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FUNERARY MONUMENTS OF LATE ROMAN AND EARLY CHRISTIAN PERIOD FROM NISYROS*

Στην αγαπημένη μας φίλη και συνάδελφο
Αγγελική Μητσάνη,
μνήμης χάριν

INTRODUCTION - DESCRIPTION OF THE MATERIAL

The history of the island of Nisyros in the late Roman period is barely known, since it is merely another pebble, like all the Dodecanese, in the vast mosaic of the Roman Empire. At the end of the 2nd cent. A.D., the Pax Romana had secured safe sea transport and life on the islands ran peacefully, without serious problems. Nisyros is absent from the literary sources of the period, which means that no important earthquake, as in Rhodes, nor any epidemic disease troubled the island¹.

Our main source of information on this period consists of a group of funerary reliefs, some inscribed, either recovered in the Italian excavations or, mainly, handed over by the Nisyrians. The provenance of the majority of them are the areas of Ai-Yiannis and Kampi, where the archaic and classical necropoleis of the island spread². These reliefs – 50 in total –, products of a local workshop, are characterised by the primitive rendering of the human figure. The deceased and his relatives are depicted fully-dressed, strictly frontal, standing in a row, the right hand on the chest and the left by the side. In some reliefs the children stand on stools. The sculptured scene is set inside a rectangular or arched frame. The few inscriptions mention the name of the deceased, without patronymic or demotic – with one exception – and the greeting phrase ΧΡΗΣΤΕ ΧΑΙΠΕ. The reliefs found in the Italian excavations were first published in Clara Rhodos VI-VII, but in the last fifty years their number has increased, since many were handed over by the inhabitants to the Archeological Service. They were dated by the Italian excavators according to their inscriptions, at the transition between the 2nd and 3rd cent. A.D. Our aim is a more precise dating, using the information extracted from the study of the accompanying inscriptions in association with stylistic analysis.

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¹ The volcanic island of Nisyros belongs to the Dodecanese, a group of islands in the South Eastern Aegean, facing the western coast of Asia Minor. *RE* XVII, 1, 1936, col. 761-767, s.v. 'Νίσυρος' (R. Herbst). About archaeological research on the island, see *JACOPI* 1932/3, 469-552. ZERVOUDAKI 1970, 518. FILIMONOS-TSOPOTOU 1980, 62-86.

² *JACOPI* 1932/3, fig. 91, 85, 89, 90, 87, 88.

HISTORY OF NISYROS IN THE LATE ROMAN TIMES

Little is known about Nisyros in the first centuries of the Christian era. From the few rescue excavations it is obvious, that in Roman times the settlement expanded outside Palaiokastro, the walled ancient citadel situated on the hill above Mandraki, the modern settlement of the island. Rescue excavation near Limnes – an area which according to Ross was initially a marsh and in Antiquity was covered by the sea³ – unearthed a water tank and rooms with stucco floors, dating from the 3rd-4th cent. A.D.⁴ These rooms were found outside the retaining walls of black volcanic stone preserved near the area of Ayios Savvas in Mandraki, and possibly associated to the ancient port⁵. That means that the silting of the harbour must have then already been in progress, followed by the spread of habitation there⁶. The inhabitants continued to be buried in the cemeteries of Ai-Yannis and Kampi, in use since the Archaic period. The Italian excavations there revealed a slab-covered tomb with ossuaries and grave goods dated from the Hellenistic to the Late Roman period (2nd-3rd cent. A.D.)⁷. From a certain time onwards, as it is common almost everywhere, the area around or inside the churches is used for burials⁸. Inside Palaiokastro architectural remains (column capitals) and the foundations of an Early Christian basilica are preserved⁹. Besides Palaiokastro, the remains of two more basilicas are preserved in the modern town of Mandraki. At Kipoi, in the modern church of Ayios Konstantinos, the apse of a basilica with the steps of the sythronon and part of a mosaic floor can be seen; while in this church, as also in the neighbouring church of Ayios Michael, architectural elements of the basilica are incorporated in the masonry. In the modern cemetery, within the settlement, parts of another basilica are preserved with a mosaic floor. On top of the basilica were raised the later churches of Ayios Antonios and Nicolaos. It is therefore evident that, irrespective of whether these basilicas were contemporaries – something hard to say with certainty, since no excavation has taken place –, the Late Roman-Early Christian settlement spread over a wide area, from the castle to its slope and down to the port, and occupied a large part of the modern town; its boundaries have yet to be traced. At Pali, the settlement nearest to Mandraki, besides the Early Christian basilica of Ayios Fokas, part of the Late Roman baths has been preserved, and houses of the same period have been excavated throughout the area¹⁰.

DESCRIPTION OF THE MATERIAL

The Nisyrian reliefs are carved on rectangular or almost square blocks of marble, narrowing slightly upwards. There are narrow margins at the sides with no other elaboration. The top is either flat or arched, and sometimes decorated with a cavetto moulding. The relief cat. n° 49 from Telos has a gabled top. The stelai cat. nn° 38, 39, 41 are carved on rectangular blocks of marble with horizontal moulding, but the figures are set within an arch niche¹¹, as in the altars cat. nn° 37 and 34. The frame under the figures is wider to fit the inscription, but only sixteen stelai are inscribed. The stelai cat. nn° 8 and 20 are carved on columns. The deceased is depicted alone in twelve reliefs, couples are depicted in ten reliefs, there are six reliefs with three figures, one stele with four figures, while on the altar cat. n° 35 seven figures are displayed, one of which is a child. The male figure is usually on the spectator's left, according to Greek practice. When the female figure is on the left side, as it happens here in three cases – cat. nn° 23, 10, 28 – the figures are thought to represent mother and son¹². Children with their parents appear on four reliefs. On three of them, the child

³ ROSS 1843, 67-81.

⁴ PALAIOLOGOU 1995, 807. BAIRAMI 1996, 697.

⁵ See FILIMONOS 1980, 62.

⁶ FILIMONOS 1980, 60 and FILIMONOS 1993, 140.

⁷ JACOPI 1932/3, 528-534.

⁸ See among others, MARKI 2002, 163-176.

⁹ LAZARIDIS 1955, 238-240.

¹⁰ The thermai of Nisyros are mentioned by STR. X, 5, § 16, 488: “Ἐχει δὲ καὶ πόλιν ὁμώνυμον καὶ λιμένα καὶ θερμὰ καὶ Ποσειδῶνος ἱερὸν”, PANTELIDIS 1891, 488-490. FILIMONOS 1987, 652-653. PALAIOLOGOU 1997, 1115-1116.

¹¹ For a similar typology in the funerary reliefs of Macedonia, cf. RIZAKIS - TSOURATSOGLU 1993, 1290-1291.

¹² For all these, see MÜHSAM 1952/3, 81-90, esp. 65.

stands on a stool, according to the practice of the period. Sozousa also stands on a low stool, on stele cat. n° 38¹³. Only on one stele, the one from Telos, the parents are depicted as portrait-busts on the upper part of the relief, as in numerous similar reliefs from Asia Minor¹⁴.

The homogeneity of the Nisyrian group is also remarkable. No funerary banquets or funerary busts, or seated figures occur, all common in the reliefs of other areas in the same style. The repertory is limited to the standing frontal figures with one hand on the chest, with no connecting element, such as a dexiosis-motive. The folds of the clothes, despite minor differences, are rendered by few curving incisions.¹⁵ The arrangement of the figures side by side all of equal height- with exceptions, since sometimes females and children are shorter-constitute the main features. Female figures have their heads uncovered, making their identification even more difficult¹⁶, although sometimes they are shorter than males.

As already cited the style of the reliefs is schematic and linear. The figures display the indifference for the normal proportions and realistic rendering of the body, typical of this late period. It is even hard to distinguish male from female figures, since the facial features are worn and the rest of the bodies are all alike. The dress, angular and stiff, is decorated with a few incised curving lines. The hands and feet are abnormally large in relation to the rest of the body. The face is dominated by the large, wide-open, almost popping eyes and the unnatural hairstyle, like a wig, enframes the face and is decorated by engraved lines. These reliefs continue the hellenistic tradition, by adopting the palliatus male figure and a relevant type (palliatia) for the female as the representation of the honest and upright citizen “καλού καγαθού” of a society characterised by dignity and reason. Nevertheless, at the same time they mark the last stage of its evolution: a dissolution of the classical types in the stylized rendering of the figure and the adoption of a schematized model, austere and rigid, which will become prevalent in the following years. This provincial style coexists with the survival of classical proportions, probably indicating not only the technical ability of the sculptors, but also their cultural background, and their degree of familiarity with the classical Greek forms¹⁷. It is indicative that the nearest parallels of this style are encountered in Asia Minor, in the Phrygian stelai of 2nd-3rd cent. A.D. – i.e. they come from a district where the Greek element was a minority among the native population¹⁸.

Because of this simplicity, any classification is rather pointless; but some distinctions are evident and they are worth mentioning briefly:

A. In stelai cat. nn° 2, 5, 17, 21, 24 and altar cat. n° 35, the figures wear a mantle with few sparse folds, which widens downwards, so that they look bellshaped. The hands and feet are too large, while the double edge of the garment on the left hand of the figures is typical. Reliefs cat. n° 13 and cat. n° 15 share most of the above features, but their dimensions are too small: they are almost square. On altar cat no 35 the hairstyle of the figures is exceptional for Nisyros. The figures of stelai cat. nn° 39, 40 have similar hands and feet as well as the double edge of the garment on the left hand, but the rendering of the mantle is different.

B. Reliefs cat. nn° 3, 14, 25, 46 are distinctive because of the particularly thick folds of the cloak.

C. On stelai cat. nn° 38, 40, 41 the mantle of the figures is rendered with a few curving oblique folds, while the chiton is discernible underneath, also denoted by vertical lines. The figures raise either the right or the left hand to the chest. The figures on relief cat. n° 38 have very small hands

¹³ These multfigured compositions are rather rare in Asia Minor, where they usually figure couples or a couple with child, cf. the funerary reliefs from the Museum of Ikonium, McLEAN 2002, 53, n° 156, fig. 173: three adults and three children, 56, n° 171, fig. 193, 194: four women, 57, n° 173, fig. 197: eight adults, 42, n° 117, fig. 124, 56-57, n° 171, fig. 193, 57, n° 173 fig. 197. DREW-BEAR 1999, 391-401, fig. 5, a stele with five frontal figures.

¹⁴ Cf. selectively, BUCKLER - CALDER - COX 1925, 141-175, esp. 171-172, fig. XXIV n° 163,164. PFUHL - MÖBIUS 1977a, n° 356 also from Kütahya.

¹⁵ There is no indication whatsoever of the occupation or profession of the deceased or any accompanying object, a com-

mon practice in stelae of the same period in Minor Asia and particularly Phrygia, see KOCH 1988, 97-98.

¹⁶ For similar features on Phrygian reliefs, cf. KOCH 1990, 115-132.

¹⁷ Cf. the funerary reliefs of this late period in Athens, MÜHSAM 1952/3, 81-90. VON MOOCK 1998.

¹⁸ For the Phrygian stelai, cf. PFUHL - MÖBIUS 1977a, n° 456, 464, 478, 479, 580-589, 596, 589. GIBSON 1978a, 1-32. GIBSON 1978b. GIBSON 1980, 59-85. COX - CAMERON - CULLEN 1993, n° 47, 101, 106, 107, 115, 137, 161, 162, 163, 190, 202, 205, 225, 238, 240, 242, 244, 276, 277, 278, 286, 287, fig. 4, 5. FIRATLI 1964, n° 156 fig. XXXIX. DREW-BEAR 1999, 391-401, fig. 5.

and feet, like the figures of relief cat. n° 32, on which the rendering of the folds is similar to relief cat. n° 40.

D. Altar cat. n° 37 is stylistically distinct compared to the rest of the reliefs. Differences include the hard helmet-like hairstyle, the particularly large eyes, the rigid folds of the mantle, the group of three folds at the edge of the mantle and the feet, which are not shown from the ankles like the others, but with the soles shown vertical.

E. Reliefs cat. nn° 42, 43, 16, perhaps should be placed at the head of the list since the facial features and the rendering of the clothes are naturalistic¹⁹.

F. The figures of relief cat. n°23 have unusually rendered hands and Deionysia has the right hand folded under the chest instead of keeping it at the side.

G. On relief cat. n° 26 the second figure from the left has the left hand on the belly. That must be due to the clumsiness of the artisan.

It is impossible to make similar observations for the rest of the reliefs since erosion has effaced the main stylistic features. Nevertheless, on relief cat. n° 4 the grace and plasticity of the figures are obvious, while the subtle raising of the mantle in an attempt to differentiate between the relaxed and supporting leg, betrays the artistic sensitivity of the craftsman. In relief cat. n° 11 the father holds tenderly the child by the hand, while on the stele cat. n° 27 the child raises its hand to the mother.

A chronological estimation is possible only for group E, since no evolution of any kind is observable in the rest of the stelai – although we may assume that the finest groups A and C are perhaps early, followed by altar cat. n° 37 – minor differences in the rendering of clothes and hairstyle may be due to the different hands active in the same, family (?) workshop.

Another feature of the Nisyrian reliefs is that they are carved on re-used stone. Nisyros is a volcanic island, lacking stone suitable for sculpture²⁰. There are few Hellenistic and Roman sculptures on Nisyros, carved in imported marble. The most impressive example of reusal is relief cat. n° 26, carved on the back of a classical relief of the 5th cent. B.C. The reliefs cat. nn° 34, 35, 37 are carved on cylindrical and rectangular Hellenistic altars, relief cat. n° 10 on the lid of a cinerary casket, and relief cat. n° 49 has used a Hellenistic stele with gabled top. Relief cat. n° 40 is carved on an architectural rectangular element, whose decorative rectilinear moulding is preserved at the side. The stele cat. n° 23, and possibly cat. nn° 7 and 30 are reused Hellenistic stelai. Relief cat. n° 8 has used an unfluted colonnette and the inscription is awkwardly pushed to the edge of the convex moulding. On the base of the relief cat. n° 41 an earlier inscription is cut. The marble of most reliefs is very worn due to exposure to the volcanic atmosphere of Nisyros, as many of them were incorporated in modern retaining walls. Best-preserved are the finds of the Italian excavations from the necropolis of Ai-Yiannis.

According to the limited data given by the Italian excavators²¹ the funerary reliefs were found among the ruins of the Byzantine church of Ayios Ioannis, about one hundred meters from the hill of Palaiokastros; the site is named after the church. No further information about the circumstances of the excavation is given – whether they were recovered from some kind of a deposit as discarded material or if – rather improbable – they were found *in situ*, over Late Roman burials. In the latter case, the scanty skeletal remains, simple inhumations without funerary gifts, may have escaped the attention of the Italian excavators. Possibly the discarded bones found in a tomb together with funerary gifts of various periods²², indicate a clearing of the site at a late period, possibly during the foundation of the church, whose remains are preserved on the Konstas property²³, very close to the sports ground of Mandraki, within the ancient necropolis. The stelai, found by farmers during ploughing,

¹⁹ On the stele cat. n° 16 the facial features are naturalistically rendered and the hairstyle is “melonenfrisur” – for a similar example, cf. VON MOOCK 1998, n° 196. On the other three reliefs the figures wear chiton and himation, with the folds of the two garments clearly distinct and conforming to the typology of classical models.

²⁰ The characteristic dark volcanic stone, was used for the construction of the ancient fortification wall and revetments, as the excavations in the urban grid of the ancient city have shown, as well as for millstones. Quarries for this stone are behind Palaiokastros.

²¹ JACOPI 1932/3, 471- 473 and 541-550.

²² JACOPI 1932/3, 528-534.

²³ The ruined single-aisled church, of medium size, whose apse is preserved up to the springing of the vault, preserved some traces of frescoes until the '70s. In the apse two brick zones are visible in the masonry. It should also be mentioned that near the Mandraki football field, another church is preserved, dedicated to Ayios Ioannis: it is a vault cut in the natural bedrock, without frescoes. Research in the surrounding area has uncovered part of the classical and hellenistic necropolis, cf. FILIMONOS-TSOPOTOU 1980.

were probably incorporated in modern retaining walls by them. The Italian archaeologists would then have discovered the stelai while preparing the site for excavation. The Early Christian monuments above mentioned, together with the large number of the funerary reliefs, indicate a prosperous society in the period from the 2nd-3rd cent. A.D. onwards. It is worth mentioning that the Late Roman reliefs far outnumber the Hellenistic and Early Roman ones on the island, a fact that raises questions about this sudden trend which lasted for barely a century and possibly even less, and disappeared equally suddenly.

SIMILAR RELIEFS FROM GREECE AND ASIA MINOR

It is also interesting that in the same period similar monuments are very rare in the rest of the Dodecanese. A cylindrical altar has been found in Rhodes with a male figure within an arched frame with the inscription: ΕΠΑΦΡΟΔΕΙΤΟΣ ΤΟΝ ΘΡΕΠΤΟΝ/ ΖΩΣΙΜΟΝ ΜΝΗ[ΜΗΣ Χ]ΑΡΙΝ²⁴. The stelai of Kallityche and Zoeilos, also from Rhodes, are different from the Nisyrian reliefs both typologically and stylistically, thus emphasizing the homogeneity of the Nisyrian workshop²⁵. We do not know of any similar monuments from Kos, since in that period gladiator reliefs are commoner there, whereas in Rhodos such reliefs are absent²⁶. On Telos, another island of the Dodecanese, near Nisyros, in the church of Ayia Anastasia on the bay of Ayios Antonios, where the ancient cemeteries of the island lie, a funerary relief with scenes in two tiers is preserved (cat. n° 49). In the upper part two portrait- busts have been carved, while in the lower and larger part a standing male figure. The surface is eroded to such an extent, that it does not permit identification of the sex of the subjects, nor a stylistic analysis, since only the outlines are preserved²⁷. No similar funerary reliefs have been found in the rest of the Dodecanese.

Few examples are preserved from the rest of Greece. Two reliefs from the islands of Lesbos and Psara²⁸, of the same period and a relief from Florina, with frontal standing figures are comparable with the Nisyrian group²⁹. In the Cyclades two reliefs have been preserved from the islands of Paros and Thera, showing a primitive fully dressed male figure³⁰. In the displays of the Benaki Museum a relief³¹ with three standing frontal figures with arms over each other's shoulders, of unknown provenance, recalls the facial features of the Nisyrian figures, while different in attitude. In the Veroia Museum a group of reliefs with frontal standing figures is of particular interest; some of them can be compared with the Nisyrian group³². Nevertheless, as a rule, in Northern Greece the funerary reliefs with portrait busts are more common, and derive from the Roman funerary reliefs of the late Republican era³³. In Southern Greece, the Tripolis Museum (Peloponnese) has a small group of

²⁴ JACOPI 1932/3, 94-95, fig. 62. PFUHL - MÖBIUS 1977a, n° 244, from the necropolis of Makry Steno in the town of Rhodes. For the meaning of the word "threptos", a free man exposed by his parents and raised as a slave by another family, a common occurrence in Asia Minor and elsewhere, see NANI 1943/4, 45-84. WESTERMANN 1955, 85-86, where examples from Bithynia, Egypt, Africa are given. Pliny (SHERWIN-WHITE 1966, 65D, X, 65, 66) explains as "threptos" a freeborn child, who does not lose its social status by the fact that it was abandoned and later raised up as a slave. In CAMERON 1939, 27-62, 37, n° 20, the term is explained as possible adoption of a son as a future son in law. Also, see RITTI - SIMSEK - YILDIZ 2000, 59-62. GOUNAROPOULOU - HATZOPOULOU 1998, 259.

²⁵ For the Kallityche relief from Rhodes, see IG XII, 1, n° 561. JACOPI 1932, 167-255, esp. 233, n° 130. PFUHL - MÖBIUS 1977a, 135, n° 401 (they wrongly quote it as of unknown provenance, possibly from Nisyros, according to the type). The stele of Kallityche shows a female figure with arms at the sides, clad in tunic and himation according to the classical conventions. Its rough workmanship places the relief among the stelai of the transitional period. For the stele of Zoeilos, see PFUHL - MÖBIUS 1977a, n° 352. A bearded man himation-clad, holds by the hand a child placed on a plinth. The right hand of

the man is on the chest.

²⁶ PFUHL - MÖBIUS 1977b, n° 1233, 1234. PATTON - HICKS 1891, n° 138-141.

²⁷ The singularity of the Telos find, although it was found in a church in the necropolis area, has made us cautious about its origin. In our opinion transportation from neighbouring Nisyros cannot be excluded, at an unspecified moment.

²⁸ PFUHL - MÖBIUS 1977a, n° 348, 350.

²⁹ LAGOGIANNI-GEORGAKARAKOS 1998, 34, n° 18, fig. 5.

³⁰ COUILLOUD 1974, 397-498, n° 43, 446, fig. 44. FEISSEL 1977, 211, n° 18, fig. 3. ORLANDOS 1960, fig. Z', n° 20ε (3rd-4th cent. A.D.).

³¹ CHOREMI 2004, 313-314, n° 91.

³² ADAM-VELENI 2002. GOUNAROPOULOU - HATZOPOULOU 1998, n° 217, 219, 220, 224, 226, 251 (funerary banquet), 283, 301, 310, 312, 336, 350, 356, 371, 412, 490, 511, 512. RIZAKIS - TSOURATSOGLU, 1985, n° 61, 63, 64. RIZAKIS - TSOURATSOGLU 1993, 1285-1300, especially 1290-1295.

³³ LAGOGIANNI-GEORGAKARAKOS 1998, 18. For stelai of Macedonia, cf. ALEXANDRESCU-VIANU 1975, 183-200. As the author reports, full figures have been carved on the reliefs of Thessaloniki and Veroia (type B) *supra*, 189-192.

funerary reliefs with primitive figures, dated from the period of the Tetrarchy³⁴. Standing figures are closer to the Greek tradition and are commoner in the funerary stelai of Asia Minor (Phrygia, Pisidia, Isauria, Lykia). The comparison of the reliefs listed above to the Nisyrian group, as we shall see shortly, proves a stylistic and typological uniformity and an attempt to imitate specific prototypes, and therefore should not be considered as a simple expression of the popular art of the lower classes³⁵. They belong to a general artistic current of schematization and simplification of “official” art, partly due to the cultural and social background of clients and partly to the degradation of the “official” art, a phenomenon prevalent in Late Antiquity. Besides, the dating of the Nisyrian group to Late Antiquity is certain, based on the preserved inscriptions.

The sudden popularity of funerary reliefs in Nisyros in this period can only be compared to the group of Phrygian stelai, in the hinterland of Asia Minor across the straits, when in the 2nd cent. A.D. rural prosperity and quarries of good quality stone contributed to the production of a large number of funerary reliefs. The Nisyrian reliefs are rough, without architectural frame or symbols denoting the professional occupation of the deceased. Comparisons are limited to the frontality and arrangement of the figures, the rendering of garment folds, the large head with protruding eyes, the rendering of hands and feet. It should also be taken into consideration that the Nisyrian figures appear coarser than the Phrygian ones due to the extensive erosion of the surface, so that the engraved folds or the rendering of the hairstyle are effaced. In contrast the Nisyrian stelai found in the Italian excavations and exhibited in the Museum of Rhodes, preserve stylistic features more than the others and permit better comparison.

More particularly, stelai of “barbarian art” or “rough workmanship” as they are usually described, are common in Asia Minor. Of particular interest is the group of the Phrygian reliefs from Altıntaşköy (ancient Soa) and Kütahya (ancient Cotiaëum). Especially the former constitute a well dated group with a recognizable stylistic evolution, based on the inscribed dates³⁶. The features they share with the Nisyrian stelai are mainly typological: standing frontal figures with the right hand on the chest, children usually on a stool, arched niche as a frame, sometimes portrait-busts on the upper part of the stele. Stylistically, we find again in these reliefs the curvilinear folds of the Nisyrian garments, similar hairstyles, large hands and feet, intense eyes. The group belongs to the production of funerary reliefs from the valley of Upper Timbris (modern Porsuk Cay), which were presented as a whole in the last volume of the series *MAMA*. Another, less artistic, group of reliefs in Konya Museum (ancient Ikonium)³⁷, represents the numerous artisans active during that period throughout Phrygia³⁸. The stele from Constantinople³⁹ and Kütahya⁴⁰ are comparable to the Nisyrian reliefs cat. nn° 3 and 14, with the thick curving incised folds. On the standing figure of the Malcove collection⁴¹ we find again the sparse curving folds of the mantles of the majority of the Nisyrian reliefs (mainly cat. nn° 38-40), as well as the position of the disproportionate hands and feet and protruding eyes⁴². In Pisidia, in the same period, another workshop was producing similar reliefs, which show shepherds, standing or seated⁴³. Although it is only natural that Nisyros was stylistically influenced by Asia Minor and not by the Greek mainland or islands, it is nevertheless remarkable that the par-

³⁴ DATSOULI-STAVRIDIS 1997, 28-32, n° 2325, 1612, 2981, 1224, fig. 9-12, 52-54, n° 1636, 1290, 1619, fig. 33-35. Also in the Sparta museum, a stele of a full figure in himation of the 2nd cent. A.D. is preserved, see PAPAETHIMIOU 1993, 242 fig. 7.

³⁵ For the so called “popular art”, its manifestations and its differentiation from the provincial art, see STROCKA 1985, 286-292. The popular art of slaves and lower classes coexists with official art from the classical period to late antiquity. Provincial art is always associated to the art of a specific centre, whose conventions it imitates more or less. See also PAPAETHIMIOU 1992, 69-72, where the phenomenon of primitive art, “primitiven reliefs”, is discussed and the reliefs from all over the Roman Empire are compiled.

³⁶ See LOCHMAN 1990, 453-507.

³⁷ McLEAN 2002, n° 117, 134-137, 149, 140, 146, 162, 164-165, 167, 170-174. Cf. also the inscribed reliefs with similar features from Filomelion (today Akşehir), JONNES 2002, 5, n°

6, 6, n° 7, 13, n° 23, 93, n° 410.

³⁸ For the Phrygian reliefs, see GIBSON 1978. For artistic evaluation of the Phrygian workshops and their relations to Hellenistic models, see KOCH 1990, 131-132. The unusual hairstyle of the figures on the Nisyrian relief cat. n° 37 is comparable to a figure of the stele from Konya Museum, see McLEAN 2002, n° 137, fig. 151.

³⁹ FIRATLI 1964, n° 156. Cf. also, MENDEL 1914, III, n° 913 (2206), 128-129, n° 918 (2208), 133-134 (3rd cent. A.D.), of unknown provenance, n° 921 (478), 136-137 (3rd cent. A.D.), probably from Thessaloniki.

⁴⁰ BUCKLER - CALDER - COX 1925, n° 141a, fig. XX.

⁴¹ WAELKENS 1985, 21-25, especially n° 18.

⁴² COX - CAMERON - CULLEN 1993, n° 161, 190, 205, 225.

⁴³ BORCHHARDT - NEUMANN - SCHULZ 1975, 68-72. BRUXHE - GIBSON 1982, 130-169. For a figure with a small dog or goat, cf. HALL 1968, 57-92, fig. III, a.

allels are found in the eastern hinterland and not on the coast, where the Greek classical tradition is stronger. The schematization, flat figures and their arrangement in a row, and the lack of normal proportions are, of course, widespread after the middle of the 2nd century⁴⁴. Nevertheless, in the Nisyrian as in the Anatolian reliefs, the existence of a different model is evident- a model that rejects all classical forms in favour of the new style. In the Phrygian reliefs the decorative element is dominant, while in the Nisyrian stelai the simple figures retain only basic features, with no attempt to impress.

To sum up, we observe that in the Roman Empire, thriving of marble sculpture after the middle of the 2nd cent. until the middle of the 3rd, is probably associated with the custom of burial in relief sarkophagi, a practice which gradually superseded cremation⁴⁵. This custom favoured the establishment of workshops with many artisans. In the meantime, in Phrygia, the famous funerary stelai decorated with a door (Türsteine, doorstones) make their appearance, together with symbols related to the professional occupation of the deceased, later in combination with portrait- busts and finally with frontal standing figures. The quarries in Phrygia (Aizanoi, modern Cavdarhisar and Soa, modern Altıntaşköy) and the major building programmes of Hadrian in the area, led to the training of many artisans who ended up carving stelai⁴⁶. The stelai were usually ready made and the artisans were itinerant, while the inscriptions were carved on order⁴⁷.

DATING OF NISYRIAN RELIEFS

As mentioned above the Nisyrian reliefs date from the last quarter of the 2nd cent. and the beginning of the 3rd cent. A.D. However some further commentary is required. The presence of the name Marcus Aurelius in the inscription cat. n° 38, probably the older of the series, points to a date before 212/3 A.D., when the *constitutio Antoniniana* was established by granting Roman citizenship to the masses. Hence the popularity of the *gentilicium* Aurelius in the Roman Empire and more particularly in Greece in the 3rd cent. AD. The deceased is referred to with his full name *Μάρκος Αυρήλιος Χρυσόγονος Κλείτωνος Βράσιος*, denoting both the patronymic and the demotic origin: the deme of Vrasion belongs to Lindos in Rhodes⁴⁸. According to the studies of Follet, Robert, Ramsay and Herrmann⁴⁹, the presence of the full name Marcus Aurelius indicates that the bearer has been granted Roman citizenship by Marcus Aurelius, Commodus or Caracalla before 212/3 A.D. After the *constitutio Antoniniana* Roman citizens adopted the name *Αυθ.* as a praenomen. It is also characteristic that his spouse Sozousa does not bear the name Aurelia⁵⁰: additional evidence in favour of an early dating of the relief. Therefore the relief in question should be dated to about 200 A.D.⁵¹ and definitely before 212 A.D.⁵² It is also a fact however that neither of the remaining reliefs mention the name Aurelius or Aurelia, while the deceased are indicated without patronymic or

⁴⁴ COUILLOU 1974, 488.

⁴⁵ TOYNBEE 1971, 39-42.

⁴⁶ LOCHMAN 1990, esp. 496. For the influence of the decorative motifs of the Zeus temple in Aizanoi, on stelai depicting doors (Türsteine), see LOCHMAN 1991, 57-82. For the marblers' workshops in Dokimeion and Synnada, with a wide range of activities and examples of marbleworking tools on funerary reliefs, see WAELEKENS 1977, 277-289, mainly 288. For the transfer of the exploitation of the quarries from the emperor to individual contractors, which led to a major increase of the funerary reliefs in the end of 2nd cent. A.D., see COX - CAMERON - CULLEN 1993, xxviii.

⁴⁷ GIBSON 1980, 43.

⁴⁸ PAPACHRISTODOULOU 1989, 69, 74, 76. The deme is placed in the area of the village of Sianna and possibly included the villages of Monolithos, Istrios and Ayios Isidoros.

⁴⁹ HERRMANN 1972, 519-530. RAMSAY 1967², 6-10. FOLLET

1976, 63-105. ROBERT 1950, 201-208, n° 204. MITCHELL 1999, 419-433.

M. Segre argued that only *Marcus Aurelii* were full citizens, see FOLLET 1976, 93, n. 1. However the full name is not absent from inscriptions dated after the *constitutio Antoniniana*. For this view, see BOURAZELIS 1989, 123-124, 136.

⁵⁰ However the use of the praenomen was never widespread in Anatolia. It is worth mentioning that in two inscriptions from Nicaea of Bithynia, as on Nisyros, the men bear the full name in contrast to the women, see JOHNSON 1984, n° 13, 15. The author considers them to be of late date, obviously meaning that they belong to the transitional period of complete abandonment of the praenomen.

⁵¹ M. Aurelius 161-180 A.D., Commodus 180-192 A.D., Caracalla 198-217 A.D.

⁵² Cf. for a similar problematic, ROBERT 1964b, 52.

demotic, a feature of this late period⁵³. The Nisyrian funerary inscriptions of Marcus Aurelius and of Aurelia Epafrionos Nisyria,⁵⁴ suggests that the island was not entirely untouched by the *constitutio Antoniniana*, but that the institution was enthusiastically adopted only by a few individuals and not by all citizens. Although a clear distinction of the Aurelii before and after the grant of Roman citizenship to the wider population remains difficult, since not even the specialists have reached an agreement, we are inclined to support the early chronology for the inscription of Chrysogonos, given the use of his full name.

The stylistic features of the reliefs are in accordance with 3rd cent. practice: disproportionate members of the body, shapeless hair and low relief⁵⁵. A chronology based on the emperors' hairstyles is practically impossible, since they are rarely preserved due to surface erosion. Wherever the hairstyle is discernible, we see that the hair is simply parted in the middle and tied back in the case of women, while men have short hair and usually a short beard⁵⁶. This male hairstyle is dominant throughout the 3rd cent., until the era of Constantine the Great⁵⁷. As a rule, the limitation of expressive means and the emphasis on the eyes and mouth in an attempt to reveal the inner world of the figure, constitute a main artistic tendency, which becomes prevalent after the middle of the 3rd cent.⁵⁸ On two relief altars, the figures wear an unusual helmet-like hairstyle, suggesting an incised rendering of curls⁵⁹. The fifth figure from the left on altar cat. n° 35 in particular has a hairstyle with wavy locks like a wig, in fashion from the time of Julia Domna (217 A.D.) and later⁶⁰. Therefore the Nisyrian stelai, artifacts of artisans rather than artists, with their flat figures, the lack of harmony, the limited expressive means, the plainness and austerity of the outlines, are fully integrated in the artistic trends of the 3rd cent., which withdraw from classicism, as the difficult conditions of the period did not allow for refinement and elegance. Unfortunately, no Nisyrian relief preserves a chronological allusion, a common feature on the stelai of other areas, which permits their certain dating. As a rule, the chronology of the funerary reliefs from other areas is taken into consideration as a terminus for the dating of the Nisyrian stelai. In Attica relief sculpture seems to have been aban-

⁵³ TATAKI 1988, 496. VON MOOCK 1998, 84. According to BRESSON 1996, 225-238, in Rhodes, its possessions and in Cos a delay – even a conscious refusal – is observed in the adoption of the name Aurelius, perhaps due to conservatism. We are in no position to explain a possible reflection of this practice in Nisyros. Refusal? Conservatism? Free men without full citizen rights? Nevertheless, the absence of the name Aurelius after 212 A.D. is also noted by Herrmann, (*supra*, n. 49, 524), as a widespread phenomenon, which weakens chronological classification. On the contemporary funerary inscriptions of Rome the indication of a single name only, in the 64% of the inscriptions, has been interpreted as an indication of an immigrant from Anatolia, a slave or a freedman, see KAJANTO 1963b, 2. The same author notes in a slightly later article that the use of a single name on funerary monuments indicates intimacy. Moreover after the *Constitutio Antoniniana* the distinctive quality of praenomen and gentilicium disappears, since everyone bore the same inherited praenomen (KAJANTO 1977, 421-430). The absence of the name Aurelius 44 years after the *Constitutio Antoniniana*, on inscriptions of Anatolia is also noted by VARINLIOGLU 1989, 17-34. A similar absence of the name Aurelius after 212 A.D. is observed by BOURAZELIS 1989, 124. Finally according to SHERWIN-WHITE 1973², 386-387, the adoption of the praenomen Aurelius after the decree, based on Syrian and Egyptian papyri, influenced mainly an upper social tier, while lower social classes (peasants), continued using single names.

⁵⁴ See *IG XII*, 3, 164. The Nisyrian inscription honouring Caracalla is also interesting, see *IG XII*, 3, n° 100. It is obviously expressing the "gratitude" of certain citizens, possibly after the granting of *Constitutio Antoniniana*. Nevertheless the study of Nisyrian inscriptions indicates that there were roman-

ized citizens during Roman rule, such as Gaius Julius Klefantos, the banker Licinnius Euporistou (see PEEK 1969, 5-65, mainly 30-31, n° 72, 74), the general Flavius Euphragoras (*IG XII*, 3, n° 97) and the above mentioned priest of Dionysos with his wife.

⁵⁵ ADAM-VELENI 2002, 118.

⁵⁶ For the dating of this male hairstyle to the second quarter of the 3rd cent. A.D., see LAGOGIANNI-GEORGAKARAKOS 1998, 20.

⁵⁷ BERGMANN 1984, 41-60. See also McCANN 1981, 623-645. BERGMANN 1977.

⁵⁸ BERGMANN 1984.

⁵⁹ Cf. MN 230 and AK 37. For a similar helmet-like hairstyle, cf. RIZAKIS - TSOURATSOGLU 1985, 72 n° 63 (middle of 3rd cent. A.D.). For a bulky fringed mass of hair, inspired by Lucius Verrus, Commodus and Faustina the younger, see ADAM-VELENI 2002, 72. The rendering of the eyes on the figures of altar cat. n° 37 is also typical- narrow, dipping down at the outer corner, comparable to the eyes on the portraits of Probus (276-282 A.D.), cf. BERGMANN 1984, 41-60 fig. 29 (Rome, Capitoline Museum). Is the roughly rendered "curly" hair of the male figure on the stele cat. n° 38, a reflection of the more naturalistic hairstyles of Marcus Aurelius, Caracalla and Macrinus? – see BERGMANN 1984, fig. 9, 15, 16.

⁶⁰ In the Altıntaş group of funerary reliefs a similar hairstyle is dated to the decade 220-230 A.D., cf. LOCHMAN 1990, 453-507, mainly 479, n° 262. For the hairstyle of Julia Mamaia, Tranquillina and Julia Domna, cf. POULSEN 1962, n° 743, 754, 724, fig. CCLXX, CCVIII. This hairstyle, in a very schematized form, is used by Fausta as well, up to 320 A.D., cf. HEINTZE 1971, 61-91, fig. 9 d (Rome, Torlonia Museum).

done after the Herulian invasion of 267 A.D.⁶¹; in Macedonia after the middle of the 3rd cent., also due to barbarian invasions⁶². In Asia Minor and particularly in Phrygia, after the middle of the 3rd cent. the relief figure is gradually superseded by the inscription and the depiction of objects. In the 4th cent., ornament is replaced by the inscription⁶³; therefore objects appear only rarely and human figures almost never. The inscription then covers the whole slab, usually escaping from the margins.

INSCRIPTIONS

The inscriptions mention only the name of the deceased with the greeting ΧΡΗΣΤΕ/ΧΡΗΣΤΗ ΧΑΙΠΕ⁶⁴, in contrast to the usual expression ΜΝΕΙΑΣ/ΜΝΗΜΗΣ ΧΑΡΙΝ of the steles originating from the areas of Asia Minor across the straits⁶⁵. Apparently there was no need of legal protection of the tomb with cautionary expressions of warning of fines, except in one case, stele cat. n° 22, which, however, seems associated to a particular custom, as will be shown presently. The lack of patronymic for the deceased does not permit the establishment of family trees and the investigation of family relations⁶⁶. Besides the Rhodian Χρυσόγονος who had been granted Roman citizenship, the rest of the names belong to the category of the new names⁶⁷ popular throughout Greece in the Roman period (“panhellenic”), such as Ζώσιμος, Ζώειλος, Πιθάνη⁶⁸. Theophoric names such as Ασκληπιάδης, Ερμής, Ερμίας, Δειονυσία, Ήλειος, are also present, as are names expressive of a wish – Καλλιτύχη, Ευτύχαιος/Ετύχος, Επαγαθώ, Επαφροδίτη, Σώζουσα – or those of Latin origin like Βιταλία. The name Αφιάς-άδος, is frequent in Asia Minor⁶⁹. The name Κόμβοσος is unknown in this form. In Minor Asia occur the forms κόμβης, κόμβος, κομβίον, κάμβιον and mean a grandchild⁷⁰. The names Ερμής, Ερμίας⁷¹ are common throughout the empire and its eastern provinces. Βιταλία, a Hellenized Latin name, is not common in the eastern provinces of the empire, in contrast to Italy⁷². The name Σαμβάτιος-ίου and its variations constitute Hellenised ver-

⁶¹ As it has been observed, the lack of representative sculpture from Athens from the 3rd. cent. onwards is not fully explained by the barbarian invasions since, when the city recovers, its artistic production is marked by some exceptional architectural sculptures, but no longer by sarcophagi or funerary reliefs. For all these, see PALLAS 1989, especially 888 ff.

⁶² LAGOGIANNI-GEORGAKARAKOS 1998, 21.

⁶³ VON MOOCK 1998, 86. *MAMA* X, xxx. WAELKENS 1985, 21-25, especially 22, n° 17,18. The last known Phrygian figured stele is dated in 304/5 A.D., see GIBSON 1978b, 37-40, n° 16, fig. 17, although recent studies push the date up to 350, see MITCHELL 1993, *passim*. Nevertheless KOCH 1990, 115-132, mainly 130, doubts the dating of Gibson and considers that the stele had been reused.

⁶⁴ For this greeting, see RIZAKIS - TSOURATSOGLU 2000, 247-249, with bibliography. ADAM-VELENI 2002, 105. It is noteworthy that the expression χαίρει is extremely rare in Phrygia, see HASPELS 1971, 171. As it has been remarked, the use of the adjective χρηστός is frequent in the epitaphs of Greece and the Islands, in contrast to Egypt and Rome, TODD 1951, 185-186. For the use of the adjective χρηστός in funerary inscriptions, see ROBERT 1937, 369 ff., who argues that in ancient Attica the adjective χρηστός was used for foreigners and especially slaves.

⁶⁵ Nevertheless, the expression μνίας χάριν is not entirely absent from the Nisyrian inscriptions, see PEEK 1969, 30, n° 72, and in the unpublished inscription MN 164: ΤΥΧΗ ΜΗ/ΝΟΦΙΛΩ/ ΜΝΙΑΣ ΧΑΡΙΝ.

⁶⁶ For a similar absence of the patronymic from the funerary monuments of Macedonia, see ADAM-VELENI 2002, 107. TATAKI 1988, 496.

⁶⁷ See also TATAKI 1988, 378, 381, 385-387, 415-418.

⁶⁸ BÖRKER - MERKELBACH 1980, 136, n° 1632. The nomenclature on the funerary monuments of Macedonia is similar, cf. ADAM-VELENI 2002, 106.

⁶⁹ For the corresponding Latin name Άππιος and Αππία and the various versions of the name, cf. ZGUSTA 1964, 74 § 66-16 and 81 § 66-40. Cf. also Αφύσσος, ZGUSTA 1964, § 128. AMELUNG 2004, 583. For the origin of the name, ROBERT 1948, 90.

⁷⁰ The word is not included in ancient dictionaries, but it is often encountered in the inscriptions of Asia Minor, see ROBERT 1937, 469-471. ROBERT 1948, 94-98. ZGUSTA 1964, § 667. DREW-BEAR 1972, 204-205 with bibliography. *LSJ*, rev. Suppl., ed. by P.G.W. Glave, Oxford 1996, κόμβος = grandchild. It is reported in an inscription from Kappadocia, see MERKELBACH 1998, 111-112, quoting all the related bibliography. The noun is used in Rhodes probably as a personal name, cf. Κόμβων, *LGPN* I (2nd cent. B.C.). In Thessaly the personal name Κόμβος is used in the 4th and 1st cent. B.C., cf. *LGPN* IIIB.

⁷¹ Cf. the inscription of a certain bishop Hermias of the 5th cent., FEISSEL 1983, 235, n° 283, pl. LXII. Also ALEKSOVA - MANGO 1971, 268, fig. 12. A bishop (?) Hermias of the 5th-6th cent. is mentioned on an inscription from Hermione, FEISSEL 1985, 298, n° 40. The name Ερμάς, Ερμίας, Ερμής was widespread all over the empire from the time of Augustus onwards, SOLIN 1971, 110.

⁷² Cf. Βιτάλης -ια, Βιτάλις, Ουειτάλις, Βειτάλις, Βιτάλης in WESSEL 1989, n° 1421, 1519, 1518, 1518A, 1520, 760A, 876. FELLE 1997, cf. index on page 287. *IG* XIV, n° 463. For Βιτάλιος, see ΚΑΝΑΤΣΟΥΛΙΣ 1967, 326. For Βείταλος, see ΡΗΜΙΟΠΟΥΛΟΥ 1981, 300-301. For Βειταλία, see ΚΑΙΑΝΤΟ 1963a, 80.

sions of the Jewish name and is widely encountered all over the empire⁷³. Although most of these names are common for slaves, the lack of any other indication, together with the fact that they are also borne by free men, prohibits the formulation of any theory on the subject⁷⁴. Other funerary inscriptions of the same period mention the deceased as a Nisyrian⁷⁵.

None of the inscriptions on the Nisyrian funerary reliefs – as mentioned above – bear any dating indication. The transcription of some is particularly difficult. There are no ligatures, but a number of abbreviations in the typical formulas. The script is the curvilinear of the times, with round C, E and Ω, except for stelai cat. n° 38, 40, where the letters are angular. The first of them, the inscription of Marcus Aurelius Chrysogonus, is in curvilinear writing while his wife's in angular, which means that she died later and her name was added afterwards, although there are occasions where both types of writing are mixed in the same inscription. On stele cat. n° 23 an ivy leaf is used as an ornamental device between the words, an element common from the 2nd cent. B.C. onwards⁷⁶. On stele cat. n° 40 only the name of the male deceased is inscribed, while the names of the two women who accompany him were never carved. It is also worth noting the irregular size of the letters in the same inscription and the errors in spelling, like ΕΠΕΓΑΘΩ ΧΕΡΕ, ΟΥΔΙΣ, ΔΕΙΟΝΥΣΙΑ, a common feature of this late period⁷⁷. The letters on most of the inscriptions are disproportionate and irregular, do not fit inside a frame, but are written in disorder. On the inscriptions of Hermes (cat. n° 44) and Vitalia (cat. n° 33), the latest of the group, the letter Y has a horizontal line in the middle⁷⁸. On the Hermes inscription there are two letter forms of E, an angular and a curvilinear and two types of A⁷⁹. These letter forms are common up to the 6th cent.⁸⁰ and do not constitute a dating element on their own.

From the remaining inscriptions the epigramm cat. n° 37 is worth mentioning: Ἐπαφροδείτη χρη/στὰ χέρε εὐθύ/ οὐδὲς ἀθ[ά]νατος. The formula of the inscription is an abbreviation of εὐθύ(μει) together with the very common οὐδὲς ἀθάνατος⁸¹ which occurs in the Early Christian era (2nd cent. A.D.) on pagan, Jewish and Christian epitaphs all over the Roman empire in several versions⁸². The expression οὐδὲς ἀθάνατος is initially encountered on pagan monuments, but is soon adopted by Christians, since it gives the deceased the hope of an afterlife. Typically the majority of the inscriptions of the period all over the empire with this formula are, or are considered to

⁷³ Like Σαββάτιος, Σαββάθιος, Σαββατίων, Σαμβάτις, Σανβάτις, Σανβάτιος, Σαβ(β)άτις, Σαμβάτιος, Σανβατούς. For the name, see URDAHL 1968, 39-56. NTINA 1992, 455. ZGUSTA 1964, § 408, n. 4. TAM II 2, 457 (inscription from Patara). Inscriptions from Ayioi Deka: BANDY 1970, n° 74 and 93. ROBERT 1934, 516-517. KEIL - WILHELM 1931, 262. VEES 1911, 104, n° 38. Thrace: ASDRACHA 1989/91, 311, n° 90. MANGO - SEVCENKO 1978, n° 14,7. FLACELIÈRE - ROBERT 1938, 480, n° 561. ROBERT 1946/7, 334, n° 147. ROBERT 1965, 158, n° 359. Veroia: TATAKI 1988, 404. The female name Σαββατώ in a Christian epitaph of Attica: IG 3,2, n° 3460. In Sicily: RUTGERS 1997, 251. At Diafani, on the island of Carpathos, on a small column with a votive inscription, GUARDUCCI 1977, 370-371, n° 3. For Crete, see DIAMANTI 1998, 322, n° 8, 325, n° 12. For more examples of the name, see FEISSEL 1983, 154. Εὐσανβάτιος in Cilicia: AMELUNG 2004, 507, n° 236. The heretic monk Savvatos, who was exiled in Rhodes at the beginning of the 5th cent. should also be mentioned (Socratus Scholastic, *Εκκλησιαστική Ιστορία*, 7.25, 5.21).

⁷⁴ Cf. PETSAS 1984, 281-308, esp. 288-290. SOLIN 1996, 237 (Χρυσόγονος), 438 (Ζώειλος και Ζώσιμος), 477 (Αφιάς), 200 (Επάγαθος, Επαγαθώ), 211 (Καλλιτύχη), 299 (Ἡλιος), 290 (Ερμίας), 297 (Ασκληπιδίης), 278 (Διονυσία), 572 (Σώζουσα), 281-283 (Επαφρόδιτος), 434-435 (Εὐτυχός, Εὐτύχη). In the list of slave names of VON MOOCK 1998, 84, the names Ρόδη, Ἡλιος, Επαγαθώ, Επαφρόδιτος, Εὐτύχη, Ζώσιμος are included, as well as the names with the antefix σω- (σώζω=save). RAMSAY 1967, 129, n° 137 for the name Επάγαθος and 129, n° 138 for the name Ερμής, although the latter is also used by free men. TATAKI 1988, 494, for the

names Επάγαθος, Επαφρόδιτος, Εὐτυχός, Ζώσιμος, Ζωσίμη, Καλλιτύχη, among the names of slaves of the years 13-314 A.D.

⁷⁵ For the adjective N(e)isyrios or N(e)isyria on inscriptions, cf. IG XII, 3, n° 111, 115, 164. PEEK 1967, 369-387, esp. 369 ff., n° 24, 25.

⁷⁶ For the contemporaneous use of curvilinear and angular script even in the same inscription in the 2nd-3rd cent. A.D., see ADAM-VELENI 2002, 100. VON MOOCK 1998, 30. For the use of the ivy-leaf in the 2nd cent. A.D., see VON MOOCK 1998, 30.

⁷⁷ For similar examples of vocal or spelling errors in Macedonia, see ADAM-VELENI 2002, 102. The phenomenon is very common in the inscriptions of Asia Minor, see LOCHMAN 1990, 492. GIGNAC 1975, 189-191, 192.

⁷⁸ For the type of the letter Y dated to the time of the emperor Probus, see RAMSAY 1897, n° 630, 698-699.

⁷⁹ For curvilinear and angular script in this period, see SIRONEN 1997, 379-382.

⁸⁰ MOUTSOPOULOS 1975, 76, fig. I and II.

⁸¹ This abbreviation is not found elsewhere.

⁸² Θάρσει, εὐψύχει, εὐδαιμόνει, εὐμοίρι, εὐφρόνει οὐδὲς ἀθάνατος, see SIMON 1936, 188-206. CUMONT 1942, 76, 480, n. 3. The type εὐψύχει is particularly popular in Syria and Egypt, see KAJANTO 1963b, 16, 40-41. SAHIN 1991, 183-190. RAMSAY 1906, 45-46, 129. PETRIE 1906, 129. The typical expression οὐδὲς ἀθάνατος occurs very often in the Christian inscriptions of Egypt (LEFÈBVRE 1907, *passim*), of Jordan (ATTALAH 2001, 2), of Cyprus (YON 2004, 284) and of Palestine (MEIMARIS - KRITIKAKOU-NIKOLAROPOULOU 2005, *passim*).

be, Christian⁸³. It is also assimilated unaltered in inscriptions where Christian origin cannot be doubted: οὐδὲς ἀθάνατος εἰ μὴ μόνον ἴς Θεὸς αὐτὸς/ ὁ πάντων γενέτης κε πᾶσι τὰ πάντα μερίζων⁸⁴. The imperative εὐθύμει is relatively rare in comparison to θάρσει, εὐψύχει, εὐδαμόνει, εὐμοίρει, εὐφρόνει⁸⁵. As Robert has observed, the wish εὐμοίρει on epitaphs, wherever it occurs, is exclusively Christian⁸⁶. The name of the deceased Ἐπαφροδείτη, is used by pagans as well, although it probably spread in the Christian populations due to a saint of that name from Kolossoi⁸⁷. As it has been remarked, converts – old pagans – did not always consider it necessary to change their name after baptism⁸⁸.

The possibility of Christian presence among those commemorated in the Nisyrian funerary reliefs of the 3rd cent. is strengthened by the inscription cat. n° 8, where in the word ΧΡΗΣΤΗ which accompanied the name of the deceased Aphias the letter X is written as a cross (+); the same occurs on the stele cat. n° 46. This is an element widely used on Christian funerary reliefs of Asia Minor⁸⁹, although it is also observed on pagan inscriptions⁹⁰. The replacement of letters by a cross, especially of the letters T and X, as it has already been observed, is not unknown on Christian inscriptions, particularly on the so-called crypto-Christians, but on some occasions it has been considered accidental by scholars⁹¹. In Phrygia in particular the replacement of letters by a cross on Christian inscriptions is widespread in the mid- 4th cent., although it is known by the 3rd century⁹².

The lecture and the drawing of conclusions from a third Nisyrian inscription, the cat. n° 22, are more difficult because the first verse appears to make no sense: ΚΑΤΩΚΜΑΕΙΤΟΥ—/ ΝΤΩΤΑ ΧΡΩ ΟΥΛΗΘ/ Τ - ΚΟΜΒΟΟΥ ΟΥΤΗΡΙΑ. The expression ΧΡΩ ΟΥΛΗΘ on the second verse has its equivalent in the Christian inscription from Rome, where we read ΕΝ ΧΡΩ ΟΥΛΗΘ and ΧΡΩ is transcribed as ΧΡ(ΙΣΤ)Ω⁹³. The initially incomprehensible first verse can be transcribed as the abbreviation of the Phrygian curse ΙΟC ΝΙ CΕΜΟΥΝ ΚΝΟΥΜΑΝΙ ΚΑΚΩΝ ΑΔΔΑΚΕΤ (ΕΤΙ)ΤΕΤΙΚΜΕΝΟΣ (ΑΔ)ΕΙΤΟΥ⁹⁴, which means that whoever does harm

⁸³ Cf. BUCKLER - CALDER - COX 1928, 33, n° 249, fig. III, 249. WESSEL 1989, n° 267-287. FEISSEL 1982, 363.

⁸⁴ PETRIE 1906, 119-124, esp. 129, n° 11. For the origin of the prayers of the Early Christian era from Alexandrian Jews, with the addition of biblical types, see SIMON 1936, 199. Especially for the origin of the phrase εὐψύχει οὐδὲς ἀθάνατος from the Egyptian religion and the mysteries of Osiris, see ibidem, 201-206. According to CUMONT 1942, 76, the expression οὐδὲς ἀθάνατος Θάρσει, refers to the hope for the afterlife.

⁸⁵ Cf. the Christian inscriptions from Rome: γλυκυτάτω ἀνδρὶ εὐθύμει, FELLE 1997, n° 23379 and from the catacomb of Saint John at Syracuse, Sicily, ... εὐθύμει ψυχῇ, AGNELLO 1953, 21, n° 14. GRECO 1999, 95-96, n. 76. For two expressions εὐθύμει οὐδὲς ἀθάνατος from Seleucia on the Euphrates, but also for the spread of the phrase οὐδὲς ἀθάνατος and its meaning, see SAHIN 1991. According to the author the precursors of this expression are to be found in pagan inscriptions, but the content is not contrary to the Christian ideology. For further examples cf. also IG XIV, n° 2530, while in the inscription IG XIV, n° 2473 the address “εὐθύμει” is not followed by the phrase οὐδὲς ἀθάνατος.

⁸⁶ ROBERT 1978, 414.

⁸⁷ RAMSAY 1897, 556 n° 432b. Epafroditos was the name of the first bishop of Filippisii, KANATSOUKIS 1967, 457.

⁸⁸ FEISSEL 1978, 60.

⁸⁹ For the use of a cross as a symbol of the Christian faith, see SULZBERGER 1926/5, 337-448. DINKLER 1962, 93-112. DINKLER 1967. For the meaning of the cross in the Judaic world, see DINKLER 1962, 93-113. For inscriptions where the cross replaces letters of the alphabet, usually the letters X and T, see DÖLGER 1910, 259, fig. 30. ANDERSON 1899, 280-318, esp. 298, n° 218. HOGARTH 1890, n° 11,13. GIBSON 1978b, 31,

n° 12. CALDER 1955, 35, n° 3, 4. CALDER 1924, 88 ff. MAMA VII, introduction, xi. See also ROBERT 1978, 414. COX - CAMERON - CULLEN 1993, xxxviii.

⁹⁰ It also occurs in non-Christian inscriptions, as a result of carelessness, see COX - CAMERON - CULLEN 1993, xxxviii, n. 12. GIBSON 1978b, 39. For the use of the cross-shaped X in pagan inscriptions, given that its ancient form as + had not disappeared in the 2nd cent. A.D., see WISCHMEYER 1980a, 166-171. In the Rhodian alphabet the archaic form of χ was cross-shaped (see GUARDUCCI 1967, pl. II) and this type is repeated in the inscription IG XII, 1, n° 889: ΧΡΗΣΤΑ +ΑΙΠΕ, which according to the letter form should be dated to the Hellenistic period.

⁹¹ Although many arguments against their Christian origin have been expressed (see for example FERRUA 1978, 608), nevertheless, as MITCHELL 1993 has proved (*passim*, esp. 58-59), their context and date should also be taken into account, since in many areas, where the Christian element was a majority or a strong minority, the replacement of the letters from the 2nd cent. onwards was intentional, also STRUBBE 1981, 112, n° 3. According to DÖLGER 1960, 5-16, n. 7, it is a survival of an old form of script, since in local alphabets of Asia Minor, the letter χ was written as + since 650 B.C. But, as he points out referring to CALDER's arguments (n. 6), the important thing is that this letterform appears suddenly in Phrygian inscriptions, together with other “cryptochristian” elements.

⁹² CALDER 1924, 87-88. RAMSAY 1897, I, 562.

⁹³ IG XIV, n° 531. For further examples, cf. IG XIV, n° 535: ΖΗΣΑΣ ΕΝ ΧΩ (after 408 A.D.), n° 1812: Λουκίας τῷ ἰδίῳ συ(ν)δοῦλω.

⁹⁴ RAMSAY 1905, 79-120.

to the grave, let him be cursed. Therefore the Nisyrian inscription could be completed as follows: κα<κ>ῶ(ν ἀδδάμετ ετικετί)κμ(ενος) α(δ)είτου⁹⁵-/ [ζῶ]ντω(ν) τᾶ(ς ἐν) Χρ(ιστ)ῶ σ(υνδ)ούλης/ [καί] τ[οῦ] Κομβόσου σωτηρία. In this period there are numerous stelai in Phrygia⁹⁶ with curses against the violators of tombs, in the Phrygian language but written in the Greek alphabet. Thus, it emerges from the inscription that the two spouses, who prepared their own tomb⁹⁷, and the grandchild were Christians.

On another funerary relief the cat. n° 23, the symbol of a trident has been carved on the edge of the inscription, which as it has been observed, often replaces the anchor, a very popular symbol of the earliest Christian inscriptions⁹⁸.

On altar cat. n° 44, Hermes, dedicator of the epigram, belongs to the class of presbyters (priests), indicating that he was either a Christian or a Jew⁹⁹. In the middle of this extremely interesting inscription, in the middle of the third verse, the letter I of the word ἰδίω has been replaced by the cross. Although, as it has been remarked, the possibility of chance cannot be excluded, in this case it is reasonable to believe that the quality of Hermes as a priest should also be taken into consideration, together with the key position of the cross in the middle of the epigram and therefore the inscription should be considered as Christian¹⁰⁰.

The altar was originally decorated by a relief wreath and carried an earlier inscription, which was erased to make room for the epigram of Hermes. It is worth noting that the presbyter (priest) chooses a Greek epigram, an old-fashioned Greek epitaph, on the tomb of his son, following pagan custom. Epigrams of this kind frequently mention the age of the deceased, particularly when death is premature¹⁰¹, sudden and hard to accept¹⁰². Expressions such as the “last gifts to the son”, the “tears”¹⁰³, the reference to his journey “to the gloomy port of Hades”¹⁰⁴, are favourite subjects of the Graeco-Roman tradition, (like the epicurean attitudes mentioned above) with which the Christian priest was perfectly familiar¹⁰⁵. The use of epigrams on funerary Christian inscriptions does occur, although not very often. It is hard not to recall here the injunctions of St. Basil the Great to church

⁹⁵ We are not aware of any other survival of the Phrygian language in Greece. Phrygian was spoken as far as Iconium late into the 3rd cent. and was often used in the inscriptions with Greek letters. HOLL 1908, 240-254, believes that the survival of the local languages of Phrygia and Lycaonia is due to the “closed” heretical sects of Montanists and Novatians.

⁹⁶ CALDER 1911, 161-215. CALDER 1913, 97-105. Many of them are republished in CALDER 1956. For curses in Phrygian inscriptions, see PARROT 1939, 134 ff. The majority consist of an epitaph in Greek followed by a curse in Phrygian against the violators of the tomb, see CALDER 1956, ‘Introduction’, ix-x. The expression “slave of Christ” on a Phrygian inscription is also known, as surmised by an inscription with the letters ΖΩΠΙΔΧΡΧΧΡΕΙ of the first half of the 3rd cent., belonging to a shoemaker from Apameia, Aurelius Valens: this is interpreted as ζῶν ἐποίησε δοῦλος Χριστοῦ Χριστιανός Χριστιανοῦς, see GIBSON 1978b, 113, n° 40.

⁹⁷ For similar examples (ζώντων, ζώσης, ζῶσα) on funerary inscriptions from Macedonia, see ADAM-VELENI 2002, 105. For the meaning of the expression, see ROBERT 1966, 377-432, esp. 379, n. 5.

⁹⁸ SULZBERGER 1926/5, 380. The trident is another allusion to the cross, see MARUCCHI 1974², 59 (for anchor), 62, n. 1 (for trident).

⁹⁹ IG XII, 3, n° 107. Cf. for example Jewish inscriptions from Castelli Kissamou in Crete of the 4th-5th cent. where Sophia, a presbytera and archisynagogissa (αρχισυναγωγισσα) Kissamou is mentioned (BANDY 1970, 142-143. BANDY 1963, 227-229, ROBERT 1964a, 215-216, n° 413) and from Vizye of the 4th-5th cent., ASDRACHA 1994/5, 338-339, n° 161. Cf. also DAGRON - FEISSEL 1987, 81. ROBERT 1958, 40-42. ROBERT 1964b, 37, n° 4, 57, n° 8. For the office of presbyteros in the Jewish communities, see ROBERT 1958, 41-42. For the office

and the duties of presbyteros in general, see MEIMARIS 1986, 54-155, 184-201.

¹⁰⁰ PALLAS 1975, 5 considers it a pagan inscription, although the word presbyteros refers to a Jew, at the least. The same author (*supra*) quotes commentaries for the religion of the dedicant Hermes, by M. Guarducci, A. Ferrua and H. Achelis. GUARDUCCI 1939, 83 argued that the epigram should be considered as pagan and interpreted the word πρεσβύτερος as πρέσβυς, denoting the age of the donor. According to FERRUA 1947, 149-167, and ACHELIS 1900, 87-100, the Nisyrian inscription is considered Christian. Especially FERRUA 1947, 152, points out appropriately, that if the writer of the epigram simply wanted to refer to the age of Hermes, he would call him a πρέσβυ and not πρεσβύτερο, which means a priest. Some further pre-Constantinian inscriptions from Rhodes are listed in the article of Achelis.

¹⁰¹ For the quotation to premature death in funerary epigrams, see GRIESSMAIR 1966, esp. 44-47 for predeceasing the parents.

¹⁰² Cf. another presbyteros from Docimeion, who mourns two daughters, RAMSAY 1897, 58, n° 441-442.

¹⁰³ Cf. the epigram for Stratonike from Ephesus: ..οὐκ ἂν ἀδακρυτεῖ τόνδε διήλθε τόπον, JAVIER MURCIA ORTUNO 1999, 368, n° 2104. Also an epigram from a gladiator relief of the 1st cent. A.D. from Kyzikos: ...λάθας ἦλυθον εἰς λ[υ]μένας, SCHWEERTHEIM 1980, 203-204, n° 492.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. a poetic metaphor in use even in later years, in the epitaph of Ignatios, a bishop of Herakleia in 854: ἐκυμήθη καταντήσας εἰς τὸν ἀκύμαντον λημένα..., see ASDRACHA 1989/91, 270, n° 68.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. the same attitude in the epitaphs of Phrygia, GIBSON 1978b, 140. This practice is not unknown in other areas of the empire with a strong Graeco-Roman tradition.

officials, concerning their approach to pagan Greek education¹⁰⁶.

The stele of Φιλοκύνηγος¹⁰⁷ (cat. n° 48) is up to now unique in the Dodecanese. In the Roman period Philokynegoi, besides the meaning “friends of the chase”, also signified an association of amateurs of wild beast fighting¹⁰⁸ – i.e. fights with wild beasts in the Roman arenas, the *kynegia* or *kynegesia* of the inscriptions. Although stelai of gladiators are preserved only on Kos, the surname philokynegos does not occur there. On the Nisyrian stele the male figure is depicted with high soft Phrygian boots and he is accompanied by a four-legged small animal, raised on two feet. In the same period reliefs depicting a man and a dog in a similar pose are not absent, but they are not always gladiator reliefs¹⁰⁹. The beastfighters (*bestiarii*), according to Robert in his fundamental study about the gladiators, wear a leather tunic with a belt and high boots or leather strips around the shin. Occasionally they wear a conical hat or bear a shield, a club, trident or whip. The use of dogs during the fight is not confirmed. The fragmentary state of the stele and its nearly effaced inscription make its decipherment more difficult. It probably began on the upper part of the relief, where perhaps the typical greeting ΧΡΗΣΤΕ ΧΑΙΡΕ or an epigram ending with the name of the deceased Ο ΚΙΡΙ[Ο]C ΦΙΛΟ[Κ]ΥΝΗΓΕ¹¹⁰ was cut. Given the fact that in the same period gladiator fights as well as beastfights were particularly popular on Kos¹¹¹ we assume that a certain Nisyrian, perhaps a *bestiarius* himself, was buried in his native land, after pursuing a career in the arena. Because of the fragmentary state of the stele, its dating is based on other, similar gladiatorial reliefs, the majority of which are dated to the 2nd-3rd cent. A.D. Although it does not typologically belong to the homogeneous group of funerary reliefs just mentioned, it is hard to see the philokynegos stele as an import from neighbouring Kos. Given the existence of such an active sculptural workshop on the island, related to the Anatolian coastline, it is not unlikely that the relief was carved on Nisyros.

The stele of Vitalia, cat. n° 33, dated to the period after Constantine the Great, is in a class of its own among the funerary reliefs under examination. It is not certain that this small stele was reused. Indications of early date, such as the use of the diphthong OY in full¹¹² and not abbreviated, the use of old-fashioned names from the ancient onomasticon, a habit that gradually disappears from the mid- 4th cent. onwards¹¹³ – after Christianity became the official religion of the empire – lead to the dating of the inscription to the 4th-5th. cent. A.D. The formulaic phrase Ἐνθα κατάκειται, placed

¹⁰⁶ For the counsels of Basil the Great about the acquisition of a Greek education, see esp. WILSON 1975, *passim*.

¹⁰⁷ VILLE 1960, 273-335. Cf. archikynegos (αρχικύνηγος) in an inscription from Ilion, FRISCH 1975, 228, n° 126. The personal name Philokynegos occurs in Attica, cf. *LGPNI*, Attica, Aurelius Philokynegos (Αυρήλιος Φιλοκύνηγος): *IG II2* n° 2235, line 72 (235-236 A.D.).

¹⁰⁸ Like Philoploi. ROBERT 1971², 323-324, n° 23, 24, points out that this association was not actually about chase, but fights with wild beasts, particularly popular in the Roman empire. See also CHAPOUTHIER 1924, 287-303, n° 11. JONES 2001, 47. The quality of philokynegos on epitaphs sometimes accompanies the name of the deceased, cf. the inscription on a sarkophagus from the area of Sestos: Χρυσέρω[ς] Φιλοκύνηγο[ς] ἐποίησα ἑμαυτῷ τὸ ἐνσόρι[ον].: KRAUSS 1980, 105, n° 70. It is remarkable that even Christians claimed this quality, as in the epitaph of philokynegos Aurelius Charidemos from Phrygia, today in Denizli, dated to the 3rd cent., see SHEPPARD 1979, 180. It is also worth noting that the wild beast fights, in contrast to gladiatorial fights, continued to take place in Christian Byzantium. For an association of philokynegoi in Filippoi and the significance of kynegoi in the Greek and Roman period, see ROUSSEL 1930, 361-367. For the meaning of kynegoi in ephebic inscriptions, see ROBERT 1946, 112-150. For Philokynegos as a personal name, see ÜNDEMIS - FRENCH 1989, 91-98. For other inscriptions with the name philokynegos either as a quality or as a personal name, see *SEG XXIX*, 1979, 351, n° 1401, (from Phrygia). *SEG XXXII*, 1982, 331, n° 1218 (Lydia).

¹⁰⁹ Cf. the stele from Laodiceia of Lykos (Eski Hisar) of the 2nd or the 3rd cent., COZSTEN 1997, 172, n° 86. For gladiatorial reliefs with representation of a sitting dog, cf. PFUHL - MÖBIUS 1977b, n° 1227, 1230, 1255. For Philokynegos as name of a hunting dog, see PFUHL - MÖBIUS 1977b, n° 2197, from Pergamon. For the stele of a gladiator with a dog, see PETZL 1974, 285-293, n° 6.

¹¹⁰ For the personal name Κύριος, see *LGPNI*, in a hellenistic inscription of Mytilene (*IG XII*, 2, n° 323) and of Samos (DUNANT - POUILLOUX 1957, 15, n° 167,6: 2nd cent. B.C.). The personal name Κύριος is also attested in Byzantine Gortyna on Crete (*LGPNI*). Cf. also *LGPNI* IIIA. *SEG XXVII*, 1982, 424, n° 1538 (Geras, 2nd-3rd cent. A.D.). As ROBERT 1963a, 172-173, n° 253, reports, the word Κύριος accompanies the god Sozon, ie. on the wall of a temple at Susa of Lycia.

¹¹¹ Mosaic floor from the House of the “Judgement of Paris”, in Western Thermai in Kos (2nd-3rd cent. A.D.), see DE MATTEIS 2004, pl. ix,1, xii,2.

¹¹² For this archaistic factor, see ASDRACHA 1994/5, 291.

¹¹³ RAMSAY 1897, 492, points out that pure Christian names begin to appear in Christian inscriptions not earlier than the mid- 4th cent., after the related prohibition of the Council of Nicaea (325 A.D.). CALDER 1955, 30 mentions that the confirmed preference for Christian names coincides with the mass production of funerary reliefs depicting the cross. In Phrygia for example the transition to Christian names occurs at the end of the 3rd cent., see ANDERSON 1906, 198. In Rome, in contrast, not before the mid- 4th cent., see, KAJANTO 1963a, 117-118.

in the beginning of this inscription, while on earlier examples it is at the end, is a loan of the hellenistic type ἐνθάδε κείται¹¹⁴. It is used together with other expressions such as ἐτελεύτησεν, ἐκοιμήθη, ἀνεπάύσατο. The letters almost all with serifs, are squarish, of equal size and angular,¹¹⁵ deeply and carefully incised, in a beautiful majuscule script, in a laid straight, free of any grammatical errors. The use of the word κατάκειτε written with an ι instead an ει, as has been remarked¹¹⁶, occurs so often, that it becomes stereotyped. The use of the type ἔνθα instead of ἐνθάδε occurs less often, as statistics in certain areas have indicated¹¹⁷. The gabled type of the funerary relief, the cross in the beginning of the inscription¹¹⁸, the expression ἔνθα κατάκειται, place the relief among numerous examples of the kind, such as the Rhodian funerary stelai of around the same period¹¹⁹.

WAS THERE A CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY IN NISYROS IN THE 3RD CENTURY?

The above mentioned indications, as shown in the Nisyrian stelai of the pre-Constantinian era, take the study of the reliefs into a new dimension. In this transitional period, the use of certain words or expressions in the inscriptions facilitates their attribution to pagan or christian burials¹²⁰. It should be mentioned in passing that the use of the adjective θεοσεβής in two epitaphs from Rhodes and Cos denotes, according to L. Robert, that the deceased were Jews¹²¹. The lack of patronymic in the majority of the inscriptions has led to certain questions, as already remarked¹²². Among the funerary inscriptions of Attica, it has been observed that many pagan epitaphs, even of a late period, include the patronymic of the deceased, while that occurs rarely in Christian inscriptions¹²³.

This is the transitional period of the Early Christian era. The 2nd and 3rd centuries are a period of relative tranquility and peace for the newly founded Christian church, very influential in Asia Minor and particularly in Phrygia¹²⁴, but it is also a very restless period, full of innovations concerning religion. The populous Christian communities of Smyrna and Ephesus are not too far away from Nisyros. The persecutions, of short duration as a rule and local in character as well¹²⁵, do not seem to influence adversely the expansion of the quickly growing new religion¹²⁶. From 184 A.D. until Diocletian no martyrdom occurs in the area. The 3rd cent. was decisive for the new religion. From a marginal sect Christians became a respectable minority – if not a relative majority –, at least

¹¹⁴ ASDRACHA 1989/91, 262. ROBERT 1952, 202, n° 197. ROBERT 1941, 265, n° 160. ROBERT 1962, 224, n° 391. FEISSEL 1978, 30-33. It has been observed that in the late 4th cent. the various local typical expressions of funerary inscriptions are definitely replaced by ἔνθα-ἐνθάδε κείται-κατάκειται, see JOHNSON 1984, 10, n. 3. ΚΑΙΑΝΤΟ 1963b, 20-21. RAMSAY 1908, 337.

¹¹⁵ ASDRACHA 1989/91, 297. As she remarks, this kind of script, is roughly dated up to the 6th cent., although it is also found, as quoted in an example dated to 813, in later inscriptions.

¹¹⁶ ASDRACHA 1994/5, 298.

¹¹⁷ ASDRACHA 1996/7, 366, see the remarks for Thrace, Crete and Macedonia.

¹¹⁸ For the use of the cross on funerary reliefs from the mid-4th cent. A.D., cf. CALDER 1956, xxxvi.

¹¹⁹ PUGLIESE CARRATELLI 1952-1954, 301-302, n° 86, 87, fig. 66, 67.

¹²⁰ *Supra*, n. 91 and *infra* n. 128.

¹²¹ ROBERT 1964b, 44. MITCHELL 1993, 8, n. 59 with bibliography.

¹²² It should be mentioned, for example, that among the 3600 inscriptions of the catacombs of Domitilla in Rome, only 20 bore the three name system, 340 a name and a patronymic, while the rest mentioned only the name of the deceased, see FERRUA 1991, 316.

¹²³ GREAGHAN - RAUBITSCHKE 1947, 7. According to FEISSEL 1977, 55, nonetheless, after 212 and the constitutio antoniniana, the practice of adding the patronymic is gradually abandoned. RAMSAY 1897, part II, 487, interprets it as an extreme Christian phenomenon, in accordance to the commandments to deny their family ties and devote themselves to God, according to Matthew, XXIII, 9: “καὶ πατέρα μὴ καλέσητε ὑμῶν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς· εἷς γὰρ ἐστὶν ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν, ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς”.

¹²⁴ This fact is particularly stressed by ROBERT 1960, 546. See also, RAMSAY 1897, 501.

¹²⁵ See GRÉGOIRE - ORGELS - MOREAU - MARICQ 1964², where persecutions are mentioned as sporadic. As he points out (182) persecutions in the 3rd cent. are not the rule but the exception. MITCHELL 1993, 64-67. FRENZ 2000, 815-839, with bibliography.

¹²⁶ In the middle of the 3rd cent. Origen writes that they constituted a small part of the population. A few decades later, as a strong majority, they force Constantine the Great to declare Christianity as the official religion of the empire, in association, of course, to the shift of imperial interest towards the East, where the Christians were already numerous, especially in Asia Minor, Egypt, but also in North Africa. For their spread and situation, but also for interesting statistics, see STARK 1997, 5-91, pl. 1.1. Also MITCHELL 1993, 37 ff.

in the eastern provinces of the empire. Although they avoided provocation and openly declaring their religion on funerary monuments, many experts have managed to distinguish¹²⁷ the Christian owners of numerous monuments by various symbols, names, or the type of the inscription¹²⁸. Certainly the stelai of the most ardent adherents of the new religion are not absent, mainly in Phrygia, where it seems that from the 3rd cent. onwards, Christians constituted the majority of the population¹²⁹ and did not hesitate to boldly carve on funerary reliefs dating from 248 until 350 A.D. the expression Χριστιανοὶ χριστιανοῖς. That contributes, in association to the literary sources, to the study of the expansion of christianity in the pre-Constantinian era in its true dimensions¹³⁰.

If the argument that some of the Nisyrian reliefs are Christian is correct, then this group should be added to the few pre-Constantinian Christian monuments in Greece¹³¹. This assumption is of major importance, given the fact that, in Greece, Christian representative reliefs, especially of the pre-Constantinian era, in contrast to Anatolia, are extremely limited, due to both social and ideological reasons¹³², or simply because of the indifference towards this kind of artistic expression¹³³. Like the rest of the Anatolian Christians of the period these Nisyrian inhabitants, perhaps did not openly declare their belief, but they did not entirely hide it either. As examples for it, we mention the relative differentiation of their epitaphs, ranging from typical expressions like οὐδείς ἀθάνατος in the inscription cat. n° 37, which is common among Christians and in any case extremely rare in the epigraphy of the islands, to the almost cryptographic quality of the inscription cat. n°22 which can be recognized as Christian only with great difficulty. Also the inscriptions cat. nn° 8, 46 where letters are replaced by a cross, and cat. n° 23 with the symbol of a trident carved at the end of the inscription, should also be noted.

The early Christians shared Graeco-Roman tradition and funerary practices with the pagans, and lived in harmony with them¹³⁴. The Christian communities of Anatolia in particular, had been fully integrated into the existing pagan communities¹³⁵. Christian soldiers worshipped the one God¹³⁶, and at the same time were under the protection of the deity of their legion. Sometimes Christians became high-ranking officials¹³⁷. The case of Aberkios, bishop of Hierapolis (+214), with a manifold activity and unhindered journeys, as his epitaph testifies, is probably an extreme but telling

¹²⁷ See esp. CALDER 1924, *passim*. On other occasions, as in an inscription from Altintas of Phrygia of the early 3rd cent., -ordinary in every other way- the cross carved inside a circle was so discreet that it escaped the attention of the early scholars, ANDERSON 1906, 217, n° 16.

¹²⁸ For the subject, see among others, JOHNSON 1984, 28. For Christian symbols on a funerary relief from Cadi, as early as the middle of the 2nd cent. A.D., cf. COX - CAMERON - CULLEN 1993, xxxvi. There are certainly occasions, where the Christian symbols on inscriptions or reliefs are so obvious that their classification as Christian should be considered certain. Cf. the cross on the inscription of the woodcarver Eumoirios Pappos from Bithynia, ROBERT 1978, 413-415. Also, the latin cross which is carved with special care and larger than the letters, which replaces the letter Ψ in the word εὐψύχεται in the epitaph of the gladiator Klados of the 1st-2nd cent., see REYNOLDS 1997, 130-131, n° 3, pl. 11, or the apocalyptic letters Α Ω carefully engraved on the book held by the deceased on a Phrygian funerary relief of the 3rd cent., today in the Benaki Museum, see VLIZOS 2002 and VLIZOS 2004, 308-312, n° 90. It is worth noting that-curiously enough-neither of the two authors (Reynolds, Vlizos) mentions the possible religion of the deceased. See also, LOCHMAN 1991, 59, n° 2: stele of Eutycheis, who is holding a circular object with a cross, and 64, n° 8: stele of Tryphon and Auxanousa, where in second use the word ΧΡΙΣΤΙΑΝΟΙ is cut.

¹²⁹ They may have belonged to the Montanists sect, but they certainly constitute a special group, MITCHELL 1993, 39-40. See recent works with full bibliography, TABBERNEE 1997. JOHNSON 1995. For Montanists, see HIRSCHMANN 2005. For

the heresies in Anatolia, see also MITCHELL 1993, 100-108.

¹³⁰ RAMSAY 1897, 501. GIBSON, 1978b. COX - CAMERON - CULLEN 1993, xxxvi. GIBSON 1978a. GRÉGOIRE - ORGELS - MOREAU - MARICQ 1964², 15. ROBERT 1960, 546. The stelai appear around the middle of the 3rd cent. in the Upper Tembris valley of NW Phrygia, near Cotiaenum (Kütahya). The earliest example is dated to 248/9.

¹³¹ Most of them have been included in PALLAS 1975, esp. 3-7 and 14 ff., among which inscriptions from Rhodes as well. Cf. also ZEILLER 1926, 215-232. For a christian inscription from Corinth of the early 4th cent. A.D. with a cross and the Eumeneian formula, cf. ROBERT 1964a, n° 177.

¹³² PALLAS 1975, 3-4, 14 ff.

¹³³ As KITSINGER 1980, 92, points out, this indifference was not synonymous to hostility.

¹³⁴ As it is already evident from the second half of the 3rd cent., judging by the inscriptions, Christians did not consider themselves a foreign element in the society they lived in, nor were they hostile to the empire, FREND 1998, 99.

¹³⁵ See among others JOHNSON 1984, 80-93.

¹³⁶ HELGELAND 1972, II, 23,1, 816 ff. IOSIF 2003, 167-180.

¹³⁷ At least five funerary inscriptions prove it (MITCHELL 1993, 41), like Aurelius Eutycheis Hermou Helix, an athlete and a member of the Senate, a funerary altar from Ishekli (Eumeneia), cf. BUCKLER - CALDER - COX 1926, 53-94, esp. 80, n° 204. SHEPPARD 1979, 170-171, or Marcus Demetrianos, an agonothete, on an inscribed column from Claudiopolis, JOHNSON 1984, 80-91, n° 27, all dated to the 3rd cent. As MITCHELL 1993, 65 postulates, in the 3rd cent. in many cities the local aristocracy had been replaced by the Christian bishops.

case¹³⁸. For all these reasons, as it has been repeatedly stressed, it is extremely difficult to distinguish epitaphs – and consequently cemeteries of this period – into Christian and pagan whenever they are excavated¹³⁹. The transition from the pagan to the Christian world is almost imperceptible in certain areas. The study of typical expressions and symbols may prove illuminating, as long as we keep in mind that Christians, especially in the formative years of the religion, copied the symbols of other religions and used expressions from various sources¹⁴⁰. Statistically, a percentage of surviving funerary monuments and inscriptions, should belong to Christians. The example of the ossuary of Trophimos¹⁴¹ bearing the Eumeneian formula¹⁴² and the quality of martyr is indicative of a case, where Christianity is present without symbols¹⁴³.

These family group reliefs from Nisyros may have been carved during the owners' lifetime (something certain for the relief cat. n° 22) and considered as part of a plan, influenced by attitudes towards the afterlife and obligations to the dead. The indifference of Christians for realism has already been noted, as well as the rarity of funerary reliefs from the rest of Greece in the same period, compared to the numerous Nisyrian reliefs. In this case Nisyros follows the practice of the peoples of Anatolia, where the relief stele is not an artistic expression, but a necessity¹⁴⁴, for both Christians and pagans – the very last honours rendered to the deceased. If the date range of this closed group of Nisyrian reliefs is estimated according to stylistic criteria to about a hundred years, it may be assumed, through the average lifetime of the period¹⁴⁵, that they concerned about a hundred persons. We do not know anything more, concerning their position in the Nisyrian society, if they were in some way connected to each other, by blood or otherwise, or the population of the island as a whole. Internal immigration in the Roman Empire towards large urban centres, such as Rome for example¹⁴⁶, was the rule, but in the case of Nisyros the movement would be from one partly urbanized rural area to another.

The Phrygian curse raises questions about the origin of the makers of the reliefs and their customers. The female name Aphias was particularly popular in Asia Minor at the time. Another name, Papas, very common in Phrygia¹⁴⁷ in contrast to Greece and the islands, occurs on two Nisyrian inscriptions, earlier than those currently under examination¹⁴⁸. These names indicate the presence of a possibly small community from Anatolia on the island in Late Antiquity, a feature common in an empire where internal movement was widespread. People who leave their homeland to settle and die elsewhere naturally have epitaphs reflecting their origin, and it is even probable that they took pains to that end in their lifetime. It would be particularly interesting to know the extent of such penetration into local tradition¹⁴⁹. But what was it that caused the immigration of this group and its

¹³⁸ RAMSAY 1883, 339-353. CALDER 1939b, 1-5. MERKELBACH 1997, 125-139. WISCHMEYER 1980b, 22-47.

¹³⁹ See for example PALLAS 1968, 119-153. See also SOLIN 2004, 197-221. For the Christian/pagan cemeteries in Rome, see the synopsis of CARLETTI 2000, 323-329.

¹⁴⁰ The observations in WUJEWSKI 1991, 46 and KITSINGER 1980, 92, are interesting. Also CALDER 1922/3, 12.

¹⁴¹ Trophimos (*Acta SS*, Sept. VI, 12-20. PG, éd. Migne CXV 733-749) was martyred at Synnada of Phrygia in the reign of Probus or Decius.

¹⁴² For the Eumeneian formula, cf. CALDER 1939a, 15-26. MITCHELL 1993, 40-41, with bibliography.

¹⁴³ MENDEL 1909, 342.

¹⁴⁴ For the procedure of adoption of pagan customs by the Christians, see BROWN 1980, 23.

¹⁴⁵ It should be noted that life expectancy is estimated around 23.4 years for Rome, 36.2 years in Spain and 45.2 in Africa, see NORDBERG 1963, 38. Also, KAJANTO 1968, 13-16. Calculations have been based on closed groups leading to limited conclusions, see DUVAL 1975, 471. The life expectancy of males is estimated around 30 years, for females around 22.8. Also STARK 1997, 155. DUNCAN-JONES 1977, 349.

¹⁴⁶ As it has been estimated by the Greek epitaphs of Rome, half of the deceased came from Asia Minor and Anatolia, KAJANTO 1963b, 2.

¹⁴⁷ As ZGUSTA 1964, 406-408, § 1199-1201, points out, the name is rare in Bithynia, Mysia and Paphlagonia. It is more common in Pisidia, Isauria and Lycaonia. The highest frequency is observed in Phrygia. Cf. also for the name Papias and its occurrence in Phrygia, NAOUR 1985, 37-76, esp. 54, nn. 68-70. For its spread, cf. DETSCHEW 1976, 356. The name belongs to the Lallnamen group, signifying names with parallels in all languages, according to ROBERT 1963b, 348, 504, 513. Although the author considers it as of Phrygian origin, admitting that it is widespread in Asia Minor, he points out nevertheless that its root is attested in Greek and refers to a Papylos in Athens in the 2nd cent. B.C., and a Papon in Apollonia of Pontus (5th-4th cent. B.C.). The name is attested in Edessa (Macedonia) and in inscriptions of Pontus, Cappadocia, Comana, Athens. Even LOCHMAN 1990, 494, lists Papias among native, Phrygian names. The name occurs rarely in the Aegean islands, cf. *LGP*N I, on a Rhodian amphora stamp of the Hellenistic period and on Thasos. It is attested sporadically in the rest of Greece, as in Thessaly, cf. *LGP*N IIIA and B.

¹⁴⁸ The name on a fragment of an inscription, today in the archeological collection, inv. n° MN 210, and in an epitaph, referring to a certain Papas from Soloi, cf. CHAVIARAS 1913, 6-16, esp. 11, n° 19.

¹⁴⁹ Cf. similar observations in JOHNSON 1984, n. 89.

establishment on a small island like Nisyros, far from the crowded cities of the times, about the end of the 2nd cent. A.D.? The possibility that some of the immigrants were Christians and came from Phrygia is, we believe, strong because of the presence on a relief of the Phrygian curse, which is not encountered outside Phrygia. As it has been repeatedly argued, during the 2nd-3rd cent. the percentage of Christians in the population of Phrygia was quite high¹⁵⁰. The arguments in favour of the possibility that they tried to avoid the religious persecution are not sufficiently supported, since it is known that persecutions were erratic, short-lived and localized, excepting those of Decius and Diocletian, which occurred later. It cannot be excluded that the immigration was due to the gradual closing of the large quarries in Phrygia and the plague¹⁵¹ which ravaged the whole empire for a long time during the second half of the 2nd cent. The plague is mentioned as quasi-endemic, capable of spreading in a short time over large areas through army movement and maritime trade. It is characteristic that it reached China through a Roman embassy in 166. It broke down family ties, workshop output, and local economies. The marble quarries in Phrygia¹⁵² suspended production over a long period, which from then on steadily declined¹⁵³. In 182 the plague was at its peak and no province was left untouched. Nevertheless the chance to survive increased away from large urban areas, out of the trade routes.¹⁵⁴ Nisyros, close to the Anatolian coast and yet distant from crowded cities, may well have attracted immigrants¹⁵⁵. Besides, as it has already been remarked, there is no evidence as yet that the plague visited the islands before the Justinianic era¹⁵⁶.

The existence of one or more workshops on the island is another issue, given the homogeneity of the reliefs; besides, the simplicity of the figures does not permit the identification of different craftsmen, as in the case of the Phrygian stelai. In earlier centuries reliefs and sculptures in the round are rare on Nisyros¹⁵⁷, as there was a preference for simple inscribed stelai and altars. As a result we cannot argue that the older, local artistic tradition degenerated into the production of these humble works. More plausible is the arrival of some itinerant – originally – artisans, clumsy enough, who finally established themselves on the island and made the above reliefs (possibly their presence created the demand?) for about a century. Another important factor, the lack of material, was not decisive enough to deter the production of the reliefs. Reuse of earlier funerary monuments or architectural elements was the easy solution. Nisyros does not have any quarries of fine marble, but it seems that unlike in the good old times, it was also unable to import it. That indicates that Nisyrian society or the part of it which patronized the workshop producing the funerary reliefs, had a certain difficulty in importing raw materials, possibly a withdrawal of the islanders towards the interior, perhaps due to failing links with the outside world. Moreover it is not clear whether this sudden trend is due not only to the settlement of artisans but perhaps also to a change in the composition of the local population. In any case, it is certain that the funerary reliefs disappeared in the end of the 3rd cent., as everywhere in the empire, with the changing social and economic conditions, in association with the changes in the artistic and expressive habits introduced with the new religion.

¹⁵⁰ GRÉGOIRE 1924, 704.

¹⁵¹ During the plague a third or a quarter of the empire population died, among them the emperor Marcus Aurelius in 180 in Vienna, see STARK 1997, 73.

¹⁵² For the marble quarries in Asia Minor, esp. in Dokimeion (Ischisar) in Phrygia, see FAUT 1989. FAUT - CHRISTOL - DREW-BEAR 1991, 113-174. WARD-PERKINS 1980a, 325-338. WARD-PERKINS 1980b, 23-96. WARD-PERKINS 1972, 57. WARD-PERKINS 1972, 36, based on epigraphy, mentions the activities of itinerant marbleworkers from Phrygia, working in the western Asia Minor, where the main consumers of the Docimean marbles were found, although he believes that they did not extend their activities far beyond its borders. The case of Menandros, itinerant marbleworker in the 3rd-4th cent., travelling around with a stock of incomplete stelai, which he finished upon order, is known, see CALDER 1955, 35-36. These reliefs, at least in the case of Dokimeion, were the remnants from the dressing of larger blocks of marble and thus the poor-

est social classes could afford them.

¹⁵³ DUNCAN-JONES 1996, 108-136, esp. 117-129. GILIAM 1961, 225-251. MC NEILL 1976, esp. 103 ff.

¹⁵⁴ DUNCAN-JONES 1996, 136.

¹⁵⁵ Immigration from Phrygia and Asia Minor in general, to Constantinople and Propontis, reaches a peak in the 4th cent., see FEISSEL 1995, 376. AVRAMEA 1995, 20 ff.

¹⁵⁶ KIOURTZIAN 2000, 16, n. 31.

¹⁵⁷ For relief and sculpture in the round of the classical, Hellenistic and Roman period from Nisyros, see JACOPI 1932/3. PFUHL - MÖBIUS 1977a, n° 14, 64, 239, 387, 388, 629, 667, 700, 837, 840, PFUHL-MÖBIUS 1977b, n° 2045. For a male himation-clad statue from Nisyros, dated to the first half of the 2nd cent. B.C., see KONSTANTINOPOULOS 1965, 602, fig. 767c. LEWERENTZ 1993, 151-152, 284. For a statue base with carved weapons in the round, see BAIRAMI 2004, 451-464. For inscribed stelai and altars, see *JG XII*, 3, n° 106-166. PEEK 1969. PEEK 1967, 369-387.

CONCLUSIONS

The late roman Nisyrian reliefs, although primitive in execution and badly preserved, constitute – we believe – an important chapter in the history of the island. Their number and their homogeneity in style and type are evident of one or more thriving marble workshops in the end of the ancient era on this tiny piece of land in the Aegean. Surprising enough nothing similar is attested on far larger – like Rhodos – and more prosperous – like Kos – islands. The inscriptions, although fragmentary, shed light to the origin of this sudden funerary “trend”. Even though the lecture of the funerary inscriptions may be doubtful to many, since the use of a cross as a substitute for letters is controversial and the Phrygian curse is an unicum in the region, we believe that the sudden appearance of this kind of funerary monument on an island with a very poor sculptural tradition, needs a certain explanation. If all the above mentioned factors are taken into account, then little by little the puzzle is solved.

Beyond the obvious importance of these funerary monuments for our understanding of Nisyros and its region in the first centuries of the Christian era, we hope that this study will initiate further research into archeological evidence from other neighbouring islands, which has, so far, escaped the attention of experts.¹⁵⁸ Examination of these Early Christian relics, which may engage our attention in the future, will hopefully illuminate the penetration of Christianity into the islands. This was a complex process, about which the literary sources are silent, and involved the period before Christianity became the official religion of the empire and impressive basilicas began to appear.

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¹⁵⁸ For example, the funerary relief with the carving of a cloth, today in the sculpture collection of the Archaeological Service in the Dodecanese (PAPACHRISTODOULOU 1979, 445,

pl. 237 b-c), compared to the funerary reliefs from Palmyra, cf. CUMONT 1942, 476. SEYRIG 1936, 137-140. PARLASCA 1982, pl. 24, 1-2.

CATALOGUE

In the following catalogue the abbreviations MN and MT originate from the words Museum of Nisyros and Museum of Telos respectively. They correspond to the Inventories of the Museums of Nisyros and Telos. The abbreviation E corresponds to the Inventory of inscriptions of the Museum of Rhodes. Wherever an inventory number is not mentioned, it means that the stele is either missing or not inventoried.

In the catalogue entries, right and left refer to viewer's right and left unless otherwise stated. When *fragment* is used, it means that only a tiny piece of the relief is preserved.

1 - MN 5: Part of a stele. The upper left part with a gabled (?) crowning. On the front a worn female (?) figure frontal with her right hand folded on the chest.

Pres. height 0.31, width 0.15, thickness 0.07 m.

Traces of rust. Recovered at Petsini.

2 - MN 7: Part of an inscribed stele: lower left side. On the front a standing frontal figure clad in long himation, preserved from the waist downwards. Ending of an inscription in two lines:

 Ϛ]ΙΚΛΗ --- σ]ικλή
[ΧΡΗϚ]ΤΕ ΧΑΙΡΕ χρησ]τέ χαίρε

Pres. height 0.23, width 0.13, thickness 0.065 m.

Found in the N. Voyagis plot opposite the Lyceum (Ilikiomeni site). For numerous names with the ending -σικλής, cf. DORNSEIFF - HAUSER 1978, 160 (i.e. Iasikles, Damasikles, Timasikles, Pasikles and others). From these the name Σωσικλής is attested in two Nisyrian inscriptions of hellenistic and Roman period, cf. *LGN I*.

3 - MN 12: Part of a stele: right side, with the upper part of a headless, clad frontal figure with the right hand on the chest.

Pres. height 0.17, width 0.14, thickness 0.05 m.

Found in the Ap. Mastroyannis plot, at Ayia Paraskevi.

4 - MN 14: Part of a stele, with a worn surface. Three frontal figures, clad in himatia, with the right hand folded on the chest, are preserved. The upper part of the stele is missing and part of the heads. Damages on the left side of the stele and its lower part, where the rectangular tenon is partly preserved.

Pres. height 0.42, width 0.35, thickness 0.12 m.

Found in the Mantoudakis plot, at Stavros.

5 - MN 15: Lower part of a relief. Three frontal figures, clad in himatia, are preserved from the waist downwards. Damages on the lower surface.

Pres. height 0.32, width 0.36, thickness 0.10 m.

Found in the ruined church at Armas.

6 - MN 16: Small fragment of a relief: lower right side preserving the feet of a frontal figure.

Pres. height 0.16, width 0.22, thickness 0.10 m.

Found at Dali.

7. MN 28: Rectangular relief, with top missing. Two frontal figures inside a rectangular frame, measuring 0.36 x 0.25 m.

Pres. height 0.67, width 0.32, thickness 0.16 m.

Found in the Tsatsaronis plot at Ayios Georgios.

8 - MN 29: Unfluted inscribed colonnette, with a relief frontal figure, clad in himation, in a shallow rectangular frame. The right hand is folded on the chest, face extremely worn. Moulding on the lower side. Under the relief the inscription:

-ΑΦΙΑC+PHC[TA	-Ἀφιάς <χ>ρησ[τὰ]
XAIPE ---]CO	χαῖρε ---]σο

Height 0.62, diam. 0.10 m. Found at Kaprianou .

For the name Αφιάς-δος, cf. PAPE'S - BENSELER 1863-1870, 180. ZGUSTA 1964, 74 §66-16 and 81 § 66-40. Cf. also Αφύασις, ZGUSTA 1964, § 128. For the origin of the name, cf. ROBERT 1948, 90, who rejects the possibility of eastern provenance since the name, although widespread in Asia Minor, is also attested in Athens (cf. BECHTEL 1902, 66). ROBERT 1963b, 348, 39. For the origin of the name, see FRISK 1960, I, 126 (Αππα), 195 (Αφιάς), 127. On the Aegean islands it is attested as Απφάριον in Cyprus (1st c. A.D.), Rhodes (imperial period), Samos (1st-2nd c. A.D.), as Απφία and Απφιάς in Thasos (imperial period), cf. *LGPN* I. In Attica the name Κλαυδία Ἐαρφειν ἐκ Μελιτέων, is attested, cf. VON MOOCK 1998, n° 420 (Antonine period), as well as the types Απφία, Απφιανός, Ἀπφιον, cf. *LGPN* II (2nd-3rd c. A.D.). In south Italy the types Ἄπφη and Απφιάς are attested, cf. *LGPN* IIIA (Roman period). In Central Greece the type Ἄππιος is known, cf. *LGPN* IIIB.

9 - MN 31: Almost intact stele. Three frontal figures inside a rectangular frame. Extensive injuries on the marble surface, especially on the faces. Possible traces of an inscription under the relief.

Height 0.49, width 0.42, thickness 0.08 m.

Found in Lakki, at Yonia.

10 - MN 36: Stele, with part of the top missing. Two very worn frontal figures, right hand on the chest. Initially the stele was the lid of a cinerary casket.

Pres. height 0.34, width 0.265, thickness 0.08 m.

Unknown provenance.

11 - MN 39: Lower part of an inscribed stele. Two frontal figures, clad in himatia, preserved from the waist downwards. Between them stands a child on a stool, held by the hand from the figure on the right. Inscription on the low part worn to illegibility .

Pres. height 0.26, width 0.25, thickness 0.06 m.

Found in the P. Kapiti plot at Votilos.

12 - MN 40: Part of a relief. Frontal figure, very worn, preserved to the knees, right hand on the chest.

Pres. height 0.35, width 0.17, thickness 0.12 m.

Found at Ayios Ioannis, Votilos.

13 - MN 45: Almost complete square stele, with some damage at the lower right corner. Two frontal figures, clad in himatia, inside a square frame.

Height 0.31, width 0.27, thickness 0.08 m.

Unknown provenance.

14 - MN 47: Lower part of an inscribed stele, broken at the right. Lower part of two frontal figures in a rectangular frame, clad in himatia. Under the relief the inscription:

ΑΚΚΛΗΠΙΑΔΗ ΧΡΗ[ΣΤΕ]	Ἀσκληπιάδη χροη[στὲ]
ΧΑΙΡΕ	χαῖρε

Pres. height 0.26, width 0.32, thickness 0.09 m.

Unknown provenance.

The name Ἀσκληπιάδης occurs frequently in the Aegean islands, cf. *LGPN* I. In Veroia, cf. ΤΑΤΑΚΙ 1988, 314. According to RAMSAY 1897, 489, although it is a common pagan name, it is also used by Christians. It is also attested as name used by slaves, *supra* n. 74, since (VON MOOCK 1998, 84) slaves are often placed under the protection of certain divinities, like Asklepios.

15. MN 51: Almost complete square stele, with damaged frame. Figure set inside a frame, right hand on the chest. Face broken off. On the right side of the figure small rectangular slot.

Height 0.285, width 0.25, thickness 0.11 m.

Unknown provenance.

16. MN 52: Upper part of a stele, with a flat top. Female figure preserved to the waist, clad in himation, with the right hand bent forward, holding the himation. Rough “melon”-hairstyle.

Pres. height 0.23, width 0.21, thickness 0.055 m.

Found at Panagia Spiliani.

17. MN 53: Inscribed stele. Upper part missing. Bearded figure inside an arched frame depicted frontally, with the right hand on the chest. Under the relief the inscription:

.ΕΩΚΡΑΤΟΥ	Λ]εωκράτου
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Pres. height 0.46, width 0.25, thickness 0.17 m.

Found in the house of A. Yannakis at Langadi.

See PFUHL - MÖBIUS, n° 239, who completes the inscription as Ν]ΕΩΚΡΑΤΟΥ. The name Νεωκράτης is not attested in the Aegean islands, cf. *LGPN* I. It is found in Athens as Νεοκράτης and the Peloponnese, cf. *LGPN* II, IIIA.

The name Λεωκράτης is common in the Aegean islands and Central Greece, cf. PAPE'S - BENSELER 1867-1870, 793, *LGPN* I (Delos, Euboea, Kea, Samos, Thasos), *LGPN* III B (Roman period). For the name, cf. DORNSEIFF - HAUSER 1978, 171, while Νεωκράτης is not attested.

18 - MN 54: Incomplete square stele. Oblique breakage in the lower part. Two frontal figures. On the left a bearded man, preserved to the waist, with hand on chest. The female figure on the right is preserved to the legs.

Pres. height 0.36, width 0.33, thickness 0.14 m.

Unknown provenance.

19 - MN 55: Inscribed, almost complete stele. Frontal figure set in an arched frame, with the hand folded on the chest. Face broken off. Various breakages at the sides. Under the relief traces of eroded inscription in two lines.

Pres. height 0.47, width 0.26, thickness 0.10 m.

Unknown provenance.

20 - MN 56: Inscribed stele in two pieces. In an arched frame a frontal figure with the right hand folded on the chest.

The relief is broken across the legs. Damages, mainly on the face. Broken off on the upper left corner.

Under the relief the inscription:

ΡΟΔΩ[Ν]	Ρόδω[ν]
ΧΡΗCΤΕ	χρηστὲ
ΧΑΙΡΕ	χαῖρε

On the back a recent inscription:

ΑΝΩΚΟΔΟΜΗΘΗ Η ΙΕΡΑ ΜΟΝΗ/ΤΗΣ ΘΕΟΤΟΚΟΥ ΣΠΗΛΙΑΝΗΣ/ ΖΗΛΩ ΚΑΙ ΠΡΟΣΤΑΣΙΑ Ν. ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΙΔΟΥ/ΔΙΑ ΤΟΥ ΑΡΧΙΤΕΚΤΟΝΟΣ Φ. ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΟΥ/1879.

(=The holy monastery of Theotokos Spiliani was rebuilt by the ardour and protection of N. Apostolides, by the architect F. Dimitriou 1879).

Height 0.74, width 0.20, thickness 0.17 m.

Found in the old belfry of Panagia Spiliani.

For the name *Ρόδων*, cf. *LGPN* I. It is often attested on the islands and especially Rhodes.

In *PAPE'S - BENSELER* 1867-1870, 1313, the female name Ροδῶ-οῦς is attested. For the name Ρόδη, cf. *TATAKI* 1988, 328, n° 563. According to *VON MOOCK* 1998, 84, the names denoting origin, like *Ρόδη*, constitute the oldest group of slave names. *Idem* n° 195: Ρόδη/ Σερβελίου/ Μειλησία (late Antonine period).

21 - MN 57: Square inscribed stele, broken at the top. In a frame two frontal figures with the right hand on the chest. Surface considerably damaged. Inscription partially legible:

Z(ΣΤ;)ΟΝ (or I)	---ζον/ι
[ΧΡ]ΗCΤΕ ΧΑΙΡΕ	χρηστὲ χαῖρε

Round epsilon.

Height 0.41, width 0.365, thickness 0.10 m.

Unknown provenance.

22 - MN 58: Square, inscribed stele, top broken. The relief gets narrower towards the top. Inside a rectangular frame three figures: on the left a male frontal figure with the right hand on the chest and on the right two smaller figures, possibly a female and a child. Defaced. Under the relief worn inscription in three lines:

Κ Α ΤΩ Κ Μ Α Ε Ι Τ Ο Υ ---	Κα<κ>ῶ(ν ἀδδάκετ ετιτετί)κμ(ενος) α(δ)είτου
ΝΤΩΤΑΧΡΩCΟΥΛΗC ---	ζῶ]ντω(ν) τᾶ(ς ἐν) Χρ(ιστ)ῶ σ(υνδ)οῦλης [καί]
T - ΚΟΜΒΟCΟΥCΩΤΗΡΙΑ	τ[οῦ] Κομβόσου σωτηρία

Pres. height 0.47, width 0.39, thickness 0.135 m.

Unknown provenance.

In PAPE'S - BENSELER 1863-1870, 691 the names Κουβάβος, Κόμβαφης, Κόμβη and Κόμβουτις are attested. For similar examples *supra*, n. 70.

23 - MN 59: Inscribed funerary relief, broken at the top. Tenon on lower part, to fix on the base. Two frontal figures: the female on the left side, has the right hand bent at the waist and the left higher on the chest. Her legs are slightly apart. The male figure on the right, has the right hand on the chest and the left lowered. Under the relief, inscription in three lines:

ΔΕΙΟΝΥ	ΗΛΕΙΟΣ trident	Δειονυ	Ἡλειος
CEIA XP[H]	[X]PHCTE Ϝ (ivy leaf)	σειά χρ[η	χ]ρηστὲ
CTA XA[IPE]		στὰ χα[ιρε	

Pres. height 0.645, width 0.29, thickness 0.085 m.

Found at Tavla tou Gialou.

See *IG XII*, 1, n° 147, where the male name is transcribed as Ἡλειόδ[ωρος], the trident is noted but not the ivy leaf. PEEK, *supra* n. 75, n° 7, reads the male name once more as Heliodorus, misses the trident but notes the ivy leaf. The inscription with the name as Heliodorus is also referred to in *LGPN I*. The name Ἡλιος, cf. *LGPN I*, is attested on Crete (4th cent. A.D.), Cyprus (imperial period), Rhodes (170 B.C.), Tenos (imperial period). ΤΑΤΑΚΙ 1988, 319 n° 248 (two names as *cognomina* in the 2nd c. A.D. in Veroia). GOUNAROPOULOU - HATZOPOULOU 1998, 300, n° 304, in Thessaloniki. SOLIN 1996, 84, 299 (42 slaves names).

The name Διονυσία is frequently attested on the Aegean islands, cf. *LGPN I*. In this type - with ετ - is found on an inscription of Nisyros, cf. *supra* n° 22, dated in the Roman Imperial period.

24 - MN 67: Fragment of a funerary relief. Part of a frontal figure clad in himation, with the right hand on the chest and the left lowered.

Pres. height 0.12, width 0.09, thickness 0.05 m.

Found in the Municipal football field.

25 - MN 68: Part of a funerary relief: a himation-clad figure – from the chest to the knees – is preserved from the left side of the relief. Right hand on the chest, left hand lowered.

Pres. height 0.22, width 0.18, thickness 0.07 m.

Unknown provenance.

26 - MN 97: Double sided funerary relief, due to reuse. Surface extensively corroded and seriously damaged.

In the first use, part of a figure clad in richly folded peplos and himation, in low relief, dated to the 5th cent. B.C. The stele initially comprised two more sections at top and bottom, not preserved. In the second use, four standing frontal figures side by side, on the back of the stele, within a rectangular frame. The right arm bent, hand on the left shoulder. The left hand with palm open resting on the thigh. The left hand of the second figure on the left is slightly bent over the belly.

Height 0.56, width 0.625, thickness 0.13 m.

Found in the Kouvis property at Ai Yiannis.

For the 5th cent. relief, cf. a similar relief from Eleusis, BOARDMAN 1989, fig. 144 (440-430 B.C.).

27 - MN 143: Part of a funerary relief, surface very worn. Two frontal figures. On the right side a female torso. On the left a child on a stool, raises its left hand to the front of the waist of the female figure.

Pres. height 0.31, width 0.24, thickness 0.08 m.

Found in Langadi.

28 - MN 151: Funerary relief, lower part missing. Inside a rectangular frame three frontal figures, right hand bent at the elbow, holding the left forearm. The central figure must be male, because it is larger than the other two. The figure on the left is probably the female and on the right the child, because it is the smallest of all three. Damages on the frame and the faces.

Pres. height 0.38, width 0.44, thickness 0.11 m.

Found in the ruins of the Ketses house at Panagia Potamitissa, Mandraki.

29 - MN 163: Lower part of an inscribed funerary relief. A small part of the relief preserves the feet of two frontal figures. Underneath, illegible inscription:

ΗΛΕ ---

Pres. length 0.28 m. pres. height 0.13 m. depth 0.10 m.

Found in the Aristom. Vrouzos plot, inside Paleokastro.

30 - MN 167: Lower part of an inscribed funerary relief. Part of a frontal figure is preserved from the waist downwards. Underneath the inscription:

EYTYXE Εὔτυχε

A moulding is cut under the inscription and a similar one at the back of the stele, where the surface is smoothed. The stele is broken at the sides.

Pres. height 0.17, width 0.145, thickness 0.045 m.

Unknown provenance.

For the name Εὔτυχος, frequently attested in the Aegean islands, cf. *LGPN* I. This is its first appearance on Nisyros. Cf. ΤΑΤΑΚΙ 1988, 386, for the new names of the Roman period, combining the prefix εὐ- with the words καλὸς και τύχη. According to SOLIN 1996, the name was also used by slaves (136 names).

31 - MN 171: Part of an inscribed funerary relief: On the left the feet of a frontal figure are preserved. Underneath almost completely effaced inscription in two lines:

-----XPH -----χρη
----- [στὰ/έ χαῖρε

Pres. height 0.155, width 0.085, thickness 0.07 m.

Unknown provenance.

32 - MN 182: Part of the lower right corner of a funerary relief. A frontal figure is preserved from the waist downwards, clad in chiton and himation.

Pres. height 0.31, width 0.23, thickness 0.075 m.

Found at Langadi, NW of Panagia Spiliani.

33 - MN 222: Upper part of an inscribed funerary relief with a flat top. On the upper part a cross within a relief gable. Below, framed inscription in five lines:

+ΕΝΘΑΚΑΤΑΚΙΤΕ	Ἐνθα κατάκιτε
ΒΙΤΑΛΙΑΓΥΝΕΗΡΜΙ	Βιταλία γύνε Ἡρμί
ΟΥΜΗΤΗΡCΑΜΒΑ[Τ]	ου μήτηρ Σαμβα[τί
ΟΥΤΟΥΕΥΛ[Α.....]	ου τοῦ εὐλ[αβεστά]
ΤΟΥΠ[--	του π[ρεσβυτέρου]

Pres. height 0.425 width 0.445 thickness 0.085 m.

Found in the Taxiarchis enclosure wall.

For the completion of the inscription, cf. HANTON 1927/8, 90. For the hellenized Latin name Βιτάλια, *supra* n. 72. It is rather rare in the Aegean islands, as it is only attested on Samos, the name Βιτάλη (6th c. A.D.), cf. *LGPN* I. In PAPE'S - BENSELER 1863-1870, 213, only the male names, Βιταλιανός, Βιτέλλιος, Βιτάλιος are listed. It does not appear in the ZGUSTA list for Asia Minor. For Βιτιλιανός in Macedonia, cf. GOUNAROPOULOU - HATZOPOULOU 1998, 367, n° 422.

In contrast Ἐρμίας (Ἡρμίου) is a very common name in the islands and Rhodes, cf. *LGPN* I. According to ΤΑΤΑΚΙ 1988, 417-418, names inspired by divinities, like Hermas, become extremely popular in the Roman period. In Rome and Athens they were frequently used by slaves and freedmen, cf. SOLIN 1996, 290 (37 slaves names). For the Jewish name Σαμβάτιος, *supra* n. 73. In the Aegean islands it is attested as Σαβάτων, Σαββάτιος, Σαμβάθης, Σαμβατοῦς, cf. *LGPN* I.

34 - MN 226: Cylindrical altar with mouldings at top and bottom, with breaks. In a concave arched niche a frontal figure, clad in himation, with a worn face. Probably with erased inscription.

Height 0.65, diam. 0.049 m.

Unknown provenance.

35 - MN 230: Rectangular altar with a relief. The bottom hollowed due to reuse as a basin. Lower corner broken. On the front seven frontal figures, one of them a child, right hand on the chest. The third figure from the left, is probably female, because it is shorter than the others. Also female must be the two figures at the far right because of the hairstyle.

Height 0.60, width 0.86, thickness 0.68 m.

Found in the Papisiminis and Karis plots at Ai Yannis.

36 - MN 236: Cylindrical inscribed altar, the base and parts of the sides missing. In front three frontal figures, very worn, and at the back illegible inscription:

Ζωσίμη π[ο]	Ζωσίμη π[ολυ]
[λύ]θρηνε	θρήνιστ[ε
	[Μ]ενε---

Pres. height 0.40, diam. 0.33 m.

Found in the church of Ayia Triada.

See PFUHL - MÖBIUS 1977a, n° 670. *IG* XII, 3, n° 156.

37 - Rectangular altar, right part missing. On one side, within an arched frame, three frontal figures: a male and two females, clad in chiton and himatia, with the right hand on the chest and the left lowered on the thigh.

Underneath the inscription:

Ἐκάτων	Ἐπαφροδείτη χρη	Ἐπεγαθώ
χρησταί χέρε	στά χέρε εὐθύ	χέρε
	οὐδὶς ἀθ(ά)νατος	

Pres. height 0.52, length 0.53, width 0.47 m.

Found in the ruined church of Ayios Ioannis at Ai Yannis.

See, JACOPI 1932/3, 541, fig. 85, 86, n° 1. PFUHL - MÖBIUS 1977a, 643. The name *Ἐπεγαθώ* is not frequently encountered in the Aegean islands- besides Nisyros it is also attested on Paros-, cf. *LGPN I*. The male name *Ἐπάγαθος* is more common. The name *Ἐπαφρόδιτος-ίτη*, is popular in this period and later on, (ie. Athens, VEES 1941, 128 n° 66), *Ἐκάτων* as well. In Rome 117 slaves are registered with the name *Ἐπαφρόδιτος*, cf. SOLIN 1996, 282-283, and 42 persons with the name *Ἐπάγαθος*, 200.

38 - Square inscribed stele, lower part missing. On one side within an arched frame two frontal figures, the male bearded, himation-clad and the female wearing a chiton, with the right hand bend at the waist and the left lowered at the thigh. Underneath the inscription:

Μάρκος Αὐρήλιος	Σώζουσα
Χρυσόγονος Κλείτωνος	χρηστά
Βράσειος χρηστὲ χαῖρε	χαῖρε

Height 0.615, length 0.45, width 0.115 m.

Found in the ruined church of Ayios Ioannis in Ai Yannis.

See, JACOPI 1932/3, 544, fig. 87, n° 2. For the name *Σώζουσα*, *supra* n. 74. For the name *Χρυσόγονος*, cf. *LGPN I*.

39 - Rectangular inscribed stele, intact, with breaks on all four sides. Within an arched frame two frontal figures: a bearded, himation-clad male, and a female wearing chiton and himation. The male has the right hand bent at the shoulder and the left lowered on the thigh. The female has the left hand bent over the chest and the right hand on the thigh. Underneath the inscription:

Εὐτυχαῖ[ος]	Πιθάνης
χρηστὲ	χρηστὴ
χαῖρε	χαῖρε

Pres. height 0.53, length 0.325, width 0.07 m.

Found in the ruined church of Ayios Ioannis at Ai Yannis.

See, JACOPI 1932/3, 546, fig. 88, n° 3. The name *Εὐτυχαῖος* is rather rare in the Aegean islands, being only attested on Nisyros, while the name *Πιθάνης* besides Nisyros is also attested on Chios, cf. *LGPN I*.

40 - Rectangular inscribed stele, damaged on three sides. Reused ancient architectural element with moulding preserved on one side. Within a rectangular frame three frontal figures: a bearded, himation-clad male and two females wearing chiton and himation. The first two figures have the right hand bent at the shoulder and the left on the thigh. The third figure has the left hand bent over

the chest and the right on the thigh. Under the male figure the following inscription:

Ζώσι
 με χϞη
 στὲ χαῖ
 ρε

Pres. height 0.685, length 0.46, width 0.12 m.

Found in the ruined church of Ayios Ioannis at Ai Yannis.

See, JACOPI 1932/3, 547, fig. 89, n° 4. PFUHL - MÖBIUS 1977a. 667. In Rome the name is registered 85 times in the list of the slave names, cf. SOLIN 1996, 438. The names Ζώσιμος-ιμη are frequently attested on the Aegean islands, especially in the Roman Imperial period, cf. *LGPN* I.

41 - Rectangular relief, almost intact, with minor damages. Within a frame three figures: a male, a female and a child on a stool in the middle. The male has the right hand bent at the shoulder and the left hanging by the thigh. The female has the left hand bent over the chest and the right by the thigh. The child has both hands hanging at the sides. The surface is corroded.

On the base of the rectangular slab an inscription of the early roman imperial period is cut: ΑΙΝΗΣΩΝ/ ΑΔΡΩΝΟΣ (Α with a broken bar, Ω open, Σ with straight bars, letters with apices). Height 0.70, length 0.41, width 0.13 m.

Found in the ruined church of Ayios Ioannis at Ai Yannis.

See, JACOPI 1932/3, 548, fig. 90, n° 5.

42 - E396 Rectangular fragmentary relief. Within a frame, female frontal figure, with right hand bent at the shoulder and the left stretched on the thigh. Surface corroded.

Length 0.25, width 0.20 m.

Found in the ruined church of Ayios Ioannis at Ai Yannis.

See, JACOPI 1932/3, 549, fig. 91, n° 6.

43 - Rectangular inscribed funerary relief, top missing. Two frontal figures, male and female, preserved from the waist downwards. Surface corroded. Inscribed:

Λεοτα

Found in the ruined church of Ayios Ioannis at Ai Yannis.

See, JACOPI 1932/3, 549, fig. 91, n° 7. In the Aegean islands the names Λεοντᾶς, Λεοντῖς, Λεόντις, Λεόντιος, Λεοντίδας and Λεοντίων, are attested, the last two on Nisyros as well, cf. *LGPN* I. In PAPE'S - BENSELER 1867-1870, beyond the name Λεοντᾶς the name Λεόννατος is also registered. For the name Λεονᾶς, cf. TATAKI 1988, 322, n° 369. The above names are also common in the rest of Greece, cf. *LGPN* II, IIIA-B.

44 - Cylindrical inscribed altar. In front a wreath in relief and underneath the inscription:

Οὐκ ἀδάκρυτος ὁ τύμβος / ὄν Ἐρμιῆς ποῖσεν ὁ προεσβύτερος /
 Ἐρμεῖ παιδὶ ἰδίῳ ὕστατα / δῶρα τάδε
 πέμπτον πληρώσας // δὲ καὶ (εἰκοστὸν) λυκάβαντα
 τὸν στυγνὸν λάθας ἤλυθεν / ἰς λιμένα.

Height 0.54 m. diam. 0.41 m.
 Found at Skali. See, *IG XII*, 3, n° 107.
 See also n. 100.

45 - MN 264: Lower part of a funerary relief. Within a frame, standing figure clad in himation, down to the knees. The lower part of the stele preserves a moulding and part of the tenon for fixing onto the base. Right side of the stele missing. Gray stone.

Pres. height 0.32, width 0.23, thickness 0.09 m.
 Found at Molyvi.

46 - MN 265: Funerary relief, top missing. Inside a frame standing male figure in himation, head missing, right hand on chest. Fragmentary inscription:

--- IOC+PHCTO --- ---]ιος <χ>ρηστὸ[ς χαῖρε]

Pres. height 0.36, width 0.22, thickness 0.09 m.
 Handed in by Orsaris, from Ayios Gregorios, above the helicopter landing pad.

47 - MN 266: Upper part of a funerary relief. Left side missing. Himation-clad figure, with right hand on chest, head missing.

Pres. height 0.25, width 0.24, thickness 0.145 m.
 Handed in by Avtzis from Piaouli.

48 - MN 267: Lower part of a funerary relief. Within a frame male figure in short chiton and high soft boots. On the right of the figure a four-footed animal. Underneath, the inscription:

OKIPI-ζ	Ο Κύρι[ο]ς
ΦΙΛΟΙ Υ	Φιλο[κ]υ
ΝΗΓΕ	νηγέ

Pres. height 0.27, width 0.27, thickness 0.095/0.10 m.
 Handed in by Avtzis from Piaouli.

For the name Κύριος, *supra* n. 110. Also for the designation κύριος, cf. ROBERT 1978, 413, where the wife names her husband: ... τῷ ἰδίῳ ἀνδρὶ καὶ κυρίῳ. On an inscription from Lydia, cf. PETZL 1996, 9-11, n° 4, the designation κυρία is interpreted by the argument that the inscription was dedicated by a slave or a freedman of the person honoured. It is obviously used as an indication that the subject belongs to the upper class. Cf. also BERGES - NOLLÉ 2000, 234, n. 17, where the designation of the husband as κύριος ἀνὴρ is a very common practice in Cappadocia. ROBERT 1936, 233-237, considers it an expression of politeness and not an indication of heroization.

49 - MT 176: Upper part of a rectangular relief with a broken gabled top. A relief in two tiers. On the upper tier a funerary bust and on the lower one two standing frontal figures. Surface worn.

Pres. height 0.76, width 0.62, thickness 0.16 m.
 Found at Ayia Anastasia in Kampos, Megalo Chorio in Telos.

See, SUSINI 1963/4, 247-261, esp. 270. E. Kaninia, 'Αρχαία πλαστική από την Τήλο: μια προοπτική συνοπτικής καταγραφής', *AAA* (in press), n° 7.

50 - Rectangular altar with four himation-clad figures in relief. Cavetto moulding on the base. Underneath the relief, inscription, denoting the names of the deceased and the greeting ΧΡΗΣΤΕ/Α ΧΑΙΡΕ. The altar is broken on the top.

ΚΑΡΠΙ[ΜΕ	ΔΙΟ[ΝΥ]CΙΑ	ΑΡΤΕΜΕΙCΙΑ
ΧΡΗCΤΕ ΧΑΙΡΕ	ΧΡΗCΤΑ	ΧΡΗCΤΑ ΧΑΙΡΕ

Κάρπι[με	Διο[νυ]σία	Αρτεμεισία
χρηστὲ χαίρει	χρηστὰ	χρηστὰ χαίρει

Pres. height 0.67 m. width 0.50 m. pres. length 0,65 m.

For the name Διονυσία, see *supra* n° 23 and n. 74. Κάρπιμος (;), see *LGPN I*. The name Κάρπιμος is not frequently encountered in the Aegean islands. The name is attested only on Paros (3rd cent. A.D.), cf. *LGPN I*, while on Nisyros another name with the same root is registered Καρπιμέρος. The name is also found in Boeotia, quite early (5th cent. B.C.), cf. *LGPN IIIB*. On the other hand Αρτεμεισία is a very common name all over Greece, especially on the Aegean islands, and the type with -ει-, is also attested in the Roman Imperial period. In Nisyros, nevertheless, it is registered for the first time.

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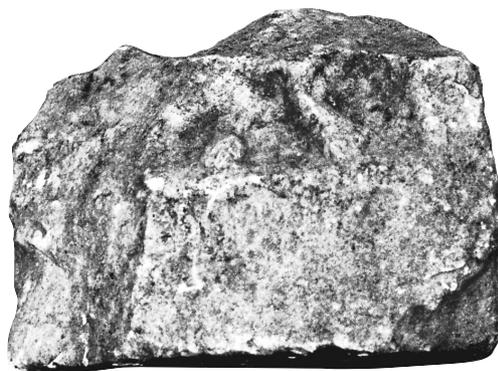
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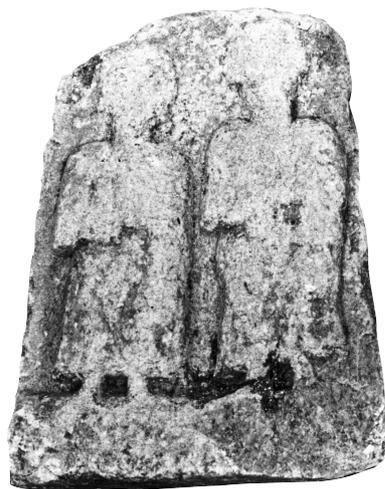
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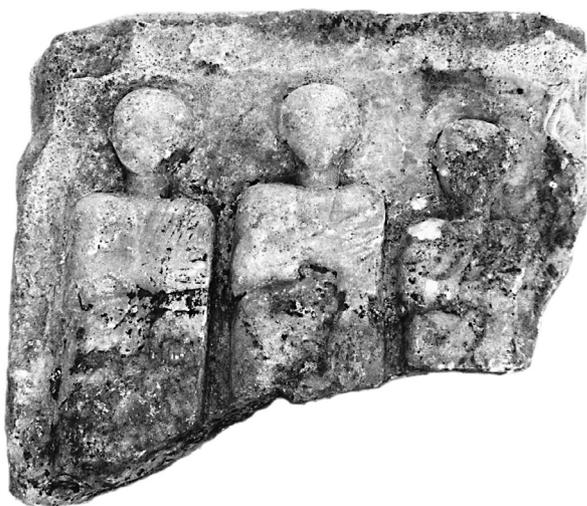
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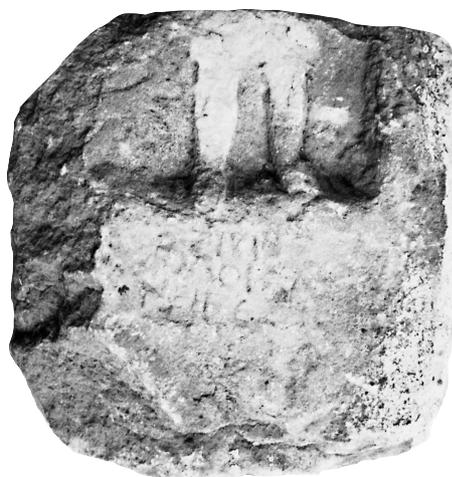
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ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

ΤΑΦΙΚΑ ΜΝΗΜΕΙΑ ΤΗΣ ΥΣΤΕΡΗΣ ΡΩΜΑΪΚΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΡΩΤΟΧΡΙΣΤΙΑΝΙΚΗΣ ΠΕΡΙΟΔΟΥ ΑΠΟ ΤΗ ΝΙΣΥΡΟ

Η Νίσυρος, μικρό νησί της Δωδεκανήσου με φτωχή γλυπτική παραγωγή την κλασική και ελληνιστική εποχή, υπήρξε στην ύστερη ρωμαϊκή περίοδο ο τόπος κατασκευής μιας ομάδας πενήντα αναγλύφων επιτυμβίων στηλών, αρκετά ομοιογενούς ως προς την τυπολογία και την τεχνική κατασκευής. Πρόκειται για στήλες αμελούς τεχνοτροπίας με απεικόνιση ιστάμενων, μετωπικών ενδεδυμένων μορφών, με το ένα χέρι λυγισμένο στο στήθος, που χαρακτηρίζονται από σχηματοποίηση και απλοποίηση των εκφραστικών μέσων, σύμφωνα με την γλυπτική παράδοση του 3^{ου} αι. μ.Χ. Λίγες είναι ενεπίγραφες και φέρουν τον συνήθη χαιρετισμό ΧΡΗΣΤΕ/Α ΧΑΙΡΕ συνοδευόμενο από το όνομα του νεκρού. Τα ανάγλυφα έχουν λαξευθεί σε στήλες και αρχιτεκτονικά μέλη παλαιότερων περιόδων, σε δεύτερη χρήση, λόγω της απουσίας μαρμάρου από το νησί.

Η ξαφνική αυτή άνθηση της μαρμαρογλυπτικής στη Νίσυρο δημιούργησε ποικίλα ερωτήματα, δεδομένου ότι ανάλογα ανάγλυφα είναι σπάνια στη Δωδεκάνησο και στον Αιγαϊακό χώρο γενικότερα. Η άγνοια των επιγραφών τους και η εύρεση μιας φρυγικής κατάρας, καθώς και λέξεων και γραμμάτων που υποδηλώνουν την ύπαρξη Χριστιανών μεταξύ των κατόχων των στηλών, οδήγησε στη διατύπωση της υπόθεσης ότι τα ανάγλυφα είναι προϊόντα εργαστηρίου επίλυδων καλλιτεχνών, πιθανώς από τη Μικρά Ασία, όπου βρίσκονται τα πλησιέστερα παράλληλά τους, σε μια εποχή που η νέα θρησκεία εξαπλώνεται ραγδαία στην αυτοκρατορία.

RIASSUNTO

MONUMENTI FUNERARI DI EPOCA TARDO ROMANA E PROTOCRISTIANA DA NISYROS

Nisyros, piccola isola del Dodecaneso con scarsa produzione di glittica in epoca classica ed ellenistica, è stata in epoca romana il luogo di produzione di un gruppo di cinquanta rilievi funerari su stele, abbastanza omogenei sia per tipologia sia per tecnica di realizzazione. Si tratta di stele di tecnica non raffinata con raffigurazione di personaggi stanti, frontali e ammantati, con un braccio piegato sul petto, che si caratterizzano per la schematizzazione e la semplicità dei mezzi espressivi, in conformità con la tradizione scultorea del III sec. d.C. Poche sono iscritte e recano l'usuale saluto ΧΡΗΣΤΕ/Α ΧΑΙΡΕ seguito dal nome del defunto. I rilievi sono stati lavorati su stele e membri architettonici di periodi precedenti, in reimpiego, a causa della carenza di marmo sull'isola. Questa improvvisa fioritura di scultura in marmo a Nisyros ha posto diverse domande, dato che tali rilievi sono rari nel Dodecaneso e in generale nell'Egeo. La lettura delle loro epigrafi e la scoperta di una maledizione frigia come anche di parole e lettere che indicano l'esistenza di Cristiani tra i proprietari delle stele, ha portato all'ipotesi che i rilievi sono prodotti di un laboratorio di artigiani esterni, probabilmente dell'Asia minore, dove si trovano i confronti più vicini, in un'epoca in cui la nuova religione si espandeva con forza nell'Impero.