

CGRN 229

Sacrificial regulation for Aphrodite Peitho and Hermes at Mytilene on Lesbos

Date :

3rd-2nd century BC

Justification: dialect (Hodot).

Provenance

Mytilene [↗](https://pleiades.stoa.org/places/550763/) (<https://pleiades.stoa.org/places/550763/>), found reused in the school library. Current location unknown.

Support

Stele of blueish marble, only broken at the bottom.

Height: 16 cm

Width: 27 cm

Depth: 10 cm

Layout

The beginnings of lines 4 and 6, as well as the entire line 5 have been erased. The first word of line 6 has been reinscribed in a rasura.

Letters: 1.3-1.5 cm high

Bibliography

Edition here based on [IG XII.2](http://cgrn.ulg.ac.be/abbreviations/#IG%20XII.2) (<http://cgrn.ulg.ac.be/abbreviations/#IG%20XII.2>) 73.

Cf. also: [Conze 1865](http://cgrn.ulg.ac.be/bibliography/#Conze%201865) (<http://cgrn.ulg.ac.be/bibliography/#Conze%201865>); Bechtel [SGDI](http://cgrn.ulg.ac.be/abbreviations/#SGDI) (<http://cgrn.ulg.ac.be/abbreviations/#SGDI>) 293; Ziehen [LGS II](http://cgrn.ulg.ac.be/abbreviations/#LGS%20II) (<http://cgrn.ulg.ac.be/abbreviations/#LGS%20II>) 119; Sokolowski [LSCG](http://cgrn.ulg.ac.be/abbreviations/#LSCG) (<http://cgrn.ulg.ac.be/abbreviations/#LSCG>) 126.

Further bibliography: [Salviat 1958b](http://cgrn.ulg.ac.be/bibliography/#Salviat%201958b) (<http://cgrn.ulg.ac.be/bibliography/#Salviat%201958b>): 325-326; [Hodot 1990](http://cgrn.ulg.ac.be/bibliography/#Hodot%201990) (<http://cgrn.ulg.ac.be/bibliography/#Hodot%201990>): 17, MYT 016; [Pirenne-Delforge 1991](http://cgrn.ulg.ac.be/bibliography/#Pirenne-Delforge%201991) (<http://cgrn.ulg.ac.be/bibliography/#Pirenne-Delforge%201991>); [Pirenne-Delforge 1994](http://cgrn.ulg.ac.be/bibliography/#Pirenne-Delforge%201994) (<http://cgrn.ulg.ac.be/bibliography/#Pirenne-Delforge%201994>); [Wallensten 2019](http://cgrn.ulg.ac.be/bibliography/#Wallensten%202019) (<http://cgrn.ulg.ac.be/bibliography/#Wallensten%202019>): 252-253; [Pitz forthc.](http://cgrn.ulg.ac.be/bibliography/#Pitz%20forthc) ([http://cgrn.ulg.ac.be/bibliography/#Pitz%20forthc.](http://cgrn.ulg.ac.be/bibliography/#Pitz%20forthc))

Text

θεός· τύχα ἀγαθά·
ὃ κε θέλη θύην ἐπὶ τῷ βωμ[ῶ]
τᾶς Ἀφροδίτας τᾶς Πεί-
[[θως]] καὶ τῷ Ἑρμᾶ, θυέτω
5 [[...?]]
«ἰρήϊον» ὅττι κε θέλη καὶ
ἔρσεν καὶ θῆλυ πλ[ᾶ]γ χοί[ρω],
καὶ ὄρνιθα ὅττι[νά κε θέλη]
[...?]

Translation

God. Good Fortune. The one who wants to sacrifice on the altar of Aphrodite Peitho and Hermes should sacrifice (5) [...] the animal he wishes, a male and a female, except swine (literally: a piglet), and the bird [he wishes ...]

Traduction

Dieu. Bonne fortune. Que celui qui veut faire un sacrifice sur l'autel d'Aphrodite Peitho et d'Hermès sacrifie (5) [...] l'animal qu'il veut, un mâle et une femelle, sauf un porc (littéralement : un porcelet), et l'oiseau [qu'il veut ...]

Commentary

The stele details what sacrifices can be made to Aphrodite Peitho and Hermes and was presumably set up by the altar of these deities mentioned in lines 2-3. The figure of Peitho is commonly associated with Aphrodite throughout the Greek world, though mostly as a deity in her own right, often playing the role of Aphrodite's attendant (see Pirenne-Delforge 1991, with further discussion). Peitho as an epithet of Aphrodite occurs much more rarely: it is also, for instance, found at Pharsalos in Thessaly ([IG IX.2](http://cgrn.ulg.ac.be) (<http://cgrn.ulg.ac.be>

[/abbreviations/#IG%20IX.2](#) 236 records "a torch for Aphrodite Peitho") and at Knidos ([SEG](#) (<http://cgrn.ulg.ac.be/abbreviations/#SEG>) 12, 42). The association of Aphrodite with Peitho can be found in civic contexts, where Peitho probably represents rhetorical persuasion (cf. [CGRN 136](#) (<http://cgrn.ulg.ac.be/file/136>), line 26, mentioning "statues" plural] in the sanctuary of Aphrodite Pandemos in Athens, which Pausanias [1.22.3] identified as statues of the two goddesses). However, when connected with Aphrodite, Peitho can also refer to erotic persuasion. Similarly, the coupling of Aphrodite with Hermes can be found in both civic and private contexts throughout the Greek world: cults dedicated to Hermes and Aphrodite can be linked to sex, fertility and marriage (cf. Plut. *Mor.* 138c-d), but the two deities also appear together frequently in dedications by magistrates in civic contexts such as the agora or prytaneion (cf. Salviat, Wallensten).

Lines 6-7: With the exception of swine, the regulation allows for any animal, one male and one female, to be sacrificed by worshippers. Despite the word order, the phrasing of the regulation probably implies that the usual practice was for the female animal to be offered to Aphrodite Peitho and the male animal to Hermes: compare [CGRN 17](#) (<http://cgrn.ulg.ac.be/file/17>) (Thasos), where the Nymphs receive any sort of female animal, while Apollo Nymphagetes receives a male. As a general rule in Greek ritual norms, male animals are sacrificed to gods and female animals to goddesses: cf. Pitz. The term used to denote the generic sacrificial animals, ἱερεῖον, appears to have been inscribed over a rasura, and the erased text is illegible. Rather than restricting the sacrifice only of piglets—the young of the swine,—it is highly probable that the regulation had a more general scope, aiming to forbid the sacrifice of any animals from the porcine species (cf. again [CGRN 17](#) (<http://cgrn.ulg.ac.be/file/17>) and also [CGRN 27](#) (<http://cgrn.ulg.ac.be/file/27>), both from Thasos, for similar interdictions using χοῖρος to denote the whole species). In the present Collection, none of the other restrictions of swine concern a cult of Aphrodite; however, [CGRN 178](#) (<http://cgrn.ulg.ac.be/file/178>), also from Thasos, restricts the sacrifices of goats and swine (again expressed as χοῖρος) to Peitho; in [CGRN 136](#) (<http://cgrn.ulg.ac.be/file/136>), line 24, the use of a dove for the purification of the sanctuary of Aphrodite Pandemos and Peitho in Athens, instead of a piglet as is common in this type of ritual, could be a sign of Aphrodite's ambiguous relationship to pigs in the Greek world (see Pirenne-Delforge 1994: 388-393).

Line 8: For other prescriptions of sacrifices of birds, see e.g. [CGRN 70](#) (<http://cgrn.ulg.ac.be/file/70>) (Oropos), line 7, and esp. [CGRN 220](#) (<http://cgrn.ulg.ac.be/file/220>) (Aphrodite Pandamos and Pontia on Kos), line 12. The dove and the pigeon are birds particularly connected to Aphrodite, see [CGRN 136](#) (<http://cgrn.ulg.ac.be/file/136>) (Athens), line 24, and [CGRN 233](#) (<http://cgrn.ulg.ac.be/file/233>) (Aphrodisias). If the restoration is correct, the choice of the bird was left to the worshipper (cf. again [CGRN 220](#) (<http://cgrn.ulg.ac.be/file/220>), line 12: ὄρνιθος).

Publication

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