

Human Transgression – Divine Retribution

A study of religious transgressions and
punishments in Greek cultic regulation and
Lydian-Phrygian propitiatory inscriptions
(‘confession inscriptions’)

Aslak Rostad



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Table of Contents

Table of Contents	i
Abbreviations	vi
Foreword	vii

PART 1. INTRODUCTION AND AIMS OF THE STUDY

Chapter 1. Introduction	3
Chapter 2. Aims of the Study	4
General remarks	4
Greek or Oriental religiosity	5
Notes on method	6
The structure of the study	6
Interpretive approach	7
Time, geography and context	9
Sources	10
Concluding remarks	11

PART 2. THE PROPITIATORY INSCRIPTIONS

Chapter 3. The Propitiatory Inscriptions and their Religious Context	15
I. Propitiatory inscriptions	15
Geography	15
Time	15
Content	17
Structure	17
Curses, judicial prayers and oaths	18
Gods in propitiatory inscriptions	20
Μήν	21
Ζεύς	22
'Απόλλων	22
Μήτηρ	23
II. Religion and cult in Lydia and Phrygia	23
General remarks	23
The Gods of Katakekaumene	25
Saittai	26
Silandos	26
Tabala	26
Maionia	26
Katakekaumene outside the territories of the four main cities	26
Categories of religious inscriptions	27
Ex-voto inscriptions	27
Dedicatory inscriptions	31

Grave inscriptions	32
Honorary inscriptions	36
Analysis	37
III. Conclusions	39
Chapter 4. Earlier Research on the Propitiatory Inscriptions	41
I. Trails in the research on propitiatory inscriptions	41
Confession of sin	41
Oriental religiosity	43
Theocracy and a religious legal system	45
II. Trails in recent research	48
Research following Petzl's publication	48
The research situation since 2006	52
III. Conclusions	52

PART 3. RELIGIOUS TRANSGRESSIONS AND PUNISHMENTS

Chapter 5. Greek Cultic Morality	57
I. Cultic morality – definition.....	58
Introduction	58
Morality, moral philosophy and ethics	59
Piety	60
Cultic morality and cultic legislation	60
II. Boundaries and social control.....	62
External boundaries	62
Internal boundaries.....	65
III. Creating sacred space.....	67
Sacred space	67
Greek terminology of sacred space.....	69
ἱερός.....	69
τέμενος.....	69
σηκός	70
ἄβατον and ἄδυτον.....	70
ἄλσος	71
IV. Purity and impurity	71
Introduction	71
Purity and impurity as an interpretative tool	72
Greek terms for ritual pollution and purity.....	74
ἀγνός	74
ἱερός.....	75
ὄσιος	75
The notion of impurity and purification in ancient Greek religion	76
Miasma and agos	76
Purification.....	79
Sources of ritual pollution in ancient Greek religion	80
Death	80
Sexuality	81

Birth.....	81
V. Protection of sacred property	81
VI. Conclusion	82
Chapter 6. Prohibitions and Punishments in Greek Cultic Regulations	83
I. Introduction	83
Defining the genre.....	83
Publications and classification of cultic regulations	85
Rules for the protection of sacred property.....	87
II. Prohibitions in cultic regulations.....	88
Prohibitions against entry	89
Prohibitions against impurity	90
General purity rules	90
Detailed purity rules	93
Death pollution.....	94
Birth pollution	97
Sexual pollution.....	99
Dietary rules.....	101
Clothes, weapons and jewellery	102
Domestic animals	104
Damage to sacred property	104
Violations of sacred trees and groves	105
Other prohibitions concerning sacred property	107
III. Punishments in cultic regulations	108
Civil punishments.....	109
Fines.....	109
Corporal punishment.....	110
Rituals as punishments.....	111
Divine punishments	111
Excursion – LSAM 20	113
IV. Conclusions	115
Historical aspects.....	115
Authority and punishments.....	116
Authority	116
Punishments.....	117
Conclusions.....	118
Chapter 7. Transgressions in the Propitiatory Inscriptions.....	121
I. Introduction	121
Classifications of the transgressions in the propitiatory inscriptions.....	121
Earlier classifications of transgressions.....	121
Causes of punishment.....	123
Causes of punishment in BIWK	124
Vocabulary of transgressions in the propitiatory inscriptions	126
II. Category I a: Violations of purity rules.....	126
Vocabulary of ritual purity and impurity in propitiatory inscriptions	127
ἀναγνος.....	127
καθαρός.....	128

λούω	128
καταμολύνω, μολύνω and μολυσμός	128
ρύπαρός	129
Crossing the border	129
Ritual pollution and purification	130
The notion of ritual impurity in the propitiatory inscriptions.....	135
III. Category I b: Violations of sacred property.....	136
Violations of sacred groves and trees.....	136
The transgression	136
Violation of trees in the propitiatory inscriptions and in Greek cultic regulations.....	137
Destruction of sacred objects	138
IV. Category I c: Neglect of religious duty.....	139
Dishonouring the gods.....	139
Neglect of religious offices.....	141
Other transgressions	142
Propitiatory inscriptions with uncertain content	142
V. Categories II & III: Judicial prayers and perjury	145
Civil conflicts.....	145
Judicial prayers	146
Abolishment of curses	146
Recordings of fulfilled judicial prayers and curses	147
Perjury.....	148
Civil transgressions in the propitiatory inscriptions – concluding remarks	150
VI. Conclusions.....	151

PART 4. CONCLUSIONS

Chapter 8. Conclusions	155
Introduction	155
Cultic morality in the two genres	155
Divine punishments and curses	157
Divine punishment in Greek cultic regulations and propitiatory inscriptions.....	157
Divine punishment in Lydian cultic regulations.....	158
Literacy and oral tradition.....	161
The ideology and function of the propitiatory inscriptions.....	162
The ideological level.....	163
The cultic level.....	163
The sociological level.....	164
The function of propitiatory inscriptions in Lydian and Phrygian cults	166
Concluding remarks – The origin of the propitiatory inscriptions	167

PART 5. APPENDICES, BIBLIOGRAPHY AND INDEX OF CITATION

Appendix A: Cultic Regulations.....	171
Appendix B. Propitiatory Inscriptions	203

Bibliography	219
Index of Citations	228
General Index	231

Abbreviations

This list only includes abbreviations referring to publications of inscriptions. As far as possible, abbreviations of periodicals follow the standard of *L'année philologique*.

BIWK	<i>Die Beichtinschriften Westkleinasiens</i> (= Petzl 1994).
CIG	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum</i> (= Boeckh 1828-1877)
IC	<i>Inscriptiones Creticae</i> (= Guarducci 1950).
I.Delos	<i>Inscriptions de Délos</i> (= Roussel & Launey 1937).
I.Ephesos	<i>Die Inschriften von Ephesos</i> (= Wankel 1979).
IG	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae</i> .
I.Heraclea Pontica	<i>The Inscriptions of Heraclea Pontica</i> (= Jonnes 1994).
I.Lindos	<i>Lindos - Fouilles et recherches 1902-1914 II, Inscriptions</i> . (= Blinkenberg 1941).
I.Rhod.Per.	<i>Die Inschriften der rhodischen Peraia</i> (= Blümel 1991).
I.Smyrna	<i>Die Inschriften von Smyrna</i> (= Petzl 1987).
I.Tralleis	<i>Die Inschriften von Tralleis und Nysa</i> (= Poljakov 1989).
IvP II	<i>Die Inschriften von Pergamon, vol. 2</i> (= Fränkel 1895).
LGS	<i>Leges Graecorum Sacrae</i> (= von Protz and Ziehen 1896 and 1906).
LSCG	<i>Lois Sacrées des Cités Grecques</i> (= Sokolowski 1969).
LSAM	<i>Lois Sacrées de l'Asie Mineure</i> (= Sokolowski 1955).
LSS	<i>Lois Sacrées des Cités Grecques, supplément</i> (= Sokolowski 1962).
MAMA	<i>Monumenta Asiae Minoris Antiquae</i> .
NGSL	<i>New Greek Sacred Laws</i> (= Lupu 2005).
SEG	<i>Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum</i> .
SGDI	<i>Sammlung de griechischen Dialekt-Inschriften</i> (= Collitz and Bechtel 1905).
Syll.	<i>Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum</i> .
TAM	<i>Tituli Asiae Minoris</i> .

Foreword

This book is a revised version of my doctorate dissertation submitted to the University of Bergen in 2006.¹ As the dissertation was a continuation of my master's thesis, submitted in 2000,² the propitiatory inscriptions have followed me for a very long time, and accordingly there are many persons who deserve acknowledgements for help and support during my work on the thesis and subsequently this book. First, I would like to thank my tutor, the late Professor of Classics at the University of Bergen Tomas Hägg (1938-2011) who sadly passed away before this revised version of my thesis was completed. His advices, kindness and humanity are still deeply missed. Second, I am immensely indebted to the assistance and guidance of my co-tutor Professor of the history of religion at the University of Bergen, Ingvild Sælid Gilhus. I am also grateful to former Assisting Professor of Classics at the University of Bergen and Dean of the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Stavanger, Tor Hauken, who first introduced me to the world of epigraphy in general and the propitiatory inscriptions in particular.

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¹ Rostad 2006a.

² Rostad 2000.

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Trondheim, January 2020

Part 1

Introduction and Aims of the Study

Chapter 1

Introduction

The propitiatory inscriptions or ‘confession inscriptions’ as they are usually called are a distinctive epigraphical genre only found in certain parts of the Lydian and Phrygian landscapes of ancient Asia Minor. The inscriptions dating between 57/8 and 263/4 AD record stories of people who have committed various transgression, mainly violations of cultic rules, and therefore are punished by an enraged deity who usually inflicts disease upon or kills the transgressors. To settle the conflict and obtain healing, the perpetrator or his relatives must propitiate the deity. The inscriptions are, in my opinion, intended as a public proof that the conflict between human and deity has been settled.

This genre has challenged scholars for nearly a century following Franz S. Steinleitner’s famous thesis on confession and religious justice published in 1913. Since then the distinctiveness and peculiarity of these texts have been emphasised and they have been viewed as detached from other forms of ancient religiosity, especially traditional Greek religion. Instead, they have been interpreted as expressions of Oriental beliefs and notions – based on the claim that the inscriptions record the confessions of sinners, a practice unknown to ancient Greek religion – but often without specifying what the terms ‘Oriental’ or ‘Greek’ imply. I wish to challenge this distinction. There can be no doubt that these inscriptions represent a form of religious expression and practice not found anywhere else than in certain parts of Asia Minor for a limited period of history (ca. AD 80-260). But the fact that the texts are formulated in an unusual way does not prove that the beliefs and notions they express are completely alien to the ancient religious landscape and do not overlap with religious practices we find in cults which usually fall under the traditional category ‘Greek religion’. After all, few if any religious and cultural expressions can be understood in isolation from a wider context of beliefs and rituals.¹ In this study it is argued that these inscriptions can be understood as part of a general ancient religiosity, even though they admittedly are distinctive in their form and limited in their geographical and temporal distribution.

Since my thesis was submitted in 2006 new propitiatory inscription and scholarly articles have been published. These are not included in this revised version, apart from a brief survey in Ch. 4.² I for my part conclude my research on the propitiatory inscriptions here.

¹ Cf. Chaniotis 2009: 142-148 for a discussion of the propitiatory inscriptions’ place in Greco-Roman religiosity.

² Cf. p. 52.