

CGRN 231

Sacrificial regulation for Eros at Athens

Date :

ca. 450 BC

Justification: Attic script and lettering (Broneer).

Provenance

Athens [📍 \(https://pleiades.stoa.org/places/638356144\)](https://pleiades.stoa.org/places/638356144), north slope of the Acropolis. Text cut on the rock-face, in an open-air sanctuary, located on the north slope of the Acropolis. Found among a large number of votive niches carved in the rock during an excavation undertaken in January 1931 by Broneer.

Support

Rupestal (rock-cut) inscriptions (A and B).

Frame of inscription A: 75 × 22 cm.

Frame of inscription B: 43 × 7.5 cm.

Height: n/a

Width: n/a

Depth: n/a

Layout

Inscription B inscribed to the right of inscription A. Despite damage in some areas, the inscriptions remain legible. The letters, carved in Attic lettering, are carefully and deeply cut in the rock. Given the similarity of the shape of the letters in both inscriptions, Broneer argues for a similar date, although the omicron is slightly smaller in B.

Letters:

Inscription A: 3.5 cm high.

Inscription B: 3.1 cm high.

Bibliography

Edition here based on Lewis – Jeffery IG I³ (<http://cgrn.ulg.ac.be/abbreviations/#IG%20I%C2%B3>) 1382.

Other edition: [Broneer 1932](http://cgrn.ulg.ac.be/bibliography/#Broneer%201932) (<http://cgrn.ulg.ac.be/bibliography/#Broneer%201932>).

Cf. also: Sokolowski [LSS](http://cgrn.ulg.ac.be/abbreviations/#LSS) (<http://cgrn.ulg.ac.be/abbreviations/#LSS>) 5.

Further bibliography: [Mikalson 1975](http://cgrn.ulg.ac.be/bibliography/#Mikalson%201975) (<http://cgrn.ulg.ac.be/bibliography/#Mikalson%201975>); [Pirenne-Delforge 1994](http://cgrn.ulg.ac.be/bibliography/#Pirenne-Delforge%201994) (<http://cgrn.ulg.ac.be/bibliography/#Pirenne-Delforge%201994>); [Pirenne-Delforge 1998](http://cgrn.ulg.ac.be/bibliography/#Pirenne-Delforge%201998) (<http://cgrn.ulg.ac.be/bibliography/#Pirenne-Delforge%201998>); [Breitenberger 2007](http://cgrn.ulg.ac.be/bibliography/#Breitenberger%202007) (<http://cgrn.ulg.ac.be/bibliography/#Breitenberger%202007>).

Text

Text A

[...[?]]

τῷ Ἔρωτι ἡε ἑορτὲ

[τ]ετραδέδι ἡισταμέν[ο]

Μονιχιῶν[ο]ς μὲν[ός].

Text B

Ἀφροδ[ί]τ[ε]ς.

Translation

Text A

To Eros, the festival (falls on) the 4th of Mounychion.

Text B

(Sanctuary) of Aphrodite.

Traduction

Texte A

Pour Eros, la fête (a lieu) le 4 Mounychion.

Texte B

(Sanctuaire) d'Aphrodite.

Commentary

Both inscriptions are found in the rock-cut sanctuary excavated by Broneer on the north slope of the Acropolis in January 1931. This open-air sanctuary, identified as Aphrodite's by votive dedications found on site and by text B presented here, is also mentioned by Pausanias as the enclosure of Aphrodite ἐν κήποις (Paus. 1.27.3). The two inscriptions are found next to each other, cut into the rock.

Eros is associated with Aphrodite already in the *Theogony*, where he appears at Aphrodite's side just after her birth from the waves (Hes. *Theog.* 188-206). Still, worship of Eros is relatively rare in Archaic and Classical Greece: apart from this site on the north slope of the Acropolis, the only other known instances are literary references; for example, an altar to Eros was supposedly set up by a man called Charmos near the Academy in Athens (Paus. 1.30.1; Ath. 13.609d; schol. ad Pl. *Phdr.* 231e), while Pausanias also mentions Thespieae in Boeotia (Paus. 9.27.1) and Leuctra in Laconia (Paus. 3.26.5) as sites where Eros was worshipped. In iconography from the sixth and early fifth centuries, Eros is regularly found in a context related to masculinity and homoeroticism; from the mid-5th century onwards we also find Eros, beside Aphrodite, in feminine contexts linked to marriage: cf. Pirenne-Delforge 1998: 21-22.

Text A

Line 1: Little is known about the festival mentioned here. It has previously been suggested that it refers to a festival of a private religious association: see Mikalson, p. 138-139. However, nothing in the text itself supports such a hypothesis: it is carefully cut in the rock, part of the sanctuary and next to votive niches, and it does not mention any association (Pirenne-Delforge 1998: 26). More importantly, the word ἑορτή is practically exclusively used to refer to a civic festival: see here e.g. CGRN 46 (<http://cgrn.ulg.ac.be/file/46>) (Piraeus), lines 12-13; CGRN 75 (<http://cgrn.ulg.ac.be/file/75>) (Oropos), line 34. Although the inscription describes the festival as an occasion only for Eros, it is likely that Aphrodite was honoured too, since the ἑορτή occurred in her sanctuary. A *thesauros* found near the Acropolis, and dated to the beginning of the 4th century, contains an inscription prescribing a payment of a drachma for offerings made to Aphrodite Ourania which were preliminary to marriage (SEG (<http://cgrn.ulg.ac.be/abbreviations/#SEG>) 41, 182). At Athens, Aphrodite Ourania is found in connection with marriage (cf. Pirenne-Delforge 1998: 28), so it is possible that the festival to Eros mentioned here also had a connection to marriage. Alternatively, Breitenberger (p. 140) has suggested interpreting this occasion as linked to fertility in general, based on the

date of the festival in springtime (see below, lines 2-3) and Aphrodite's connection to the fertility of the land.

Lines 2-3: The fourth day of each month was dedicated to Aphrodite, as well as to Hermes and Herakles (cf. Mikalson, p. 16-18; Pirenne-Delforge 1994: 31). It is possible that Eros, through his association with Aphrodite, was also particularly honoured on the 4th. In any case, though the date is otherwise unknown, the 4th of Mounichion (April/May) could have constituted an official Athenian festival when Eros was worshipped, very likely in the company of Aphrodite.

Text B

The name in the genitive, carved into the rock, confirms the identification of the sanctuary as Aphrodite's, where Eros is also honoured.

Publication

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