

Symposium Classicum Peregrinum

BLESSINGS AND CURSES IN ANTIQUITY

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Panel II: Curses and Blessings in the Roman World

“Comparison and reflection on two formulas for consecration:

Greek καθιερώ (τῷ θεῷ) and Latin *sacer (deo)*”

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1. INTRODUCTION

According to the theme of this Symposium, I will try to illustrate how the act of consecrating a human to the divinity can be ambivalent depending on the context. To this aim, I have chosen two consecration formulas: one in Greek κατεειέρωσεν Σωτήρη Ἐκάτη, which is inscribed on a Phrygian funerary stele of the III A.D. and has a positive sense as a blessing. The other formula in Latin stands as a kind of curse¹ in judicial context; it is addressed to a condemned person who is pronounced “*sacer* to Jupiter” (*eius caput Iovi sacer esset*).

Thus, the connexion between the human and the divinity seems to be the only meeting point for two acts of consecration which contexts, religious-funerary and judicial-politic, are different and which goals are almost the opposite. It is curious, or at least remarkable, the fact that the gods’ names are expressed in dative case in both syntactical constructions.

Individually, these formulas are particular for a reason. The Greek blessing is the unique case among Phrygian epitaphs from II-III A.D. and dedicated to Hecate that uses the syntactical structure καθιερώ τῷ θεῷ. In other cases we find the expression τιμηθέντα ὑπὸ + genitive case for divinity’s name (Σωτείρης Ἐκάτης) καθιέρωσαν². For its part, the Latin judicial sentence is special because formulas for *consecratio* or *devotio* of a *sacer homo* are normally more appropriated to chthonian divinities (*diis inferis*) and not to heavenly Jupiter.

2. CONSECRATION FOR BLESSING IN A GREEK FORMULA FROM A FUNERARY STELE

Funerary stele³ (193-211 A.D.) from the Anatolian planes of high Tembris (actual Turkish Eskişehir) close to Kotiaion in Northwest Phrygia⁴.

Iconological description. – White-marble stele (1’30m)⁵. The funerary monument consists in two sections with a triangular façade on the top. The façade has a representation of the eagle of the apotheosis. The upper section has triple goddess Hecate in the middle, the standing figures look to the front and they are holding short torches with their hands. They are dressed with a long chiton and a tight-fitting robe with long sleeves. Their faces framed by puffed hair and ringlets fall down the neck, they three were *poloi* on their heads and the central figure has also a moon crescent over it within which there is a bust of draped Helios with the sun behind him. The moon, the sun and the stars normally appear in imperial Anatolic iconography by influence of afterlife belief in eastern cultures (Persian, Hittite), pagan and Anatolic religions. God Men is on the right of the triple goddess, wearing a robe above the

¹ I am considering here the formula *sacer esto* as a special way of cursing the human, giving that his life is offered to the divinity and left to god’s will. He becomes a tabooed, banned man who is not part of the society anymore. Agamben, on the contrary, considers that *sacer esto* “non è una formula di maledizione religiosa che sancisce il cedere *unheimlich*, cioè insieme augusto e abietto, di qualcosa: essa è, invece, *la formulazione politica originaria dell’impostazione del vincolo sovrano*” (cf. Agambeni, 2005: 94-85), that is, not a cursing formula but as an “original politic statement for the setting of the sovereign duty”.

² It has a different meaning: the deceased couple is “honoured by goddess Hecate with death”,

³ Cf. MDAI(A) 10 (1885) 16,3 = SEG 29.1408, 40.1186, II = CMRDM 1.99; LIMC 327; De Hoz, 1998 n. 4; Rostovtzeff, 1981 tav. XLVI; Perdrizet, 1896: 64-66 tav. XVI. Online available in <https://epigraphy.packhum.org/text/270846>

⁴ Cf. Perdrizet, 1896: 66 and note 2 for Hecate *Soteira* not only at Kotiaion in Phrygia but also in Lagina.

⁵ Cf. Perdrizet, 1896: 64-66.

knees and a Phrygian hat, a moon crescent rises behind his shoulders. On the left of Hecate, a naked masculine figure holds a double axe in one hand and an indistinctive object on the other hand which is being bitten by a dog next to him. On the right side above the characters, the symbol of the husband: an open diptych (his Great Book), on the left side the symbols of the housewife: a dove (or a crow) on a wooden basket, a comb and a hand mirror with a little circle in the centre. The busts of the deceased couple, Gaios and Appsion, are represented on the lower section. They look to the front, left hands covered by the mantle while right hands are set on the heart-side, Appsion is wearing a spinning wheel in her hand. Below them there is a plough. They were a well-off family, he a landlord and her wife an exemplary housewife.

Inscription. – The Greek inscription is written on the stripe that divides both sections: Ἄπσιον τὸν ἑαυτῆς σύνβιον Γάειον κατειέρωσεν Σωτίρη Ἐκάτη καὶ Ἀπελλᾶς καὶ Γάειος ἐτείμησαν τοὺς ἑαυτῶν γονεῖς μν|ῆμις| χάριν. | Τειμ|ῆ|ας Μου|ρματε|ανός.

Translation. – “Appsion, her wife, consecrated her husband Gaios to Hecate *Soteira*⁶ and Apellas and Gaios honoured their parents’ grace of memory. [By] Teimeas Murmateanos”.

Brief linguistic commentary. – 1. Ἄπσιον: Ἄπσιον⁷; τὸ ἀπφίον “dear”, family hypocorism of endearment (Eust. 565.26; Poll. 3.74; Eust.l.c.)⁸; ἀψίον τὸ πρόσωπον (Hsch. α 8966)⁹; the group -πψ- has got a reduplicating sound /p/. 2. σύνβιον: σύμβιον, phonetic confusion, -v- before -β- should be -μ-. 3. κατειέρωσεν: καθιέρωσεν, -τ- for -θ-; double -εε- by mistake. 4. γονεῖς: γονεῖς, iotacism phenomenon, -ις instead of -εις (ac. pl.). 5. μνήμις: μνήμης, iotacism phenomenon, -ις instead of -ης (gen. fem. sing.).

We only find a few epigraphic parallels for the structure κατειέρωσεν τῷ θεῷ of our inscription. For example, an epigraph found in Smyrna but original from Phrygia: τέκνον ἀπιέρωσαν Ἀπολλωνι. And another epigram from Lydian city of Kula: Δία Κτήσιον Ταττα Παπιαν... κατειέρωσαν where De Hoz says that the theonyms in accusative case are used here for dative¹⁰.

Function. – The verb καθιέρω serves to the wife put the soul of her husband under Hecate’s protection. At the same time their children blessing their parents’ souls¹¹. This shows the special connection between the mortal and the divinity, especially from Hellenistic period on and in Imperial literature. A similar conception in Christian belief, already settled in Phrygia between II-III A.D., reveals its coexistence with paganism at that time.

⁶ Steles with dedication to Hecate, cf. LIMC VI.1. nn. 325-330 concretely to Hecate *Soteira*, nn. 326-328. See also Johnston, 1990 and Serafini, 2015: 372.

⁷ It is a female name in a Lydian inscription from Philadelphieia, 26-22 BC [TAM V (3) 1703]: “Φίλα ἡ καὶ Ἄπσιον, daughter of Μηνόδοτος”; as well as in a Lydian inscription from Sardis, I/II AD (*ISardis* 53-54 II): “Ἄπσιον Σεκοῦνδα, daughter of Μένανδρος Λεχίτας. There is also the male name Ἄπσιανός on a Lydian inscription from Maionia, 249-251 AD (*BMC Lydia* 130 no. 26; 136 nos. 53-57; *SNG Glasgow* 1990F coins): “Αὐρ. Ἄπσιανός ὁ καὶ Ἀθήναιος, son of Ἄπσιανός, father of Αὐρ. Ἄπσιανός”. See Riçl, 2010: 535, 543 and 547, 533, respectively.

⁸ DGE 1991: 483.

⁹ DGE 1991: 661.

¹⁰ Cf. De Hoz, 1998: 161 nn. 9-10.

¹¹ Cf. De Hoz, 1998: 165.

Origin. Why the deceased was consecrated to Hecate? – Hecate’s function as *Saviour* (Σώτεια) in death realm recalls her association with the souls of the unhappy dead. She became the “prototype of all vengeful ghosts” and leader of spirits¹². This is a fundamental reason why Hecate became the divine Saviour which represents the Cosmic Soul in the *Chaldean Oracles*¹³. The guardian function of the goddess in the cosmic realm, as intermediary protector and guide of the souls, is closely connected with her original role as φύλαξ and προπύλεια¹⁴ in the doorways, the liminal and transitional areas¹⁵.

During Hellenistic and Roman period Hecate was venerated as *Soteira*, *Megiste* (“greatest”, μέγιστη) and *Epiphanistate* (“[most] manifest goddess”, ἐπιφανής < ἐπιφανεστάτη) in her temple of Lagina (Caria, s. I a.C.). Carian epigraphs from Panamara mention Hecate together with Zeus *Panamaros*, Hera and Tyche (*IStr* 217)¹⁶, and also with Zeus *Hypsistos-Kapetolios* and Tyché (*IStr* 330)¹⁷. Under the epithet *Soteira* Hecate is syncretised with Artemis in Epidaurus (*IG* IV.1², 509), Kotiaion (*CIG* n. 3827*q*) and Delos¹⁸ (*ID* n° 2448).

Greek formulas to protect the graves –

- The rest of Phrygian epitaphs from Tembris and Kotiaion¹⁹ dedicated to Hecate presents a different syntactical structure:
 - Nominative case (= person who consecrates) + Accusative case (person who is consecrated to the divinity) + τιμηθέντα/ς ὑπὸ Σωτείρης Ἑκάτης (after [the deceased] has being honoured by the goddess with death) + κατειέρωσαν/ἀπειέρωσαν (they consecrated),

Syntax changes and the meaning is slightly different in comparison with our formula:

- Nominative case (Ἀψιον = she who consecrates) + Accusative case (τὸν ἐαυτῆς σύνβιον Γάειον = person who is consecrated) κατειέρωσεν Σωτίρη Ἑκάτη + καὶ Nominative case (Ἀπελλᾶς καὶ Γάειος, that is, their children = who dedicates) + ετείμησαν + Accusative case (τοὺς ἐαυτῶν γονῖς = they who are dedicated).
- Formulas of consecration with the name of divinity in accusative case (warning against grave robbers):
 - Epitaph *IGR* IV, n° 621(Temenotiri-Flaviopoli, 269-270 a.C.):

¹² Cf. Johnston, 1990: 246-249.

¹³ For Hecate *Soteira* in the *Chaldean Oracles*, cf. Johnston, 1990.

¹⁴ Hecate’s little temple at Eleusis (VI a.C.) is set at the entrance of Demeter *Malophoros*’ sacred area. The goddess is associated to Artemis *Propyleia* in Eleusis (Soph., fr. 535 Radt; Paus., I 38, 6). For Hecate’s cult and function in liminal and transitional spaces, doors and entrances, cf. Johnston, 1999a: 203-249; Zografou, 1999; Zografou, 2003; Calcaterra, 2005-2006; Carboni, 2007; Calcaterra, 2009; Zografou, 2010; Serafini, 2015: 101-164, 307-323; Carboni, 2015.

¹⁵ They dedicated a small sanctuary to Hecate *Propyleia* at the entrance of the sacred area of Demeter *Malophoros* in Selinunte, Sicily (VII-VI B.C.); also Zeus *Meilichios* has a reserved place in this area.

¹⁶ Cf. Cousin-Deschamps (1888). *BCH* 12: 264, n. 49; Laumonier (1937). *BCH* 61: 263-265, 266 nn. 84, 86.

¹⁷ Cf. Cousin-Deschamps (1888). *BCH* 12: 271, n. 57 (l. 1).

¹⁸ Cf. Serafini, 2015: 385 ss.

¹⁹ Cf. De Hoz, 1998: 166 nn. 1-3, 5, 8.

εἴ τις δὲ παραμαρτήσι τῇ στήλῃ ἢ τῷ ἡρώω, ἔξει τὴν οὐρανεῖαν Ἑκάτην κεχλωμένην (Il. 19-22)²⁰.

This Phrygian funerary stele is a warning against whoever dares to damage the hero's resting place: he would suffer the rage of *Ouranian* Hecate.

- Bilingual Attic epitaph from Eleusis for cursing (“tituli sepulcrales cum diris et poenarum sanctionibus”, n. 13213)²¹:

ἐὰν τις [τὸν τιτ]λον τοῦτον σαλεύσῃ ἔχοι τοὺς καταχθονίους θε[οὺς] κεχλωμένους (= *habebit deos Manes iratos*)

- Cilician epitaph from Sepphoris (ancient Diocesare, Galilee region, Israel)²²:

ἔξει πάντα τὰ θεῖα κεχλωμένα καὶ τὰς συγέρας Ἐρεινύας καὶ ἰδίου τέκνου ἥπατος γεύσεται.

- Name of divinity in dative case:
 - Attic rhetoric epitaph for cursing (“tituli sepulcrales cum diris et poenarum sanctionibus”, n. 13209-13210)

Ἄντωνία ἢ καὶ Σωκρατικὴ τῷ γλυκυτάτῳ μου ἀνδρὶ Ἀντιόχῳ τῷ καὶ Συνεσίῳ ἐποίησα τὸ ἡρώων τοῦτο, τέλος καμάτων. Παραδίδομι (n^o 13210) τοῖς καταχθονίοις θεοῖς τοῦτο τὸ ἡρώων φυλάσσειν, Πλούτωνι, καὶ Δήμητρει καὶ Περσεφόνῃ καὶ Ἐρυννύσιν καὶ πᾶσιν τοῖς καταχθονίοις θεοῖς.

- Greek ἦτω (=ἔστω) equivalent to Latin *sacer esto*, name of divinity in dative case:
 - Dodurga, in the plain of Karayükpazar:

[...] εἴ δέ τις κακουργήσι, ἦτω ἔνοκος Ἡλίῳ Σελήνῃ²³. From Imperial time on, the form ἦτω became a widespread vulgarism for ἔστω.

3. CURSING CONSECRATION IN A LATIN FORMULA FROM LIVY (III, 55, 7): *eius caput Iovi sacer esset*

Historical background context of the expression *sacer esto*: the Lapis Niger – pronouncing a man *sacer*²⁴ is the earliest Roman criminal law. The first register of the formula *sacer esto* was found in the *Cippus* of the Forum called *Lapis Niger* in the form *sakros esed*²⁵. The formula inscribed on the stone serves as a curse: the criminal who dare to damage the stone would be consecrated to infernal deities. Scholars have dated this inscription in the VI sec. B.C.²⁶ Maybe it is the *lapis niger in Comitio* referred by Festus (II A.D.) as a funerary place where Romulus

²⁰ Cf. Serafini, 2015: 391-2 fn. 1. *Athen. Mitteil.* XXX, 1905, p. 327: εἴ τις δὲ παραμαρ|τήσι τῇ στήλῃ ἢ τῷ ἡρώω, ἔξ|ει τὴν οὐρανεῖαν Ἑκάτην | κεχλωμένην (Il. 19-22).

²¹ Cf. Robert, 1978: 243-244 with bibliography, *R.Phil.* (1944) 38, n. 2; *BCH* 48 (1977), n. 21.

²² Cf. Robert, 1978: 248. In Niksar (ancient *Neokaisáreia* in Turkey) the Erinyes follow Hecate's dogs, cf. Moraux, P. (1959). “Une imprécation funéraire à Néocésarée”. *Bibl. Inst. Fr. Istanbul*, IV.

²³ Cf. Robert, 1978: 261-262 f.n. 113.

²⁴ Cf. Bennett, 1930: 5.

²⁵ Cf. Morani, 1981: 31-32, 40.

²⁶ The characters of the *Lapis Niger* are similar to those of Greek Chalcidian from which the Latin alphabet comes from.

was buried or where he was killed. Festus also refers a cursing formula in the name of Jupiter: *si quisquam aliuta faxit, ipsos Iovi sacer esto*²⁷ when he quotes the *leges sacrae* of the XII Tables. The author gave indeed the first definition of *sacer homo*: *is est quem populus iudicavit ob maleficium; neque fas est eum immolari, sed qui occidit parricidii non damnatur*²⁸.

Cursing consecration formula in Livy (I A.D.)²⁹ – The passage III, 55, 7 from Livy's *Ab urbe condita* tells the administrative measures took by Lucius Valerius and Marcus Horatius during their consulship (449 B.C.), favourable both to people and to patricians. Among those measures, it was prescribed that whoever violates the *sacrosanctus* character of the tribunes of the plebs would be judged by the *aediles* or the *decemviri* judges. They would forfeit the head of the guilty to Jupiter and all his possessions should be offer to the temple of Ceres³⁰, Liber and Libera.

The expression *eius caput Iovi sacrum esset* means that he can be killed with impunity but never can be “sacrificed” to a divinity as a votive offering³¹: he was removed and isolated from the society in a similar way of the original tabooed man³². Such a curse consecration was normally addressed to infernal deities (χθονίους θεοίς) or *Diebus Manes* and it surprises that the formula in Festus and Livy is addressed to Jupiter instead.

The mention of the “head” (*caput*) in the formula recalls the beheading of the sacrificial animal with an axe, and it was probably the first form of human execution in Rome (from 509 B.C. during Valerian-Horatian consulship (449 B.C.) until Verrius Flaccus, 55 B.C.-20 A.D.³³).

Whatever human or object declared *sacer* became property of the divinity (*quidquid quod deorum habetur*³⁴). As referred by Agamben, *sacer* is a limit-concept in the Roman social organization. It lies within the *ius divinum* and the *ius humanum*, probably referring to an original political structure where there was not a clear difference between the sacred and the profane, the religious and political fields.

The adjective *sacer* indicates that something is a “property” of the god (possessor's name in dative³⁵), so in the formula *eius caput Iovi sacer esset* Jupiter becomes the “owner” of the consecrated human. The human proclaimed *sacer* cannot be judge by the human law, on the

²⁷ Cf. Festus, 5 L.

²⁸ Cf. Festus, *sacer mons*, 424 L.

²⁹ Cf. Cantarella, 1996²: 225.

³⁰ ...*qui tribunis plebis, aedilibus, iudicibus decemviris no cuisset, eius caput Iovi sacrum esset, familia ad eadem Cereris Liberi Liberaeque venumiret*, Livy, III, 55, 7. Also in Plu., *Rom.* 22, 3.

³¹ Cf. Agamben, 2005: 81-82.

³² Cf. Morani, 1981: 40-41.

³³ According to Bennett, the methods of judgement and execution of an individual criminal changed along the Roman history. The first period (before 509 B.C.) was characterised by the use of the *ax*, but in the second period (from 509 B.C. until V. Flaccus' time) the ax was removed from the *fasces* and the criminal was granted of appealing to the people, cf. Bennett, 1930: 8-9. Roman religion depends on collective, represented on the figure of the State. The ritual to declare something or somebody *sacer* was performed by a specific magistrate in the name of the State (the State *dedicat*), and the *pontifex* pronounced the *sollemnia verba* (the priest *consecrat*) to accomplish the ritual passage, cf. Morani, 1981: 33, 39.

³⁴ Cf. Macrobius, *Sat.* II, 3, 2.

³⁵ The name of the divine possessor is only specified when required by the circumstances.

contrary, his fate is now on the *ius divinum* or *fas*³⁶. In that sense *sacer* means “cursed”, the human is not part of the community anymore and his fate is left to divinity’s will³⁷.

Further contexts for a sacer offering to Iovi – this “negative” consecration of the human in the name of Jupiter is surprising. Normally the consecrations to the heavenly god have a “positive” sense when the subjects are a mountain/hill, a plant (like trees *quercus*, *pinus*...) or food³⁸, the priesthood institution (*sacerdotium*)³⁹ or the *prophana*⁴⁰, the days of wine harvest (*vinaliorum dies*)⁴¹, the *carmina*⁴², etc.

Sometimes the general of an army immolated himself against the enemy as a sacred offer to Jupiter that will propitiate the victory to his legion⁴³. Only human sacrifices consecrated to Jupiter *Estygiu*m and the infernal deities, as Dido’s suicide⁴⁴, see Jupiter as the divine receptor of a “negative” or unhappy action, as well as in the judicial sentence. Nevertheless, there is a very important difference: the immolation (especially like the general of a legion or the priests) is a voluntary offering as a sacred victim to the god, quite the opposite is the case of the condemned to death in a trial. The former has been *cursed* and now is a banned man, he can never be considered as a sacrificial victim since he can be *killed* with impunity⁴⁵. Also in this context human sacrifices accomplished to gain the god’s favour⁴⁶.

4. FINAL REMARKS AND QUESTION POINTS

³⁶ In the context of *sacra* the word *fas* expresses the regulation of the human-god relationship and it is the equivalent of the *ius* in the context of interpersonal human rapports, cf. Morani, 1981: 35.

³⁷ Cf. Virg., *Aen.* III, 57; Plaut., *Bacch.* 784; Nonn., 397, 20; see Morani, 1981: 41.

³⁸ Cf. Ovidius, Pomponius Mela, *De chorographia* LLA 330, LIB. 3, par. 66, pag. 70, lin. 27; Silius Italicus, *Punica* (LLA 368) lib. 10 versus 163, p. 253; *civica iligne*a (Plin. Maior, *NH* (LLA 399), lib. 16, par. 11, vol. 3, p. 4, lin. 13); D. Magnus Ausonius, *Eclogarum liber* (CPL 1392 + (M), LLA 554.2, ecloga 19, 3, p. 110), Caius Iulius Solinus, *Collectanea rerum memorabilium* (LLA 603) cap. 52, par. 16, p. 186, lin. 7; etc.

³⁹ Cf. Frechulfus Lexouiensis, *Historiarum libri XII*, pars. 1, lib. 1, cap. 28, p. 60, lin. 49.

⁴⁰ Cf. Gislebertus Trudonensis, *Gesta abbatum Trudonsium* (continuatio prim : lib. VIII et X-XIII), lib. 12, par. 6., lin. 59, p. 73.

⁴¹ Cf. Macr. Ambr. Th., *Sat.* (LLA 636) lib. 1, cp. 4, par. 6, pag. 13, lin. 16; *idem* lib. 3, cap. 3, par. Par 2, pág. 166, línea 17.

⁴² Cf. Martianus Capella, *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii* (LLA 710), lib. 9, par. 907, p. 345, lin. 22; Paulinus Nolanus (pseudo), *Carmen* 32 (CPL 0206) versus 62, page 332.

⁴³ Although the Latin verb in this case is *devoeo*, cf. Livy, VIII, 9, 6-8: Sicut verbis nuncupavi ita pro re publica (populi Romani) Quiritium legiones auxiliaque hostium mecum Deis Manibus Tellurique devoeo. A parallel in Greek, the priests an Fabius Maximus, cf. **Plu., Cam. XXI, 4**: ἐπευξάμενοι τοῖς θεοῖς, ὡς ἑαυτοὺς ὑπὲρ τῆς πατρίδος τῷ δαίμονι καθιεροῦντες,... “[the priests, the old distinguished men, headed by Fabius as Pontifex Maximuss] prayed to the gods and consecrated themselves as victims for the salvation of the city”.

⁴⁴ Cf. Verg., *Aen.* IV, 638 pag. 414 (LLA 224); Val. Flacc., *Arg.* I, 730 pag. 26 (LLA 367); Serv. Gram., *Commentarius in Vergilii Aeneidos libros* (“Servius auctus”) vol. 1, lib. 4, comm. ad versum 635, pag. 574, lin. 15 and *comm. ad versum* 646, pag. 576, lin. 10 (LLA 612): “sacra Iovi faciunt et ‘Iuppiter optime’ dicunt / hunc que rogant, et ‘Iane pater’ primo ordine ponunt” and *idem*, vol. 2, lib. 6, comm. Ad versum 138, pag. 31, lin 13.

⁴⁵ Cf. Bennett, 1930: 10 ff.; Morani, 1981: 40-41; Agamben, 2005: 80 ff.

⁴⁶ Cf. Plu., *Them.* XIII, 3: τούτους ἰδὼν Εὐφραντίδης ὁ μάντις [...] τὸν Θεμιστοκλέα δεξιωσάμενος ἐκέλευσε τῶν νεανίσκων κατάρξασθαι καὶ καθιερεῦσαι πάντας ὠμηστῆ Διονύσω προσευξάμενον... – the seer Eufantides prescribes to Themistocles to sacrifice three young men to Baccho Omesta with prayers for Greeks to get health and victory.

4.1. The formula καθιερῶ τῷ θεῷ of our Phrygian epitaph (κατεειέρωσεν Σωτίρη Ἐκάτη) is an exception among the other epitaphs from Timbris in which Hecate is mentioned. The rest of the cases presents the structure τιμηθέντα ὑπὸ (Σωτείρης) Ἐκάτης καθιέρωσαν, which also expresses a different meaning “[the deceased] has been honoured by Hecate with death”. It is also particular because there are very few examples of the formula καθιερῶ followed by the name of divinity in dative in a funerary context (a Phrygian epitaph, *ibid.* p. 3). At first, the construction καθιερῶ τῷ θεῷ seems common when consecrating non-human subjects⁴⁷, and it later became usual even for the Christian formula to consecrate the human soul to God⁴⁸.

The divinity’s name in dative for both Greek and Latin formulas probably expresses the fact that the god becomes owner of the human. It might not be further relevant giving that the contexts and goals are so different in the funerary and judicial examples.

→ We only can turn back to the origin of the Latin formula *sacer esto* in the *Cippus* of the Forum if it serves as a threat against the violator of Romulus’ gravestone. In the same way, sometimes the epigraphs of the funerary steles have a hint of **menace** and aim to protect the resting place of the deceased against grave robbers.

→ However it be, epitaphs from Tembris and Maionia, as De Hoz had once remarked⁴⁹, are special because they show a **local use of the verb καθιερῶ** to dedicate the soul of the deceased to the divinity, putting the grave under its protection.

4.2. *Chthonian deities* – The consecration formula that we have seen are addressed to chthonian divinities, Hecate and Jupiter⁵⁰. For Hecate it is not surprising considering the influence of the goddess in death and funerary realm, especially as guide of the souls.

It is not that “usual” declaring the human life *sacer* to Jupiter, a heavenly (“positive”) god instead of the *Diis Manibus*, the infernal deities of the *devotio*.

→ why cursing in the name of Jupiter?

In the judicial context that we have seen, the sentence also mentions chthonian Ceres, since the wife and personal assets of the condemned were donated to the temple of the goddess.

4.3. In brief, it was my aim here to show two different contexts for human consecration. Blessing in funerary context has a positive sense when the human soul of the deceased is

⁴⁷ Places like villages, houses, *temenoi* or sanctuaries (cf. D.L., II, 52, 8; Plu., *Rom.* XVIII, 1, 3; Plu., *Num.* XIII, 2, 7, *Tim.* XXXVI, 7, 1; Suda, s.v. ι 203, 3, κ 2498, 15 and 19, etc.), calendar dates (cf. Plu., *Cam.* VII, 7, 1); Vestals’ priesthood (cf. Plu., *Num.* IX, 5, 3); statues, altars and the *naos* of a temple (cf. Pl., *Lg.* 738C Steph.), etc.

⁴⁸ Cf. Cyrillus, *Pr.Ps.* 69, p. 10009, 33, *De adoratione et cultu in spiritu et veritate* 68, p. 713, 825, 957, etc; Suda, s.v. σ 777, 5, etc.

⁴⁹ Cf. De Hoz, 1998: 165.

⁵⁰ In other contexts, Hecate and Zeus/Jupiter ὑψιστος are related, cf. Belayche, N. (2005). “De la polysémie des épicleses: “Υψιστος dans le monde gréco-romain”, p. 435. In V.V.A.A. (2005). *Nommer les dieux : théonymes, épithètes, épicleses dans l’Antiquité*. Turnhout: Brepols. See also Serafini, 2015: 401.

consecrated to the divinity; and cursing in this judicial context, which means to declare a human *sacer* to the god, banning him from the community.

→It serves to demonstrate that the connexion between human and gods has an ambiguous and ambivalent value depending on the context. In any case, it is always the divinity, expressed in dative case in the formulas of consecration, to become the possessor of the human life or soul.

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