

The phrase καταθείσης τριακονθημέρου in an inscription from Macedonian Lefkopetra

M. RICL

doi: [10.12681/tekmeria.209](https://doi.org/10.12681/tekmeria.209)

To cite this article:

RICL M. (2000). The phrase καταθείσης τριακονθημέρου in an inscription from Macedonian Lefkopetra. *Tekmeria*, 5, 155–160. <https://doi.org/10.12681/tekmeria.209>

THE PHRASE ΚΑΤΑΧΘΕΙΣΗΣ 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: ...Αὐρήλιος Κάσσανδρος ... δωροῦμαι κοράσιον ... Ἄνδρῖσκαν ... Μητρὶ θεῶν Αὐτόχθονι, καταχθείσης τριακονθημέρου κατὰ τὴν ἀπόφασιν Τερτυλλιανοῦ Ἀκύλα.

In her study of manumissions by consecration³, F. Papazoglou correctly translated the phrase καταχθείσης τριακονθημέρου 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) (αἱ ἕθιμοι/ εἰθισμέναι ἡμέραι, ἑορταί, 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 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. Gounaropoulou-P. Paschidis, *Inscriptions du sanctuaire de la Mère des Dieux Autochtone de Leukopétra*, [ΜΕΛΕΤΗΜΑΤΑ 28], Athens 2000.

2. No. 100, October 244.

3. *Živa Antika* 31 (1981), pp. 171-9, esp. 174-6.

4. The term συναγωγαί is not attested in Lefkopetra but it appears in the new inscription from the sanctuary of Enodia in Exochi near Kozani (P. M. Nigdelis-G. A. Souris, *Τεκμήρια* 2 (1996) pp. 69-81; cf. *BE* 1998, 239).

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 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 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 Boeonius Antoninus (the future emperor Antoninus Pius) from the village of Yeniköy north of Marmara Gölü (Gygaia/Koloe 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 tricensimum me aut successorem meum c.v. adeat*; (lines 38-42 of the Greek text): *περὶ οὗ εἴ τις τῆ αἰτήσει αὐτῶν ἀντιλέγει βούλεται, ἐντὸς τριακοστῆς ἡμέρας ἐμοὶ ἢ τῷ τεμιιωτάτῳ μου διαδόχῳ ἐντυχέτω*. In his book *Nunudinas instituere et habere* (1982) J. Nollée adduced several examples of public display of diverse official documents during a thirty-day period⁸.

5. Cf. my article in *Živa Antika* 43 (1993) pp. 139-40.

6. *Πρακτικά τοῦ Η' Διεθνoῦς Συνεδροῦ Ἑλληνικῆς καὶ Λατινικῆς Ἐπιγραφικῆς*, 1984, p. 302. Cf. M. B. Hatzopoulos, *Živa Antika* 47 (1997), p. 58.

7. H. Malay, *Greek and Latin Inscriptions in the Manisa Museum, Denkschr. Akad. Wien, phil.-hist. Kl. 237, Ergänzungsbände zu den Tituli Asiae Minoris* 19, Vienna 1994, pp. 152-6, no. 523 (SEG 44, 977).

8. Pp. 49-50 and note 99: 1. the edict issued by Claudius (Josephus, *AJXIX* 291): τοῦτό μου τὸ διάταγμα ... ἐγγράψασθαι βούλομαι ἐκκειμένον τε ἔχειν οὐκ ἔλαττον ἡμερῶν τριάκοντα, ὅθεν ἐξ ἐπιπέδου καλῶς ἀναγνωσθῆναι δύναται; 2. *POxy.* 1100: μὴ ἔλαττον τριάκον[τα ἡμερῶν τηροῦντες τὴν πε]ρίοδον; 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 προτεθῆναι βούλομαι refer to the public display of official state documents⁹. A similar procedure was applied for private documents as well, as evidenced by the following four inscriptions from Lefkopetra: 1. καθὼς τὸ προτεθῆ[ν πιττάκιον περιέχει]¹⁰; 2. ...ἐμαρτυροποιήσατο τοὺς ἐπισφραγισαμένους προτεθεικέναι αὐτὸν πιττάκιον δωρεᾶς ἀπὸ τῆς εἰκάδος τοῦ προγεγραμμένου μηνός, ἐξῆς ἡμερῶν δέκα¹¹; 3. καθὼς καὶ τὸ προτεθὲν πιττάκιον περιέχει¹²; 4. προέθηκεν πιττάκια πρὸς τοῦ Κεσαρείου εἰς τοὺς ἰθισμένους τόπους¹³, and three from the city of Beroea itself: 1-2. καθὼς τὸ προτεθὲν γραμμάτειον περιέχει¹⁴; 3. ὡς τὸ π[ρο]τεθὲν πιττάκιον τ[ῆς] δωρεᾶς περιέχει¹⁵.

M. B. Hatzopoulos assumes that the act of donation (πιττάκιον / γραμμάτειον (τῆς) δωρεᾶς) was publicly displayed together with the document of sale (ὠνή) or other documents certifying the lawful ownership of the donated slave by the donor (καταγραφή, χεῖρ vel sim.)¹⁶. 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 made¹⁷ and in one case¹⁸ 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 παρὰγγελέτωσαν). On the question of publicity in Roman law, cf. F. von Schwind, *Zur Frage der Publikation im römischen Recht*, 1940, 88-9; W. Williams, *JRS* 64 (1974) 99; id. *ZPE* 40 (1980) 292-4. The Roman term for the public display of documents is *propositio*.

9. On the formula προετέθη in imperial subscripts, cf. Williams, *JRS* 64 (1974), p. 88 and note 22; p. 92 and note 52.

10. No. 108, October 254 (?); cf. M. B. Hatzopoulos, *Cultes et rites de passage en Macédoine*, [ΜΕΛΕΤΗΜΑΤΑ 19], Athens 1994, 66.

11. No. 99, May 244.

12. No. 115, AD 283/4 (?).

13. No. 103, July 253. Cf. also no. 106, AD 252/3 (?): ὦν καὶ τὸ πιττάκιον ἔθηκα εἰς τὸ ἱερόν.

14. L. Gounaropoulou-M.B. Hatzopoulos, *Ἐπιγραφές Κάτω Μακεδονίας, τ. 1: Ἐπιγραφές Βεροίας*, Athens 1998, nos. 53-54, June and April 248 respectively.

15. *Ib.* no. 56.

16. Cf. *ZA* 47 (1997) 58; *Cultes et rites de passage*, 66. In the new edition of inscriptions from Lefkopetra he has modified his opinion in the sense indicated here (p. 57). For house-born slaves (οἰκογενεῖς), the appropriate document would be a "birth-certificate"- οἰκογένεια, attested in this meaning in several papyri (L. Mitteis-U. Wilcken, *Grundzüge und Chrestomathie der Papyruskunde* I, Leipzig/Berlin 1912, 372, second century AD; *POxy.* 1451.26, second century AD; *Sammelbuch griechischer Urkunden aus Ägypten*, III (ed. F. Bilabel), Berlin/Leipzig 1926-7, 6995.7, second century AD).

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 month¹⁹. 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 Lydia²⁰. 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 (πιπτάκιον, πινακίδιον, τάβλα) was submitted and publicly displayed in the local temple. In one case²¹ 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 inheritance²². 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 temple²³. 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, ἀνεπίλη(μ)πος, ἀνυπόθηκος, ἀναντιρήτως, μηδενὸς ἀντιλέγοντος.

mistress' inability to pay off a debt incurred for her purchase: διὰ τὸ τὴν τιμὴν αὐτῆς δεδανίσθαι παρὰ τῆς θεοῦ καὶ μὴ δύνασθαι ἀποδοῦναι²⁴.

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.

University of Belgrade

M. Ricl

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 ΤΡΙΑΚΟΘΗΜΕΡΟΥΣΕ ΜΙΑ
ΕΠΙΓΡΑΦΗ ΑΠΟ ΤΗ ΛΕΥΚΟΠΕΤΡΑ

Ἡ φράση “καταχθείσης τριακοθημέρου” σὲ ἐπιγραφή τῆς Λευκόπετρας (244 μ.Χ.) ὅπου ἀναφέρεται δωρεὰ δούλης στὸ ἱερὸ τῆς Μητρὸς Θεῶν Αὐτόχθονος στὴ Λευκόπετρα, πρέπει νὰ συνδεθεῖ, ὅπως εἶχε ἤδη ὑποστηρίξει ὁ Φ. Πέτσας, μὲ τὴν διαδικασία δημοσίευσης τῆς σχετικῆς πράξης. Ἡ ἐρμηνεία αὐτὴ ἐνισχύεται μὲ ἐπιγραφικὰ παράλληλα τῆς αὐτοκρατορικῆς ἐποχῆς ἀπὸ τὴ Μ. Ἀσία, καὶ ἰδιαιτέρως τὸ δίγλωσσο ἔδικτο (134/5 μ.Χ.) τοῦ ἀνθυπάτου τῆς Ἀσίας T. Aurelius Fulvus Boeonius Antoninus (κατοπινοῦ αὐτοκράτορα Ἀντωνίνου Πίου) ποὺ παρατίθεται καὶ σχολιάζεται στὸ ἄρθρο.