

## Paramone

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*Paramone* is a contractual obligation that binds someone to remain (*paramenein*) with another for whom he works. The most common form is found in various epigraphical documents of MANUMISSION from the second half of the third century BCE: it is well known, especially, from the rich corpus of Delphic manumissions from the second century BCE, but is attested also in inscriptions from many other places, such as Beroia, Chaeronea, Orchomenos (where, as in the other Boiotian manumissions, the freedman has to wait for the end of *paramone* to become *hiaros* of a deity), and Kalymna (where *paramone* is a regular condition of manumission). In addition, a reference to a *paramone* provision occurs in the report of Theophrastus' testamentary manumissions by Diogenes Laertios (5.2.55).

*Paramone* is usually a clause that provides that the freedman must remain with his former owner (or with a relative of his) and work for him for a certain period of time or, more often, until the beneficiary's death (and sometimes the freedman has to take care of funeral rites too); the freedman can be released from this obligation with the *apolyxis*, if he pays another sum of money in addition to the money paid for the manumission or if he provides a substitute (a slave or a child) to replace him. The significance and the effect of this type of *paramone* have been variously interpreted by modern scholars. Undoubtedly *paramone* is a strong restriction of a freedman's freedom (he can even be struck or chained if he does not fulfill his duties), but it seems sufficiently

clear at the same time that this person is legally free and not a slave, so it is not possible to see in this provision a deferred manumission. From the epigraphical documents we deduce that the freedman enjoys all the guarantees he receives at manumission from that moment on (he may not, for example, be sold or seized), and, unlike the slave, has patrimonial power and legal status. In case of contestation it is in fact possible to refer to an arbitrator chosen by mutual consent.

From papyri from Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt and from Dura-Europos, in Mesopotamia, we know other forms of *paramone*, which, in these cases, always concern people of free status. The obligation to remain is attested not only in some testamentary manumissions, but also in sureties, in apprentice and service contracts, and in contracts that bind a debtor to work to pay off interest on a loan or a capital sum (these last are just called *paramonai* or *homologiai paramones*). In Ptolemaic Egypt yet another form of *paramone* is also attested, a judicial obligation "to remain" imposed on those waiting for a court to convene for an appeal.

### REFERENCES AND SUGGESTED READINGS

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