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BIFAO 111 (2011), p. 371-384

Abd El-Ghaffar M. Wagdy, Hassan A. El-Ebiary

New Funerary Stelae from Kom Abou Bellou.

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New Funerary Stelae from Kom Abou Bellou

ABD EL-GHAFFAR M. WAGDY, HASSAN A. EL-EBIARY

This is a publication of eleven funerary stelae, some fragmentary, that have been recently unearthed during the recent excavations in Kom Abou Bellou, the ancient Terenouthis (season 2006-2007), under the supervision of Abd El-Ghaffar Wagdy. The eleven limestone stelae are now deposited in the museum store of the Giza pyramid's area. The inscriptions have been studied by Hassan A. El-Ebiary.

KOM ABOU BELLOU

The site of Kom Abou Bellou is the necropolis of the region of ancient Terenouthis (nowadays El Tarrana). It lies on the edge of the Western Desert on the road to Wadi al Natrun. It is about 4 km south of the Kafr Daoud station, at a distance about 70 km, northwest from Cairo. The modern town of al-Khatatba is a few kilometres south of the site, which is situated in the midst of a locality full of limestone quarries.

The collection of objects published here is rich and displays a great variety of positions of the human figures (standing, sitting, lying on couches and mattresses, legs extended or crossed), of drapery and of decorative art in dressing and hair arrangement. The deceased is often accompanied by the jackal of Anubis. Some of these banqueting scenes were carefully produced and coloured with red and black ink. In general, all the stelae present traces of colour.

Some representations in this collection are particularly uncommon, such as the family group carved on Stela 3 (fig. 5). The stelae can be divided into two groups, according to the technique: a few are carved in bas-relief and a majority in sunken relief.

BIFAO 111 (2011), p. 371-384 Abd El-Ghaffar M. Wagdy, Hassan A. El-Ebiary
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The stelae show a combination of two iconographical traditions, arranged according to a compromise to suit the demands of a mixed population (Egyptian-Greek). Occasionally, however, the balance tips in favour of a more purely Greek representation.

All the funerary stelae published here were found outside the tombs, following looting by thieves who took the objects from the tombs and threw away the funerary stelae. Nevertheless, the graves unearthed still retained remains of the deceased and various objects related to the graves, like Aphrodite statues, oil lamps and pottery.

Stela 1 [FIG. 1]

Reg. No. 1398, Exc. No. 12/2006 – H. 24 cm; W. 25 cm; Th. 5 cm.

This is a square limestone stela, of irregular shape, with rough edges, damaged on the left side and on the bottom where a piece has been broken away. Inside a frame with a rounded top painted in black is a representation of a full-faced woman in low sunken relief, reclining on a mattress spread upon a couch. Her raised right arm holds a *patera* and she leans her left elbow on the topmost of two rounded pillows. She sports a common hair style, and is dressed in a *chiton* and a *himation*. One end of the *himation* is folded around the left arm. Her right leg, represented in profile, is crossed above the left one, of which we can only see the toes, the knee slightly rising accordingly.

Near the human figure is the design of a stela, without any visible inscription.[1] Beneath the couch, which has a decorative motive and two stands coloured in black, several objects are depicted, painted in red with a black outline. A semi-oval three-legged table stands on the right, without any dish on it. There are two amphorae, one on the left and the other in the middle, on a stand, with a ladle. The lower part of the slab, which might have had a funerary inscription, has been damaged and broken away.

Stela 2 [FIG. 2]

Reg. No. 1396, Exc. No. 10/2006 – H. 37.5 cm; W. 37.5 cm.

This is a square stone, with an architectural motive in *bas-relief*, in the form of a Greek temple front, framed by two Egyptian columns with papyriform capitals. The square Egyptian abaci are clearly represented, supporting a triangular pediment. In the centre is a full-faced man, reclining on a couch. His right arm is outstretched and holds a cup, while the left hand rests on two pillows. His hair is arranged around the forehead in ridges. He gives the impression of a firm-looking middle-aged man.

1 For other examples of this pattern, see A. ABD EL AL, J.-Cl. GRENIER, G. WAGNER, *Stèles funéraires de Kôm Abou Billou, RGC* 55, 1985, p. 16, no. 24 and pl. 6; S.A.A EL NASSERY, G. WAGNER, « Nouvelles stèles de Kom Abu Bellou », *BIFAO* 78, 1978, p. 245 no. 23 and pl. LXXV, p. 250, no. 37 and pl. LXXIX, p. 253, no. 46 and pl. LXXXII.

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He wears the *chiton* and *himation*, one end of which is folded round the waist and drawn over the left shoulder. The position of his legs is similar to Stela 1.

The most interesting feature about this stela is the perfect condition in which the drapery is preserved. It keeps its beautiful original colours which consists of black as background on both sides of the stela, and in the stands which supports a couch, yellow for the stand where a Jackal of Anubis sits up, as well as the triangular pediment, and red used as background for the banquet scene, and the pedestal of the columns. The painter used a brownish colour as background of the man.

Beneath the couch is a relief of an offering scene. On the right is a three-legged table supporting a dish, on the left a bunch of flowers and in the middle an amphora on a stand. The lower part of the stela bears a Greek inscription in black-coloured letters, indicating the name of the deceased and the date of his death.

Inscription

[1] Τίτος Ἡρωνος (ἐτῶν) μθ	*Titos son of Heron, (aged) 49 years,*
[2] φιλόπιλος (ἔτους) ις Μεσορη ιζ	*friend to his friends, year 16, Mesore 17.*

Comments

1. Τίτος is a Roman name (praenomen) which appears in papyri mostly during the 2nd and 3rd centuries A.D.[2] It has, until now, never occurred in funerary stelae from Kom Abou Bellou but, in a few cases, other Roman names appear in the documentation of the site.[3]
2. The abbreviation L which signifies ἔτος is used to denote the age of the deceased and the regnal year of his/her death. As J. Zelazowski and A. Twardecki noted, only five mentions of this abbreviation have been listed outside of Egypt and they are related to Egypt, indicating that they were used by Egyptians.[4] While the year of the reign of the Emperor is usually given, the emperor's name is never added.
3. φιλόπιλος: written for φιλόφιλος. There are a few occurrences of this writing on the funerary stelae from Kom Abou Bellou.[5] Most of the inscriptions from Kom Abou Bellou use the form φιλόφιλος.[6]
4. The date of death is 17 Mesore. There are at least 10 indications of this month in the funerary stelae from Kom Abou Bellou.[7]

2 *NB* 439. E. g. *BGU* IV, 1104; *P.Bub*. I, 4, 3.

3 See S.A.A El Nassery, G. Wagner, *op. cit.*, p. 238, no. 4 (*Gaius Iulius Phrates* et *Gaius Iulius Pareilis*); J.G. Milne, *Greek Inscriptions*, CGC Oxford, 1905, no. 27537 and no. 27563; *SEG* III, 576; *SB* I, 84; *SB* 1138; *SEG* VIII, 501.

4 J. Zelazowski, A. Twardecki, « A New Funerary Stela in the Collection of the National Museum in Warsaw », *ZPE* 95, 1993, p. 157.

5 *SEG* XX, 600.

6 *SEG* XX, 546; *SEG* XXXV, 1657 and 1668.

7 *SEG* XX, 538; 517; 535; 524; 534 and 549; *SEG* XXXV, 1668; S.A.A El Nassery, G. Wagner, *BIFAO* 78, 1978, no. 7; G. Wagner, « Nouvelles inscriptions funéraires grecques de Kom Abu Bellou », *ZPE* 114, 1996, no. 100, no. 101.

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Stela 3 [FIG. 3]

Exc. No. 39/2007 – H. 32 cm; W. 17 cm.

This is a representation of a family group, in sunken relief, on a rectangular limestone funerary stela. Between two Egyptian columns with papyriform capitals are represented a middle-aged woman and her daughter.

The woman is reclining on a mattress spread upon a couch, which has two stands. Her hair is carefully arranged round her forehead, in small ridges, and is drawn on either side into shoulder tresses. She stretches her right arm and holds a two-handled cup in her hand. Her left arm rests on two pillows, her hand being clenched. She is dressed in the usual *chiton* and *himation* arranged as to cover the left elbow as it rests in her lap. Her legs are outstretched, one above the other, the uppermost one slightly raised in an arched way. There is a faint reddish colour on the dress and the lower part of the stela.

Her daughter is standing in front of her, full-faced with both hands upraised in the *orans* attitude of adoration, which can be interpreted as a sign of joy for being accepted by Osiris in the afterlife. Her hair is arranged as her mother's. She is also dressed in a *chiton* and a *himation*, one edge of which is drawn across the chest from under the right arm to the left shoulder. The other end of the *himation* is drawn into a fold which hangs from the left shoulder along the front. The entire figure is in sunken relief.

Below the couch, which is supported by two stands, is represented the common banquet scene, although not clearly visible. Two bunches of wheat are disposed on right and left and in the middle is a three-legged table as well as an amphora in a stand. Below that scene, two lines have been incised between which an inscription remains engraved.

Inscription

] (ἐτῶν) $\overline{\text{ις}}$ ἄ̣ωροϛ ’Ι σάου ὡϛ (ἐτῶν) $\overline{\text{λ}}$
] Ἁθυρ ..

] (aged) 16 years, prematurely dead, (and) Isaou (aged) about 30 years
] Hathyr [x]

Comment

1. The beginning of this inscription is destroyed but this part usually bears the name of the deceased, which is lost here.[8]
2. The epithet ἄ̣ωροϛ is the most common epithet on the funerary stelae from Kom Abou Bellou.[9] This epithet describes persons from different ages, for instance Achilleis, who died 82 years old, is said on his stelae "prematurely dead".[10]
3. ’Ι σάου: this name is uncommon on the funerary stelae from Kom Abou Bellou.

8 Compare to *SEG* XX, 588; 590; 559; 592; 622; 594.

9 See for instance *SEG* XX, 513; 515; 518 - 520; 522 - 523; 527; 529; 530; 536; 539; 543; 547; 554; 559, etc.

10 *SEG* XX, 530.

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Stela 4 [FIG. 4]

Reg. No. 1424, Exc. No. 38/2007 – H. 33 cm; W. (top): 30 cm; W. (bottom) 33 cm.

This is a square limestone funerary stela with an irregular shape, in sunken relief, without any pediment or frame containing the scene. The representation is that of a full-faced young-looking woman, reclining on a mattress with a rounded edge. The woman's face is rounded and rather plump and the features are very distinct. There are traces of red colour on her lips and black colour on her hair which is arranged in a carefully made fringe around the forehead, falling into two shoulder tresses. She outstretches her right arm and holds in her hand a goblet with two handles and a base. Close above this goblet is a jackal of Anubis very lightly incised, sitting up in profile. The deceased leans her left elbow on the topmost of one pillow and her hand is closed. She is dressed in the usual *chiton* and *himation,* the edge of the *himation* is drawn into a fold from under the right shoulder along the waist and over to the left shoulder. The legs are outstretched and the feet are in profile, with the right one above the left.

Below the couch, which is supported by two stands, there is the usual funerary banquet scene, clearly visible. On the right stands a three-legged table supporting two plates, in the middle an amphora in a stand and on the left a bunch of wheat. Below, there are three incised lines, with a two-line inscription engraved in-between.

Inscription

Πλουτίαινα ὡς (ἐτῶν) ν̅ε̅ (ἔτους) ι̅α̅	*Ploutiaina, (aged) about 55 years, year 11*
Ἁ[θ]υρ̣ τῇ̣ νουμηνίᾳ	*the first day of Hathyr*

Comment

1. Πλουτίαινα: this uncommon name never appears among the names on the funerary stelae from Kom Abou Bellou, but it is known in some papyrus.[11]
2. τῇ̣ νουμηνίᾳ: (ἡμέρᾳ) is used to indicate the first day (new moon) of the month. It appears only in a few other cases on the funerary stelae from Kom Abou Bellou.[12]
3. This slab has been reused because there are traces of hieroglyphic signs on the back, at the bottom of two columns.

nfr…	*good…*
nb ʿnḫ wȝs	*lord of life and dominion.*

Stela 5 [FIG. 5]

Reg. No. 1423, Exc. No. 37/2007 – H. 25 cm; W. 23 cm; Th. 4 cm.

This square limestone stela with an irregular shape contains the framed representation of a full-faced middle-aged woman, reclining on a mattress, whose edge is rounded. Her face is rather plump and the features are distinct.

11 *P. Koeln* II, 108, *P. Oslo* II, 44. 12 *SEG* XXXV, 1644.

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Her hair is arranged in a carefully made fringe around the forehead and the rest is divided into two shoulder tresses. She outstretches her right arm and holds a goblet which seems to have one handle. She leans her left elbow on the topmost of two rounded pillows. She appears to be holding something like a fold of her outer-garment which may have been wrapped round her forearm. The dress is the usual *chiton* and *himation*. One edge of the *himation* is drawn into a fold from under the right shoulder along the waist and over to the left shoulder. In the top part of the dress, the pleats run vertically but in the lower part of the body they are diagonal. The legs are outstretched with the right one slightly raised, and the feet are in profile, with the right one above the left foot.

The most interesting feature about this stela is the perfect condition in which the robbing and drapery of this woman were preserved. Her beautiful attire was arranged at the lower part of the body in the ancient Egyptian fashion.

Below the couch, which is supported by two stands in black colour, there is the usual funerary banquet scene, painted in black colour. There are two bunches of flowers on each side, and on the right is a three-legged table supporting two plates, and on the left an amphora in a stand with a ladle. Below that scene, there are two incised lines with an inscription of two lines painted in black ink. Part of the bottom is damaged and broken away.

Inscription

Ἀ̣πολ(λ)ωνάρι(ος) φιλότεκνος (ἐτῶν) μ̣α̣
(ἔτους) ιθ̅ Ἁθ̣υ̣ρ̣ ϛ̣ εὐψύχι

Apol(l)onari(os) who loves her children (aged) 41 years
year 19, Hathyr 6 farewell

Comment

1. φιλότεκνος: this word is common in the stelae from Kom Abou Bellou. Here, the final ς is written on the top of the second ο.
3. I suggest that the deceased's age is 41 years (μ̣α̣), according to his representation and to the form of the last two letters.
4. εὐψύχι: written for εὐψύχει; it is one of the most common epithet in funerary stelae from Kom Abou Bellou.

Stela 6 [FIG. 6]

Reg. No. 1409, Exc. No. 23/2007 – H. 21.5 cm; W. 18 cm.

This is a limestone slab, almost rectangular in shape, with the representation in sunken relief of a Greek temple front with two columns supporting a triangular pediment. In the centre is a full-faced man reclining on a mattress placed upon a couch. His hair is arranged around the forehead in ridges. The features of the face are not clearly visible. His outstretched right arm holds a cup with two handles, while the left hand rests on one pillow. He is dressed in a *chiton* and a *himation*, one end of which is folded round the waist and drawn over the left shoulder.

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His right leg, shown in profile, is crossed above the left one, with only the toes visible, and the right knee is slightly raised accordingly.

The space below the couch whose surface is not smooth, might have contained the usual funerary banquet scene. We can only distinguish an amphora in the middle. The lower part below that banquet scene, which is usually intended to bear the inscription, is damaged and broken away.

Stela 7 [FIG.7]

Reg. No. 1421, Exc. No. 37/2007 – H. 27.5 cm; W. 17 cm breadth; Th. 6 cm.

This is a stone carved in *bas-relief* in the form of a Greek temple-front with two Egyptian columns standings on rounded bases, with lotus-form capitals which support a triangular pediment. The square Egyptian abaci are missing. In the centre is a full-faced human figure in the usual *orans* attitude. He raises his arms and both palms are wide open, but the left hand is damaged. His hair is arranged around the forehead in ridges, in Roman fashion. The features of the face are clear, giving the impression of a firm-looking middle-aged man. The sunk relief background is painted in black colour.

The dress is the usual *chiton* and outer *himation*, worn with one end drawn from under the right arm across the chest to the left shoulder. The most interesting feature about this stela is the perfect condition in which the robbing and drapery of this man were preserved. Beneath the standing figure, there are two incised lines, enclosing a fragmentary Greek inscription in two lines.

Inscription

Ἀμμώνιος ἄωρος̣ ὁ̣ς̣ (ἐτῶν)…	*Ammonios prematurely dead, (aged) about (x) years*
ὃς ἐτελεύτα τῷ̣ μηνὶ Ἀ̣[θυρ]	*who is dead the first day of Ha[thyr]*

Comment

1. Ἀμμώνιος is an Egyptian name after the god Amun, one of the most common names in the Greek papyri. It is particularly common on the funerary stelae from Kom Abou Bellou.[13]
2. The ω is in two cases replaced by ο̣ (l. 1 ὁ̣ς̣ and l. 2 τῷ̣ μηνὶ).
3. ἐτελεύτα: it means "to finish one's life", i.e. "die". This word is common in the Greek papyri, and mummy labels but it is rare in the funerary stelae.[14]

13 *SEG* I, 565; *SEG* XX, 614; 542; 634; *SEG* XXXV, 1625; 1684; 1663; S.A.A El Nassery, G. Wagner, *BIFAO* 78, 1978, no. 67; no. 89.

14 Two examples in *SEG* XX, 547 and *SEG* XXX, 1745.

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Stela 8 [FIG. 8]

Reg. No. 1422, Exc. No. A 36/2007 – H. 15.5 cm; W. 12 cm; Th. 5 cm.

This part of a limestone funerary stela is in a slightly sunken relief. There is a possibility that the person represented on this part may be a male. The feet are represented in profile, in the usual traditional ancient Egyptian posture. On each side of the deceased, there is a jackal of Anubis standing up in profile.

Stela 9 [FIG.9]

Reg. No. 1421, Exc. No. 37/2007 – H. 15 cm; W. 13.5 cm; Th. 6 cm.

This part of a limestone stela, in a slightly sunken relief, represents the usual banquet scene, not clearly visible because of its damaged condition: only a three-legged table is visible on the right. Below this scene are six incised lines between which an inscription of four lines was engraved.

Inscription

]ας Ἀφρόδιος̣	*[...]as daughter (?) of Aphrodios*
] ἄωρε φιλο-	*[...] prematurely dead, who loves*
] χρηστή	*[...] good*
] Χοαχ $\overline{\alpha}$	*[...] the first day of Choiak*

Comment

1. ας: I suggest that the two letters are the end of the lost name of the deceased.
2. Ἀφρόδιος̣: name of the father, written for Ἀφροδίου? The use of a nominative is perhaps a mistake for the genitive expected for the father's name. This is a Greek name after the goddess Aphrodite, which appears sometimes in Kom Abou Bellou.[15]
3. ἄωρε: written for ἄωρος or most probably for ἀώρη. The fact that the last adjective is also feminine (χρηστή) might suggest that the deceased was a woman.
4. φιλο-: the end of the word was at the beginning of the next line (maybe φιλόφιλος or φιλότεκνος etc.).
5. Χοαχ α: written here without ι and with χ instead of κ. This month appears frequently on the funerary stelae from Kom Abou Bellou.[16]

15 *SEG* XX, 514.
16 *SEG* XX, 521; 515; 531; 535; *SEG* XXVIII, 1492; *SEG* XXXV, 1624; 1644; S.A.A El Nassery, G. Wagner, *BIFAO* 78, 1978, no. 3; no. 5; no. 53.

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Stela 10 [FIG. 10]

Reg. No. 1421, Exc. No. 38/2007 – H. 14 cm; W. 12 cm; Th. 8 cm.

This part of a limestone stela bears traces of a *bas-relief* which may represent the usual *orans* in the attitude of adoration. It may remain one foot of the human figure, in profile, and some traces of red colour. Below this scene are four lines between which an inscription of three lines was engraved.

Inscription

]ϛ ἐνιαυτοῦ	*]s, one year,*
]̣ μηνὸϛ ἄωροϛ	*] month, prematurely dead*
] (ἔτουϛ) ι̅ϛ̅ Χοιαχ δ̄	*] year 16 Choiak 4*

Comment

1. I suggest that the first ϛ preserved is the last letter of the name of the deceased.
2. ἐνιαυτοῦ: is used for a period of one year. This word is very rare in the funerary stelae from Kom Abou Bellou.[17]

Stela 11 [FIG. 11]

Reg. No. 1421, Exc. No. 39/2007 – H. 36 cm; W. 14 cm; Th. 4 cm.

It only remains the lower part of the stela, made of three parts of limestone, painted with different colours, with an inscription of three lines between carved lines.

Inscription

Ὡρίων [....]ω ..λιων	*Horion son of [...]*
[̣]μοϛ φιλότ̣ε̣κνοϛ φιλόφιλοϛ	*]mos loving his children, friend to his friends*
ὡϛ ἐτῶν λ̄α̅ (ἔτουϛ) ιδ̄ Ἁθυρ κ̅ζ̅	*about 31 years, year 14 Hathyr 27.*

Comment

Ὡρίων: The ω is clearly visible, even if the painting is lost. This name appears in some funerary stelae from Kom Abou Bellou[18] and is frequent in Greek papyri. The end of the line remains unclear.

17 G. Wagner, *BIFAO* 78, 1978, no. 89.

18 *SEG* XX, 567; 606; *SEG* XXXV, 1615; 1651; G. Wagner, *ZPE* 114, 1996, no. 70.

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FIG. 1. Stela Reg. No. 1398, Exc. No. 12/2006.



FIG. 2. Stela Reg. No. 1396, Exc. No. 10/2006.

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FIG. 3. Stela Exc. No. 39/2007.

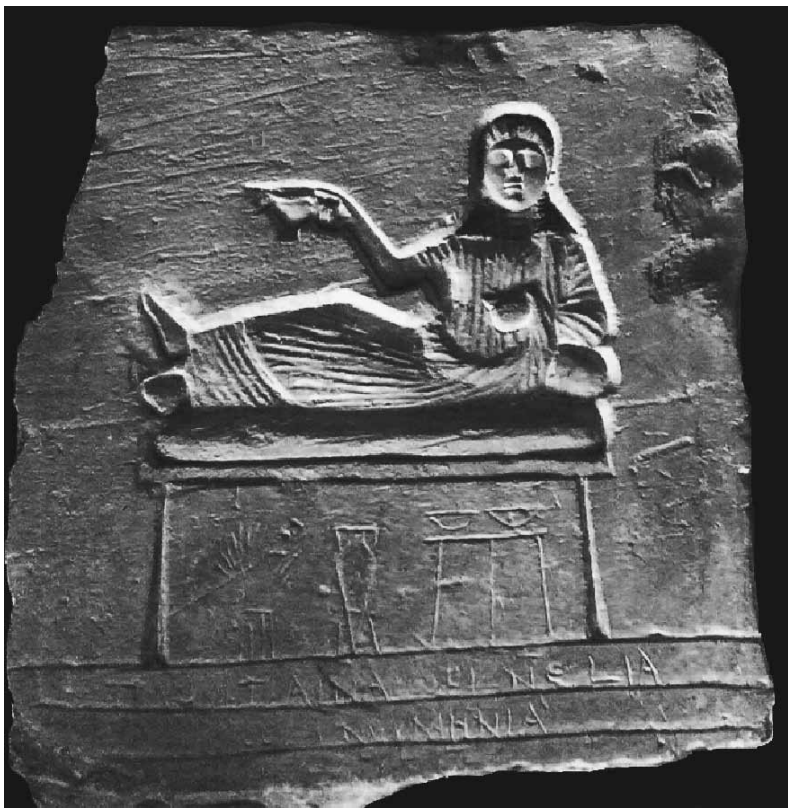


FIG. 4. Stela Reg. No. 1424, Exc. No. 38/2007.

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FIG. 5. Stela Reg. No. 1423, Exc. No. 37/2007.



FIG. 6. Stela Reg. No. 1409, Exc. No. 23/2007.

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FIG. 7. Stela Reg. No. 1421, Exc. No. 37/2007.



FIG. 8. Stela Reg. No. 1422, Exc. No. A 36/2007.

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FIG. 9. Stela Reg. No. 1421, Exc. No. 37/2007.



FIG. 10. Stela Reg. No. 1421, Exc. No. 38/2007.

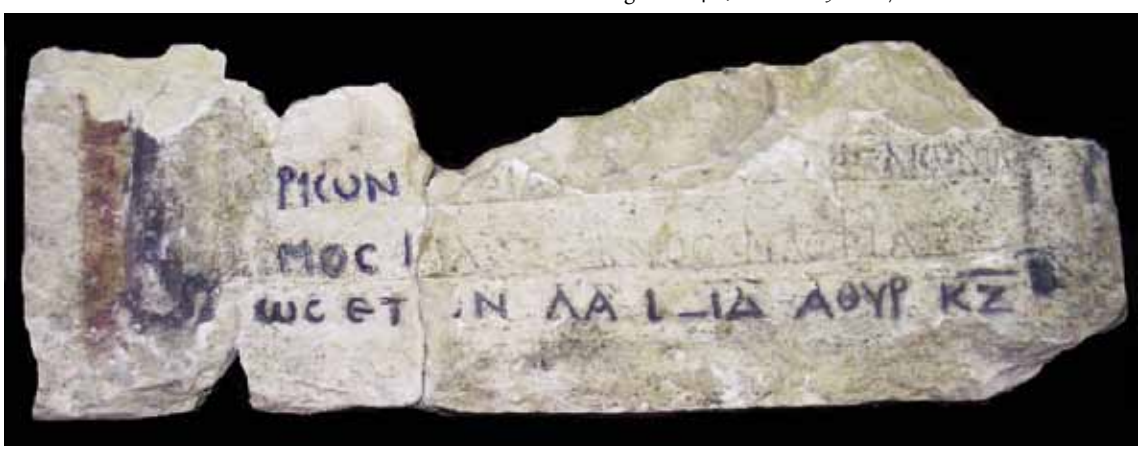


FIG. 11. Stela Reg. No. 1421, Exc. No. 39/2007.

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