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STAMP-SEALS FROM GERONISOS AND THEIR CONTEXTS

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Stamp-seals from Geronisos and their Contexts

Joan Breton Connelly and Dimitris Plantzos

The small island of Geronisos, just off the shores of Agios Georgios tis Pegeias on the western coast of Cyprus, continues to intrigue excavators and students of late Hellenistic history (Figs 38, 39).¹ The site has yielded the only Ptolemaic ostraka found to date in all of Cyprus, painted and incised with Greek cursive script.² It has produced numismatic evidence pointing to a very narrow chronological range of 80-30 B.C., with heavy concentration in the years 47-30 B.C.³ A rich ceramic repertory attests to a certain standard of luxury in which 1st century B.C. pre-Augustan fine wares are well represented, a wide variety of imports as well as local productions.⁴ Architectural remains reflect a similar level of opulence, preserving a well-carved lion's head waterspout, egg and dart molding, a fragment of an engaged ionic column, and perhaps the most comprehensive corpus of roof tiles to survive for Hellenistic Cyprus.⁵ Among all these exceptional finds, it is the series of small limestone stamp-seal amulets, unique to the site, that holds the greatest promise for our understanding of life on late Hellenistic Geronisos.⁶

These objects, in the form of stamp-seals though of presumably amuletic function, pose a broad range of interesting questions. They are catalogued below, classified according to subject-matter. The fifteen seals, all cut in limestone, resemble loom weights, though not all are provided with stringholes. Some are pyramidal in shape, others conical or rectangular, ranging from elongated to squatish (one seems to be part of a cube). These limestone "amulets" could be classified as stamp-seals, since twelve of them are cut with representations or scratched with markings on their resting side, which thus becomes a sealing surface; five of these are also cut with devices on their sides and top. Their

devices are of varied technique, style, and subject-matter, but a preference for Ptolemaic iconography is discernible. Two portraits stand out,

1. Connelly 2002, Connelly 2005, Connelly and Młynarczyk 2002, Connelly and Wilson 2002. The stamp-seal amulets were excavated under the direction of the first author on behalf of the New York University Yeronisos Island Excavations during the 1992, 1993, 1994, 1996, 2004, and 2005 seasons. They were studied by the second author during the 2004, 2005, and 2006 seasons. Dimitris Plantzos has prepared the Catalogue presented here and has written the sections on Technical Aspects, Usage and Function, Iconography, and Cyprus Under the Last Ptolemies. J.B. Connelly has written the section on Excavation and Stratigraphic Contexts.
2. Connelly 2005, 169-70. Prof. Roger Bagnall of Columbia University is preparing the Geronisos ostraka for publication.
3. Of the 14 bronze coins found so far on Geronisos, one dates to the reign of Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II (170-164/3 and sole reign 146/5-117/6 B.C.), two belong to Ptolemy King of Cyprus (80-50 B.C.), nine coins belong to Cleopatra VII together with her son Caesarion (47-44 B.C.), while an additional two coins belong to Cleopatra VII on her own (44-30 B.C.). Dr Anne Destrooper-Georgiades is preparing the publication of the Geronisos coins.
4. Connelly 2005, 166-68; Młynarczyk 2005.
5. Connelly 2002, 256-58, figs 11-13, 264-66, figs 10, 23, and 24; Connelly 2005, 159, fig. 16.
6. We thank the Department of Antiquities of Cyprus and the Directors under whom we have been licensed to excavate, including Dr Athanasios Papageorghiou, Dr Demos Christou, Dr Sophocles Hadjisavvas, and Dr Pavlos Flourentzos. We are indebted to Dr Bonny Bazemore who prepared an earlier catalogue of the Geronisos amulets and provided some useful references, and to George Marshall Peters and Mariuz Burdajewicz who have made the drawings for this article. We thank Socratis Mavrommatis for his excellent photographs of the seals. This article has greatly benefited from the expertise and thoughtful care of Efthymios Shaftacolas in preparing it for publication in the *RDAC*.
We thank New York University and the Friends of Yeronisos who have generously financed this work, especially James Ottaway Jr, Bill Murray, Salvatore S. Ranieri, Carl S. Forsythe III and the de Coizart Perpetual Charitable Trust, and the trustees of the Coca-Cola Hellenic Bottling Company. We also thank the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation for its support of Prof. Connelly's work during the years of excavation and study, 1996-2001.

both attributable to late Ptolemaic royals and three or four more images relate to Pharaonic or Ptolemaic regalia. A further number of devices shows a more Cypriot character in design.

Finally, one different type of amulet is included here, a black steatite scarab of the late Ptolemaic period. Its date and iconography suggest that its use and function may have been similar to those of the limestone seals, since they all appear to have originated in the same cultural milieu (though not necessarily made in the same place).

CATALOGUE⁷

A. LIMESTONE SEALS

Images are described as they appear in impression, *not* on the stone itself. When multiple sides are engraved, the sealing surface is described first, followed by the sides in clockwise fashion.

1. A.93.07
Trench P 23.3.2.1.1
X=3.52; Y=2.10; Z=20.17.
h.: 25; b.: 18×7; t.: 8×3.
Pyramidal; perforated.
State of preservation: Good; some tool marks; chipped at the base, abrasions throughout.
Royal bust to the right. Man with curly hair, long nose, deep-set eyes, tight lips, pointed chin, and heavy jowl, wearing diadem (Fig. 1).

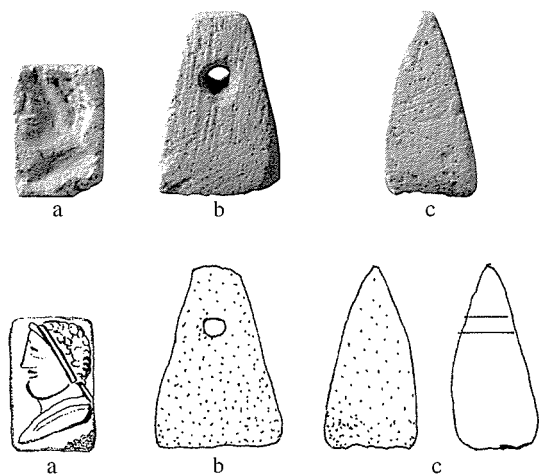


Fig. 1a-c: A.93.07 (Cat. No. 1) (1:1).

2. A.92.01
Trench O 23.3.1.3.1
X=0.76; Y=3.72; Z=20.25
h.: 29; b.: 15×13; t.: 11×10.
Pyramidal, elongated; no perforation.
State of preservation: Good; abrasions throughout.
Animal (a dog?) to the right.
Side a: Cypro-syllabic sign for [a]; *Side b*: Royal head to the left. Sketchy portrait, showing a man with skinny face, hooked, pointed nose, and thin chin, wearing Egyptian double crown; *Side c*: Bird; *Side d*: Post or staff decorated with feathers (a crown?) and bands (Fig. 2).

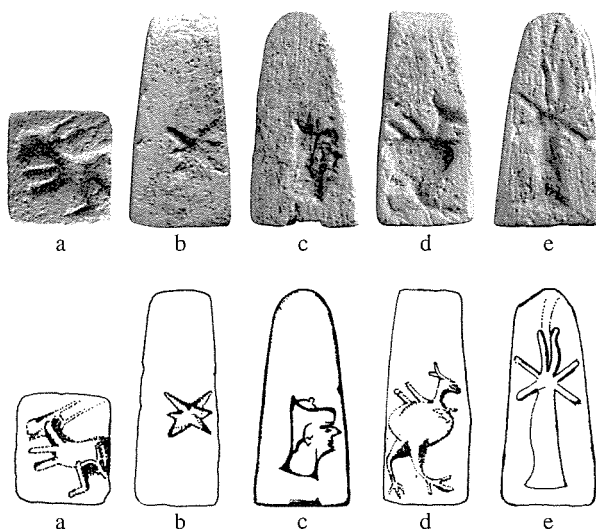


Fig. 2a-e: A.92.01 (Cat. No. 2) (1:1).

3. A.94.01
Trench N 25.2.1.3.1
X=0.68; Y=3.55; Z=20.61.
h.: 18; b.: 15×15; t.: 14×02.
Pyramidal; no perforation.
State of preservation: Good; chipped.
Ptolemaic Eagle (Fig. 3).

7. Catalogue abbreviations:
h. height
b. dimensions of base
t. dimensions of top side
All dimensions are in millimetres. Other standard abbreviations are also used.

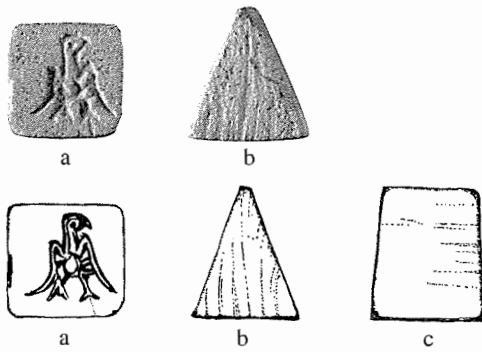


Fig. 3a-c: A.94.01 (Cat. No. 3) (1:1).

4. A.93.06
 Trench N 24.5.3.1.2
 X=0; Y=0.15; Z=20.305.
 h.: 25; b.: 17×19; t.: 6×7.
 Pyramidal; perforated.
 State of preservation: Broken and restored; cracked;
 tool marks.
 Disc-and-horns crown (Fig. 4).

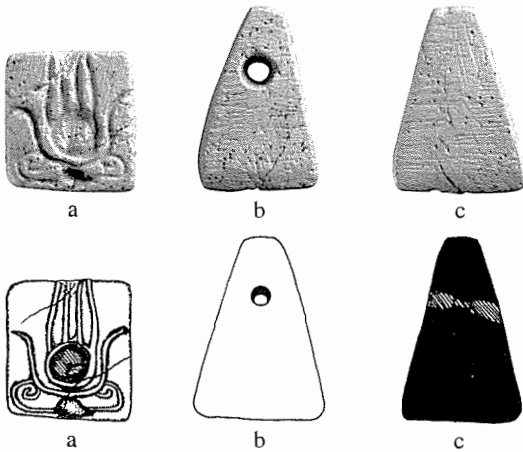


Fig. 4a-c: A.93.06 (Cat. No. 4) (1:1).

5. A.04.01
 Trench N 22/N 23 Baulk 5.1.1.1
 X=0.02; Y=3.02; Z=20.10.
 h.: 36; b.: 20×22; t.: 13×13.
 Prismatic, with beveled side walls; perforated.
 State of preservation: Tool marks and abrasions;
 chipped off at the base.
 Floral motif; *top*: square with intersecting lines
 (Fig. 5).

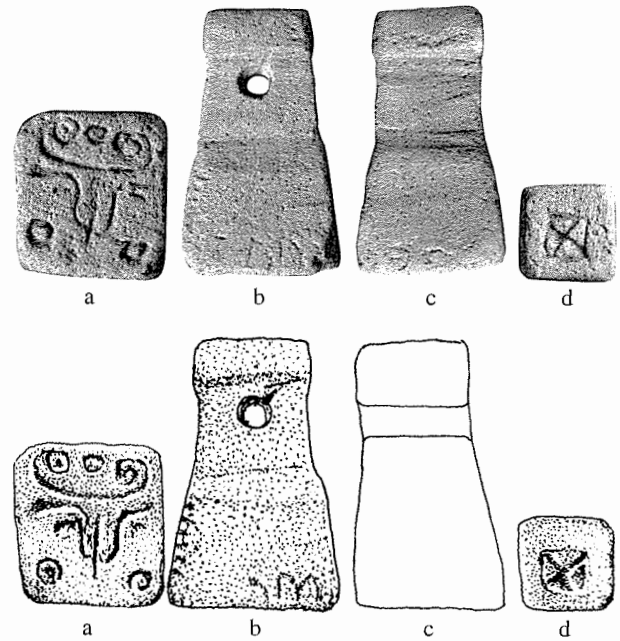


Fig. 5a-d: A.04.01 (Cat. No. 5) (1:1).

6. A.94.02
 Trench N 25/O 25 Baulk 3.2.2.1
 X=65; Y=0.97; Z=20.327.
 h.: 27; b.: 12×14; t.: 5×6.
 Pyramidal, tapering towards the top; perforated.
 State of preservation: Good, certain parts heavily
 corroded; cracked; tool marks.
 Square with dot in the middle.
Side a: Anchor; *Side b*: Concave rectangle;
Side c: Convex rectangle, possibly incised with
 decoration (?); *Side d*: Square with intersecting
 lines; drilling on each quadrant (Fig. 6).

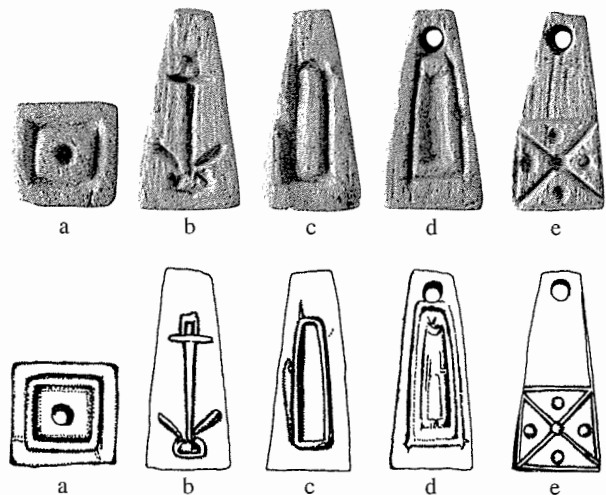


Fig. 6a-e: A.04.02 (Cat. No. 6) (1:1).

7. A.05.02
 Trench N 21/N 22w Baulk / M 21n Baulk / M 22nw Baulk / O 21s Baulk / O 22sw Baulk 3.2.1.1.
 X=0.54 ; Y=5.86; Z=20.52.
 h.: 22; b.: 13×11; t.: 2×9.
 Prismatic, slightly irregular; perforated.
 State of preservation: Somewhat corroded; tool marks.
 Triangle with vertical incision (Fig. 7).

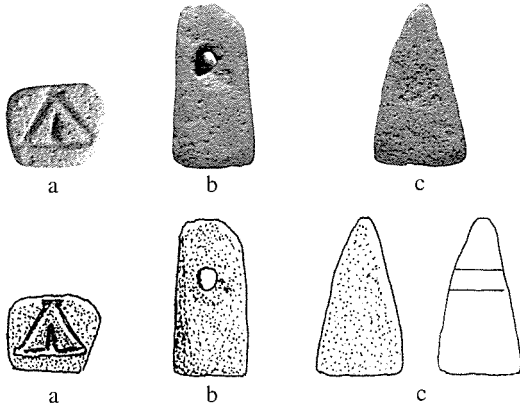


Fig. 7a-c: A.05.02 (Cat. No. 7) (1:1).

8. A.93.01
 Trench N 22.3.5.1.2.
 X=3.60; Y=3.28; Z=20.37.
 h.: 32; b.: 26×12; t.: 10×4.
 Prismatic; top surface slanting sideways; perforated.
 State of preservation: Good; some tool marks; chipped at the base, abrasions throughout.
 Stylized tree; hatched triangles (Fig. 8).

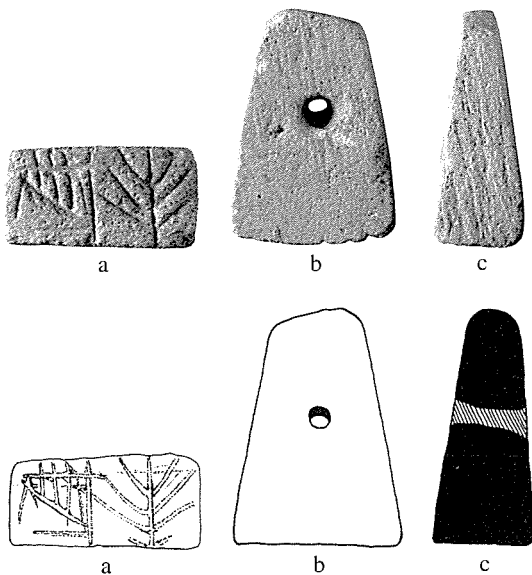


Fig. 8a-c: A.93.01 (Cat. No. 8) (1:1).

9. A.92.02
 Trench N 23.5.1.2.1
 X=2.75; Y=3.00; Z=20.24.
 h.: 25; b.: 11×9; t.: 6×5.
 Prismatic; perforated.
 State of preservation: Good; deep tool marks.
 Cursory scratches on all sides but one, as well as the bottom and the top (Fig. 9).

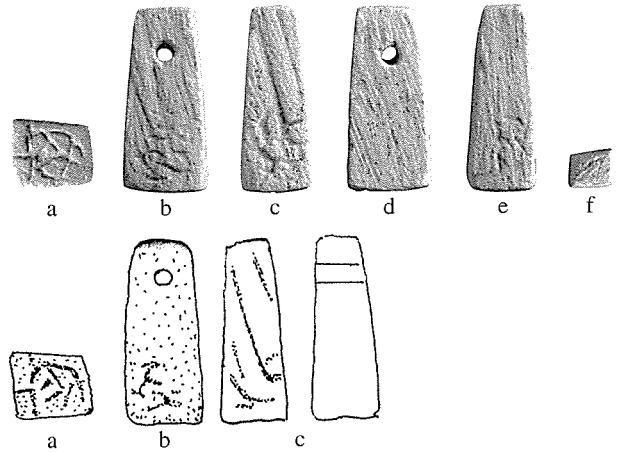


Fig. 9a-f: A.92.02 (Cat. No. 9) (1:1).

10. A.93.03
 Trench N 22.5.1.1.1
 X=2.24; Y=1.18; Z=20.135.
 h.: 26; b.: 14×11; t.: 10×4.
 Prismatic; perforated.
 State of preservation: Badly corroded.
 Rather unintelligible. Scene with two figures(?).
 Side c: Drilled dots (Fig. 10).

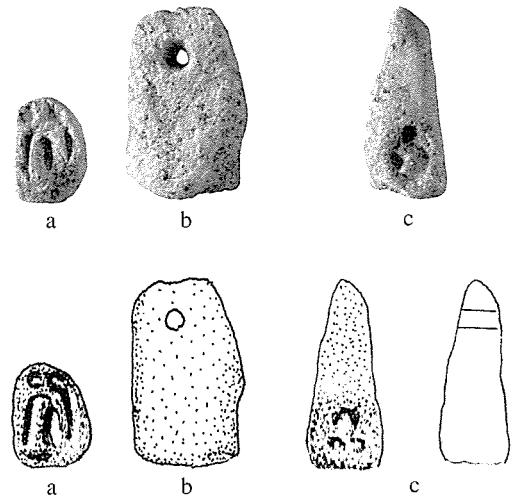


Fig. 10a-c: A.93.03 (Cat. No. 10) (1:1).

11. A.05.01

Trench M 24n / M 24 / N 24 Baulk
 X=4.73; Y=0.00; Z=20.035.
 h.: 23; b.: 20; t.: partly broken off.
 Irregular-conoid, bulbous body; perforated; tool marks.
 State of preservation: Badly corroded; one third broken off.
 "Worm-eaten wood" pattern (Fig. 11).

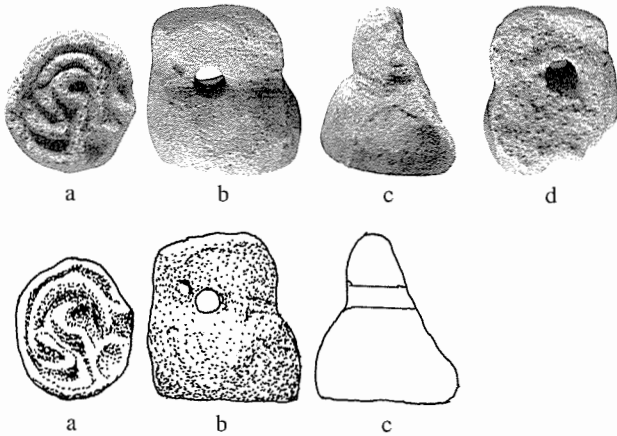


Fig. 11a-d: A.05.01 (Cat. No. 11) (1:1).

12. A.05.03

Trench N 21 / N 22w Baulk / M 21n Baulk / M 22nw
 Baulk / O 21s Baulk / O 22sw Baulk 3.2.3.1
 X=3.68; Y=5.12; Z=20.30.
 h.: 24; b.: 22; t.: 15.
 Conoid; no perforation.
 State of preservation: Good; tool marks throughout.
 Bird or a quadruped(?) to the right; unintelligible motifs above and to the left (Fig. 12).

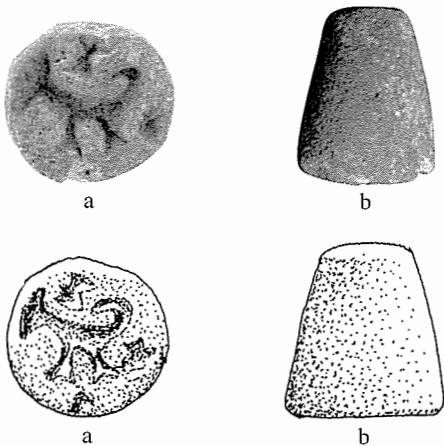


Fig. 12: A.05.03 (Cat. No. 12) (1:1).

13. A.93.02

Trench N 22.4.5.0.2.
 X=1.16; Y=0.66; Z=20.045.
 h.: 14; b.: 12×10.
 Rectangular; no perforation.
 State of preservation: Only lower half preserved.
 Traces of a hole drilled at an oblique angle may indicate an accident while drilling a perforation.
 Pinwheel (Fig. 13).

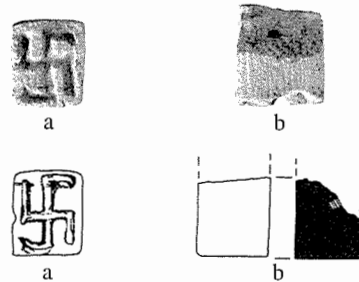


Fig. 13a-b: A.93.02 (Cat. No. 13) (1:1).

14. A.93.04

Trench N 24.2.1.1.1
 X=1.70; Y=1.67; Z=20.765.
 h.: 18; b.: 9×10; t.: 8×6.
 Slightly prismatic, almost rectangular; perforated.
 State of preservation: Good.
 Plain (Fig. 14).

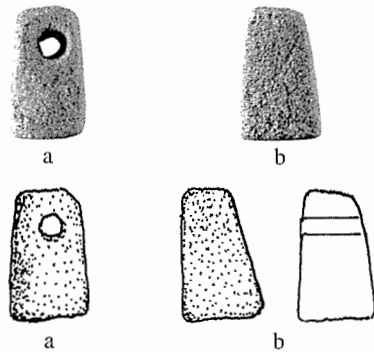


Fig. 14a-b: A.93.04 (Cat. No. 14) (1:1).

15. A.93.05

Trench H 16.3.2.2.2
 X=2.53; Y=3.14; Z=19.045.
 h.: 18; b.: 10×17; t.: 16×4.
 Prismatic; no perforation.
 State of preservation: Good.
 Plain (Fig. 15).

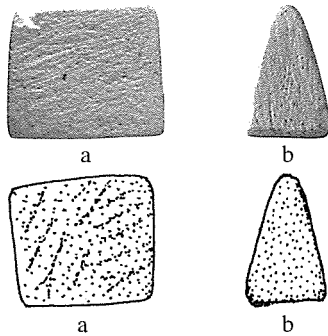


Fig. 15a-b: A.93.05 (Cat. No. 15) (1:1).

B. STONE SCARAB

16. ST.96.44

Trench P 22se / O 22 / O 23n Baulk / O 23 / O 23w
Baulk 7.1.1.1

X=0.45; Y=1.90; Z=19.79.

h.: 7; b.: 10×13; diam. of perforation: 4.

Dark-green steatite; perforated lengthways; two parallel incisions mark the division of the thorax and the split of the elytra (wing cases); incised lines denote the head as well as the front and back legs, and v-markings suggest winglets on either side at the front of the elytra.

State of preservation: Rather poor, heavily corroded in places.

The Lion-headed goddess Sekhmet is shown enthroned to the left, wearing sun-disc, and holding a papyrus scepter in her raised hand (Fig. 16).

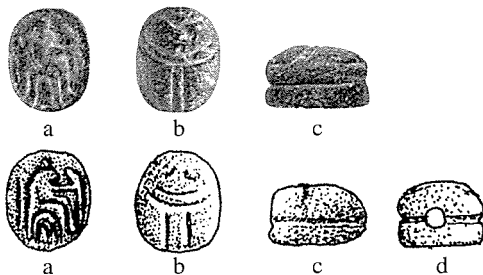


Fig. 16a-d: ST.96.44 (Cat. No. 16) (1:1).

TECHNICAL ASPECTS

The limestone amulets presented here are a rarity in Hellenistic contexts such as Geronisos. Though no two examples are completely alike, the fifteen limestone amulets found thus far on the island fall broadly into the same category. The majority is made of white limestone, while three exceptions (Nos 7, 10 and 14) show a dark-

er limestone. As a rule, the amulets are decorated and perforated for suspension, though both undecorated (Nos 14 and 15) and un-perforated (Nos 2, 3, 12, and 15) specimens have been found. No. 15 lacks both decoration and perforation, possibly (if one also takes account of its smaller size) suggesting that it was rejected in the course of its manufacture.

The only significant variation to the more or less standard prismatic-pyramidal shape is presented by No. 5. Its side walls are beveled at the top and at about one third of its height above the base. This “pinched” look is an obvious departure from the straight or slightly swelling walls of its counterparts. Despite this obvious difference, No. 5 is linked with the group by way of its decoration (Fig. 5a): the device on the bottom is closer to the Ptolemaic tradition (cf. Nos 3 and 4) and the simple linear design on the top (Fig. 5d) recalls those seen on No. 6 (Fig. 6a and e). Nos 11 and 12 recall the old conoid stamp-seal shape with a long tradition on Cyprus, going back to LCII – LCIIIA periods (*ca* 1300-1200 B.C.), when it was most likely borrowed from Palestine.⁸ Conical or pyramidal stamp-seals cut in limestone appear on Cyprus already in the 11th cent. B.C., engraved with linear devices such as sketchy animals, trees, human figures and the like.⁹ It is thought that Cypriot cutters drew their inspiration from the Anatolian or North Syrian tradition, though Late Bronze Age Enkomi has yielded an apparent precursor to the pyramidal type, cut in black serpentine.¹⁰ Just as the Geronisos stamp-seals, their Iron Age and Classical predecessors tend to show devices on several faces besides their sealing surface. The prominence of these earlier seals has distorted our understanding of the later ones, often resulting in

8. See Reyes 2001, 10-11: according to this author, the conoid was adopted by the local population, alongside other stamp-seal shapes (including the scarab) in preference to cylinders.

9. Reyes 2001, 24-28 (conical); 72-75 (pyramidal); 167-82 (cubical).

10. Dikaios 1971, 809-810 no. 33, pl. 183; cf. Reyes 2001, 72 (star-like device).

faulty identifications for the later examples, especially for seals that survive without the benefit of known contexts. One such case can be seen in the limestone pyramidal seal, allegedly from the Karpassia region and now in the Louvre.¹¹ The seal shows a device consisting of two intersecting lines and four drilled dots forming quadrants. This resembles one of the engravings on our No. 6 (Fig. 6e) and —less so— that on the top surface of No. 5 (Fig. 5d). Its dimensions and overall shape are close to those of the Geronisos amulets, though it has been dated much earlier than our late Hellenistic sequence. Similarly geometric, and equally well cut, is the device on No. 7 (Fig. 7a), a vertically incised triangle (which could, however, be intended as a bold letter V, elaborated with antefixes). The persistence of old shapes and motifs, the unassuming nature of the artifacts themselves, and the accidents of archaeological recovery have heretofore obstructed our understanding of these seals and their patterns of development into the Hellenistic period.

No. 13, though technically not prismatic or pyramidal in shape like most of its counterparts, appears to belong with the group, as suggested by its material and engraved device. Its shape is more akin to the cubic stamp-seals indigenous to Cyprus and dating mostly from the 7th and 6th cent. B.C. In the late 6th cent. B.C., serpentine cubical seals employed Phoenician as well as Greek motifs for their devices.¹² Similarly made and cut stamp-seals were also produced on the Aegean islands at about the same time (though not in Greece proper).¹³ The engraving on No. 13, a neatly-cut pinwheel or “swastika” (Fig. 13a), is not out of place on Ptolemaic Geronisos, as it resembles linear devices on other limestone amulets discussed here, including Nos 5 and 6 (Figs 5d; 6a and e). Judging by the traces of a drill hole still visible at the break line (Fig. 13b), No. 13 was about to be perforated when it broke and was, presumably, discarded.¹⁴

The fact that several among the limestone amulets seem to have been discarded while in various stages of production (some unfinished

altogether, some awaiting decoration or perforation) is a strong indication that they were produced locally on the island. This is corroborated by the rather unassuming, coarse appearance of the pendants, hardly pointing to a specialist craftsman. Even the two portraits (especially No. 1), cut with deeper strokes and rounder surfaces through the use of a circular point, seem to result from close observation of similar works. The soft limestone used for the Geronisos amulets does not require mechanical means, such as bow drills, but can be cut freehand. Simple files and a few undemanding, even improvised tools with circular and pointed tips (such as nails) seem to have been used to cut the designs on the Geronisos amulets, while a basic drill must have been employed for the perforations.

USAGE AND FUNCTION

In antiquity, seals performed a great range of functions, ornamental to amuletic, secular to religious. Ostensibly a bureaucratic tool, seals and sealing safeguarded the privacy of documents and containers, serving as the guarantor of their user’s authority.¹⁵ Carried or worn by men and women of importance, they embodied their office and projected their function in society. In art, signet rings and stamp-seals are often shown worn or carried by officials such as priests and, quite notably in Cyprus, by the so-called “temple boys.” These are a distinct class of limestone figurines (some mold-made terracotta examples also exist) showing toddlers seated or crouching, nude or half-clad. Some wear a string of seals, discs, and other talismans across the chest. The

11. Paris, Louvre MNB 379 (A.1170); h.: 28; b.: 16×15; brown limestone; Reyes 2001, 72 no. 90.

12. See Reyes 2001, 167-82; also Reyes 1991, 126 no. 20.

13. Cf. Boardman 1963, 122-23.

14. A small cube (14×12×13), cut in yellow-green soapstone (ST.93.66) is a similarly unfinished die-like artifact, with one irregular side, perhaps providing a further suggestion that stone cutting in that scale was taking place on Hellenistic Geronisos.

15. On seal usage in antiquity, see generally Boardman 1970, 235-38; Plantzos 1999, 18-22.

temple-boy type first appeared in the 5th cent. B.C. and carried on well into the Hellenistic period.¹⁶ On Cyprus they surfaced chiefly at sites connected to Apollo, as at the sanctuary of Apollo Hylates at Kourion where a large number have been found. Although it was originally thought that these statuettes represent actual boy-servants of the divinity, it is now accepted that their function was symbolic, perhaps pointing to a rite of passage involving young boys. Be that as it may, the presence of the strings of talismans, including the stamp-seals, on many of the extant examples must carry an indirect symbolism or allusion of some sort. Even as actual servants, young boys would not have been expected to carry seals giving access to private areas within the sanctuary. One need only look to the example of the temple servant Ion in Euripides' play named for him, where the youth is seen sweeping floors and trimming garlands for most of the first act.

The Geronisos seals resemble a specific type depicted on some representations of temple boys.¹⁷ Two examples in particular, one in New York and the other in London,¹⁸ combine pyramidal seals, such as those from Geronisos, with pierced discs, signet rings, and other charms of different shapes. In addition to the seals, Geronisos has produced a number of humble artifacts associated with temple-boy paraphernalia, including pierced discs (reworked from pottery sherds),¹⁹ and a makeshift finger ring made from a cup fragment, preserving the handle and a portion of the cup's walls (Fig. 17).²⁰ The product of this inventive reshaping looks like a typical late Classical or Hellenistic signet ring, of the type carried by some of the temple boys. The scarab

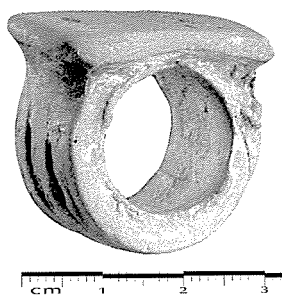


Fig. 17. P.92.08.

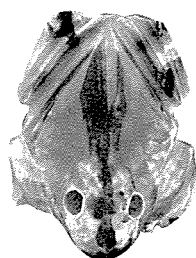


Fig. 18. Carn.96.01.

No. 16 may also belong here, as well as a carnelian bead in the shape of a frog that preserves part of a silver pin running lengthways through its perforation (Fig. 18).²¹

As mentioned above, not all the pyramidal amulets found on Geronisos are engraved and many lack stringholes. This lax observation of any sense of typology suggests, on the one hand, that the amulets were cut on the island and, on the other, that their use was not subject to a strict norm: playthings rather than officially charged artifacts. As to who made them, an obvious answer might be "anyone with some free time in their hands"; a more definitive conclusion than this may be impossible to reach.

ICONOGRAPHY

Ptolemaic portraits and devices

No. 1 bears an intaglio bust on its sealing surface (Fig. 1a). The man portrayed is beardless, with massive curly hair, strong, pointed nose, protruding, fleshy chin and heavy jowl. His eyes are deep-set, and his lips small and tight. A royal diadem is tied round the man's head, and his shoulder is shown draped as is commonly seen in portrait busts on coins, engraved gemstones, and finger rings of the Hellenistic period. The man's heavy figure and strong features recall those of the late Ptolemies, dating after *ca* 150 B.C.

Portrait types of the kings after Ptolemy VIII Physkon, who died in 116 B.C., are notoriously

16. See Hermary 1989, 69-77 and Bier 1994 for a discussion of the temple-boy type; also Connelly 1988, 3-4 and *ead.* 2002, 267-68, and Laffineur 1994 for the most recent and convincing interpretation.

17. Cf. Reyes 2001, 33; Connelly 2002, 267-68.

18. Beer 1994, no. 194 (from Kourion) and no. 175 (from "Sanctuary of Reshef - Mikal - Apollo - Amyklos"); also *ibid.*, Appendix B. nos 2 and 4.

19. Cf. the discs inv. no. P.94.06; TC.94.02 etc; limestone examples also occur (cf. ST.93.42; ST.93.22), resembling "spindle-whorles", but possibly used in some other fashion. Their make suggests they may have been cut on the island.

20. "Ring" inv. no. P.92.08.

21. Carn.96.01; Connelly and Wilson 2002, 274; 284-85.

difficult to identify, owing to a lack of inscribed examples on coins or in sculpture. Help comes, albeit indirectly, from engraved gems and finger rings, as well as from massive finds (“hoards”) of clay seal-impressions from ancient archives.²² Two such finds from the Ptolemaic realm have been excavated to date, one notably from Cyprus itself, the so-called Nea Paphos hoard, and the other from Egypt, the Edfu hoard.²³ Even though the Nea Paphos find is by far the largest, numbering over 11,000 impressions, the sealings from Edfu are better known.²⁴ Based on identification of some of the portrait types shown in the hoard, the Edfu archive seems to have been in use from the reign of Ptolemy V Epiphanes to that of Cleopatra VII (ca 200-30 B.C.); Ptolemies V, VI, and VIII, as well as Cleopatra VII are readily recognizable. A further number of seal-impressions depict Ptolemaic kings, queens and couples from the intervening years. Though obviously not labeled, some of the un-attributed portrait types preserved in the Edfu and Nea Paphos hoards evidently represent Physkon’s two sons, Ptolemy IX Soter II (nicknamed Lathyros) and Ptolemy X Alexandros I, whose portraiture is less well known. Over a quarter of a century (see below), the two princes were in constant conflict with one another, until Alexandros’s death. Lathyros ruled Egypt during two reigns, 116-107 and 88-80 B.C., while Alexandros ruled during the interim years 107-88 B.C.

Many attempts have been made to distinguish between a “Lathyros” and an “Alexandros” portrait type within the Edfu hoard. Because of the total absence of securely identifiable portraits, however, these attempts are merely speculative.²⁵ Both brothers were obese, at least in their later days, and both inherited their father’s nickname to that effect (Ptolemy VIII was not so affectionately referred to as *Physkon*, “pot-belly”, by his subjects and his sons were accordingly known as the *Physkones*).²⁶ They must have looked very much alike. The Geronisos portrait (No. 1) comes closer to the type conventionally identified with Ptolemy Alexandros by virtue of the fancy helmet he is shown wearing in one of the Edfu seal-

impressions (Fig. 19).²⁷ The same man is shown at various ages on several other examples from Edfu and Nea Paphos²⁸ (Figs 20-26), and the seal in Fig. 20 seems closer than most. As a rule, the seal-impressions come from more sophisticated matrices than No. 1, presumably metal rings or rings set with engraved gemstones: the busts are cut in finer detail, showing more of the face, the hair and the drapery, while further attributes are often added, such as various types of scepters and weapons. The late Ptolemies tended to prefer a rather wide version of the standard diadem, often adorned with bands, fringes and tassels. Still, some poorer examples from both hoards (cf. Figs 24-26) recall the sketchy and coarse rendering of the seal published here.²⁹ The man on the Gero-

22. The bibliography on the subject is vast though inconclusive: see Kyrieleis 1975, 64-75 for a systematic study that still holds and Stanwick 2002, 57-59 for the most recent account. Plantzos 1999, 44-47 discusses evidence from engraved gems and seal-impressions.
23. See Plantzos 1999, 27-29 for a brief account of the Edfu and Nea Paphos hoards, with earlier bibliography. Also, for Nea Paphos: Nicolaou 1979; Michaelidou-Nikolaou 1993; Kyrieleis 1996 (for Ptolemaic portraits).
24. After its discovery in 1905 in the modern Egyptian town of Edfu, the hoard, numbering about 700 pieces, was divided between the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) in Toronto and the Allard Pierson Museum (APM) in Amsterdam. See Milne 1916 and Murray 1907 for early assessments of the Toronto part of the hoard; and Plantzos 1996a for a brief discussion of the sealings in Amsterdam. D. Plantzos is currently preparing the publication of the re-united hoard.
25. See Plantzos 1999, 45-46 for this long-standing debate, with earlier literature; Also Smith 1988, 95-97; Ashton 2001, 28-30; and Stanwick 2002, 58-59.
26. See Maehler 1983, 16 n. 99.
27. Fig. 19: ROM inv. no. 906.12.96 and APM inv. no. 8177-278 (other, less well-preserved examples survive); Kyrieleis 1975, 67 pl. 55.9; Plantzos 1999, pl. 86.1.
28. Nea Paphos: Kyrieleis 1996, pls 57-61.
29. Fig. 20: ROM inv. no. 906.12.86; 14×11; slight beard; Milne 1916, no. 83; -Fig. 21: ROM inv. no. 906.12.85; 15×12; slight beard; Milne 1916, no. 82; Kyrieleis 1975, 68 pl. 54.8 (as Ptolemy IX); Maehler 1983, pl. 2d. -Fig. 22: ROM inv. no. 906.12.111; 18×15; slight beard; Milne 1916, no. 106. -Fig. 23: ROM inv. no. 906.12.212; 14×10; Kyrieleis 1975, 68 pl. 54:11 (as Ptolemy IX?). -Fig. 24: ROM inv. no. 906.12.229; 10×9; slight beard. -Fig. 25: ROM inv. no. 906.12.69; 13×10; radiate diadem topped with atef-crown, aegis; Milne 1916, no. 66; Kyrieleis 1975, 68 pl. 54:5 (as Ptolemy IX). -Fig. 26: ROM inv. no. 906.12.215; 15×11; keyrkeion over shoulder.



Fig. 19. ROM inv. no. 906.12.96.



Fig. 20. ROM inv. no. 906.12.86.



Fig. 21. ROM inv. no. 906.12.85.



Fig. 22. ROM inv. no. 906.12.111.



Fig. 23. ROM inv. no. 906.12.212.



Fig. 24. ROM inv. no. 906.12.229.



Fig. 25. ROM inv. no. 906.12.69.



Fig. 26. ROM inv. no. 906.12.215.

nisos amulet No. 1 is certainly a royal, judging by his diadem and the general appearance of his portrait bust, so common in the Edfu and Nea Paphos hoards, and he is a Ptolemy, as suggested by his physique. He could well be either Ptolemy IX or Ptolemy X, or another member of the dynasty, as all princes would be expected to wear the diadem, especially those ruling Cyprus at times (on whom see below).

No. 2 combines very eloquently Cypriot subject-matter with Ptolemaic imagery, including a royal head engraved on one of its sides (Fig. 2c). The man, who seems to be of a rather young age, is shown wearing the *pschent*, the double crown worn by the Pharaoh as a symbol of his rule over both Upper and Lower Egypt. The crown, which is a combination of the “white” and “red” crowns symbolizing Upper and Lower Egypt respectively, is often worn by members of the Ptolemaic dynasty in native-Egyptian context.³⁰ Some examples are preserved in the Edfu Hoard.³¹ One among them (Fig. 27) has been long suggested by Kyrieleis to portray Ptolemy XII Auletes based on comparison with this king’s coinage.³² Auletes’s coin-portraits depart from the hitherto established “Ptolemaic” type of plump faces, asthmatic noses, and heavy jowls.³³ He is shown instead with skinny, bony face, protruding, pointed nose and prominent chin, in a combination of physiognomic realism and stylistic influences picked up from Republican coinage. Cleopatra VII, his daughter, follows his example, and so seem to have done his male heirs, Cleopatra’s brothers Ptolemies XIII, XIV and her son Ptolemy XV (Caesarion), none of whom reigned independently, but under Cleopatra’s dominant presence. The Edfu hoard reflects these developments in terms of the style and subject-matter of its featured portraits. Cleopatra VII is readily recognizable (Fig. 28)³⁴ and so are a number of Ptolemaic couples portrayed in a sketchier, less careful style, that seem to show Cleopatra beside one of her various co-rulers (Figs 29-30).³⁵

The limestone amulet No. 2 from Geronisos, although badly corroded, compares well with the iconography and the style of these late Ptolemaic

seals from Edfu. The man it portrays, apparently quite young, is shown with a skinny profile, very pointed nose, and prominent chin. His features recall those of a man on one of the Edfu seal-impressions who looks like a young Auletes, however, he might plausibly be one of his male descendants (Fig. 31).³⁶ Stylistically, the linear, sketchy rendering of the Geronisos portrait is paralleled by some of the less sophisticated among the Edfu seals (cf. Figs 32-33).³⁷ Seals of this late period tend to be smaller, bearing some extremely diminutive devices, scarcely higher than 4 or 5 millimetres, a feature also encountered on Geronisos: compared to No. 1, where the portrait fits well the field of the seal, the head on No. 2 seems rather oddly placed. We may therefore recognize the head on No. 2 as a royal portrait of the Late Ptolemaic period, contemporary with the reign of Cleopatra VII.

Nos 3-5 also bear Ptolemaic emblems. No. 3 carries the linear device of an eagle (Fig. 3a), a “royal” bird associated with Ptolemaic coinage since the days of Ptolemy I Soter.³⁸ As Geronisos

30. Cf. Vassilika 1989, 86-87 (types UL; ULH; ULF); Smith 1988, no. 73 with pl. 47; Double-crowned Ptolemies on seals and finger rings: Plantzos 1996b, 39-42 with fig. 1 and *id.* 2002, 37-38 and pl. I:4; also Walker and Higgs 2001, no. 44.
31. Plantzos 1996a, pls 49:8 and 50:13.
32. Fig. 27: ROM inv. no. 906.12.122; 18×14; male bust to the right, wearing diadem, double crown, and Egyptian cuirass; Milne 1916, no. 126; Kyrieleis 1975, 65 pl. 68:5; Walker and Higgs 2001, no. 156.
33. Plantzos 1999, 46 with pls 93:20-21 and 86:13.
34. Cf. Kyrieleis 1975, 124-25; Plantzos 1996a, pl. 53:28-29; Walker and Higgs 2001, no. 176. Fig. 28: ROM inv. no. 906.12.173; 8×6; female bust to the right, hair in knot, wearing diadem, draped in chiton; Milne 1916, no. 198.
35. Fig. 29: ROM inv. no. 906.12.199; 12×12; jugate busts to the right, man in wide diadem, woman in stephane (?); Milne 1916, no. 219; Fig. 30: APM inv. no. 8177-156; 10×10; jugate busts to the right, woman with hair in knot.
36. Fig. 31: ROM inv. no. 906.12.142; 17×15; male bust to the right, in wide diadem and chlamys; Milne 1916, no. 162.
37. Fig. 32: ROM inv. no. 906.12.232; 10-6; female bust to the right (Cleopatra VII?); Fig. 33: APM inv. no. 8177-256; 10×9; female bust to the right (Cleopatra VII?).
38. See Boardman 1970, no. 996 for a brief discussion of the device (appearing in the late 4th cent. B.C.), and Mørkholm 1991, 66 nos 97-100 for the earliest series of Ptolemaic coinage.



Fig. 27. ROM inv. no. 906.12.122.



Fig. 28. ROM inv. no. 906.12.173.



Fig. 29. ROM inv. no. 906.12.199.



Fig. 30. APM inv. no. 8177-156.



Fig. 31. ROM inv. no. 906.12.142.



Fig. 32. ROM inv. no. 906.12.232.



Fig. 33. APM inv. no. 8177-256.

Clay seal-impressions from Edfu, Egypt.

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(Photos: D. Plantzos).

lies close to Paphos, where a Ptolemaic mint was based, exposure to such aspects of Ptolemaic imagery was to be expected.³⁹ No. 4 is more explicit: it shows an entire horns-and-disc crown (Fig. 4a), as worn by Isis in the art of the Ptolemaic period. It derives from the elaborate crown worn by Hathor in Egyptian art, consisting of two vertical cow horns with the sun-disc in the middle and two vertical falcon tail feathers on top. Isis was often shown wearing a modified version of this crown, omitting the falcon feathers.⁴⁰ An additional attribute, often seen on finger rings and seal-impressions, comprises two ears of corn placed on either side of the horns-and-disc set. This seems to have been a Greek invention, and perhaps represents a confused rendering of the long and twisted ram horns that were often added to the crown in Egyptian iconography. These ears of corn may be the inspiration behind the two spirals that “support” the crown shown on the Geronisos amulet. Be that as it may, No. 4 bears a certain allusion to Ptolemaic Egypt and the cult of Isis, especially popular in the later Hellenistic period. Its user (who may also have been its cutter) must have been well aware of its significance. A seal-impression from the Edfu hoard (Fig. 34) suggests that the motif was known as a seal-device serving practical, apotropaic or ritual purposes.⁴¹ The device on No. 5, apparently a floral motif (Fig. 5a), is somewhat similar to the crown cut on No. 4, especially its rounded “base” (in the form of an over-simplified column capital?), virtually identical to the Isis crown’s spiral support – though reversed. One need not read too much into this, other than the closeness in inspiration and viewpoint. No. 5 also shares the intersecting-lines motif (Fig. 5d) with No. 6 (on both its sealing surface and *side d*: Fig. 6a and e); a similar device can be seen on the limestone stamp-seal of unknown context mentioned above,⁴² and on a number of (earlier) examples. The pinwheel or swastika shown on No. 13 has been cut in the same way.

Scarabs were introduced into Cyprus in the LCIIC period (*ca* 1325-1225 B.C.). The earliest recorded example is a black-steatite seal from

Geroskipou in the Paphos area that bears a hieroglyphic device.⁴³ The shape, alongside its simpler variant, the scaraboid, persisted for many centuries, until the late Hellenistic period.⁴⁴ The Geronisos find (No. 16) is of a common late type. Its device is of apparent amuletic-apotropaic nature, showing the lioness-goddess Sekhmet seated on her throne, in typical Egyptianizing fashion (Fig. 16a). Sekhmet (“*she who is powerful*”) personified the aggressive aspects of female deities, usually of the goddess Mut. She was the daughter of Ra —hence the sun-disc she wears— and the consort of Ptah, a goddess of war, magic, medicine, and motherhood. Sekhmet was also one of the goddesses (alongside Hathor and the cobra-goddess Wadjet) who served as the various manifestations of the *eye of Ra*, which was considered to exist as a separate entity. When associated with the *eye*, Sekhmet took the form of a savage goddess who acted as the instrument of the sun-god’s wrath, engineering the destruction of humans. As a consort goddess, Sekhmet is sometimes referred to in the *Pyramid Texts* (late 3rd millennium B.C.) as the goddess who conceives the king.⁴⁵ In the 1st millennium B.C. Sekhmet often traveled outside Egypt: her pendants and amulets, produced in Egypt itself or by various Egyptianizing workshops in Phoenicia and Syria, were thought to carry prophylactic powers and were offered as New Year gifts. Two of the seal-impressions from Edfu, presumably produced by scarabs, carry the same device of Sekhmet on her throne, holding a papyrus scepter (a common attribute of female deities in native-Egyptian art), thus providing a safe context for

39. Cf. Nicolaou and Mørkholm 1976, 80-86 pls I-XVII.

40. Vassilika 1989, 94-95 (types FMD; FMF).

41. Fig. 34: APM inv. no. 8177-128; 15×14; Disc-and-horns crown with double feathers and uraeus to the left.

42. See above, 268 with n. 11.

43. Reyes 2001, 9.

44. See generally Lagrace 1976, and Forgeau 1986 for Hellenistic finds.

45. On Sekhmet in general, see Yoyotte 1980; Germond 1981; Velde 1989.



Fig. 34. APM inv. no. 8177-128.



Fig. 35. ROM inv. no. 906.12.268.



Fig. 36. ROM inv. no. 906.12.268.



Fig. 37. APM inv. no. 8177-114.

Clay seal-impressions from Edfu, Egypt.

© Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto (34 and 37); © Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto (35 and 36)
(Photos: D. Plantzos).

the use of the type in the Ptolemaic realm of the 1st cent. B.C.⁴⁶

Cypriot subject-matter

A further number of devices have sprung directly from the native Cypriot tradition. No. 2 features five devices, one (*side a*, Fig. 2b) being the star-shaped syllabic sign for [a]. Syllabic signs are not uncommon on Cypriot seals, appearing as early as the Archaic period: one good example is shown on a scarab of unknown context, now in the Cyprus Museum in Nicosia.⁴⁷ The Nea Paphos hoard of clay seal-impressions has yielded a considerable number of such examples, of which three carry the [a] character.⁴⁸ *Side c* of No. 2 features the image of a bird, a motif well known from Cypriot pottery of the Iron Age (Fig. 2d). With oval-shaped bodies and triangular tails, often shown with separate two-feathered tails and crests, these birds are quintessentially Cypriot and cast a far-reaching influence in the arts of the ancient Mediterranean.⁴⁹

Further to the linear devices mentioned above, No. 6 features an anchor motif on its *side a* (Fig. 6b). Anchors sometimes appear on amphora stamps, and at least one example is known from Nea Paphos (stamped on a Cnidian amphora);⁵⁰ another is found on an amphora handle from Salamis.⁵¹ Paphos was an important naval base in the Hellenistic period⁵² and, although Ptolemaic policies towards the exploitation of the island's maritime potential varied significantly at times,⁵³ the significance of seafaring and related iconography seems undeniable. Another traditional Cypriot design is the "tree of life" on No. 8 (Fig. 8a), well known since the 2nd millennium B.C. when stylized trees were among the first Near Eastern motifs to be introduced into Cyprus, at a time when local cutters produced their first glyptic essays – then in the form of the cylinder seal.⁵⁴ Schematic tree motifs appear on Cypriot stamp-seals in the Iron Age and later periods,⁵⁵ as well as on pottery.⁵⁶

No. 11 bears yet another old motif in seal-cutting: its concentric, irregular grooves recall

the "labyrinths" represented on some Late Geometric/Early Archaic seals from Cyprus, Greece, and elsewhere. Greek Iron Age stone seals, chiefly cut on the Islands and the Argolid, are often engraved with such irregular motifs of loops, hooks, chevrons, quartered squares and key-patterns resembling worm-eaten wood.⁵⁷ As chance would have it, some Greek texts suggest that chunks of worm-eaten wood could be used as seals since their patterns would not be easy to duplicate.⁵⁸ Some early examples, featuring concentric or irregular "labyrinth" patterns, occur on Cyprus;⁵⁹ they were also made elsewhere in the Mediterranean, as evidenced by some eleven loom weights, decorated with square labyrinth motifs, from an 8th cent. B.C. deposit at the settlement site of Timpone Motta, near present-day Francavilla Marittima in South Italy (Sibari-tide).⁶⁰

Varia

A further number of devices offer no direct associations, though they apparently derive from

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46. Fig. 35: ROM inv. no. 906.12.268; 13×10; Fig. 36: ROM inv. no. 906.12.270; 12×6; Murray 1907, nos 34 and 35.
 47. Reyes 2001, 31 no. 2.
 48. Michaelidou-Nikolaou 1993, nos 6439, 6397, and 6495.
 49. Karageorghis and Gagniers 1974, 66-79 (Group XXV).
 50. Sztetyłło 1976, 95 no. 358 (dated after 86 B.C.).
 51. Calvet 1972, 65 no. 135.
 52. See Maier and Karageorghis 1984, 230-34; Młynarczyk 1990, 124-28.
 53. See Hauben 1987, esp. 225-26 where it is suggested that Cypriots were invited to play a more significant role in the Ptolemaic navy under Ptolemy IX (Lathyros); Cyprus had become the headquarters of the Ptolemaic fleet in 142 B.C., in the early years of Physkon's reign.
 54. See Meekers 1987, 71-72.
 55. Cf. Reyes 2001, 60 nos 62, 65-68.
 56. Karageorghis and Gagniers 1974, 83 (with examples and illustrations).
 57. Boardman 1970, 108-110; Boardman and Vollenweider 1978, 1-3 nos 1-4.
 58. Cf. Theophrastus, *On Plants* 6.1; Aristophanes, *Thesmophoriazoussai* 426-28, an invention he attributes to none other than Euripides himself: see Plantzos 1999, 18-19.
 59. Cf. Reyes 2001, 181 no. 464.
 60. Attema *et al.* 1998, 336-37 fig. 6 (M. Kleibrink).

the wider repertory of Cypriot iconography, in some cases seen on stamp-seals across long periods of time. No. 12, a conical stamp-seal of a type known in Cyprus from the 11th cent. B.C. on,⁶¹ bears the device of a quadruped or a bird in more or less the same fashion as seen on early seals: sketchy lines, cursory and uneven detailing in an altogether summary execution (Fig. 12a). Such animal motifs are seen on Cypriot seals already in the Iron Age and persist throughout later periods.⁶² Typically Levantine or Greek, these “stick-figures” are virtually non-attributable owing to their unassuming nature, which may account for their lack of prominence in excavation reports and comprehensive studies.⁶³ Their persistence is nonetheless remarkable, and should serve as a yardstick by which to measure popular tastes and traditions. An interesting feature of No. 12 are the two—or possibly three—“filling devices”, one above the animal, one behind it, and perhaps one below its front leg(s), where the stone has been chipped. The cursory material and unassuming execution do not allow a clear reading; however the top pattern may be another syllabic character and indeed resembles the star-patterned [a] already observed in No. 2 (Fig. 2b).

Alternatively, the combined device of the dog-like creature and the three stars may represent the constellation of the Dog and its most brilliant star, Sirius, once again a motif of significant importance in Ptolemaic ideology. Stars and constellations, including zodiac signs, are often represented in an abbreviated fashion like this in Greco-Roman art (personified by a human or animal figure surrounded by stars). Such images were, apparently, regarded as particularly appropriate for gem-intaglios and stamp-seals.⁶⁴ Sirius (in Greek: *Seirios*) is the Hellenized form of Sothis (in Egyptian: *Sopdet*), who was thought by the Egyptians to jet the waters of the Nile towards Egypt and, thus, fertilize its soils. Sopdet was worshipped as a separate divinity in Pharaonic times but was absorbed by Isis in the Hellenistic period. It was the tears of Isis (on the eve of Osiris’ demise: Plutarch, *On Isis and*

Osiris 32) that were thought to cause the rise of the water (Pausanias 10.32.18). When assimilated to Sopdet, Isis was worshipped as Isis/Sothis, thus usurping Sopdet’s pet-star. The rise of Sirius/Sothis between the 17th and the 19th of July coincided with the inundation of the Nile, and marked the beginning of the Egyptian calendar year. According to Plutarch (*On Isis and Osiris* 21), Sothis was the name of the *soul* of Isis, whose divine personality comprised strong celestial elements.⁶⁵ It may be ill-advised to read too much into such a small and poorly preserved object. Though unprovable, this reading is still probable and certainly attractive; it recognizes the same sense of interplay between the Cypriot and Ptolemaic traditions that is evidenced elsewhere on Hellenistic Geronisos.

No. 2 also features a schematic quadruped on its sealing surface (Fig. 2a), next to the Ptolemaic portrait discussed above. Should the obscure patterns on No. 12 prove to be syllabic characters, then the “native” origin of the device would be confirmed. *Side d* of No. 2, on the other hand, seems closer to the Ptolemaic tradition as it might show a staff, pillar, or even a crown decorated with feathers (Fig. 2e). Execution and scale, however, do not allow a firm reading. Intriguingly, No. 6 features two seemingly plain rectangles on its *sides b* and *c*, concave and convex respectively (Fig. 6c and d). They both resemble panels meant to contain some sort of inscription (as in the Egyptian cartouches) of figured decoration and, as a matter of fact, the convex rectangle on *side c* (Fig. 6d) appears to preserve very indistinct traces of a standing figure holding a scepter and advancing to the left. Such figures are quite

61. Reyes 2001, 24-28.

62. Cf. Reyes 2001, nos 42, 62, 68, 176, 199, 207, 208, 466, 481-88 etc.

63. As observed by Reyes (2001, 183); see *ibid.* 24-28 figs 17-18 and 20; 184 no. 471 for examples comparable with our No. 12 from earlier periods or uncertain contexts.

64. See Plantzos 1999, 99 with further references.

65. See Plantzos 1996b, 49-54 on Isis/Sothis and Ptolemaic iconography; also Clerc 1978 for the worship of Isis/Sothis in the Greco-Roman world.

common in native Egyptian art, including that of the Ptolemaic period, and are attested in the Edfu hoard (Fig. 37).⁶⁶ If we are correct in our reading, the figure must have been executed very faintly with a rather thin tool and, perhaps, was never quite completed.

In the same category of incomplete, uncertain designs, we should include the superficial scratchings on all sides but one of No. 9 (Fig. 9a-c; d-e), which are not really intelligible, and the equally opaque devices on No. 10 (Fig. 10a and c). Both of these seals confirm our suspicion that the Geronisos stamp-seals were made and “used” on the spot. Similar scratchings, seemingly intentional though of uncertain meaning, may be found on some of the other seals as well, such as No. 5 (Fig. 5b and c).

Excavation and Stratigraphic Contexts

The Geronisos stamp-seals are particularly valuable in that they were excavated from well-stratified levels that allow us to establish with certainty their chronological placement. We also have the benefit of knowing with what other cultural material they were deposited, enabling us to reconstruct, up to a point, the contexts in which they were used and how they came to be deposited as they were.

All but one of the 15 amulets were found in the series of rooms set along the southern cliff of the island known as the Central South Complex (Figs 39-46).⁶⁷ One lone amulet has been retrieved from the Southwest Complex, which lies some 20m. to the southwest on a sort of promontory of jagged cliffs that juts out toward the sea (Fig. 41).⁶⁸ This single amulet (No. 15) though undecorated, unfinished, and unpierced, is of great importance for what it tells us about the production and dating of the stamp-seals. Its unfinished state attests to the fact that these objects were produced on Geronisos itself. Why would someone bother to carry over to the island an amulet that had been left unfinished or discarded in the course of production?⁶⁹

No. 15 was found at an elevation of 19.045m. in a destruction level comprising a tumble of

decomposed mud brick and wall plaster (grid square H 16, level 3.2.2.2, Munsell 2.5 YR 8/1 in 2.5 YR 4/6). The mottled mix of red earth and white lime also contained fragments of roofing material including plaster that shows the impression of caning or bamboo (PL.93.01). Pockets of ash dotted through the debris bore witness to the fire that consumed this building. The substantial character of the structure is attested by the quantities of large ceramic tiles that slid from its roof to the west during its violent collapse.⁷⁰ The tumble of wall blocks in domino fashion similarly suggests a single, intense event that brought the building down all at once.

The deposit in which No. 15 was found rested within the interior of this building, just to the east of its thick western wall which runs along a diagonal line from southwest to northeast (Fig. 41). This deposit was rich with cultural material. A coin (C.93.04) of Cleopatra VII and Ptolemy XV Caesar (47-44 B.C.), found at an elevation of 18.725, establishes its date. An Eastern sigillata A hemispherical bowl (O.93.03), inscribed with the Greek letters *alpha* and *omicron*, conforms to Hays type 19B which has been dated to the second half of 1st century B.C.⁷¹ The remainder of the ceramic sequence recovered here is consistent with this date and includes a Cypriot sigillata cup (P.93.31), the rim of a second Cypriot sigillata cup (P.93.36), an Eastern sigillata A semi-ovoid bowl (P.93.09), a local slipped cup handle (P.93.58), and a clay stopper for an amphora (TC.93.01). A fragment of a molded glass bowl (G.93.13), may point to a somewhat upscale nature for local dining. This is of a type found in

66. Fig. 37: APM inv. no. 8177-114; 12×9; Isis holding papyrus scepter and ankh, advancing to the right; winged sun-disc flying above her.

67. Connelly 2005.

68. Connelly 2002, 256-63, figs 8-16.

69. Indeed, our own experimental carving of Geronisos limestone into similarly decorated pendants produced results that were remarkably close to the genuine article. This was undertaken by George Marshall Peters in 2004.

70. Connelly 2002, 257-59, figs 8-13.

71. Connelly 2002, 259-60, fig. 16.

quantity on Geronisos, showing profiles consistent with the widely dispersed conical and hemispherical bowls that were used through the Eastern Mediterranean and Italy during the late second and early 1st centuries B.C. Such bowls are generally thought to have originated along the Syro-Palestine Coast.⁷²

This level also yielded an iron knife with broad blade of a type often associated with skinning (MI.93.03). In view of the large number of sheep, goat, and quail bones found here, along with some 26 animal teeth, the knife probably played some role in food preparation.⁷³

Stone finds were numerous and include a mortar (ST.93.45) and pestle, bowl (ST.93.47), a rim fragment of a basin (ST.93.51), a round stone (ST.93.02), a stopper (ST.93.35), a spout (ST.93.53), what appears to be an anchor (ST.93.39), and other worked fragments (ST.93.48). A small piece of architectural molding (StA.93.03) was retrieved. The area seems to be one in which food preparation and/or distribution took place or, perhaps, one in which the residue from such activities was deposited or dumped. Whether this food preparation was ritual in nature cannot be known with certainty. The discovery of an ostrakon giving a list of male names (perhaps dedicators?) in this same area may point to a votive context, but this is by no means certain.⁷⁴ We can only wonder what business Chariton, Thrasayes, Nikkon, and Xaireas, the individuals named on the ostrakon, had on late Hellenistic Geronisos.⁷⁵

The vast majority of 14 seals was found further to the east, in the series of rooms designated as the Central South Complex (Figs 41-46).⁷⁶ Here, several rooms measuring 4.5×4.5m. square are defined by rubble walls running on north-south and east-west axes. Other rooms are oblong or polygonal in shape and open off of a Diagonal Wall (Fig. 45) that runs from southwest to northeast through the western half of the Complex. It is possible that we have two separate architectural phases represented here, though these cannot have been separated by very many

years. An open courtyard at the east and what appears to be a veranda along the south complete the ground plan of the Complex. Its floors were filled with quantities of ceramics, primarily drinking bowls, cups, strainers, jugs, cooking pots, and casseroles, giving evidence of a diet rich in liquid and strained foods.⁷⁷

Amulets were recovered from the occupation levels deposited upon these floors, and from the destruction levels that lie just above them. They were found at elevations from 20.765-20.035m., with the majority falling in the 20.30-20.00m. range. These include two seals from the northernmost extremity of the Central South Complex, excavated as N 21/N 22w baulk/M 21n baulk/ M 22nw baulk/O 21s baulk/O 22sw baulk (Fig. 42, nos 7, 12). Both amulets were found just to the north of the thick rubble wall that runs along an east-west axis across the trench, within the same deposit of red earth packed up against the wall (level 3.2, Munsell YR 5/4). No. 7, which shows an incised triangular design, was found at an elevation of 20.52 amongst a cluster of stones at the western end of the wall, together with a glass bowl fragment (G.05.05), amphora sherds, pieces of wall plaster, and some Chalcolithic chipped stones. No. 12 was found at the eastern end of the wall, at an elevation of 20.30m. It shows a design that may represent a bird, or more likely a dog, with star patterns in the field. With it were found a fragment of glass (G.05.07), a bronze bit (MB.05.04), and fragments of Eastern sigillata A ware.

72. We are indebted to Dr David Grose who was in the course of preparing the publication of the Geronisos glass at the time of his death in 2004. Dr Mariusz Burdajewicz continues this work.

73. Dr Paul Croft of the Lemba Archaeological Field Unit is preparing the Geronisos animal bones for publication.

74. Excavated by Dr Sophocles Hadjisavvas in 1982 for the Department of Antiquities: Geronisos 82/16. The ostrakon was read by Roger Bagnall in 2002.

75. As read by Roger Bagnall.

76. Connelly 2005, especially figs 4, 5, 18, 19.

77. Connelly 2005, 166-68.

The neighboring grid square N 22 has yielded four amulets, two found to the south of the Diagonal Wall on what may be an open veranda, and two found to its north. One of these, No. 10, was retrieved from the interior of the small room to the north of the Diagonal Wall, accessed through a doorway that opens onto the terrace (Figs 42, 45). It preserves a hard packed floor that seems to be made of ground limestone, giving it a white color and grainy texture (level 5.1.1.1). The floor was filled with cultural material, clustered at the centre of the room in what seems to have been a working space. Rectangular stone blocks, pottery, chipped stone tools, and ash from what may be small cooking areas, circled the entire area. No. 10, which shows rather unintelligible designs that may represent two figures, was found here at an elevation of 20.135m. Nearby was found the neck of a Dressel type 1 amphora (P.93.27) sawed off to serve as a pot stand and positioned upright upon the floor, shimmed in place by small stones.⁷⁸ Quantities of 1st century B.C. fine wares, including fragments of Cypriot sigillata jug (P.93.53) and other Cypriot sigillata pots (P.93.47), molded relief bowls (P.93.43), and a fragment of an amphoriskos (P.93.04) were retrieved. Stone bowl fragments (St.93.13, St.93.28), the rim of a stone basin (St.93.26), and a piece of architectural molding (St.A.93.01) were also recovered from the floor along with fragments of glass bowls (G.93.02-04). Animal bone fragments were found in the southwest corner of the room. Some Chalcolithic material, including chipped stone tools and a pale green bead (St.93.25), half drilled but abandoned in the course of perforation, were found on the floor and may represent a Hellenistic reuse of early material, as encountered elsewhere on Geronisos.⁷⁹

To the west, on the far side of the room's north-south wall, amulet No. 13 was recovered (Figs 42, 45). It shows a pinwheel decoration. Excavated at an elevation of 20.045m. from a layer of reddish earth lying directly above bedrock (level 4.5.1.2, Munsell 7.5 YR 5/6), this seal was found on a gravelly floor nearly void of

material. It seems to have been an exterior space or courtyard.

To the south of the Diagonal Wall, a good floor opens on to what may be a veranda looking onto the sea. The presence of a large round oven, excavated at the southern extremity of this trench in the 2006 season, suggests that this space was open to the air (Fig. 42). A seal showing the "tree of life" design, No. 8, was recovered from the floor of the terrace at an elevation of 20.37m. The deposit from which it was excavated (3.5.1.2, Munsell 7.5YR 5/6 strong brown, 7.5YR 8/1 white, 7.5 YR 6/4 light brown) clearly represents a destruction level, made up of decomposed mud brick and lime plaster, and varying in color from red to white. It very much resembles the destruction debris encountered in H 16 from which amulet No. 15 was retrieved. Just as in H 16, broken roof tiles lay atop the jumble of decomposed wall and ceiling materials. Nearby, the large amulet No. 5, which shows a floral motif, was found (Fig. 42). This seal was retrieved at a level of 20.10m.. (N 22/N 23 baulk 5.1.1.1, Munsell 7.5 YR 5/4) resting just above the *terra rosa* that covers bedrock.

In N 23, just to the east of the cross wall that runs north-south between N 22 and N 23, seal No. 9 was found at an elevation of 20.24m. (Fig. 42). Despite the sketchiness of its unintelligible scratches, this seal is invaluable for the excellent context material with which it was found. Its deposit, 5.1.2.1, is composed of a deep red, loose sandy earth representing a rich occupation level resting on a hard packed floor. Datable materials include a stamped Rhodian amphora handle (SAH.92.01) preserving the letters *AGRIA* from the word for the month *Agrianos*. It dates from the second half of the second century into the first century B.C.⁸⁰ A matched pair of lamps

78. Connelly 2005, fig. 22.

79. For the reuse of Chalcolithic material by the Hellenistic inhabitants of Geronisos, see Connelly and McCartney 2004.

80. Sztetyłło 1976, 35, no. 42.

(L.92.02, L.92.03) found nearby can be dated *ca* 75-25 B.C. They are made of “Geronisos ware” and are decorated with a local pattern that shows the imprints of small fingers to make a pinched “melon” decoration. Beside them, a stone lamp holder was recovered (St.92.12). Fragments of a third lamp (L.92.04), found nearby and made of local “Pink Powdery Ware,” can also be dated to the period 75-50 B.C.⁸¹

Across the floor in the southwest corner of the trench, an overstruck coin (C.92.01) in very worn condition, minted during the reign of Ptolemy VIII Euergetes (170-164/3 and sole reign 146/5-117/6 B.C.) was recovered at an elevation of 20.33m. It represents the earliest coin found to date on Geronisos, separated by some 26 years from the two coins of Ptolemy King of Cyprus (80-30 B.C.) that have been recovered in the neighbouring trench, N 24 (C.93.05, C.93.07).

Of special interest is an inscription carved on a small stone plaque that reads TPIT, TETPA, ΠΕΜΠΗ (I.92.01), found close to amulet no. 9.⁸² Its first and third lines appear to give the Greek ordinal numerals for “third” and “fifth.” The second line does not give an ordinal adjective but, instead, what appears to be an adverb. A second inscription (I.92.03), found nearby, preserves the word “ENNEA,” the Greek cardinal for “nine.” So similar in size and appearance is this fragment to the first that it probably served as a companion piece.

This same level has produced an amphora sherd inscribed with Greek letters (O.92.01). It shows the letter *nu* written repeatedly, along with the letter *tau* written twice, one broken bar *alpha*, perhaps an *alpha* and a *rho* written together, and four vertical strokes. The letters do not form lines but seem to be randomly inscribed. Roger Bagnall has interpreted the ostrakon as one preserving the writing exercises of a child. Within this context, one can only wonder whether the plaques inscribed with numbers may have served as aides for counting exercises.

This level also yielded two pierced stone disks (St.92.16 and 23), a mortar (St.92.13), a

bronze hook (MB.92.03), a lead hook (ML.92.02), a second bit of lead (ML.92.01), a fragment of glass (G.92.10), an echinus bowl (P.92.05), a globular jug (P.92.60), a local color coated bowl, (P.92.78), and a fragment of Cypriot sigillata (P.93.54). Pockets of ash were found across the area.

Just to the north, in the small room excavated within grid square O 23, was found amulet No. 2. at an elevation of 20.25m. (Fig. 42). This seal is decorated on all four sides, as well as on its stamping surface, and combines devices well known from Cypriot iconography (bird, dog, Cypriot syllabic sign for [a]) with those drawn from the Ptolemaic realm (male portrait wearing double crown; staff, pillar, or crown decorated with feathers). It was found within a rich occupation level of light red earth (3.1.3.1). Remarkably, we find the same pattern of deposition for objects here as was encountered in N 23. The amulet was found together with lamps, an ostrakon showing children’s writing exercises, flat stone slabs, pierced disks (TC.92.01-02, ST.92.17) and a mortar (St.92.24). The clustering of objects could suggest a working space or, alternatively, an intentional grouping of offerings.

The lamps include a regional Paphian color coated example (L.92.06) that can be dated to the second half of the 2nd century B.C. and a wheel-made Knidian example (L.92.10) from the second half of the 2nd century to the early 1st century B.C.⁸³ L.92.08 The ostrakon (O.92.02) shows randomly inscribed letters and stray marks, including a lunate *epsilon*, a *pi*, a *delta*, a *kappa*, what appears to be an *iota* and a box-shaped *theta*.⁸⁴ This level also yielded a trefoil mouth oinochoe (P.92.16), fragments of molded relief bowls (P.92.23), a hemispherical bowl (P.92.01),

81. Connelly and Młynarczyk 2002, no. 14.

82. I.92.01, Connelly and Młynarczyk 2002, 306. I thank Roger Bagnall for his reading of this inscription.

83. Connelly and Młynarczyk 2002, 311-13, catalogue nos 21, 28.

84. As read by Roger Bagnall.

a large shallow bowl (P.92.03), a jug (P.92.30), body sherds from cooking pots and amphorae, a fragment of a glass bowl (G.92.05, 06), and animal bones.

The room just to the north, in P 23, measures 4.5m. square. In its southwest corner, two stone slabs inscribed with the letters *eta gamma* are set at floor level. An additional rectangular slab sits just opposite in the southeast corner. Quantities of cultural material were positioned up against these stone slabs. The scarab showing the goddess Sekhmet (Fig. 42, no. 16) was excavated at an elevation of 19.79m. from a spot just to the north of the small gap between the two inscribed slabs. It was found in a level that contained much decomposed white plaster, lying just above *terra rosa* (grid square P 22se/O 22-O 23bn/O 23-P 23bw, deposit 7.1). With it was found the base of a bowl (P.96.60) and several fragments of Eastern sigillata A pots. Pockets of ash surrounded the material.

At the north of this room, just inside the east-west wall, amulet No. 1 was excavated from an elevation of 20.17m. (Fig. 42). It shows the diademed portrait of a Ptolemaic ruler. The occupation level from which it was retrieved was made up of sandy brown earth (3.2, Munsell 7.5 YR 4/4). It yielded a bronze hook or nail (MB.93.06), chipped stones, and pieces of plaster. A terracotta pierced disk (TC.93.03), an amphora (P.93.26), stone anchor (ST.93.65), a small sheet of lead (ML.93.02), and a fragment of iron (MI.93.04) were found in associated levels.

The remainder of the amulets were found in grid square N 24 and its environs (Fig. 42). Here, the northern half of a room is preserved, along with the walls that separate it from a similar room, just to the north in square O 24. In the northwest corner of N 24, a rubble-built platform, measuring 1.0×1.10m., rises off the floor to a height of 0.30-0.45m. (Fig. 46). It matches similar platforms built into the western corners of the room in O 24. Fragmentary mud pisé found atop these podia suggests that they may have originally been smoothed over with a clay top. Though

these “benches” are of uncertain function, one thing is clear. They were the focus of intense activity, as quantities of cultural material were carefully deposited in close proximity to each.⁸⁵

Atop the platform in N 24, unfinished seal No. 14 was excavated at an elevation of 20.765m. (2.1.1.1, Munsell 7.5 YR 4/6). With it were found a bronze bit (MB.93.64) and fragments of a cooking pot. On the floor level just in front of the podium were found two lamps (L.93.11, L.93.05) both made of local pink powdery ware and dated *ca* 75-25 B.C.⁸⁶ The floor also yielded two coins of Ptolemy King of Cyprus (C.93.05, C.93.07), dated from 80-50 B.C., and one coin of Cleopatra VII and Ptolemy XV Caesar, dated 47-44 B.C.

Further to the north, atop the wall foundations running east-west between the rooms in N 24 and O 24, a coin of Cleopatra VII (44-30 B.C.) was found (Fig. 46). Amulet No. 4, showing the Isis crown, was found near this location, atop the wall foundations in the northwest corner of the room, at an elevation of 20.305m. (5.3, Munsell 7.5 YR 4/4). With it was found an early Roman barbotine thin-walled beaker (P.94.25) that dates to the mid 1st century B.C., a bronze needle (MB94.32), a stone basin (ST.94.20), and a fragment of lead (ML.94.04). Pockets of ash, small stones, and decomposed lime plaster were encountered throughout the level.

To the west, amulet No. 6 was found atop the wall foundations running north-south along the N 25/O 25 grid line. Excavated at an elevation of 20.327m., it was found in a level of grainy brown earth with small flakes of lime, loosely packed (3.2.2.1, Munsell 7.5 YR 5/4). It shows an anchor on one side, a die motif on another, and long rectangular fields on the other. No other objects were retrieved from this level.

Two amulets were excavated further to the south. No. 3, showing the Ptolemaic eagle, was

85. Connelly 2005, 155-76; Connelly and Młynarczyk 2002, 299-308.

86. Connelly and Młynarczyk 2002, 309-11, cat. nos 4 and 10.

found atop the wall foundation running north south on the eastern side of the room at an elevation of 20.61m. This level (2.1.3.1) contained a small fragment of an imported color coated lamp (L.94.06) that dates to the first half of the 2nd century B.C.⁸⁷ A stone molding fragment (St.94.12), many pieces of waterproof cement, and shells were recovered from this area.⁸⁸

Cleaning of the M 24/N 24 baulk yielded amulet No. 11 which seems to have come from an elevation at the floor level 20.035. It shows a labyrinth or worm-eaten wood decoration. Found nearby was a pierced stone disk (ST.94.33), fragments of glass drinking bowls (G 93.15, 16, 18-20, 73), a spouted strainer in Cypriot sigillata fabric (P.05.07), a Cypriot sigillata olpe P.05.20, and cooking pots (P.05.13-15). A large, coarse krater with broad horizontal lip, of a type that has been associated with use as a chamber pot (P.93.12), preserves a complete profile.

While the precise function of the Central South Complex remains obscure at present, it clearly was the setting for widespread food preparation and distribution, including rather upscale dining activities. Quantities of local and imported fine wares and cast glass drinking bowls attest to this. That this dining was ritual in nature seems likely. Life on an island without a water source was a wildly impractical enterprise and suggests that the effort made was one driven by the symbolic character of the place and acts of pilgrimage made to it. Secondly, cultural material found on Geronisos, including stone votive trays, ostraka, *pinakes*, and, of course, the amulets themselves point to cult activity.⁸⁹

Of special interest here is a fragment of a transport amphora, found in the Central South Complex, that shows incised letters spelling the word "ΑΠΟΛΛΩ." The final letter, *omega*, is raised above the line level to indicate an abbreviation.⁹⁰ One could resolve the abbreviation as a form of the name of the god Apollo which would conveniently give us the name of the divinity worshipped on Geronisos. But it is also possible to resolve the letters as a proper name, like Apol-

lonios.⁹¹ We must refrain from using this inscription as conclusive evidence for the Apollo cult on Geronisos, though it is certainly tempting. As we have observed, the amulets are of a type seen worn on statues of temple boys dedicated in sanctuaries of Apollo. It seems that we have just such a sanctuary here.

The Ptolemies of Egypt were known for their policy of respect and promotion of indigenous religious practices.⁹² In the last years of their rule on Cyprus, a small sanctuary seems to have been introduced on Geronisos where the old Cypriot tradition of placing boys under the care of Apollo took on a Ptolemaic flavour. The square rooms with low stone benches, small bowls, jugs, and strainers, the *ostraka* that record male names and children's writing exercises and, above all, the limestone amulets, point to the presence of male children. Construction reflects Ptolemaic planning: the Egyptian *ell* is used as a unit of measure for the width of walls, the cistern with broad fan-shaped impluvium is of a type encountered in North Africa, and the use of plaster for ashlar setting beds and the decoration of architectural members, all point to the Alexandrian orbit.⁹³ The ceramic sequence further establishes direct links with Egypt.⁹⁴

The connection of Geronisos with the Ptolemaic administration is made brilliantly clear by the fact that interest in the sanctuary, and the resources needed to sustain it, dried up following the defeat and death of Cleopatra VII in 30 B.C. The buildings of Geronisos were probably brought down by the great earthquake of 17 B.C.,

87. Connelly and Młynarczyk 2002, 313, cat. no. 27.

88. Dr David Reese of Yale University is preparing the publication of the Geronisos shells.

89. Connelly 2005, 168-76.

90. O.94.01, Connelly and Młynarczyk 2002, 305.

91. As pointed out by Roger Bagnall.

92. Wright 1992, 536.

93. Connelly 2002, 256-68; Connelly and Wilson 2002, 269-80; Connelly, forthcoming b.

94. Młynarczyk, forthcoming.

recorded by Dio Cassius 54.23.7 (3rd century A.D.) and Eusebius, *Hieron Chronikon* 166c.⁹⁵ No one bothered to rebuild. To understand why, we now turn to the special relationship of Geronisos with the Ptolemaic administration, both on Cyprus and at Alexandria itself.

CYPRUS UNDER THE LAST PTOLEMIES

Although we may be correct in thinking that those sitting on the throne at Alexandria—as was most likely also the case with those who were later to rule Rome or Constantinople—felt that their power knew no boundaries, the Ptolemaic realm possessed quite distinct (and accordingly almost impenetrable) physical borders. Cyprus provided one of these and, as a matter of fact, it can be argued that such physical confinement hindered the Ptolemies' global perspective, since "Cyprus, Cyrenaica, and the Egyptian *chōra* bounded their horizon".⁹⁶ For three hundred years or so after Ptolemy Soter secured Egypt as his home turf and established himself and his offspring as the new Pharaohs, Cyprus played an important role in Ptolemaic politics, both foreign and domestic. Ptolemy Soter put Cyprus under his control in 310 B.C., only to see it drift away at the hands of Demetrius Poliorcetes in 306 B.C., a state of affairs that remained unchanged even after the battle at Ipsus in 301 B.C. where Antigonos the One-Eyed, Demetrius' father, was severely defeated. Only in 295/4 B.C. did Ptolemy recover the island, abolish its independent kingdoms, and establish a closed-currency zone extending over the Egyptian mainland, Cyprus, Coele Syria, and Cyrenaica. These remote territories were governed by *strategoï*, who were accountable directly to Alexandria.⁹⁷ Their main importance was strategic, as well as economic: Cyprus, in particular, with its copper mines, pine timber, and fertile wheat fields was a lavish possession.⁹⁸ From 295/4 to 217 B.C., the *strategoï* (whose official residence was Paphos) came from the island's native (that is Greek and Phoenician) population; it was only after 217 B.C., under Ptolemy IV Philopator, that these magistrates

were hand-picked by the king from among the Greek/Macedonian settlers in Alexandria.

Soon enough, Cyprus was entangled in the kind of domestic strife that became so typical of Ptolemaic politics.⁹⁹ Between 167 and 152 B.C., Ptolemy VI Philometor and his brother (who was to become the infamous Ptolemy VIII Physkon) fought, among other things, for control over the island (managing to lose it momentarily to the hands of Antiochus IV of Syria) with Rome intervening in favor of Physkon. When the two brothers reached a predictably fragile reconciliation, Philometor's son Ptolemy Eupator was appointed governor of Cyprus (where he died in 150 B.C.). Henceforth, Cyprus became a sort of Ptolemaic chessboard, offering shelter to exiled kings or pretenders to the throne while their challenger held Alexandria. Thus, when in 132/1 B.C. the Alexandrian people revolted in favor of Cleopatra II, Physkon, his (other) wife Cleopatra III and their children sought refuge in Cyprus. In a most gruesome turn of events, when Cleopatra II had her son by Physkon, Ptolemy Memphites, proclaimed king, Physkon lured the 14-year old boy to Cyprus, had him murdered, and sent his severed remains to Alexandria to be delivered to his mother on the night before her birthday celebrations.

After the truce of 118 B.C. and the general amnesty that accompanied it, Physkon's elder son, Ptolemy Lathyros, was appointed governor of Cyprus where he served until his father's death in 116 B.C. He was then called to ascend to the throne at Alexandria, while his younger brother Ptolemy Alexandros was sent to Cyprus in his place. By 107 B.C. Cleopatra III, Physkon's

95. Guidoboni 1994, 177-78.

96. See Green 1990, 547-48:

97. On the administration of Cyprus under the Ptolemies, see Hölbl 2001, 59-60.

98. Green 1990, 194; see Hauben 1987 for the Cypriot contribution to Ptolemaic navy.

99. For a thorough account of the events discussed here, see Green 1990, 442-46, 537-44, 647-82 and Hölbl 2001, 181-256.

widow and mother of his two sons, though with a soft spot for her youngest, had managed to overthrow Lathyros in favor of Alexandros, who was soon on his way back to Alexandria. Lathyros established himself in Cyprus after a failed assassination attempt organized by his mother. Cleopatra III and Alexandros eventually reached a friction in their relationship which ended with Alexandros escaping from Alexandria. In 101 B.C., he returned, managed to assassinate his mother, and thus was left to rule Egypt alone. In 88 B.C., however, a new uprising in Alexandria cost him his throne for the second—and last—time. Once again, Cyprus became the theatre for dynastic conflict, as it was in its waters that the two brothers confronted one another in a naval battle in which Alexandros was killed. Lathyros then returned to Alexandria until his own death in 81/0 B.C.

Lathyros was survived by his two illegitimate sons, predictably both named Ptolemy: the elder, Auletes, became king of Egypt while the younger was appointed governor of Cyprus. In the meantime, Rome played an increasingly interfering role in the Eastern Mediterranean, overtly challenging Ptolemaic authority over Cyprus and Egypt itself. In 59 B.C. Auletes bribed Caesar into persuading the Senate to recognize his regime, a formality that had been pending since his accession. Rome proceeded to annex Cyprus the following year and Auletes' brother, 'Ptolemy of Cyprus', committed suicide. This turn of events, and the financial burden it placed on Egypt and its people,—the direct results of Auletes' bribing of Caesar—made the king so unpopular in Alexandria that he had to seek refuge in Rome.

Auletes was succeeded in 51 B.C. by his daughter Cleopatra and his son Ptolemy XIII. Cleopatra soon ignored her younger brother, omitting his name from official documents and failing to issue coinage with his portrait next to her own. In 48 B.C. Caesar arrived in Alexandria after his victory over Pompey at Pharsala and established himself in the royal palace. Caesar

and Cleopatra became lovers, and Ptolemy XIII tried in vain to raise the Alexandrians against them. Cleopatra's other siblings, Ptolemy XIV and Arsinoe, were provisionally proclaimed rulers of Cyprus by Caesar, despite the fact that the island had already been annexed by Rome in 58 B.C. Rome was thus making a hefty sacrifice for peace; Cleopatra had Caesar's intervention to thank for this. Ptolemy XIII raised his army and the Alexandrian War ensued (48-47 B.C.). In the aftermath of this rather bizarre confrontation, Cleopatra was re-instated, effectively as the sole ruler of Egypt (although she 'married' her eleven-year-old brother, Ptolemy XIV), while Ptolemy XIII lost his life. Arsinoe was thrown in prison, and Caesar and Cleopatra took their famous cruise up the Nile. In June 47 B.C. Cleopatra gave birth to Caesar's son, Ptolemy Caesarion. The following year, she visited Caesar in Rome, to the dismay of all good Republicans. Cleopatra stayed in Rome until Caesar's assassination in 44 B.C. Upon her return to Egypt, she murdered her brother Ptolemy XIV and crowned Caesarion as her joint ruler. In the same year, Marc Antony (Caesar's successor in the affairs of Egypt as well as those of Cleopatra's own heart), established Arsinoe as queen of Cyprus, as once promised by Caesar – even though in the meantime she had been paraded in Caesar's triumph at Rome. A few months later we find Arsinoe in Ephesus, having abandoned Cyprus to Cleopatra; in 41 B.C. she was put to death by Antony. In 37 B.C., while Antony was in Antioch on his way to fight the Parthians, Cleopatra came to meet him, and received as her reward the territories of Cyprus, Cilicia, Phoenicia, Coele-Syria, Judaea and Arabia, as well as Antony's formal recognition of his two children by her, Alexandros Helios and Cleopatra Selene. What happened after that was a sad anti-climax all the way to Actium.

The microcosm of Geronisos seems pretty far from the turmoil of the events described above, even though the island is the first bit of Cyprus that one approaches when sailing from Alexandria. Its settlers may have never confronted ro-

yalty, though they certainly had some, even vague and incomplete, notion of the royal comings and goings between Alexandria and Cyprus. The Ptolemaic imagery they chose to employ in their seal-like amulets suggests a connection to Ptolemaic ideology, and the depiction of the two portraits discovered to date indicates a familiarity with types seen elsewhere, from coinage, glyptics, and other sources. The significance of these portraits is more difficult to establish. Their dis-

tance from the court and the grand administrative centres obscures our understanding of their distribution and interaction with official types. Though these images may well reach us in a round-about fashion, they seem to paint the scene of a cultural outback, vibrant and parochial at the same time. Cypriot realities are entangled with memories (or fantasies?) of a distant Ptolemaic state. These amulets are bi-cultural as they are bilingual.

ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

Δημοσιεύονται δεκαπέντε περίαπτα από ασβεστόλιθο, τα οποία βρέθηκαν κατά την ανασκαφή του Πανεπιστημίου της Νέας Υόρκης στη Γερόνησο, το μικρό ακατοίκητο νησί στο δυτικό άκρο της Κύπρου. Οι ανασκαφές έχουν αποκαλύψει ένα συγκρότημα δωματίων και αυλών που πιθανότατα λειτουργούσε ως χώρος εστίασης και διανυκτέρευσης για τους προσκυνητές που επισκέπτονταν τον παρακείμενο ναό (ενδεχομένως αφιερωμένο στον Απόλλωνα) κατά την Ελληνιστική περίοδο.

Στην πλειονότητά τους τα περίαπτα έχουν ανασκαφεί εντός του συγκεκριμένου οικοδομικού συμπλέγματος, το οποίο αναφέρεται ως Νότιο Κεντρικό Συγκρότημα. Το σχήμα τους θυμίζει αυτό των υφαντικών βαριδίων, αν και ορισμένα από αυτά δεν φέρουν διαμπερή οπή αναρτήσεως. Κάποια από τα έως τώρα ανασκαφέντα περίαπτα είναι κωνικά και άλλα πυραμιδοειδή / πρισματικά. Τα περισσότερα φέρουν εγχάρακτες «έγκοιλες» παραστάσεις, επομένως θα μπορούσαν δυνητικά να θεωρηθούν και ως σφραγίδες, με συμβολική, έστω, σημασία. Οι παραστάσεις – οι οποίες συχνά κοσμούν και τις πλάγιες, ακόμη και την άνω επιφάνεια των περιάπτων, πέρα από την, καθιερωμένη για τον τύπο αυτό, βάση – περιλαμβάνουν μερικά θέματα παρμένα από το τυπικό ρεπερτόριο της κυπριακής σφραγιδογλυφίας και τέχνης γενικότερα. Ιδιαίτερα σημαντική, όμως, είναι η παρουσία στο σύνολο και σφραγίδων με Αιγυπτιαζόν / Πτολεμαϊκό θέμα, όπου απεικονίζονται μέλη της Πτολεμαϊκής δυναστείας από την περίοδο 100/80 – 50/30 π.Χ. καθώς και άλλα θέματα εμπνευσμένα από την Πτολεμαϊκή εικονογραφία.

Ο απλός, συχνά αδόκιμος χαρακτήρας των δεκαπέντε περιάπτων, καθώς και το γεγονός ότι κάποια βρέθηκαν ημιτελή, φαίνεται να υποδεικνύει ότι κατασκευάστηκαν στο νησί με στοιχειώδη εργαλεία. Το σχήμα των περιέργων αυτών αντικειμένων θυμίζει τα περίαπτα που φορούν στο στήθος τους τα ομοιώματα των λεγόμενων «νεωκόρων» (*temple-boys*), τα οποία αποτελούν συχνά αφιερώματα σε κυπριακά ιερά του Απόλλωνα, επομένως η χρήση τους θα μπορούσε να θεωρηθεί συμβολική / αναθηματική. Ο διπλός χαρακτήρας της εικονογραφίας τους παραπέμπει ταυτόχρονα στην Κύπρο και την Πτολεμαϊκή Αλεξάνδρεια, αποκαλύπτοντας τις δύο παράλληλες παραδόσεις των οποίων μετέχει η ελληνιστική Γερόνησος.

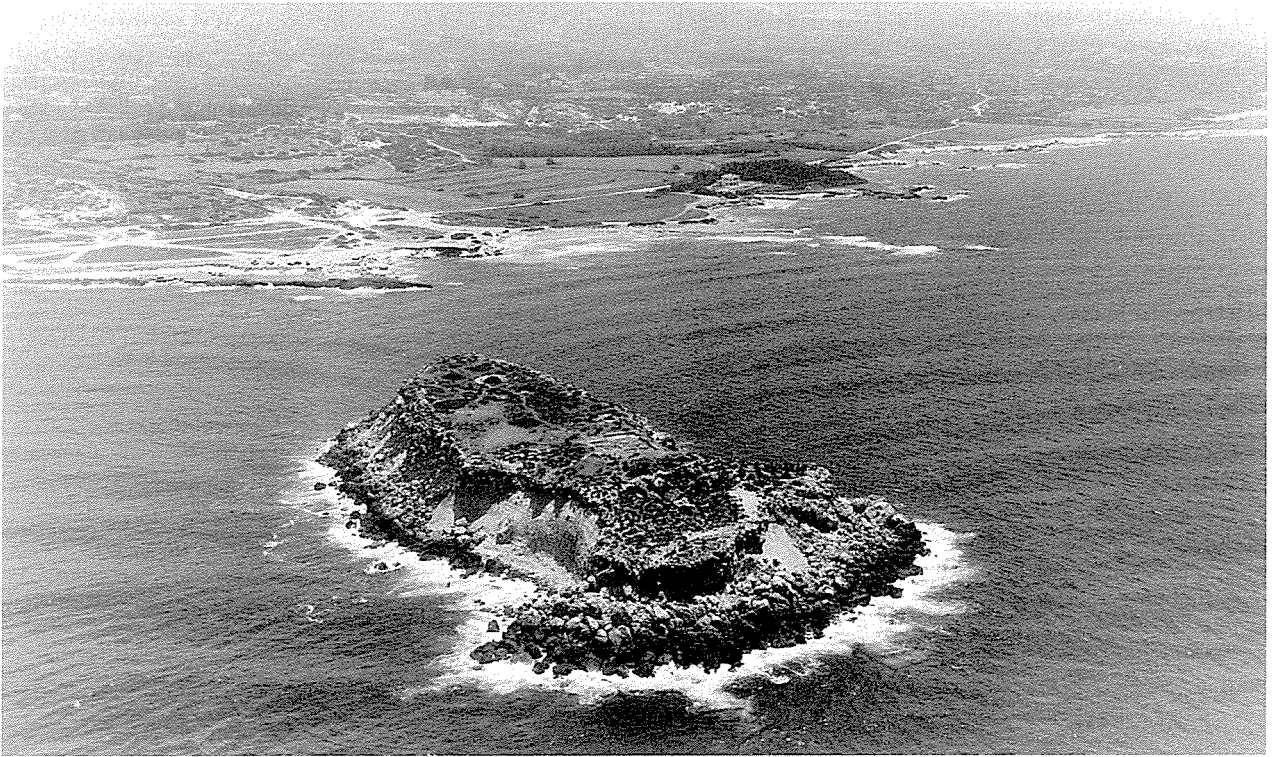


Fig. 38. Aerial view of Geronisos from west.

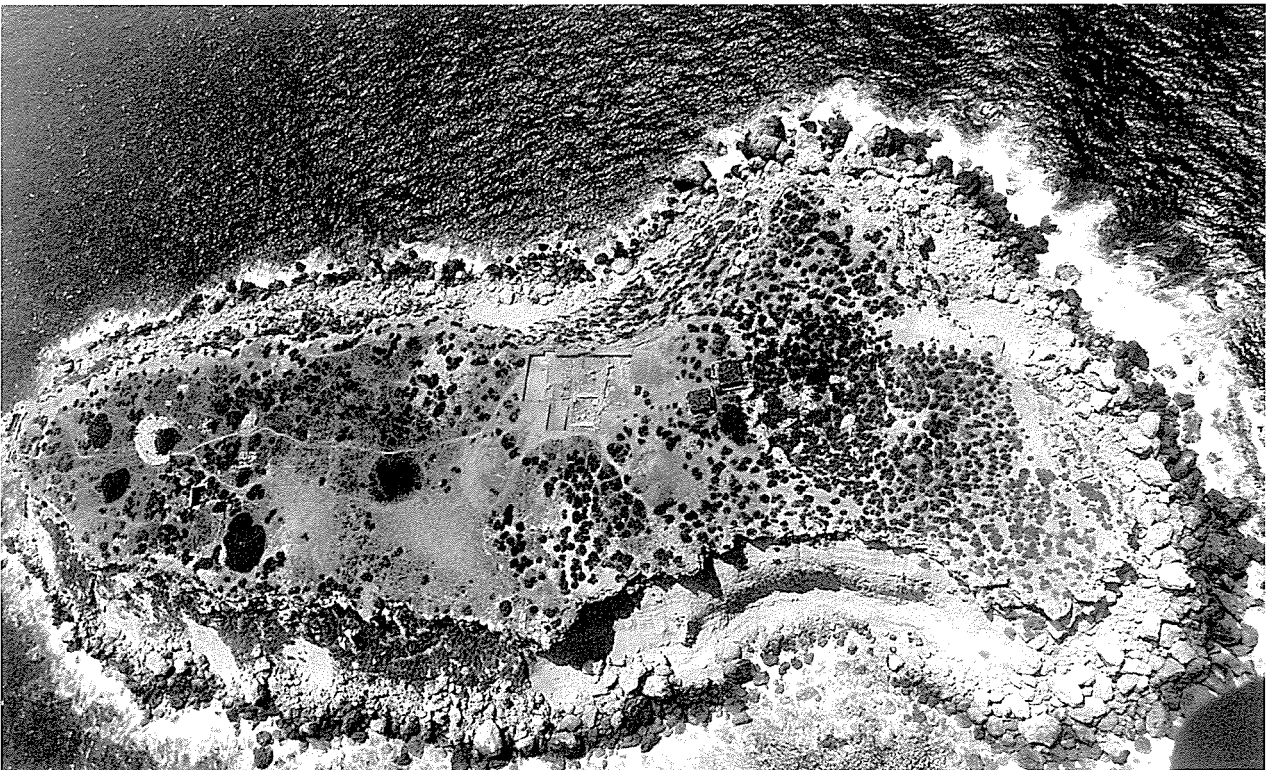


Fig. 39. Aerial view of Geronisos facing south.

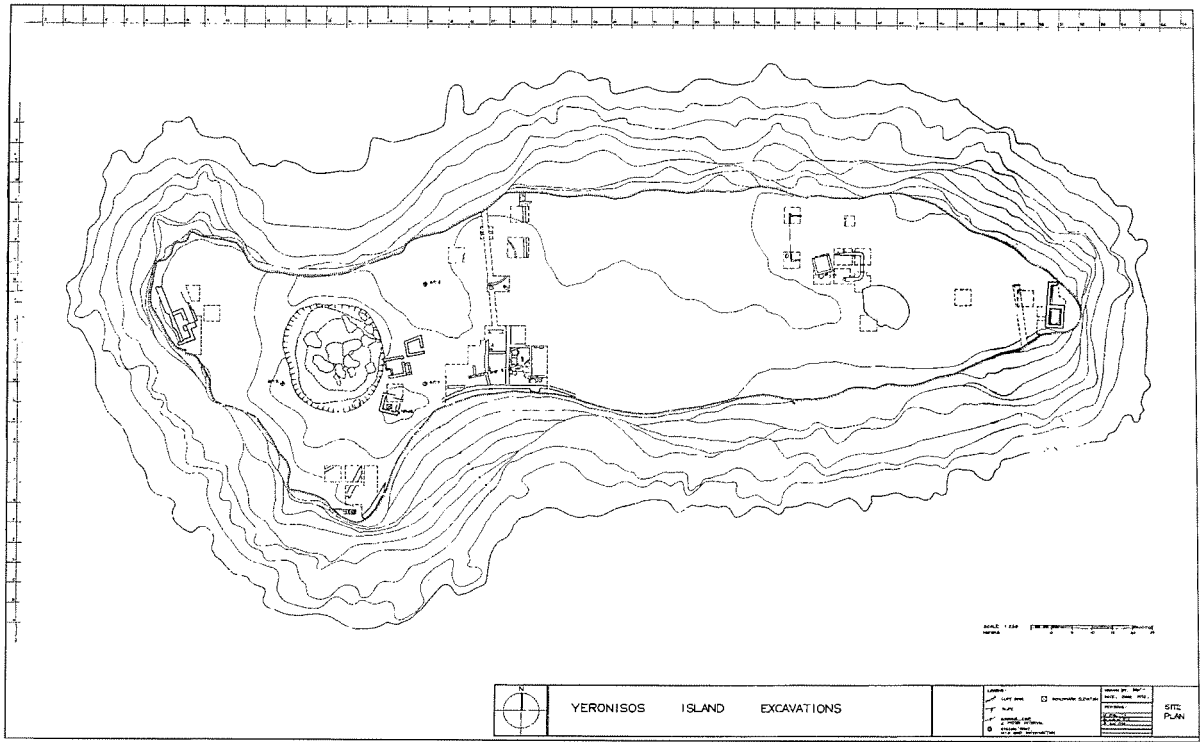


Fig. 40. State plan of Geronisos (Andrew Wixom and Mariuz Burdajewicz).

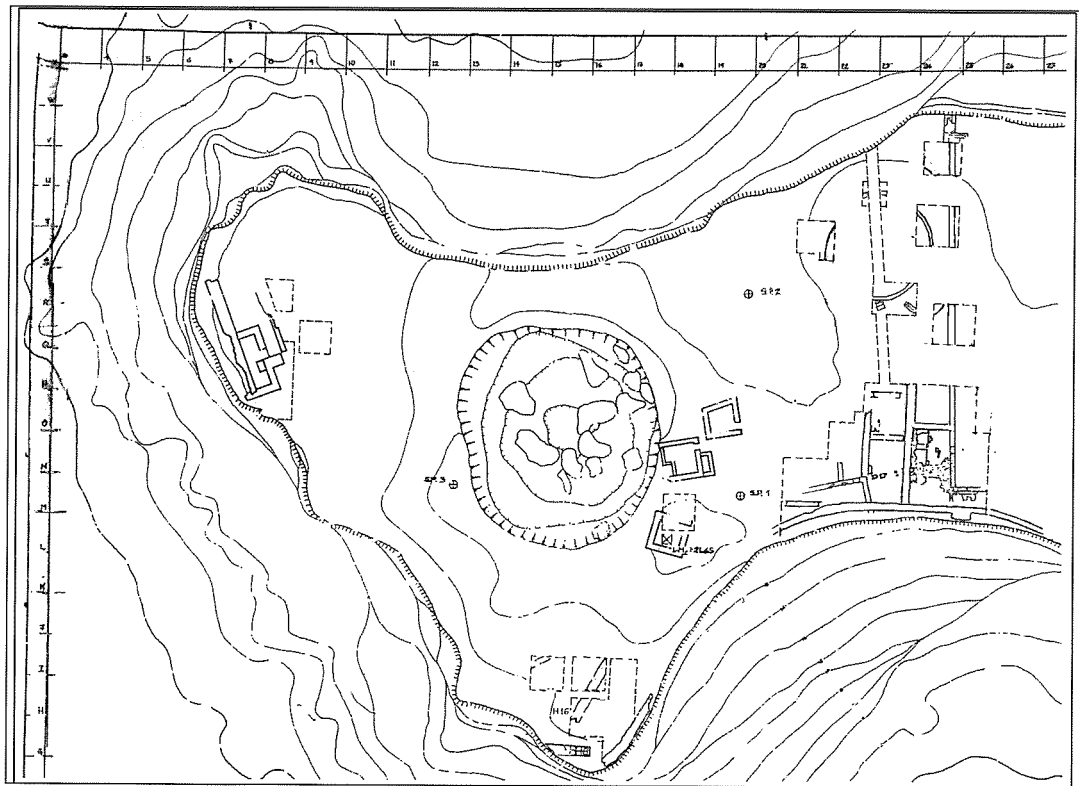


Fig. 41. Western Geronisos: Southwest Sector and Central South Complex.



Fig. 42. Distribution of stamp-seals across Central South Complex.



Fig. 43. Aerial view of Central South Complex, facing north.



Fig. 44. Detail of Central South Complex, facing north.

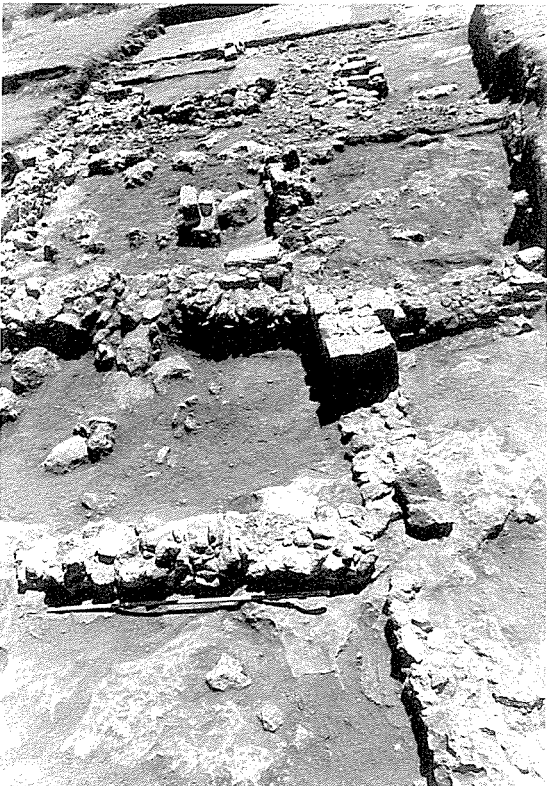


Fig. 45. Central South Complex, Diagonal Wall, N 23, N 24. Facing east.



Fig. 46. Central South Complex, N 24, O 24. Facing north.

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