

# Two Notes on the Collection of Greek Ritual Norms Looking Back, Looking Forward

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**Abstract** Launched in 2017, the Collection of Greek Ritual Norms provides an open-access commentary on selected ancient Greek inscriptions which define parameters of ritual practice. These short notes address two issues superficially concerning the name of the Collection of Greek Ritual Norms, but more deeply engaging with what one means by the notion of 'ritual norm' and what one implies in considering such norms 'Greek'. A term like 'cult regulation' might conveniently be used to replace the misnomer 'sacred law', but this encompasses a similarly broad and miscellaneous group of inscriptions. By contrast, the category of 'ritual norm' aims to reframe the discussion by focussing on normativity – paradigms and exceptions – with regard to two key rituals, sacrifice and purification. It thus only partly reprises the corpus of 'sacred laws', while also including other inscriptions or excerpts from them. Calling such norms 'Greek' is not intended as an 'ethnic' designation of the rituals they describe but rather as a reference to the language of the inscriptions. The label 'Greek ritual norms' is thus programmatic, allowing for a wider investigation of the normative characteristics of rituals within the religious 'middle grounds' of the ancient Greek world.

**Keywords** Ritual. Norm. Cult. Regulation. Hellenicity.

**Summary** 1 'Cult Regulations'. – 2 Middle Grounds.



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In early 2017, the *Collection of Greek Ritual Norms (CGRN)* was made available as an open-access website. This online platform, including 222 inscriptions and slowly growing, aims to provide an accessible collection of ancient Greek inscriptions which describe or define ritual practice, principally focussing on two key rituals: sacrifice and purification. Now undertaking a phase of revision and expansion at the Collège de France since the beginning of 2018, the project is moving forward in different directions.

Developed at the University of Liège starting in 2012, the *CGRN* project was introduced in a pair of articles which revisited both past and current scholarship and which defined its objectives (Carbon, Pirenne-Delforge 2012, 2017). The principal *corpora* of inscriptions concerning religion and religious practice have traditionally employed the terms *lex sacra* or ‘sacred law’ to refer to the documents they contained.<sup>1</sup> Yet many articles over the past decades aptly pointed out that ‘sacred law’ (ἱερὸς νόμος) was not a regular ancient Greek term for classifying such documents, notably since the category, as formed by scholarship, was in fact comprised of a miscellaneous group of inscriptions: decrees, sacrificial calendars, sales of priesthoods, inscriptions on altars or small rupestral inscriptions at cult-sites which could qualify as ‘signs’, etc.<sup>2</sup> Following this impetus, we argued that ‘sacred law’ was essentially a misnomer for most of these inscriptions, which are neither ‘sacred’ nor ‘laws’ properly speaking. We proposed instead to collect a subset of these inscriptions, the ones which could be seen to qualify as prescriptive and, accordingly, normative about sacrifice and purification – more on these ‘normative’ aspects below.

In May 2018, we organised a conference ‘around’ the *Collection of Greek Ritual Norms* at the Collège de France (“Autorité, normes et rituels: autour du projet *Collection of Greek Ritual Norms*”).<sup>3</sup> The purpose of this gathering was partly to present inscriptions and new material which could be considered by the project as it continues to evolve, but it first and foremost constituted an invaluable opportunity to reflect on the concept of the project and to receive feedback on its development. During the presentations and the ensuing discussion, two acute remarks were made, superficially concerning the title of the collection, but also engaging more deeply with the parameters and the objectives of the project itself.

The first reaction concerned the category of ‘ritual norm’ which has been devised for the specific purposes of the project. Instead of

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1 LGS; LSAM, LSCG, etc.; NGSL<sup>2</sup>; cf. e.g. the titles of the works by Robertson 2010; Gawlinski 2012.

2 See especially Georgoudi 2010; Parker 2014. Signs: Harris 2015, 58-60.

3 URL <https://www.college-de-france.fr/site/vinciane-pirenne-delforge/symposium-2017-2018.htm> (2019-07-01).

replacing 'sacred law' with 'ritual norm', the suggestion was to use the more common and broader appellation 'cult regulation'. The reason for this was that prescriptions in a sacred context were not necessarily or not exclusively concerned with ritual performance. For example, as it was pointed out, a prohibition to urinate in a sacred *stoa* cannot be said to be a 'ritual' norm, nor, strictly speaking, is the interdiction to bring certain animals inside a cult-site, which clearly, sometimes explicitly, has practical motivations.

The second interesting observation, now published in a broader article, concerned the 'Hellenic' character of the collection, if one may call it that. In two cases in particular, it was remarked that "one might say we are dealing with ritual norms written in Greek rather than Greek ritual norms" (Parker 2018a, 77). The two inscriptions in question come from Asia Minor, concern cults which are relatively unique or not found elsewhere in the Greek world, and contain what have been argued to be unusual prescriptions: a public endowment for a priest, rules for the funeral of a priestess among a group calling itself "the city of Galatians". It could therefore be claimed that what is Greek in these inscriptions is not so much the ritual norms, but the language in which they are expressed.

What we propose here is a short note attempting to address these two remarks, namely the critiques of the expressions 'ritual norm' and 'Greek ritual norm', though the answers that we can try to give to them are not of the same type. On one level, we must reiterate and attempt to make more precise the terminological choices that were made at the inception of the project. But on a deeper level, these choices imply a conceptual categorization and an approach which must be justified. By looking back on these issues, we will thus not only aim to make 'Greek ritual norms' more intelligible but also look forward to the new and productive perspectives which the *CGRN* opens.

## 1 'Cult Regulations'

'Cult regulation' can be seen as a wider, more encompassing category than ritual norm. The term is certainly another valid option for replacing the misleading category of 'sacred laws', since many if not most of the inscriptions included in the traditional *corpora* are at least in some sense of the word 'regulations' - whether they be official enactments or more informal rules - and at least touch on the subject of 'cult'. Yet 'cult regulation' is not without its own problems.

First, the rubric 'cult' is very wide indeed, if one considers that it refers to a whole series of practices and acts carried out within the framework of one or more sanctuaries. For example, the *corpus* of Sokolowski included a far from negligible number of inscriptions concerned with building works in sanctuaries or related to sanctu-

aries. The decree from Tanagra regarding the transfer of the sanctuary of Demeter from the countryside into the city can be taken as a case in point (*LGS* nr. 69; *LSCG* nr. 62; cf. Migeotte 1992 nr. 28; ca. 200 BC). This has the form of a usual decree of the community, with a preamble citing the consultation of an oracle on the matter, from which follow a lengthy series of decisions: a commission is to be appointed to manage the construction of the sanctuary; a levy of funds, contributed by the women of the community for this purpose, is to be organised (the list of these contributions is also appended to the decree). So this inscription deals with ‘cult’ in terms of the infrastructure of sanctuary, and, being a decree, it is a ‘regulation’. The label ‘cult regulation’ is appropriate then, but other than the procedure of consulting an oracle to which it alludes, the text does not pertain to cult practice. Apart from its context and apart from the oracle, we may reasonably ask whether the inscription from Tanagra is really different from another decree concerning a public building and instituting a subscription for this purpose. Similarly, the aforementioned theoretical example of an inscription regulating behaviour in a *stoa* connected with a sanctuary, such as prohibiting urination within it, could be qualified as a cult regulation in this general sense: the text is clearly a regulation and it concerns a building which saw cultic use.<sup>4</sup> Faced with only a laconic text, however, it would remain far from clear whether the prohibition against urination properly derived from the cultic context of the *stoa*, which can also be implied to have seen commercial and other activities, or whether its purpose was essentially a practical one: the cleanliness of the building.<sup>5</sup>

Broadly conceived, then, ‘cult regulations’ can constitute a sweeping group of very varied inscriptions which are prescriptive and connected contextually, but sometimes rather loosely, with ancient Greek religion. As affirmed above, the category can suitably replace the misnomer ‘sacred law’, but that does not thereby make it more precise or more useful as an analytical tool. By contrast, ‘ritual norms’ are avowedly focussed on ritual practice and what may be considered standard or unusual in this regard. In other words, by looking at a text, we ask what is the norm or rule of proper religious worship and behaviour which it attests to or, inversely, how what it describes might constitute an exception to standard practice.

This is a fundamental question for our understanding of Greek religion. It was most explicitly raised almost a century ago by Henri

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<sup>4</sup> Compare e.g. *LSCG* Suppl. nr. 105 (Kamiroi, Imperial period), which prevents the kindling of fire in the ἱεροθυτεῖον and in the adjacent *stoa*. See *NGSL*<sup>2</sup> nr. 1, 501 for uncertainties about the cultic context of signs against urination and defecation.

<sup>5</sup> At any rate, the purpose was not related to preserving purity: see Parker 2018b, 25-6 with footnote 12.

Seyrig during a discussion of the frequent ‘signs’ on Thasos that forbid the sacrifice of certain species of animals to well-known Greek deities, among which one famous case is the interdiction to perform several ritual actions in the cult of Thasian Herakles on the *agora*: not only to sacrifice goats or swine, but also to include women, to make a “nine-portioning” (ἐνατεύεται), to cut priestly portions, to hold contests (*CGRN* nr. 27; ca. 450-425 BC).<sup>6</sup> It is especially clear from the last of these two gestures, which represent essential aspects of Greek sacrifice and festivals, that what is prohibited here was in fact normatively expected in other cults of Herakles, whether on the island or elsewhere. But few cases appear so clear-cut and even appearances can be deceiving.

Let us now take the other example that was invoked during the remark made to us at the conference: a regulation concerning the entry of animals into a sanctuary is a ‘cult regulation’, not necessarily a ‘ritual norm’. Two cases might be adduced, one included in the *CGRN*, the other not. The latter is formed by two regulations from the island of Ios which protected sanctuaries by generally imposing fines on those illegally pasturing animals within the precinct or the sacred land.<sup>7</sup> Though the documents are fragmentary and leave this implicit, the main concern was apparently to protect the integrity of the property of the god; at least, the texts do not inform us otherwise and monetary compensation is imposed on transgressors. The other case, however, expresses the matter differently: it is a decree from Ialysos on Rhodes enacting a law “concerning the things which it is not ὄσιον to bring into (sanctuary)” (*CGRN* nr. 90; ca. 350-300 BC). These interdictions specifically concerned animals: “a horse, a donkey, a mule, a hinny, and any other animal with a long-haired tail must not enter, (nor is one to)... bring in sandals or anything made from pig”. As with the financial penalties on Ios, fines were also imposed for introducing sheep into the sanctuary at Ialysos, but for pig-products and animals with long hair another procedure was specified: to purify the sanctuary and the precinct, and to sacrifice afterward. In a general sense, the inscriptions from Ios and from Ialysos are all ‘cult regulations’, we agree. But the inscription from Ialysos manifestly, though rather vaguely, invokes ritual norms: a ritual of purification is prescribed followed by the necessary sacrifice afterward on the cleansed altar. As many other inscriptions attest, such a sequence – purification followed by sacrifice – was a common ritual pro-

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<sup>6</sup> Seyrig 1927, 197; for some discussion see Carbon, Pirenne-Delforge 2017, 152-3. For other Thasian documents of this kind, cf. e.g. *CGRN* nrr. 17, 18, 23, 28.

<sup>7</sup> Chandezon 2003, nrr. 32 (*LGS* nr. 100; *LSCG* nr. 105; 3rd c. BC) and 33 (*LGS* nr. 99; *LSCG* nr. 104; Classical period).

cedure.<sup>8</sup> Neither gesture is specified in great detail, and the cult personnel will have been on hand to explain what must be done: there was thus some scope for oral and local traditions, but there was also a common normative pattern. More broadly and equally importantly, it can also be affirmed that in this case part of the inscription itself is framed as a norm of proper religious conduct, a law defining what is ὄσιον and what is not, particularly with a background to outlining what is considered impure.<sup>9</sup>

To formulate the matter differently, the categories of ‘cult regulation’ and ‘ritual norm’ do not strictly correspond with one another, though they can overlap to some extent. Certain texts which we have called ‘ritual norms’ can be seen as parts of the wider – but miscellaneous – category of ‘cult regulations’, such as the inscription from Ialysos whose fabric is entirely that of a ‘ritual norm’. Conversely, some inscriptions which can be labelled ‘cult regulations’, for example, decrees relating to different matters in relation to a sanctuary, only partially concern ritual norms or might, if at all, only mention rituals in passing. In the latter case, we have from the outset admitted and even encouraged the practice to include only selective excerpts from larger inscriptions (cf. Carbon, Pirenne-Delforge 2012, 178). An instance of this practice in the *CGRN* may also help to clarify a further point: there are ritual norms which are not cult regulations. As a representative example of the rich information available in the Delian accounts, we included in the *CGRN* a sizeable excerpt from one of these documents, which preserves the account (λόγος) of expenditures for the Posidea and the Eilethyaia respectively (*CGRN* nr. 199 = *I.Délos* II nr. 445, lines 1-16 only; 178 BC). This is not a regulation in the sense of a rule or a directive formulated by an authority. Yet not only does the inscription inform us about the animals sacrificed to the gods and their price, with a precision paralleled in Attic sacrificial calendars for example, but it also provides us with a wealth of other details concerning the sacrifices (the wood necessary, the fruits or snacks also consumed – a detail seldom mentioned in other evidence, etc.). Though reflecting only a year’s iteration of these annual festivals on Delos, this part of the whole inscription nevertheless embodies normative ritual practice.<sup>10</sup>

A possible source of confusion seems to lie in the fact that the *Collection of Greek Ritual Norms* does not always, or not strictly speak-

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**8** See especially Georgoudi 2017, 112-19. As mentioned in the commentary at *CGRN* nr. 90, cf. notably *CGRN* nr. 10 (Gortyn) and *CGRN* nr. 12 (Delphi); see also now *CGRN* nr. 225 (Marmarini).

**9** On ὄσιος, see Peels 2016, particularly 183-6 on this inscription from Ialysos.

**10** Any exceptions or deviations would only become apparent when setting it in comparison with other accounts; as it appears, these were apparently financial and few.

ing, collect inscriptions which one might call ‘ritual norms’ in and of themselves. Where an inscription is wholly concerned with a description of rituals, such as a sacrificial calendar, even when its purpose is the accounting of sacred expenses, then it can be called a ‘ritual norm’ or a set of ‘ritual norms’.<sup>11</sup> When it is wholly or almost concerned with proper religious behaviour in terms of purity, as at Ialysos, the same surely applies. Yet contracts for the sales of priest-hoods, for instance, are also included in the *CGRN*. These documents may only mention priestly portions from sacrifice as one of the pre-rogatives of the purchaser of the office; they can include a variety of other clauses, for example about the modalities of payment for the sale. Here, ‘ritual norm’ obviously does not refer to the document itself, in its entirety, but rather to the norms it may contain and define (however vaguely or precisely). Where it is sufficiently brief, we tend to include the whole text for the convenience of the user; where it is more varied in terms of its subject matter or more lengthy, we opt to present an excerpt. While the term ‘norm’ remains a flexible tool for productively raising the issue of cult practice, its variations and its exceptions, this selectiveness of the *Collection of Greek Ritual Norms* has a distinct advantage over a *fouren-tout* category like ‘cult regulation’ in focussing on a specific subject matter to be investigated: rituals.

## 2 Middle Grounds

We finally turn to the second remark that Greek ritual norms, such as some of the inscriptions included in the *CGRN*, are not always Greek from an ethnic standpoint, but sometimes only written in Greek (cf. again Parker 2018a, 77). One may readily, at least partially, agree with this assessment: it is certainly true that several inscriptions in the *CGRN* relate to cults which one might hesitate to qualify as ‘absolutely Greek’. But to do so would also raise inherent problems tied with the – sometimes inextricably – complex discourse of ethnic identity. What, indeed, did it really mean for a ritual of sacrifice or purification to be ‘Greek’? While we cannot fully agree with its polarising standpoint, this critical observation concerning ‘what is Greek’ is particularly useful in that it also wrestles with the crucial issue raised by the *CGRN*: the normativity of ritual practice in the ancient Greek world.

In developing the *CGRN*, we initially expressed some (hopefully understandable) uncertainty about the geographical and chronological parameters to select: should we also include inscriptions

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**11** A famous case is the sacrificial calendar of Erchia, divided into 5 columns for the purposes of accounting: cf. *CGRN* nr. 52 (ca. 375-350 BC).

from Egypt and the Near East, should we stop at the Imperial period or when exactly? We conceded that such parameters were bound to seem arbitrary to some degree (Carbon, Pirenne-Delforge 2012, 180-1, “Envoi: The Margins of Greek Ritual Norms”). In the end, we included several inscriptions which might seem to stretch possible boundaries or which might seem questionable from a ‘strictly Greek’ ethnic perspective. As we now more fully realise and shall argue here, this is not only practically unavoidable and an incidental advantage of the current collection, it is in fact a *desideratum* for future research.

Let us take the two examples which have been cited in the context of this remark. The first is the apparent ‘foundation’ of the cult of the god known as Basileus Kaunios and his consort Arkesimas at the sanctuary of the Letoon in Xanthos (CGRN nr. 93; 337-335 BC).<sup>12</sup> As part of a decree of the city of Xanthos and under the authority of the ruling satrap Pixodaros, the cult of these gods is instituted on a trilingual stele, in Aramaic, Lycian, and Greek. The Greek of the text has not unjustifiably seemed like “translationese” (Parker 2018a, 76) and it was also noted that “such a public endowment in favour of a named individual and his descendants appears unique” (77). Yet it seems difficult to believe that the latter point can stand much scrutiny, especially if we recall, for instance, the privileges affirmed in perpetuity by the city of Pergamon to an individual and his family, who controlled one of the major cults of the city, that of Asklepios (cf. CGRN nr. 206; 2nd c. BC).<sup>13</sup> The facts might be summarised a little differently: Basileus Kaunios is an unusual god even at Kaunos, where he is “King the God”, Βασιλεὺς ὁ θεός. He was perhaps of Semitic background, as seems to be suggested by the representation on Kaunian coins of a betyl framed by two snakes or grape-clusters. At Lykian Xanthos, his cult is elaborated by a Persian satrap of Karian origin, but a copy of the rules is published in Greek and expressed in this language for a local Greek-speaking audience. Even if the requirement that a sheep is sacrificed every New Moon and an ox every year to the gods has a non-Greek background – which is far from obvious – it must have been perfectly lucid and indeed intelligible to Greek readers.<sup>14</sup> Much the same can be said of the other example that has been cited in this context: the rules for the priestess ‘Galato’ – apparently her nickname in this capacity – at Pednelissos in Pi-

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<sup>12</sup> But see the commentary there for the question of how this text may qualify as a ‘foundation’.

<sup>13</sup> These privileges notably included all profits derived from the sanctuary (line 16), tutelage of the sacred slaves (line 26).

<sup>14</sup> For the sacredness of the New Moon, noting especially the frequency of sacrifices on this day in Athens, see Mikalson 1975, 14-15 and *passim*.



sidia (CGRN nr. 213; 1st c. BC). The Galatian (Gallic) background of the regulation, stemming from a community calling itself ‘the city of the Galatians’ is particularly obvious and the focus on prescriptions for the funerary rituals in honour of the priestess serving as ‘Galato’ equally so. But was, for instance, the requirement that a person swearing an oath “bring [i.e. offer] sacrificial animals to all the civic gods except Ploutos” therefore a specifically Galatian prescription translated into Greek? We cannot be so sure, especially since the clause explicitly invokes a god by a Greek name. Again, the rules must be presented in Greek for an at least partly Greek-speaking community, whatever its mixed background.

Both of these inscriptions come from the southern coast of Asia Minor, but there is an equal danger in overestimating their local or regional specificity and their marginality. The cross-cultural background which they represent can also, *mutatis mutandis*, be found in places such as Attica or the island of Delos. The relatively elaborate rules concerning sacrifice and purity in the cult of the Anatolian god Men set up by Xanthos, originally from Lykia, at Sounion, are expressed solely in Greek, presumably for a Greek audience.<sup>15</sup> Other inscriptions evince foreign cults, from various areas of the Near East, implanted on the island of Delos, but express succinct rules of ritual practice for worshippers, in Greek (cf. CGRN nr. 171-174). Were the norms expressed in these cults wholly non-Greek? The priesthood of Sarapis and Isis was sold at Priene, presumably to a local individual who had to perform the expected sacrifice of two chicks, but an expert from Egypt was also necessary to ensure that the rituals were performed correctly (CGRN nr. 157; ca. 200 BC). Yet Sarapis was a ‘hybrid’ god *par excellence*. Not dissimilarly, Athens adopted the worship of Thracian Bendis and to large extent ‘normalised’ its procession, but apparently the cult still required the participation of a Thracian woman in some ritual capacity, while a priestess seems to have been appointed at Athens itself (CGRN nr. 44, lines 15 and 29; 413-412 BC). Such examples elegantly show that though the norms concerning rituals in cults of this kind were essentially foreign, they were nonetheless instantiated by Greek individuals and in a Greek *milieu*.

In other words, there is a danger of categorising the texts exclusively in terms of their provenance or in inferring from the absence of certain types of inscriptions in certain areas – purity rules in Attica, for instance – that this is anything other than the result of chance.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> IG II<sup>2</sup> 1365 and 1366 (cf. LSCG nr. 55; 2nd c. AD?). The texts are not yet included in the CGRN, but it is hoped that this might change relatively soon.

<sup>16</sup> Parker 2018a, 73, notes that ‘sacred laws’ are usually “treated as a homogeneous corpus, without geographical differentiation”, and concludes that the difference is

New material can suddenly and surprisingly come to light, even in regions which can seem “virtual deserts” in terms of ritual norms (Parker 2018, 75).<sup>17</sup> More importantly, rather than to speak of foreign ritual norms written in Greek, it would be more appropriate to affirm that some Greek inscriptions which discuss rituals reflect a dynamic middle ground: practices which originated in the Near East, for example, were not only expressed in Greek, they adapted, interacted and evolved in a mixed *milieu* in the Greek world. This is an aspect of rituals which we surely cannot choose to ignore: as mentioned above, the *CGRN* already includes a number of inscriptions of this kind and several others must now also be considered.

A particularly conspicuous example is the recently published and richly detailed inscription on the opisthographic stele from Marmarini near Larisa.<sup>18</sup> The miscellaneous regulations contained on the stele – focussed on rituals such as sacrifice and purification, but also others such as initiation and begging or collecting – testify to an elaborate cult of Near Eastern origin, though one well-implanted in mid-Hellenistic Thessaly. The worshippers in this sanctuary celebrated a goddess who remains anonymous in the Greek text (being only referred to as ἡ θεός), though in her orbit were a bewildering array of other gods and goddesses, including ones with Near Eastern names (for example, Adara, Lilla) and others with Greek ones (for example, Artemis Phylake, Apollo Pylouchos). An explicit *interpretatio* is even made in one passage of the ritual calendar included in the text: on the 15th day, Pan was worshipped, “whom the Syrians called Neiriples (or Neiriplen)” (face A, ll. 9-10). The specific appellation remains to be more adequately explained, but it palpably testifies to the highly diverse ethnic background of the community involved in the cult.

In terms of ritual norms in particular, one passage of the inscription has already grabbed the attention of some scholars. On face B of the stele, which presents several hypothetical instances of sacrificial offerings, including holocausts of birds, table-offerings, and other distinctive practices, a case is presented where one may wish “to sacrifice to the goddess in the Greek custom” (face B, lines 35-36:

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“partly a question of epigraphic habit... but... surely also tells us something about the different religious environment” of a region.

<sup>17</sup> Moreover, speaking of the inscription from Thessaly, Parker 2018a, 75, writes: “But that text is a true one off, and it remains the case that Thessaly lacks GRN of more normal types”. Again, new discoveries caution any hasty assessment and the situation for Thessaly in particular may fast be changing: see, for instance, the inscription from Pythoion interpreted by D. Rousset, *BE* 2017, nr. 299, as a fine imposed on anyone who travels through a sanctuary of Asklepios without stopping to sacrifice (μη̄ θύσων).

<sup>18</sup> Edd.pr. Decourt, Tziaphalias 2015. Commentary on the *editio princeps*: Parker 2016; Parker, Scullion 2016; Carbon 2016. Revised edition: Bouchon, Decourt 2017. New revised edition: *CGRN* nr. 225, see below.

ἐὰν δέ τις θύειν βούληται τῆι θεῶι ἑλληνικῶι νόμῳ). What follows is strikingly detailed: a list of the offerings which would be placed on the cult table, but also the definition of the priestly prerogative; an unprecedentedly explicit list of which entrails were to be cooked as part of the sacrifice; a similarly unparalleled list of portions from the sacrificial animal which were to be burned on the altar. Are we to understand these prescriptions as defining a straightforwardly normative Greek sacrifice? Or do they, more plausibly, represent the local, mixed community's understanding of what a Greek sacrifice might entail? In other words, does the 'Greek sacrifice' of the inscription from Marmarini represent a hybrid, an illuminating compromise between different traditions?<sup>19</sup>

These are questions which have a fundamental impact on our understanding of the constitutive ritual that is Greek sacrifice. To begin to answer them, the *CGRN* project has now prepared a new edition of the inscription for online publication (*CGRN* nr. 225). This follows the recent reedition by R. Bouchon and J.-C. Decourt which already represented substantial progress in the establishment of the text (Bouchon, Decourt 2017). As well as employing conventional methods such as autopsy and photographs, an opportunity was granted to photograph the badly worn face A of the inscribed stele in the Museum of Larisa in order to render a Reflectance Transformation Imaging (RTI) 'build' of the face.<sup>20</sup> This technique, which enables 'interactive re-lighting' of the stone from multiple angles and reveals many aspects of the letters which are not always visible to the naked eye in natural light, has considerably facilitated the new edition and augmented the decipherment of this part of the inscription. It is hoped that the new edition on the *CGRN* will demonstrate the benefits of attempt-

**19** In connection with the reedition on the *CGRN* website, V. Pirenne-Delforge has prepared an article addressing this subject in particular connection with the treatment of the innards (σπλάγχνα) and the sacred parts (ιερά) in the regulation from Marmarini; see Pirenne-Delforge, forthcoming.

**20** On RTI, see the following URL <http://culturalheritageimaging.org/Technologies/RTI/> (2019-07-01). C.V. Crowther and J.-M. Carbon extend their sincere thanks to Mrs Stavroula Drolia, the chief archaeologist of the Ephoreia, for facilitating our visit on a surprisingly snowy 2017-01-09. Sofia Kravaritou generously hosted us in Volos and provided some acute comments on the inscription. Partial and preliminary reports on the findings of this revision were presented by Carbon on several occasions: at Bryn Mawr college on 2017-02-03, at the invitation of Radcliffe Edmonds III; at the 'Epigraphy Day' organised by Angelos Chaniotis at the Institute of Advanced Study, Princeton, on 2017-03-03; at Brown University on 2017-04-10, at the invitation of Adele Scafuro; at a small workshop on the inscription at the University of Virginia on 2017-04-22/23, organised by Ivana and Andrej Petrovic, in the company of Jenny Strauss Clay, Radcliffe Edmonds III, Fred Naiden, and Jon Mikalson; at the semestrial seminar of the Center for Hellenic Studies, Washington, on 2017-04-24, convened by Greg Nagy; and finally at the Seminario Avanzato in Venice. Heartfelt thanks are extended to all of the organisers and the participants at these events for their comments.

ing to improve this kind of inscription through digital and dynamic methods: on the one hand, with imaging techniques such as RTI, enabling a better decipherment, on the other, with an online platform for publishing an updated and fully accessible text, a text which can then continue to be made still more intelligible.

More deeply, the edition of the inscription from Marmarini also demonstrates the utility and flexibility of the category 'Greek ritual norm' as a research tool. By this term, we now fully assume the ambiguity of what may be meant by 'Greek': we do not necessarily refer only to 'ethnically Greek' norms for rituals – whatever these might have been, since local variations abounded – but rather to any ritual norms of sacrifice and purification written in ancient Greek. To speak in broad terms about 'Greek ritual norms' thus provides a justification to investigate the fertile middle grounds where different cultures interacted in the ancient Greek world and which often illuminate multiple aspects of ritual practice. Such an opening of horizons is vitally necessary for research in Greek religion.

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