

Economy of Cult – Examples from Macedonia during the Roman Period

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The issue of the possible economic benefits of the sanctuaries that derived from donations or offerings is examined in specific examples from Macedonia during the Roman period.

A) The product of the vine harvest is an economic benefit of a sanctuary that derived from a donation to Zeus Hypsistos. A marble votive stele to Zeus Hypsistos from Upper Macedonia (Elimeia, Kozani. Archaeological Collection of Kozani. Inv. No 51) (2nd–3rd century AD) depicts the vine-grower Chrysseros (*Χρυσέρως*) offering two rows of vines from his property to Zeus¹ (fig. 1).



Fig. 1: Marble votive stele to Zeus Hypsistos. Elimeia, Kozani – Upper Macedonia. Archaeological Collection of Kozani. Inv. No 51. Section of Greek and Roman Antiquity, National Hellenic Research Foundation. Photographic Archive.

Χρυσέρως Φιλίππου / ἀνπελουργὸς Διὶ Υψίσ- / τῷ εὐχαριστήριον ὑπὲ[ρ] / κυρίου·
 ἀπονομάζει vac. δὲ αὐτῷ ἀμπέ- / λων δύω ὄρχου- / σ ἐκ τῶν πε- / κουλαρίων.

The term *πεκουλάριοι ἀμπελοι* which is written on the stele comes from the Latin adjective *pecularius* and it refers to private property. Vine offerings to various deities are also known from other areas of Macedonia and the most distinctive example is an inscription of the 3rd century AD from Thessaloniki,² whereas there are much more similar offerings in Asia Minor.³ The verb *ἀπονομάζειν* in the inscription could mean that the slave Chrysseros promises to offer a part of the vineyard to Zeus, specifically two rows of vines, which must be the product of the vine harvest,⁴ since he is not able to offer⁵ the *peculium*. The reason of the donation is worth mentioning. The slave offers Zeus *ὑπέρ κυρίου* and this could mean either that he pays a debt to his master with this donation or that he ensures that his master is commemorated in the sanctuary according to the custom due to their good relationship. In this case, as in the above-mentioned inscription from Thessaloniki, the donation of the vine to the sanctuary as an economic benefit would take place to cover the cost of the commemoration of the deceased master. This donation also ascertains that the status of the slaves seems to be enhanced during the Imperial period and this is possibly related to the politics of specific emperors,⁶ whereas the possibility that the donation takes place due to the manumission of Chrysseros is not excluded.⁷

There are several mentions of farmers (*γεωργὸς, γεωργικῶς ἔμπειρος, ἀμπελουργὸς*) in epigrams.⁸

Similar is the significance of a text of unknown provenance, probably from Pamhylia dated to 2nd/3rd century AD written on a bronze *tabula ansata* reporting that a certain Toues purchased an orchard, and confirming that the seller has received the price stating that “the buyer donated the field to the priests of Zeus squaring the account”. Probably Toues did not make a donation to the sanctuary of Zeus, but he delivered his field in order to repay loans he had received from the sanctuary.⁹

B) A large number of manumission acts comes from the sanctuaries of deities in Central and Western Macedonia (*Merides*). They are usually correlated with female deities and their sanctuaries. The following are typical examples.

Five published manumission acts¹⁰ have been traced on architectural members of the sanctuary of Enodia at Exochi in Eordaia in Upper Macedonia. The inscribed plaque kept in the Archaeological Collection of Kozani. Inv. No 1003¹¹ (fig. 2) reads the following text of a manumission act:¹²

Ἐτοῦς δνσ' σεβασ- / τοῦ κὲ <α>οτ ^{vac} Δύ[[υ]]σ- / στρου δωδεκά- / τη οὕσας τε- / λετῆς κὲ συ- / ναγωγῆς Αὔρη- / λεία Ἰουλεία ἡ / προχρηματείσα- / σα Ἀμύντου
 ἔχαρι- / [σ]άμην θεῷ Ἐνοδί- / α ὄνόματει Ἐρμῆν / δοῦλον. Βούλομε τὸν / τῆς ζοῆς



Fig. 2: Marble plaque with manumission act to Enodia. Eordaia, site of Exochi – Upper Macedonia. Archaeological Collection of Kozani. Inv. No 1003.

χρόν<ον> προσ-/μεῖνέ μοι κὲ γηροβοσκῆσε / ὑπηρετοῦ<ν>τα τῇ θεῷ τὲς / ἐθεί-
μοις συναγωγές, ἵνε / δὲ αὐτὸν μετὰ τὴν ἐμὴ / ν^{vac} τελευτὴν ἀνεπίλη[[π]]- / πτον.

According to the text, Aurelia Ioulia (*Αύρηλία Ιουλία*) frees her slave Hermes (*Ἐρμῆς*) with a conditional donation to the goddess. The donation to the deity is stated with the common verb *έχαρισάμην*.¹³ The slave is obliged to stay with his mistress throughout her life (*τὸν τῆς ζωῆς χρόν<ον> προσμεῖνε μοι*) and, at the same time, to serve at the sanctuary (*ὑπηρετοῦντα τῇ θεῷ*). The publishers of this inscription notice that the slave's stay (*paramone*)¹⁴ is connected with his obligation to take care of his mistress in her old age in the text (emphatically stated with the use of the verb *βούλομε*¹⁵). The year of the manumission is stated with both the Actian and the Macedonian dating.¹⁶ The legal status of the slave after the death of his mistress, which is stated with the expression *ἵνε ἀνεπίληπτον* (therefore, it was forbidden for anyone to enslave him pleading any right), is the only case among the manumission inscriptions from Macedonia.¹⁷

The texts of the inscriptions follow the rite of the manumissions with the expression *ἐφ' ᾧ προσμείνῃ, χαρίζομαι, οἰκογενής, ὃν ζώομεν χρόνον*.¹⁸

The testimony on the cult of the goddess Passikrata in Upper Macedonia comes from Suvodol, between southern Pelagonia and Lyncestis. Three manumission inscriptions with a dedication of the slave to the deity have been carved on a marble quadrangular altar (F.Y.R.O.M., Musej na Makedonija. Inv. No 400).¹⁹ Inscription a) (2nd–3rd century AD) seems quite interesting:

"Ετους θκυ' Δεσίου ἐνάτῃ ἐ- / ορτῆς ἀγομένης θεᾶς Πασι- / κράτας τῆς καθιδρυ-
μένης / ἐν κώμῃ Ιουνίᾳ Αύρηλίᾳ ἔχου- / σα τριῶν τέκνων τὸ δίκαιον ἀνέ- / θηκα
θεῷ Πασικράτᾳ δούλην μο[u] / ὄνόματι Κοπρυλλώ, ἥς κὲ τὴν ὄν[ήν] / καὶ τὴν
κατοχὴν παρέδωκα· ἐάν / τις ἀν<ά>πτῃ, δώσι τῷ ιερωτάτῳ / ταμείῳ * μυριάδες
π<έ>ντε· Ίο[u(νία)] / Αύρηλίᾳ μετὰ τῆς / θρεπτῆς κὲ πεδίον/Ζοείλον.

Iounia Aurelia (*Ιουνίᾳ Αύρηλίᾳ*) dedicates her slave Kopryllo (*Κοπρυλλώ*) to the goddess during the festival in her honour in the area. The text²⁰ also reveals the value of the slave.

The *kome* that is mentioned in line 4 should be identified with a site within the boundaries of Heraclea Lyncestis, according to F. Papazoglou.²¹ It is possible that it comes from a *kome* near modern Suvodol, east of Heraclea,²² where apparently there was a sanctuary of Passikrata, goddess-guarantor of the manumission acts.

The manumission acts with a dedication of a slave (or slaves) to the deity are important legal documents of the Antiquity and they date to the Imperial period, mostly the 3rd century AD. The basic structure of these documents includes specific terms and expressions that provide valuable information about the political, religious and social life.²³ These documents depict the regulations of the Roman Law as it was dictated by Rome itself and was evolved to the regional law in 212 AD, which was a milestone. At

the same time the regional law unofficially included the Hellenic Law at a local level. Most manumission acts come from Western Macedonia.²⁴

They concern the donation of slaves who will eventually offer their services to the sanctuary via these acts. The increase of the manumission acts of slaves after the 2nd century AD at sanctuaries with wide popularity is generally observed in Macedonia. This special phenomenon is possibly related to the management of slaves as an asset and the sanctuaries' financials. However, this might be a simple peak of the public display of the manumission acts without being attributed to a particular reason.

The manumission act that is performed as part of the donation to the deity has special validity and the person who performs it fulfils his promise to the deity or pays a debt or a loan. The sanctuary uses the slaves that have been freed, as long as they are necessary, without affecting their designated legal status. The people who perform the manumission acts are mostly women, with a few exceptions, possibly due to the lack of men because of their recruitment during these periods, and there are usually female goddesses (Mother of the Gods Autochthon, Ma, Enodia, Artemis with various cult epithets, Nemesis, Passikrata) and some male deities (Zeus Hypsistos, Dionysus, Heracles Kynagidas), which is possibly random since these sanctuaries simply were widely popular. The ability of the Macedonian citizens to guarantee the manumissions of slaves is a phenomenon that is more frequent in Macedonia than the rest of Greece.²⁵

The evidence from ancient Macedonia (3rd century BC – 4th century AD) provides several information regarding the slaves and the freedmen, and therefore makes it possible to examine their legal status and form a picture of their daily lives and their relationships with their masters or others. Within this framework, the evidence that is relevant to the manumissions of slaves, which are private actions, concern specific sanctuaries. Many issues can be examined, such as the origin of the slaves, the payment of the manumission fee and the legal and social status of the freedmen.²⁶

C) A number of examples of the sanctuaries' savings comes from the second use of the monuments mainly due to the lack of the material (stone). This concerns mostly the donators, but the sanctuary possibly participates in some way [e.g. the manumissions acts that were carved onto pre-existing architectural members of the sanctuary of Enodia in Eordaia in Upper Macedonia (fig. 3)²⁷].



Fig. 3: Part of a marble door with two manumission acts to Enodia. Eordaia, site of Exochi – Upper Macedonia. Archaeological Collection of Kozani. Inv. No 147. Section of Greek and Roman Antiquity, National Hellenic Research Foundation. Photographic Archive.

Notes

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¹ Rizakis – Touratsoglou 1985, cat. no 22 pl. 8.22; Chatzinikolaou 2011, 38–40. 236–237 cat. no 24 with previous bibliography; Yiouni 2011, 124.

² IG X 2.1 260: κατα/λίπω εις μνί/ας χάριν αἰω/νίας ἀνπέλων/πλέθρα δύο/σύν τες τάφροις. Pikoulas 2000–2003, 396–397.

³ Robert 1945, 65. Robert 1966, 34–38.

⁴ Rizakis – Touratsoglou 1985, *supra* (n. 1) with relevant examples.

⁵ The slaves had very limited legal rights. Regarding whether the slaves had the possibility to offer to deities from the peculium or to make donations see Nörr 1971. Cf. Papazoglou 1981, 179 ff.

⁶ Sverkos 2000, 112 ff. Cf. Chatzinikolaou 2011, 38; 80.

⁷ Yiouni 2000, 40.

⁸ Robert 1943, 188. On the vine cultivation see Pikoulas 2000–2003. Pikoulas 2004, 19–26 with ancient sources and bibliography. On cases of vine cultivation in Macedonia see Lilimbaki-Akamati 1988; Lilimbaki-Akamati 1998.

⁹ Arnaoutoglou 2014. Cf. Chaniotis 2017, 280 no 6.

¹⁰ The number of published manumission acts from the Roman province of Macedonia has increased significantly lately, mostly after the publication of the manumission acts of the sanctuary of Leukopetra in Hemathia. On the issue see Petsas et al 2000 with the previous bibliography. On manumission acts from Macedonia already published see Voutiras 1986; Hatzopoulos 1987, 403–404. Cf. Bull. Épigr. 1988, 835. SEG XXXVI, 616–621; Panayotou – Chrysostomou 1993, 362 (Edessa); 378 (Kyrros); 384 (Giannitsa). Cf. Bull. Épigr. 1994, 403; 410; Hatzopoulos 1994, 64 ff. (Beroia); Nigdelis – Souris 1996 (Exochi at Eordaia); Allamani-Souri – Voutiras 1996 (Beroia). IG X 2.2 (sporadically); Gounaropoulou – Hatzopoulos 1998 (sporadically); Gounaropoulou et al. 2015 (sporadically). On manumissions in general see Ricl 2001.

¹¹ Nigdelis – Souris 1996. Cf. Chatzinikolaou 2011, 305–306 cat. no 160; Yiouni 2011, 136.

¹² The first examination of the manumission acts with dedication to the deity was presented by Nörr 1971. Papazoglou 1981, 171–179, attempted to clarify some issues based on epigraphic texts, mostly from Leukopetra in Hemathia. See also Petsas et al. 2000. Cf. Chatzinikolaou 2011, 121–123; Chatzinikolaou 2012, 605–606.

¹³ On the use of the verbs *χαρίζομαι* and *δωροῦμαι* in the texts of the manumission acts of Leukopetra in Hemathia see Petsas 1984, 286–288.

¹⁴ On the term see Samuel 1965, 221–311; Voutiras 1986, 230; Yiouni 2000, 100 ff.

¹⁵ Nigdelis – Souris 1996, 71.

¹⁶ On the issue of the dating of the Macedonian inscriptions see Papazoglou 1963; Daux 1964; Rizakis – Touratsoglou 1985, 28.

¹⁷ On similar examples outside Macedonia see Nigdelis – Souris 1996, 76.

¹⁸ On the terms and expressions that are typical in manumission inscriptions see SEG XXVII, 291–294; Petsas et al. 2000. Cf. Yiouni 2000, 47 ff.; Yiouni 2008.

¹⁹ IG X2.2 18. Cf. Chatzinikolaou 2011, 313–314 cat. no 171.

²⁰ Kaser 1971, 320.

²¹ Papazoglou 1988, 372 and n. 104.

²² Sverkos 2000, 94.

²³ Chatzinikolaou 2012, 605–606.

²⁴ Chatzinikolaou 2011, 121–123.

²⁵ Le Bohec-Bouet 2006, 189–195.

²⁶ Yiouni 2011. On the deities that were worshipped especially by slaves see Bömer 1960.

²⁷ ²⁷ Rizakis-Touratsoglou 1985, cat. no 117 a+b pl. 44.117; Chrysostomou 1998, 79–80 no 3–4; Chatzinikolaou 2011, 307–308 cat. no 162.

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Fig. 1: After Rizakis-Touratsoglou 1985, 22. pl. 8.22. – Fig. 2: After Nigdelis-Souris 1996. – Fig. 3: After Rizakis-Touratsoglou 1985, pl. 44.117α+β.

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