated the phrase καταχθείσης τριακοθημέρου as “passée la période de trente jours”. She then associated it with another frequent clause in Lefkopetra (and elsewhere in Macedonia) stipulating the obligation of the donated slave to spend the customary period of time (during the festival days) (οἱ ἔθιμοι/ εἴθισμοι ἡμέραι, ἐνρταί, συναγωγαί4) serving in the sanctuary. Doing so, she reached the conclusion that the thirty-day period actually represents the number of days fixed by custom for the service due to the goddess: “la personne consacrée était obligée de demeurer au service du sanctuaire trente jours après la consécration”. My own research into the same matter has led me to the conclusion that the donated slave’s period of service in

2. No. 100, October 244.
the sanctuary was a more permanent obligation, certainly continuing beyond
the death of his former master and possibly being even a life-long committment\(^5\). The
limited epigraphical evidence is generally silent on this point: obviously, the practice
behind it was so common and familiar to everyone involved that precision on the
length of the service was not deemed necessary.

The phrase καταχθείσης τριαυξοθμερίου was correctly explained by Ph.
Petsas, the archaeologist who discovered the sanctuary of Lefkopetra. In his report on
the dated inscriptions from this site presented at the Seventh Congress of Greek and
Latin Epigraphy in Athens 1982\(^6\), he proposed to understand the phrase in question as
referring to a method of giving the necessary publicity to the act of donation.

Several documents from the Roman world support this interpretation. The most
recently published one is the bilingual edict of the proconsul of Asia in AD 134/5, T.
Aurelius Fulvus Boeconius Antoninus (the future emperor Antoninus Pius) from the
village of Yeniköy north of Marmara Gölü (Gygaia/Koloe Lake) in Lydia\(^7\).

After giving permission to a village community in the territory of Sardis (?)
(vicani Arhillon, κώμη Άρηλλων) to constitute and hold a market, the proconsul
concludes (lines 20-24 of the Latin text): *qua de re si quis petitioni eius contradicere
volat, intra diem tricesimum me aut successorem meum c. v. adeat*; (lines 38-42 of
the Greek text): περί οὗ εἰς τὴν αὐτήνιαν αὐτῶν ἀντιλέγει βουλέται, ἐντὸς τριαυ-
ςτῆς ἡμέρας ἔμοι ἢ τῷ τεμιωτάτῳ μου διαδόχῳ ἐντυχέων. In his book *Nunudinas
instituere et habere* (1982) J. Noilée adduced several examples of public display of
diverse official documents during a thirty -day period\(^8\).

---

6. Πρακτικά τοῦ Ἡ᾿ Διεθνοῦς Συνεδρίου Ἑλληνικῆς καὶ Λατινικῆς Ἑπιγραφικῆς,
Wien, phil.-hist. Kl. 237, Ergänzungsbände zu den Tituli Asiae Minoris* 19, Vienna 1994, pp. 152-6,
no. 523 (SEG 44, 977).
μου τὸ δίκαιον ... ἐγγράφασθαι βουλομαι ἐκκείμενον τοίχον εἰς ἔπεσον ἡμερῶν τριά-
χουν, ὡς ἐν εἰς ἐπετέκτῳ καλὸς ἀναγνωσθήναι δύναται; 2: *POxy. 1100: μὴ ἔλαττων τριά-
χου[το] ἡμερῶν τηροῦντες τὴν περίοδον; 3: H. Wankel, *JK* 11, 1 (Ephesos), Bonn 1979, 7 II,
23 (treaty between Ephesos and Sardis, c. 98 BC). The same period is referred to in the edict
issued by L. Antistius Rusticus de annona coloniae Antiochiae (F. F. Abbott-A. Ch. Johnson,
*Municipal Administration in the Roman Empire*, Princeton 1926, p. 381 no 65a), and in the
recently published letter of Hadrian to the Macedonian koinon (*SEG* 37, 593) it is stipulated.
The phrase *proponi volo* in line 24 of the Yeniköy inscription and its Greek counterpart in line 43 προτεθηκαὶ βούλομαι refer to the public display of official state documents. A similar procedure was applied for private documents as well, as evidenced by the following four inscriptions from Lefkopetra: 1. καθὼς τὸ προτεθ[εῖ]ν πιπτάκιον περιέχει; 2. ...ἐμαρτυρούσατο τοὺς ἐπισφραγισμένους προτεθειμέναν αὐτῶν πιπτάκιον δορεάς ἀπὸ τῆς εἰκάδος τοῦ προγεγραμμένου μηνός, ἔξης ἡμερῶν δέκα; 3. καθὼς καὶ τὸ προτεθὲν πιπτάκιον περιέχει; 4. προσέθηκεν πιπτάκια πρὸς τὸν Κεσαρείου ἑις τοὺς ἰδιομένους τόπους, and three from the city of Beroea itself: 1-2. καθὼς τὸ προτεθὲν γραμματείου περιέχει; 3. ὡς τὸ π[ρο]τεθὲν πιπτάκιον τ[ῆς] δορεᾶς περιέχει.

M. B. Hatzopoulos assumes that the act of donation (πιπτάκιον / γραμματείου (τῆς) δορεᾶς) was publicly displayed together with the document of sale (ὀνή) or other documents certifying the lawful ownership of the donated slave by the donor (καταγραφή, χείρ vel sim.). Nevertheless, at least in two cases the act of purchase seems to have been deposited in the archives of the temple on the day the donation was made and in one case possibly even prior to that, on some other occasion. In


11. No. 99, May 244.
12. No. 115, AD 283/4 (?).
13. No. 103, July 253. Cf. also no. 106, AD 252/3 (?): ὄνναί καὶ τὸ πιπτάκιον ἕθηκα ἵς τὸ ἱερὸν.
15. Ib. no. 56.
17. No. 93, October 239.
18. No. 69, August 219.
any event, a public building-usually a sanctuary- in the donor’s place of residence was chosen for the purpose of giving publicity to the act of donation. Documents were posted in places where as large a section of the public as possible could have access to them, and they were left posted up for about a month. The period of 30 days was the legal period during which any objections to the donation had to be put forward by third parties. It is possible that the public display of donation acts was mandatory even before Tertullianus Aquila regulated the whole procedure by his ἀπόφωσις issued in AD 212.

A similar case of public display of private documents is attested in the so-called “confession-inscriptions” from Lydia. It features in the group of texts recording cases of conflict between humans. To assure the gods’ interest in human affairs and their intervention on behalf of the injured party, a written complaint (πιττάκιον, πιττακίδιον, τάβλα) was submitted and publicly displayed in the local temple. In one case we see that it was deposited on the βῆμα - a platform for special use within the temple-building. In their wording, Maeonian pittakia reflected the form and terminology of petitions and complaints in secular courts, while the expected divine judgment was a substitute for inadequate human justice.

Generally speaking, donors of slaves in Lefkopetra and elsewhere in Macedonia lay particular stress on protecting the interests of the donated slaves and their offspring- their sale, mortgage or any other form of alienation from the goddess, together with the imposition of financial obligations, are expressly forbidden under threat of heavy fines. Simultaneously, donors spare no pains to emphasize that the donated slave is rightfully theirs and not burdened by debt, mortgage or rights of inheritance. In cases of slaves put down as a deposit for a loan, the loan was repaid out prior to the consecration of the slave and the existing securities deposited at the temple. In one case, the slave was surrendered to the goddess as a result of her

---

19. Ten days in the case mentioned above (note 11).
20. Cf. G. Petzl, “Die Beichtinschriften Westkleinasiens”, EA 22, 1994; M. Ricl, La conscience du péché dans les cultes anatoliens à l’époque romaine, Belgrade 1995 (in Serbian, with a French summary). This is not the only similarity between Macedonian consecrations of slaves and Lydian confession-inscriptions. I will devote my intention to this subject in another study.
21. Petzl no. 36; Ricl, no. 18, AD 191/2.
22. Recurring epithets, adverbs and phrases are ἀνε(πέ)γκλητος, ἀνεπίλητος, ἀνυπόθηκος, ἀναντιρήτως, μιδενός ἀντιλέγοντος.
mistress’ inability to pay off a debt incurred for her purchase: διὰ τὸ τὴν τιμὴν αὐτῆς
dedanṭοθαὶ παρὰ τῆς θεοῦ καὶ μὴ δύνασθαι ἀποδοῦναι.\textsuperscript{24}

Month-long public display of donation acts from Macedonian sanctuaries
registering conveyances of privately own slaves to local deities was a necessary
precaution aimed at eliminating all risks of future legal disputes involving
consecrated slaves. Practiced ever since this method of manumission spread
throughout Roman Macedonia, this procedure was officially sanctioned by an ἀπό-
φασις issued in AD 212/3 by the proconsul of Macedonia M. Ulpius Tertullianus
Aquila.

\textit{University of Belgrade} \hspace{1cm} \textit{M. Ricl}

\textsuperscript{23} Nos. 45 (AD 199/200), 51 (AD 208/9) (?), 63 (AD 212/3).
\textsuperscript{24} No. 134 (end of second century AD).
ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

Η ΦΡΑΣΗ ΚΑΤΑΧΘΕΙΣΗΣ ΤΡΙΑΚΘΘΗΜΕΡΟΥ ΣΕ ΜΙΑ ΕΠΙΓΡΑΦΗ ΑΠΟ ΤΗ ΛΕΥΚΟΠΕΤΡΑ

Η φράση "καταχθείσης τριακθθημέρου" σε ἐπιγραφή τῆς Λευκόπετρας (244 μ.Χ.) δπού ἀναφέρεται δωρεά δούλης στὸ ἱερὸ τῆς Μητρὸς Θεῶν Αὐτόχθονος στὴ Λευκόπετρα, πρέπει νὰ συνδεθεῖ, ὅπως εἶχε ἦδη ύποστηρίζει ὁ Φ. Πέτσας, μὲ τὴν διαδικασία δημοσίευσης τῆς σχετικῆς πράξης. Ἡ ἐρμηνεία αὕτη ἐνισχύεται μὲ ἐπιγραφικὰ παράλληλα τῆς αὐτοκρατορικῆς ἐποχῆς ἀπὸ τὴν Ἑ. Ἁσία, καὶ ἰδιαίτερα τὸ διγλώσσω ἔδικτο (134/5 μ.Χ.) τοῦ ἀνθιπάτου τῆς Ἑ. Ἁσίας Τ. Aurelius Fulvus Boeонius Antoninus (κατοπινοῦ αὐτοκράτορα Ἀντωνίνου Πίου) ποὺ παρατίθεται καὶ σχολιάζεται στὸ ἄρθρο.