



## [Inscriptiones Christianae Graecae 3069 \[1\]](#)

Funerary monument invoking both God and the Tych<sup>?</sup> of the emperor

**Typology (Honorific / Funerary / etc.):** Funerary

**Original Location/Place:** Veroia, Macedonia, northern Greece

**Actual Location (Collection/Museum):** Veroia Museum (number 22)

**Date:** 3d CE to 4th CE

**Physical Characteristics:**

This invocation is found on a pink marble cippus (small pillar), with yellow and purple veins. It is eroded at both ends. The text of the first line is decorated at each end with ivy (*hedera*).

**Material:** Marble

**Measurements:** Height 70 cm; Width 42 cm; Depth 5 cm

**Language:** Greek

**Category:** Roman, Christian

**Publications:**

Kallipolitis, Vassilios G., "Une épitaphe chrétienne de Beroia," *Annuaire de l'institut de philologie et d'histoire orientales et slaves de Bruxelles* 10 (1950), p. 357-360; Feissel, Denis, *Recueil des inscriptions chrétiennes de Macédoine du IIIe au VIe siècle* (Athens: École française d'Athènes, 1983), number 59; Robert, Louis, *Hellenica: Recueil d'épigraphie de numismatique et d'antiquités grecques, vol. 13* (Paris, 1965), p. 101, number 2.

**Commentary:**

This invocatory inscription, identified as Christian, was discovered in 1947, and is rather unusual in that it entreats both God and the Fortune (????, *tych?*) of the Roman emperor. Such entreaty formulae in the accusative followed by ???/???? (*soi/humin*; "you" in the singular and plural respectively) are found in numerous other inscriptions (see Denis Feissel, "Notes d'épigraphie chrétienne," p. 464-465, who notes that there are similar parallels to this inscription in papyri from the sixth century CE, but this is much later than our inscription). The precise purpose of the inscription is unclear, but it is thought by most scholars who have worked on it to be funerary (see Vassilios Kallipolitis, "Une épitaphe chrétienne"), although it has been argued that it might be intended as a protective invocation for some sort of building or monument (see Louis Robert, *Hellenica*, p. 101). Regardless, imploring the Tych<sup>?</sup> of the emperor and "almighty God" indicates here that the individual who erected it placed, or at least wished to be perceived as such, a degree of faith in the protective ability of both God and the emperor. In Greek culture the Tych<sup>?</sup> acted as the tutelary deity of a city (presiding over its fortune and prosperity), and indeed we still see this represented on coins from the East in the second and third centuries CE. However, Tych<sup>?</sup>, or Fortune, gradually also became strongly associated with the emperor, her prosperity being connected not only with the good fortune brought to the empire during his reign, but also with the good fortune of the emperor himself. The Tych<sup>?</sup> of the emperor was not too dissimilar to his Genius in this sense. There are numerous examples of this message being forwarded on coins.

The emperor is also described in this inscription as invincible, unconquerable (????????, *anik?tos*; *invictus* in Latin), reflecting the notion of the Roman emperor as possessing of a divine ability to ensure Roman victory (for instance, see Paul Stephenson, *Constantine*, chap. 3; the appellation of *invictus* was associated with the emperor much earlier than the time of this inscription, however, and this concept was forwarded to the people on coinage: see Erika Manders, *Coining Images of Power*, p. 86, who discusses this in relations to Septimius Severus, Caracalla, Elagabalus, and others). Indeed, if this inscription is dated to after Constantine's conversion to Christianity, then it shows us the understanding in an empire where Christianity was now legal, of the power of both God and the emperor working in harmony with one another. Moreover, it could be argued that this inscription fits well within the context of the religious environment of the Roman empire after Constantine's conversion. Constantine maintained his links with Roman religion even after adopting Christianity, and in his coinage, architecture, and portraiture it seems that there is an intentional ambiguity when it comes to the way allegiance to God and/or pagan gods (notably Sol Invictus) is suggested (for more detailed discussion of this issue, see the commentaries on the Colossus of Constantine, the Arch of Constantine, and the *Life of Constantine* I.15). Indeed, a fourth century sardonyx carving from Rome depicts Constantine being crowned by the Tych<sup>?</sup> of Constantinople, the



city which he had established as the new capital of the Roman empire in 330 CE. The Tych<sup>?</sup> of Constantinople also appears on silver medallions commemorating Constantine's inauguration day. Bissera Pentcheva also notes how Constantine integrated the Tych<sup>?</sup> of Constantinople (known as Anthousa) into the imperial cult, carrying a wooden statue of her during the annual celebration of Constantinople's founding day, while a gold solidus from Constantine's reign features both Victoria and the Tych<sup>?</sup> of Heraklea, the former crowning the emperor who holds a globe, and the latter presenting him with gifts for his military victory as he sits on the military insignia of his defeated enemies (*Icons and Power*, p. 16-17). We can see, then, that Constantine, after his conversion to Christianity, still utilised the symbolism of Tych<sup>?</sup> (and other deities such as Victoria) in imperial propaganda, which portrayed them as supporting his legitimacy as emperor and military power. Our inscription appears to refer to Tych<sup>?</sup> more in the sense of the emperor's genius than the patron deity of a city. However, the implication of his divine power is certainly present, with his protective ability being invoked alongside that of God's. Perhaps the language of this inscription, then, testifies to a context post Constantine's conversion, where the emperor's connections to the divine were highlighted, yet often ambiguous, and both Roman religion and Christianity were integrated within imperial propaganda.

Keywords in the original language:

- [????????????](#) [2]
- [????](#) [3]
- [????](#) [4]
- [????](#) [5]
- [????????](#) [6]
- [????????](#) [7]

Thematic keywords:

- [Roman emperor](#) [8]
- [Tychè](#) [9]
- [Fortune](#) [10]
- [invincibility](#) [11]
- [divine protection](#) [12]
- [invocation](#) [13]
- [Roman power](#) [14]

**Bibliographical references:** Feissel, Denis, [Recueil des inscriptions chrétiennes de Macédoine du IIIe au VIe siècle](#) [15] (Athens: École française d'Athènes, 1983)

Feissel, Denis, "Notes d'épigraphie chrétienne (IV). XI. Malédiction funéraires en Attique" [16], *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique* 104 (1980) : 459-475

Kallipolitis, Vassilios G., "Une épitaphe chrétienne de Beroia" [17], *Annuaire de l'institut de philologie et d'histoire orientales et slaves de Bruxelles* 10 (1950) : 357-360

Robert, Louis, [Hellenica: Recueil d'épigraphie de numismatique et d'antiquités grecques, vol. 13](#) [18] (Paris, 1965)

Stephenson, Paul, [Constantine: Roman Emperor, Christian Victor](#) [19] (New York: Overlook, 2009)

Pentcheva, Bissera V., [Icons and Power: The Mother of God in Byzantium](#) [20] (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006)

Manders, Erika, [Coining Images of Power: Patterns in the Representation of Roman Emperors on Imperial Coinage, A.D. 193-284](#) [21] (Leiden - New York: Brill, 2012)

Realized by:

[Kimberley Fowler](#) [22]



**Source URL:** <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/inscriptiones-christianae-graecae-3069>

### Links

- [1] <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/inscriptiones-christianae-graecae-3069>
- [2] <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/keywords/%CF%80%CE%B1%CE%BD%CF%84%CE%BF%CE%BA%CF%81%CE%AC%CF%84%CF%89%CF%81>
- [3] <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/keywords/%CF%84%CF%8D%CF%87%CE%B7>
- [4] <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/keywords/%E1%BC%85%CE%B3%CE%B9%CE%BF%CF%82>
- [5] <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/keywords/%CE%B8%CE%B5%CF%8C%CF%82>
- [6] <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/keywords/%CE%B2%CE%B1%CF%83%CE%B9%CE%BB%CE%B5%CF%8D%CF%82>
- [7] <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/keywords/%E1%BC%80%CE%BD%CE%AF%CE%BA%CE%B7%CF%84%CE%BF%CF%82>
- [8] <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/thematic-keywords/roman-emperor>
- [9] <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/thematic-keywords/tych%C3%A8>
- [10] <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/thematic-keywords/fortune>
- [11] <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/thematic-keywords/invincibility>
- [12] <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/thematic-keywords/divine-protection>
- [13] <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/thematic-keywords/invocation>
- [14] <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/thematic-keywords/roman-power>
- [15] <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/recueil-des-inscriptions-chr%C3%A9tiennes-de-mac%C3%A9doine-du-iiiè-au-vie-si%C3%A8cle>
- [16] <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/%E2%80%9Cnotes-d%E2%80%99%C3%A9pigraphie-chr%C3%A9tienne-iv-xi-mal%C3%A9dictions-fun%C3%A9raires-en-attique%E2%80%9D>
- [17] <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/%E2%80%9Cune-%C3%A9pitaphe-chr%C3%A9tienne-de-beroa%E2%80%9D>
- [18] <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/hellenica-recueil-d%E2%80%99%C3%A9pigraphie-de-numismatique-et-d%E2%80%99antiquit%C3%A9s-grecques-vol-13>
- [19] <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/constantine-roman-emperor-christian-victor>
- [20] <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/icons-and-power-mother-god-byzantium>
- [21] <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/coining-images-power-patterns-representation-roman-emperors-imperial-coinage-ad-193-284>
- [22] <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/erc-team/kimberley-fowler>