The phrase καταχθείσης τριακονθημέρου in an inscription from Macedonian Lefkopetra

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THE PHRASE ΚΑΤΑΧΘΕΙΣ 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 Macedonia, 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 Gods: "... Ἀυρήλιος Κάσσανδρος ... δωροῦμαι χορήγουν ... Ἀνδρίσκαν
... Μητρὶ βεβῷ Αὐτόχθοινι, καταχθείσης τριακθημέρου κατὰ τὴν ἀπόφασιν Τερ-
tυλλίσαντον Ἀκήλα.

In her study of manumissions by consecration, F. Papazoglou correctly
translated the phrase καταχθείσης 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) (ὁί ἐθημοῖ/ ἐθημεύματοι ἡμέραι,
ἐορταί, συναγωγαί) 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 consecration". My own research into the
same matter has led me to the conclusion that the donated slave’s period of service in

1. Ph. M. Petsas-M. B. Hatzopoulos-L. Gounaropoulos-P. Paschidis, Inscriptions du
sanctuaire de la Mère des Dieux Autochtones de Leukopêtra, [MELETHMATA 28], Athens
2000.
2. No. 100, October 244.
4. The term συναγωγαί is not attested in Lefkopetra but it appears in the new
inscription from the sanctuary of Enoïa in Exochi near Kozani (P. M. Nigdelis-G. A. Souris, Τέχνη 2
the sanctuary was a more permanent obligation, certainly continuing beyond the death of his former master and possibly being even a life-long commitment⁵. 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 τρισακονθημέρου 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 1982⁶, 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 Boeonium Antoninus (the future emperor Antoninus Pius) from the village of Yeniköy north of Marmara Gölü (Gygai/Koke Lake) in Lydia⁷.

After giving permission to a village community in the territory of Sardis (?) (vicani Arhillon, κώμη Ἀριλλῶν) to constitute and hold a market, the proconsul concludes (lines 20-24 of the Latin text): qua de re si quis petitioni eius contradicere volet, intra diem tricennisim me aut successorem meum c. v. adeat; (lines 38-42 of the Greek text): περὶ οὗ εἰς τῇ αὐτή τε ἁπάντησιν αὐτῶν ἀντιλέγεις βούλεται, ἐντὸς τρισακοσιοκατημέρας ἡμέρας ἐμοὶ ἡ τοῦ τειμωστέτιμον μου διαδόχω ἐντυχέτω. In his book Nunudinas instituere et habere (1982) J. Noilée adduced several examples of public display of diverse official documents during a thirty -day period⁸.

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⁸. Pp. 49-50 and note 99: 1: the edict issued by Claudius (Josephus, AJXIX 291): τούτου μου το διάταγμα... ἐγγράφασοβούλομαι ἐκεῖσιν τοῖς ἐξειν οἶς ἐλαττον ἡμερῶν τριάκοντα, ὥσπερ ἐπεπέτεν καλὸς ἀναγνωρίζηται δύναται; 2. POxy. 1100: μη ἐλαττον τριάκοντον ἡμέρων τηρούντες τὴν περιοδον; 3. H. Wankel, JK 11, 1 (Ephesus), Bonn 1979, 7 11. 23 (treaty between Ephesus 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 προτεθήναι 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 προ-
τεθέαυτον πιπτάκιων δωρεάν ἀπό τῆς εἰκάδος τοῦ προγεγραμμένου μηνός, ἔξης ἡμερών δεκα; 2. καθὼς καὶ τὸ προτεθέν πιπτάκιον περιέχει; 4. προσεθηκεν πιπτακια πρὸς τὸν Κεσαρείους τις ἰδιομένους τόπους, and three from the city of Beroea itself: 1-2. καθὼς τὸ προτεθέν γραμμάτειον περιέχει; 3. ὥς το προτεθέαυτον της δωρεᾶς περιέχει.

M. B. Hatzopoulos assumes that the act of donation (πιπτάκιων / γραμμάτειον (τῆς) δωρεάς) was publicly displayed together with the document of sale (ὄνη) or other documents certifying the lawful ownership of the donated slave by the donor (καταγγαφή, χειρὸς vel sīm.). 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 (?).
14. L. Gounaropoulos-M. B. Hatzopoulos, _'Επιγραφές Κάτω Μακεδονίας, τ. I: 'Επι-
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 (πειτάκιον, πυνωκίδιον, τάβλα) 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 pêché 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, ἀναντιρητός, μηδενός ἀντιλέγοντος.
mistress' inability to pay off a debt incurred for her purchase: διὰ τὸ τὴν τιμὴν αὐτῆς
dedanisthai parά τής θεόν καὶ μή δύνασθαι ἀποδοῦναι.  

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.

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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

Η φράση “καταχθείσης τριακοθημέρου” σε ἐπιγραφή τῆς Λευκόπετρας (244 μ.Χ.) ὁπου ἀναφέρεται δωρεὰ δούλης στὸ ἱερὸ τῆς Μητρὸς Θεός Ἀὐτόχθονος στὴ Λευκόπετρα, πρέπει νὰ συνδεθεῖ, ὅπως εἶχε ἤδη ὑποστηρίζει ὁ Φ. Πέτσας, μὲ τὴν διαδικασία δημοσίευσης τῆς σχετικῆς πράξεως. Ἡ ἐρμηνεία αὐτὴ ἐνισχύεται μὲ ἐπιγραφικὰ παράλληλα τῆς αὐτοκρατορικῆς ἐποχῆς ἀπὸ τῇ Μ. Ἀσίᾳ, καὶ ἰδιαίτερα τὸ διγλώσσο τὸ ἐδίκτυο (134/5 μ.Χ.) τοῦ ἀνθυπάτου τῆς Ἀσίας Τ. Aurelius Fulvus Boeonius Antoninus (κατοπινοῦ αὐτοκράτορα Ἀντωνίνου Πίου) ποὺ παρατίθεται καὶ σχολιάζεται στὸ ἀρθρό.