

Some Confession (or Reconciliation) Inscriptions from Lydia and Phrygia

- “This was dedicated to Men Axiotenos by Epaphrodeitos, steward of Claudius Stratonikos, having made a vow if he should get a wife which I want, and getting her but not paying his vow. After being punished he set this up, and from now on he blesses (the god) with all his family. In the year 245, on the 12th of the month of Deios.” (*CMRDM* I 80; 160 CE, from Sardis. Trans. adapted from Horsley, *NewDocs* III 6 [p. 27]).
- “In the year 203, month of Artemisios, the sixth, when Trophime daughter of Artemidoros, the son of Kikinnas, was called by the god into the favour of service she was not willing to come quickly. The god punished her and made her insane. So she asked Meter Tarsene and Apollo Tarsios and Men Artemidorou Axiotennos who possessed Koresa, and he ordered the revenge to be written on a stone and to enroll myself in service to the gods.” (*TAM* V 460 = *BIWK* 57; 118 CE, from Koresa?. Trans. adapted from Horsley, *New Docs* III 6 [p. 27]).
- “Since Jucundus was struck by insanity and it was rumoured by everybody that he had been given a potion by his mother-in-law Tatias, Tatias set up a sceptre and deposited imprecations in the temple, as defending herself against an imputation, although she was conscious (of her guilt). For this reason, the gods exercised a punishment which she did not escape. Similarly, her son Sokrates, when he was passing by the entrance which leads to the grove, having a sickle in his hands with which one cuts down vines, the sickle fell on his foot, and thus he died within a day (or: on the same day) suffering his punishment. The gods at Aziotta are great! They demanded that the sceptre and the imprecations made in the temple be annulled. Sokrateia, Moschas, Jucundus, and Menekrates, the children of Jucundus and Moschion and grandchildren of Tatias, annulled this, atoning in every way to the gods. Having reported the power of the gods on a monument, we praise the gods from now on.” (*BIWK* 69.3-34; 156 CE, from Kula. Trans. adapted from Angelos Chaniotis, “Under the watchful eyes of the gods: divine justice in Hellenistic and Roman Asia Minor,” Stephen Colvin, ed., *The Greco-Roman East: Politics, Culture, Society* [Yale Classical Studies 31; CUP: New York, 2004], 12n.34).
- “(opening of inscription, which mentioned the gods, missing) . . . to Apollonios . . . 40 denarii. Then, when Apollonios reclaimed the money from Skollos, the latter swore an oath by the gods mentioned above to repay the collected sum within a deadline. When he did not keep the agreement, Apollonios ceded (the money) to the god. When Skollos was punished by the gods with death, after his death his daughter was prosecuted by the gods. She annulled the oath and, having atoned, she now praises Meter Atimiti and Mes (i.e. Men) Tiamou.” (*BIWK* 54; 118 CE, from Ayvatlar. Trans. adapted from Chaniotis 2004, 16-17n.48).

- “Theodoros: I have set this up because I have been brought by the gods to my senses, by Zeus and the great Mes (i.e. Men) Artemidorou.
Zeus: I have punished Theodoros on his eyes for his offences.
Theodoros: I had sexual intercourse with Trophime, the slave of Haplokomas, the wife of Eutyichis, in the ‘praetorium’.
Zeus: He takes the first sin away with a sheep, a partridge, a mole. Second sin:
Theodoros: While I was a slave of the gods of Nonnos, I had sexual intercourse with the flutist Ariagne.
Zeus: He takes away with a ‘piglet’, a tuna, a fish.
Theodoros: For my third sin I had sexual intercourse with the flutist Aretousa.
Zeus: He takes away with a chicken, a sparrow, a pigeon. A kypros of barley and wheat, a prochus of wine, a kypros of clean (?) wheat for the priests, one prochus.
Theodoros: I asked for Zeus’s help.
Zeus: Look! I have blinded him for his sins. But, since he has appeased the gods and has erected the monument (stele), he has taken his sins away. Asked by the council, (I respond that) I am kindly disposed, if he sets up my monument (stele), on the day I have ordered. You may open the prison. I set the convict free after one year and ten months.” (*BIWK* 5, lines 2-26; 235 CE, from Silandos; Trans. adapted from Chaniots 2004, 28).
- “Antonia daughter of Antonios to the god Apollon Bozenos because I entered the (holy) land in filthy clothes, being punished I admitted and raised the praise, because I recovered completely.” (*BIWK* 43. Trans. adapted from Aslak Rostad, “Confession or Reconciliation?: The Narrative Structure of the Lydian and Phrygian ‘Confession Inscriptions’,” *Symbolae Osloenses* 77 [2002] 153).
- “Aphias daughter of Glykon made a promise to Men Axiottenos, if she would have a child. When the prayer was fulfilled, she hesitated, and he (i.e. the god) punished her and demanded that she wrote down the powers of the god.” (*BIWK* 65. Trans. from Rostad 2002, 154).
- “In the year 320, on the 12th of the month Peritos. Because I, Aurelius Stratoneikos, son of Stratoneikos, in ignorance cut down the trees from the forest belonging to the gods Zeus Sabazios and Artemis Anaitis, being punished and after a promise I raised a token of gratitude.” (*BIWK* 76. Trans. from Rostad 2002, 156).
- “Meidon son of Menandros held a banquet (symposium) in the shrine of Zeus Trosu, and his servants ate meat that was not sacrificed. And (the god) made him dumb for three months and appeared to him in his dreams, so that he raised a monument (stele) and wrote down what had happened, and he started to speak again.” (*BIWK* 65. Trans. adapted from Rostad 2002, 157).