The phrase καταχθείσης τριακονθημέρου in an inscription from Macedonian Lefkopetra

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THE PHRASE ΚΑΤΑΧΘΗΣΗΣ ΤΡΙΑΚΘΗΜΕΡΟΥ 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: ...Αὐρήλιος Κάσσανδρος ... δωρεύμα δοχὺιον ... Ἀνδρίσκαν ... Μητρὶ θεῷ Αὐτόχθονι, καταχθὴζης τριακθημέρου κατὰ τὴν ἀπόφασιν Τερ- τυλλίανοῦ Ἀκύλα.

In her study of manumissions by consecration³, F. Papazoglou correctly translated the phrase καταχθὴζης τριακθημέρου 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) (αἰ ἑθυμοὶ/ εἴθυμονοι ημέραι, ἔορτα, συναγωγαὶ⁴) 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

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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 commitment. 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 κατασχείσις τριακονθημέρου 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, 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 Boeonius Antoninus (the future emperor Antoninus Pius) from the village of Yeniköy north of Marmara Göllü (Gygaaia/Koloé Lake) in Lydia.

After giving permission to a village community in the territory of Sardis (?) (vicani Arhillon, κώμη Αρθιλών) to constitute and hold a market, the proconsul concludes (lines 20-24 of the Latin text): 


The phrase *proponi volo* in line 24 of the Yeniköy inscription and its Greek counterpart in line 43 προτεθήκατε βουλομαί 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 προ-
τεθὲν πιττάκιον περιέχει; 2. ...ἐμαρτυροποιήσατο τοὺς ἐπισφραγισμένους προτεθειμέναν αὐτὸν πιττάκιον δωρεάς ἀπὸ τὴς εἰκάδος τοῦ προγεγραμμένου μηνὸς, ἐξῆς ἡμερῶν δεκα; 3. καθὼς καὶ τὸ προτεθέν πιττάκιον περιέχει; 4. προέθηκεν πιττάκια πρὸς τὸν Κεσαρείου εἰς τοὺς ἰδιομένους τόπους, and three from the city of Beroea itself: 1-2. καθὼς τὸ προτεθέν γραμμάτειον περιέχει; 3. ὡς τὸ π[ρο]τεθέν πιττάκιον τ[ῆς] δωρεάς περιέχει.

M. B. Hatzopoulos assumes that the act of donation (πιττάκιον / γραμμάτειον (τῆς) δωρεάς) was publicly displayed together with the document of sale (ιόνη) or other documents certifying the lawful ownership of the donated slave by the donor (καταγγαρή, 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

that the potential successors of officials nearing the end of their term should be informed by those who want to put forward their names thirty days in advance (πρὸ τριάκοντα ἡμερῶν πα-

11. No. 99, May 244.
12. No. 115, AD 283/4 (?).
13. No. 103, July 253. Cf. also no. 106, AD 252/3 (?); ὄνκαι τὸ πιττάκιον ἐθήκα εἰς τὸ ἱερὸν.
14. L. Gounaropoulos-M. B. Hatzopoulos, *Επιγραφές Κάτω Μακεδονίας, t. 1: Ἑπ-
γραφές Βεροίας*, Athens 1998, nos. 53-54, June and April 248 respectively.
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 ἀπόφασις 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 (πιττάξιον, πιττακίδιον, τάξια) was submitted and publicly displayed in the local temple. In one case we see that it was deposited on the βήμα—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, ἀνεπιλη(μ)πτος, ἀνυπόθηκος, ἀνανεωθητος, μηδενός ἀντιλέγοντος.
mistress’ inability to pay off a debt incurred for her purchase: διὰ τὸ τὴν τιμὴν αὐτῆς δεδανισθαί παρὰ τῆς θεοῦ καὶ μὴ δύνασθαι ἀποδοῦναι.\(^\text{24}\)

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 ἀπόφασις issued in AD 212/3 by the proconsul of Macedonia M. Ulpius Tertullianus Aquila.

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

Η ΦΡΑΣΗ ΚΑΤΑΧΘΕΙΣΗΣ ΤΡΙΑΚΟΘΗΜΕΡΟΥ ΣΕ ΜΙΑ ΕΠΙΓΡΑΦΗ ΑΠΟ ΤΗ ΛΕΥΚΟΠΕΤΡΑ

Ἡ φράση "καταχθείσης τριακοθήμερου" σὲ ἐπιγραφή τῆς Λευκόπετρας (244 μ.Χ.) ὀποῦ ἀναφέρεται δωρεά δούλης στὸ ἱερὸ τῆς Μητρὸς Θεῶν Αὐτόχθονος στὴ Λευκόπετρα, πρέπει νὰ συνδεθεῖ, ὡς εἴχε ἴδῃ ὑποστηρίζει ο Φ. Πέτσας, μὲ τὴν διαδικασία δημοσίευσης τῆς σχετικῆς πράξης. Ἡ ἐρμηνεία αὐτή ἐνισχύεται μὲ ἐπιγραφικὰ παράλληλα τῆς αὐτοκρατορικῆς ἐποχῆς ᾧ ἀπὸ τῇ Μ. Ἀσίᾳ, καὶ ἰδιαίτερα τὸ διγλώσσο ἑδικτὸ (134/5 μ.Χ.) τοῦ ἀνθυπάτου τῆς Ἀσίας Τ. Aurelius Fulvus Boeonius Antoninus (κατοπινοῦ ἀὐτοκράτορα Ἀντωνίνου Πίου) ποὺ παρατίθεται καὶ σχολιάζεται στὸ ἄρθρο.