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Authority and Generic Heterogeneity of Greek Sacred Regulations

Our paper is concerned with the notion of authority in Greek sacred regulations; we posit that the type of authority issuing/prescribing a sacred regulation affects both the content and the textual form of a regulation. We suggest that placing an emphasis on the function of authority in an investigation of sacred regulations might achieve greater understanding of the material, \(^1\) and shed light on distinctive features of human vs. divine agencies in the Greek cultic normative discourse.

Taking as a point of departure our previous work on the topic, we submit that the highest level of authority attested in sacred regulations is found in those which claim to be products of divine agency. Such regulations are typically metrical in form, formulate strikingly different demands to those in prose, and, through their form and language, aim for a higher stylistic register. \(^2\) Furthermore, we argue that the regulations sourcing their authority from the human

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2. *TAM II* 178 et 184.
4. Voir n. 6.
5. *MAMA IV* 293.
8. *ILS* 8858.
sphere (at all levels, from private initiatives to official decrees of the city) are of subordinate power and effect, when compared to regulations styled as divine ordinances.

Sacred regulations are notoriously difficult to categorize and define. The first difficulty is their remarkable generic heterogeneity: Extant corpora indiscriminately include laws and decrees issued by various levels of civic administration (in guises of grafai, diagrammata, nomoi, psephismata etc.), but also building inscriptions, dedicatory inscriptions, sacred calendars, regulations regarding the auctioning and sale of priesthoods, even sepulchral inscriptions, all containing regulations pertaining to the cult practice. Secondly, the type of information they convey is also vastly diverse (from details of the dress code, to type of the sacrifice, and establishment of festivals).

Crucially, sacred regulations are not only disparate in genre and in the type of information they convey; they also claim different authorities. There are state issued legislative acts brought forth by a variety of civic entities (nomoi of the state; LSAM 16, 3rd c. BC, Gambreion, l. 4: νόμον εἶναι Γαμβρειώταις; psephismata issued by a deme NGSL 2, 4th c. BC, Eleusis, 18–21: ἐψηφίσθαι τοῖς δημόταις). By the same token, many regulations were issued by civic or religious associations and their officials.

Even though these regulations were brought forth by a variety of civic bodies, it is noteworthy that there was a consistent effort to link the regulations to the divine sphere: The inscriptions were often set up in the sanctuary of the divinity to which the regulation pertained, or in a sanctuary of the main divinity of the city, or simply in the most prominent and frequented sanctuary of the city. A clearer, more direct link between the regulation and a divinity is implied in those cases when the divinity itself sets out the sacred regulations: Such is the ephelic dedication from the Cave of Pan at Marathon (NGSL 4), where regulations concerning the entry to the sanctuary were put in the mouth of Pan 7–8 ἀπαγορεύει ὁ θεὸς μὴ ἔσφερεν χρωμάτινον ... On other occasions, it is simply the name of the divinity at the beginning which offers a clue to the authority of the text, such as a cathartic regulation placed on the entrance to a sanctuary of Isis and Sarapis (NGSL 7) Στάλα Ἱσιος Σαράπιος. Θεός.

Divinities seem to be especially keen to invest their authority via inscriptions placed at the very doorstep of their sanctuaries. Texts placed at the entrance to a sanctuary were known in Antiquity as programmata. They were often composed in meter. Also striking is the way they are rarely – if ever – accompanied by an indication of the authority behind them. Most Greek sacred regulations do tend to spell out which individual or which institution issued them. Why do programmata omit this information? We argue that in the case of programmata,
the content and their metrical form indicate divine authority as the source of regulation.

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Notes:


3 The term is used as an alternative to misleading »leges sacrae«; for the long history of the problem, from Prött-Ziehen to Lupu, as well as for paths towards resolution, see recent full treatment by M. Carbon/V. Pirenne-Delforge, *Beyond Greek »Sacred Laws«*, *Kernos* 25, 2012, 163–182, 2012.

4 On terminology, see NGSL, 4–103.

5 E. g. NGSL 5, ll. 1–5); Attica, 2nd c. AD.

6 Cf. e. g. Iscr.Cos ED 215, Frg. Bl ll. 14ff (sale of priesthood, stele in the temenos of the concerned divinity); Iscr.Cos ED 216, Frg. B, ll. 12ff. the stele concerning the sale of the priesthood of Dionysos Thyllophoros to be set up in the sanctuary of the Twelve Gods; Iscr.Cos ED 85, ll. 8–9, the stele concerning the sale of a priesthood to be set up in the sanctuary of Antigonus Doson; Unpublished regulation (decree?), quoted by H. Engelmann, Der Kult des Ares im ionischen Metropolis, in: *Erforschung Kleinasiens, Ergänzungsbände zu TAM*, Wien 1993, 171–176, esp. 174–5, dealing with the reorganization of the cult of Ares: it should be inscribed in the sanctuary of Ares next to an already existing lex sacra; M. B. Walbank, A Lex Sacra of the State and of the Deme of Kollytos, *Hesperia* 63, 1994, 233–240; BE 1995, 226: the decrees pertaining to the city cult should be inscribed on a stele which should be set up on the Acropolis.