DOI: 10.53737/2713-2021.2025.60.88.011

S.A. Yatsenko

SARMATIAN TAMGAS ON GREEK TOMBSTONES IN PANTICAPAEUM*

16 Greek tombstones from the necropolis of Pantikapaeum with Sarmatian tamgas are examined. Usually, such signs were applied during the secondary use of a tombstones during various actions that took place at old cemeteries. These are clusters of tamgas, during an event with 10—20 participants (Ns. 1—4), pairs of signs (Ns. 4—8), and single signs (including the emblems of the Bosporan kings) (Ns. 9—12). Sometimes tamgas are violate the Greek texts. The sinchronous tamgas engraved on tombstones date back to the Middle Sarmatian period and are associated with the "Barbarian" regions of Crimea (Ns. 14—15). The tamgas were signed by the representatives of Sarmatian nobility, most often from the Lower Don region, and less often from the Northern Azov Sea region and "Barbarian" parts of Crimea. They belonged to the Middle and Late Sarmatian periods in approximately equal numbers. Among the clusters of tamgas, there are also emblems of the Bosporan kings Sauromates II, Rhescuporis III and Inensimeos, which were left by officials present at the events on behalf of the king. In order to prevent the deceased Greek owner of the tombstone from taking revenge, the Sarmatians removed the faces of the dead and his family members, as well as the top part of the tombstone with his head. The Sarmatian mini-sanctuary No. 4, which features three horse figures and was used during both periods, is particularly interesting. The horse on Atta's tombstone (No. 13) is unique, as it depicts the tamgas of its former owners, king Rhoemetalces and an influential nomadic clan from Western Ukraine. Until recently, the descendants of the Sarmatians, in some situations overturned the tombstones of foreign cultures for magical purposes.

Key words: Pantikapaeum, Sarmatians, tamgas, old tombstones, 1st — mid-3rd centuries CE, rituals with tombstones, clusters of tamgas, Lower Don region, representatives of the Bosporan kings.

About the author: Yatsenko Sergey Aleksandrovich, Dr. Habil. (History), Professor, Russian State University for the Humanities.

Contact information: 125993, Russia, Moscow, 6 Miusskaya sq., Russian State University for the Humanities; e-mail: sergey_yatsenko@mail.ru.

С.А. Яценко

САРМАТСКИЕ ТАМГИ НА ГРЕЧЕСКИХ НАДГРОБИЯХ ПАНТИКАПЕЯ

Рассмотрены 16 греческих надгробий из некрополя Пантикапея с нанесенными на них сарматскими тамгами. Обычно такие знаки наносили при вторичном использовании надгробия во время различных акций, происходивших у старых кладбищ. Это скопления тамг, во время акции с 10—20 участниками (№№ 1—4), изображения пар знаков (№№ 4—8) и единичные знаки (включая эмблемы боспорских царей) (№№ 9—12). Иногда тамги находят на греческий текст. Единичные тамги, гравированные при изготовлении надгробия, относятся к среднесарматскому времени и связаны с «варварскими» районами Крыма (№№ 14—15). На надгробиях ставили свои знаки представители сарматской знати, чаще всего с Нижнего Дона, реже из Северного Приазовья и «варварских» районов Крыма; они примерно поровну относятся к среднесарматскому и позднесарматскому времени. Среди скоплений тамг встречены и эмблемы боспорских царей Савромата II, Рискупорида III и Иненсимея; их оставили присутствовавшие на акциях чиновники от имени государя. Чтобы не допустить мести умершего греческого хозяина надгробия, сарматы сбивали лица с изображения его и членов семьи, удаляли верхнюю часть с его головой. Очень интересно сарматское мини-святилище № 4 с тремя фигурами лошадей, использовавшееся оба периода. Уникален конь на надгробии Атты (№ 13), на котором изображены тамги его бывших хозяев — царя Риметалка и влиятельного кочевого клана с Западной Украины. Еще недавно потомки сарматов в некоторых ситуациях опрокидывали в магических целях надгробия чужих культур.

* Статья поступила в номер 28 июля 2025 г.
Принята к печати 1 августа 2025 г.

© С.А. Яценко, 2025.

Ключевые слова: Пантикапей, сарматы, тамги, старые надгробия, I — середина III вв. н.э., обряды с надгробиями, скопления тамг, Нижний Дон, представители боспорских царей.

Сведения об авторе: Яценко Сергей Александрович, доктор исторических наук, профессор, Российский государственный гуманитарный университет.

Контактная информация: 125993, Россия, г. Москва, Миусская пл., д. 6, Российский государственный гуманитарный университет; e-mail: sergey_yatsenko@mail.ru.

The capital of the Greek-Barbarian Kingdom of Bosporus, Panticapaeum, in the 1st and 3rd centuries CE included communities of people from various nations of the Kingdom and neighboring territories. Among them were representatives of various powerful and influential Sarmatian groups that surrounded Bosporus. Strabo (7, 4, 5) referred to the Bosporan cities of Panticapaeum and Tanais as the two largest trading centers for the "Barbarian" of the Northern Black Sea Region in the late 1st century BCE. It is not surprising that these cities attracted individual members of the Sarmatian nomadic groups during the Roman period, either temporarily (for trade and various negotiations) or even as a permanent residence (for members of small military groups, refugees, impoverished nomads, married women, and others). Single emblems of clans or their lineage/patronymies (Turkic 'tamga', the Alano-Ossetian 'nysæn') and their accumulations on the objects of various types. It is in these two cities that many more Sarmatian tamgas have been found on them than in other Sarmatian settlements (Yatsenko 2001: 61—62). Many accumulations of such emblems are associated with joint actions (agreements that were accompanied by prayer, oaths, and banquets) of people who occasionally appeared in Greek cities on business. However, probably, the Sarmatians (and later their descendants, the Ossetians) typically had their own tamgas, which were used by members of noble clans (Yatsenko 2023: 436—437). Tamgas were also used by the aristocrats of the Bosporan Kingdom, who had partial Sarmatian origins.

Today there are solid corpuses on the of stone artifacts with tamgas in Panticapaeum. First of all, it is the "Corpus Inscriptionum Regni Bospori" with its textual basis and a much later volume of illustrative material (CIRB 1965; CIRB 2004), as well as the earliest illustrated catalogue by E.I. Solomonik (Solomonik 1959), and also on the largest collection of Panticapaeum on the so-called "inscribed plate" with 480 tamgas, found in 1871 (Drachuk 1975: tab. XXXII—XL).

In this article I will only touch upon one aspect of the use of tamgas in the Bosporan capital that has not yet been studied. This is the secondary *use of Greek tombstones*, or, much less frequently, the depiction of tamgas on synchronous tombstones as an emblem of the dead. Tamgas on some of the 16 artifacts have not been noticed or analyzed by anyone (Ns. 1, 2, 5, 6, 10, 11 — CIRB 1965: Ns. 79, 89, 400, 298, 270, 281; CIRB 2004: Ns. 79, 89, 400, 298, 270, 281), and a new interpretation is provided for the other 10 finds. The tombstones were found in the necropolis located on the northern slope of Mount Mithridat, as well as in Glinishche, the northern outskirts of old Kerch, separated from the city by the Melek-Chesme River.

Let us begin our analysis with four tombstones that depict *a cluster of tamgas*.

1. Tombstone of Logonos, sun of Rodonos (CIRB: No. 79)

It was found in 1881 during the destruction of a burial mound at Glinishche (Fig. 1). The original image of the dead and his family has been almost completely destroyed. All the tamgas depicted are preserved.

Below the Greek inscription there are 8 tamgas engraved. The accumulation of tamgas is generally elongated vertically. All the identifiable emblems were used during the Middle Sarmatian period, from the 1st to the mid-2nd centuries CE, which means that they are relatively close in time to the creation of the tombstone. Signs Ns. 1 and 2 are associated with the Early Alans of the Lower Don, while sign No. 4 is related to the neighboring Northern Azov Region (Yatsenko 2001: Figs.

4/15; 5/41, 62). We are talking about traces of a single action, the participants of which put their emblems. In all three cases, these were representatives of very influential clans, the signs of which are known on expensive metal objects in the Sarmatian style in the Steppe. A special place in the action was occupied by representatives of the clan with tamga No. 1, the emblem of which is engraved here three times (!) in a vertical row, that is, there were three men — its representatives. In the Lower Don Basin this sign was repeatedly depicted on gold plaques-applications of women's dresses. It is these three signs in the composition that are outlined with a double line, which is rare in the practice of applying tamgas (this is also done for the single sign No. 3); all the emblems with this feature form a vertical row. Both Lower Don clans with signs No. 1 and No. 2 were among the most active in Sarmatia in terms of participation in interregional actions (Yatsenko 2001: Fig. 19/5, 9). Tamga No. 2 is engraved in the geometric center of the accumulation.

Probably, the tombstone was laid at the end of the Middle Sarmatian epoch, in the first half of the 2nd century CE. This, of course, was not the first Greek owner of the tombstone. However, the stone slab's adventures did not end there. After its secondary use by the Sarmatians, in the second half of the 2nd — first half of the 3rd centuries CE, a second Greek inscription was inscribed on it in honor of another dead, Hevremonos, and then used for burial, it was placed in a barrow (burial mound). The presence of Sarmatian signs clearly did not prevent this.

2. Tombstone of Sosios, the first half of the 2nd c. CE,
found on Mithridat Mountain in 1933 (CIRB 1965: No. 89) (Fig. 2)

The tamgas are placed just below the lower edge of the inscription. There are at least 11 tamgas in total, but the surface of the lower edge of the slab is chipped, and there were more (but not much more). Tamgas Ns. 9 and 10 are only partially preserved. The shapes of two of them cannot be reconstructed, while two others (Ns. 2 and 4) can be reconstructed quite reliably. Most of the tamgas form a horizontal row. Like on the previous slab, there are also double-lined emblems placed diagonally. As in the first case, the signs are similar in size, but tamga No. 5 is larger than the others (it is also known in the same place, Kerch / Panticapaeum, on the famous "inscroptied slab" with almost 500 signs, which was discovered in 1871). There are no repeating tamgas here. Among the identifiable signs there is one Middle Sarmatian sign from the Lower Don (No. 1). One sign is similar to a Middle Sarmatian example from the Northern Azov Sea Region (No. 7). The third sign (No. 9) is depicted on a clay weight from the Bosporus (Yatsenko 2001: Figs. 5/36, 62; 6/69). Overall, this is a Middle Sarmatian artifact.

3. Tombstone of Areta, the wife of Athenaios, the 1st c. CE, from Kerch
(CIRB 1965: No. 357) (Fig. 3)

Judging by the placement of the royal signs, the tombstone was turned upside down to apply the tamgas. There are 13 emblems here. The faces of the woman and man depicted in the upper part were deliberately knocked off. The entire accumulation of emblems has been preserved. All the depicted tamgas have been preserved for the most part. Four of them, placed in the center of the composition, were damaged by a transverse line applied later with a chisel. Three of them (No. 3) — placed in the center in a horizontal line — are identical signs of *Sauromates II* (174—210). They were applied by the king's representatives (apparently three officials) very carelessly. At the top we see a small sign (No. 8) of a clan related to the Bosporan *Inenthimeos* (234—239). Between the tamgas of Sauromates II is squeezed in the emblem of the Crimean clan No. 5, known as early as the 1st — 2nd centuries CE on the funeral stele of a noble warrior from Zavetnoe (Southwestern Crimea); judging by its participation in interregional actions, this clan was one of the most active in the vast territory of Sarmatia (Yatsenko 2001: Fig. 19/11). Other tamgas in this accumulation are not yet identifiable by regions. Probably, the organizer of the action, who left the largest sign in the upper part, was the clan whose emblem was tamga No. 6. Three signs of the smallest size (Ns. 7, 8, 12) were inscribed or placed next to it. In general, we have before us a Late

Sarmatian composition from the turn of the 2nd — 3rd centuries CE. It reflects a certain action, for participation in which several officials arrived from the ruler with the Sarmatian name of Sauromates.

4. Tombstone of Theonika, the wife of Demetrios, the second half of the 1st c. CE, Mirthidat Mountain (CIRB 1965: No. 357) (Fig. 4)

This is the capital's tombstone with the most tamgas. The heads of all three anthropomorphic figures were then deliberately knocked off. There are 19 types of signs depicted here, and they are not repeated; almost all of them have survived. Several stages of functioning are assumed for this Sarmatian artifact, since it was probably a kind of mini-sanctuary of the Middle Sarmatian period. The earliest can be considered to be three (the simplest of the sacred numbers) Sarmatian horse figurines. Later, almost all the tamgas applied (except for Ns. 6, 7, 15, 17) were placed at angles to them, and emblems Ns. 1 and 16 even cross them out. One of the royal signs of the 2nd — 3rd centuries CE is also present here (No. 16), but it is small and depicted very carelessly, so that it is not even possible to understand which ruler it refers to. The emblem of another king (No. 7) is less schematic. Tamga No. 18, which is the center of the composition on the previous tombstone, is also present here. At first, large emblems No. 8 (central), 9, 12, 18 and 19 were applied to the tombstone in a spacious manner and parallel to the old inscription. Later (to what extent is unknown), other tamgas of a smaller size began to be placed here on free areas, including on the periphery. They could be inscribed in earlier ones (No. 5), placed close to them (No. 14), overlap horses with them (No. 1, 16) and even (which is extremely rare in clusters in Sarmatia, since for the peoples of the Steppe it meant insult and revenge) depicted on top of earlier emblems (No. 17)[1].

The regionally identifiable signs provide a vivid and interesting situation. Most of them belong to the Lower Don Basin of two periods — the Middle Sarmatian and, to a lesser extent, the Late Sarmatian (mid-2nd — mid-3rd centuries CE). The majority of signs (Ns. 1, 11, 13, 17) date back to the first period, while only No. 5 dates back to the second (Yatsenko 2001: Fig. 4/7, 12; 5/34, 38, 47; 6/37). The early examples are associated with images of horses. The early Don signs No. 1 are presented in two examples; they are depicted under the figurines (bellies) of two horses and are oriented in the same way as the latter. Tamgas Ns. 11 and 17 are depicted above the horse figurines, No. 13 — under the horse in the same perspective. In other words, the early Don signs are associated with period 1 and with horses. At stage 2, a series of large signs appeared below the horses, grouped around No. 8, which also included one reliably early one from the Northern Azov Region (No. 12) (Yatsenko 2001: Fig. 5/60). Probably, a group of smaller signs also belongs to this action. After the middle of the 2nd century CE (at the beginning of the Late Sarmatian era, period 3), at least three identifiable tamgas appeared here. Their arrangement is characteristic: the sign of *king Inenthimeos* No. 7 crosses out the Don sign No. 17; the schematic royal sign No. 16 crosses out the muzzle of the largest horse, and the Lower Don tamga No. 5 (known on a silver bridle in barrow 16 of Centralnyi VI) is inscribed inside the former main large sign of period 2. There was a sort of magical neutralization of the earlier Lower Don signs and the horses associated with them by representatives of the late Bosporan kings and their Late Sarmatian allies from the Lower Don. In addition to the Lower Don and two late Bosporan royal signs, early signs from the Northern Azov Region (No. 12) and a sign repeatedly encountered in the Bosporus (No. 10) are known here (Yatsenko 2001: Fig. 5/50). The first is one of the large signs of period 2, and the second forms a pair with the Lower Don sign above the horse figurine.

[1] In the latter case, we are probably talking about a deliberate insult. The fact is that both of these signs are associated with clans of one region — the Lower Don. The earlier tamga of the middle Sarmatian period is covered by the emblem of the Bosporan king Inenthimeos, whose clan is associated with a later, Late Sarmatian culture (the latter spread in the middle of the 2nd century CE as a result of the invasion of the Don by a new wave of nomads from the South Urals (Yatsenko 2001: 56, Fig. 26/d).

So, in the early period we have mainly Lower Don tamgas around horses. In period 2, a series of large signs with several small ones on the periphery appear to the side of the horses. In the late stage 3, two Bosporan rulers and the Lower Don "Late Sarmatians" were noted here.

Let us now consider former tombstones with *pairs of different tamgas* applied to them. Such pairs usually confirmed joint actions and agreements between representatives of two clans (Yatsenko 2001: 81—83).

5. Tombstone of Germes, the son of Gastios, and Mastus, the son of Hermes, the 1st c. CE, Glinishche, 1906 (CIRB 1965: No. 400) (Fig. 5)

A second inscription about the death of Mastos, the son of the deceased, has been added. The faces of all 7 personages depicted here have been deliberately knocked down. This tombstone, after the tamgas had been applied, was used as a threshold to a crypt in the 2nd century CE (apparently, three more steles from the 1st and the turn of the 1st — 2nd centuries CE were found in the same burial mound (CIRB 1965: Ns. 130, 617, 618). Below the inscription, a pair of tamgas of the same size, one above the other, is carelessly depicted on the right edge. No analogues to these signs are known yet. Both emblems are deliberately placed on the lines of the old inscription and partially overlap it. The tamgas almost touch each other, which is very rare.

6. Tombstone of 1909, Mithridat Mountain, the 1st c. BCE
(CIRB 1965: No. 298) (Fig. 6)

According to the inscription (which has been preserved very fragmentary), two tamgas of the same size, one above the other, almost closely adjacent, as on the previous slab, are carefully and very thinly depicted in the center of the slab with a knife. Sign No. 2 is not known anywhere else. Tamga No. 1 is Lower Don, Middle Sarmatian and is represented in barrow 1 in Donskoi sovkhoz (Yatsenko 2001: Fig. 4/15). The signs belong to the Middle Sarmatian period.

7. Tombstone of Macarios, the son of Hermogenes, the first half of the 2nd c. CE, from E. Zaporozhsky collection (CIRB 1965: No. 87) (Fig. 7)

The upper part of the stone slab with the images is almost completely broken off. On the left and in the center, two tamgas of different sizes are depicted in a horizontal line. Large sign No. 1 is early Lower Don. It is known from grave 185 of 2012 of the western necropolis of Tanais, dating back to the 2nd — 1st centuries BCE, in the form of graffiti on a Sinopean amphora (Yatsenko, Marchenko, Tuallagov 2025: fig. 1, 3). Later, it was known on one of the slabs with a accumulation in the same Tanais (Yatsenko 2001: fig. 23/b). Sign No. 2 is from the Middle Sarmatian period, from the Northern Azov region (Yatsenko 2001: fig. 5/60); we have already encountered it on slab 4 (CIRB 1965: No. 424). Tamgas date back to the Middle Sarmatian period.

8. The anthropomorphic tombstone with tamga sign, the 2nd — 3rd cc. CE, Glinishche, from L. Demidenko, 1914 (Solomonik 1959: No. 21) (Fig. 8)

This tombstone is interesting not only because it is the only anthropomorphic one in our collection. Both sides of it were originally engraved with the same large and unique tamga. Similar examples were used in the Late Sarmatian period (Yatsenko 2001: Fig. 6/37; 7/7); the first of them is close to the emblem from the Lower Don, which is presented on the already described slab (Fig. 4, No. 5), but without a separate horizontal stripe at the bottom.

No less interesting are the four emblems, very carelessly depicted here later. Above the early large sign, a thick line depicts a unique tamga (No. 2) "on the chest" of the figure, and a schematic sign of the Bosporan *king Rhescuporis III* (210—222) (No. 1). Later, on the side, at the left edge,

another pair of tamgas was applied with a thin, barely noticeable blade: sign No. 3 (identical to No. 2) and emblem No. 4, presented in the middle Sarmatian period on an amulet pendant near Kazanskaya stanitsa in the Kuban "Golden Cemetery", the culture of which existed until the turn of the 2nd — 3rd centuries CE (Yatsenko 2001: Fig. 5/48). In both pairs, a special role is played by signs Nos. 2 and 4, unknown to us. Accordingly, the accumulation of two pairs of tamgas is dated to the beginning of the 3rd century CE.

Next, we examine tombstones *with a single tamga* applied later.

9. Tombstone of "one courtier", the second half of the 1st c. CE, from Sheremetev collection (CIRB 1965: No. 565) (Fig. 9)

The upper edge with the head of the main personage — the deceased is broken off. Below the inscription on the left is a unique tamga.

10. Tombstone of Antisphenes and Ptolemeos, the 1st c. BCE, from E. Zaporozhsky collection (CIRB 1965: No. 270) (Fig. 10)

The upper edge with the head of the main character — the deceased — is broken off. At the bottom of the slab, in the center, a tamga is carelessly depicted. This sign is also known on an early slab from Tanais, where, in addition to it, there is the sign of king *Aspurgos* (15—37) (Yatsenko 2001: Fig. 21/2). The tamga dates back to the Middle Sarmatian period.

11. Tombstone of Mamia, the mother of Menios, the 1st c. BCE, from E. Zaporozhsky collection (CIRB 1965: No. 281) (Fig. 11)

The upper edge with the head of the main character — the dead — is broken off. The tamga is located in the right corner below the inscription. It is known from one of the small fragments of the slab with a cluster of signs found at the southern gate of Tanais in 1994 (Fig. 11: a). The clan that used it is apparently associated with Central Crimea: the tamga is depicted on a female mirror-pendant from grave 235 of the Neizats Necropolis and dates back to around the turn of the 2nd — 3rd centuries CE (Yatsenko 2018: Fig. 11/4; 12/3). The tamga dates back to the Late Sarmatian period.

12. Tombstones of Pappos, the son of Demetrios, and Filarsenes, the son of Theodoros, with tamga of Rhescuporis III, the 3rd c. CE (CIRB 1965: Ns. 89, 529) (Fig. 12)

Of the individual royal signs on former tombstones, we encounter only the tamga of *Rhescuporis III*, and this fact is very interesting. We are talking about the sign in the center of the lower part of the tombstone. On the tombstone of Pappus, son of Demetrius, this sign is depicted very carefully, in "printed" form (Fig. 12: a), and on the monument of Filarsenes, son of Theodoros (Fig. 12: b) it is engraved schematically. It can be assumed that such a sign was also placed by a royal official during some action, the nature of which we cannot guess today. It is interesting that this ruler used his Sarmatian-type tamga more often than others in the territory of the Bosporus (Yatsenko 2001: 53—54). This is confirmed by the data on the tombstones on which his representatives were noted.

13. Tombstone of Attas, the son of Triphones, the first half of the 2st c. CE, Theodosia Road, 1929 (CIRB 1965: No. 83) (Fig. 13)

It has been preserved completely, the bodies and faces of the people are not damaged. This is understandable, since the tamgas were applied during the production of the tombstone.

This tombstone is very interesting for our topic. Firstly, two tombstones were erected for Attas, son of Tryphon: on behalf of a religious association — thiasos (θίασος) (CIRB 1965: No. 83) and on behalf of a relative (see below CIRB 1965: No. 660) (Marti 1935: 70). We are clearly talking about an influential person. Secondly, this is one of the rare cases in the Bosporus when tamgas are associated with the figure of the deceased or his horse. At the same time, the tamgas are drawn very carefully, in "printed form", despite their small size, since they were important for the customer and the viewers. Probably, despite the Greek name of his father, Atta also had Sarmatian blood. Thirdly, three tamgas, not one, are associated with the deceased, and this also requires comment. On the nadrobium, placed by the fias, Atta is depicted as a warrior — a horseman, armed with a Sarmatian bow and short sword, on a long-legged graceful horse of Central Asian origin. The tamgas are depicted as brands on the body of his thoroughbred horse, and they are placed in the way that was customary among the nomadic peoples of Sarmatia — on the shoulder and hip.

The tamga closest to the head and the rider on the shoulder (No. 1) is the sign of the Bosporan *king Rhoemetalces* (131—152), towards the end of whose reign the "Late Sarmatians" were advancing from the east (from the South Urals). The second emblem (No. 2), partially damaged at the top, is associated with a very influential Sarmatian clan that lived west of the Dnieper River. In the 1st century CE, it is known on two large gold items associated with the nomadic nobility. These are a gold bracelet from Olbia and a plate from Dunaharaszti (Hungary); in both cases, the tamga bears images of a pair of animals (Bârcă 2021: fig. 11, 1—2; 15, 6). This clan was one of the most active in Sarmatia in terms of participation in various actions (Yatsenko 2001: fig. 19/2); it is present, among other things, in such famous tamga collections as 1871 y. slab with almost 500 emblems, the Olbian lion No. 2 and the stele from Krivoi Rog (Bârcă 2021: figs. 12—15). This tamga is also depicted on the mirror-pendant from Călăraşi in Romania (Bârcă 2021: figs. 5, 16).

So, the dead had a very expensive and thoroughbred horse, on whose body two different brands of the early owners are specially emphasized at once. Both of these tamgas do not belong to him, but to the previous owners of the horse, since we will see Attas's personal emblem on the next artifact. In a more significant place we see the emblem of the Bosporan Rhoemetalces, but there is also an emblem of a powerful Sarmatian clan from the far west of the European steppes. The tamgas belong to the Middle Sarmatian period.

14. Tombstone of Attas, the son of Triphones, the first half of the 2st c. CE, 1872
(CIRB 1965: No. 660) (Fig. 14)

It is also completely preserved, the bodies and faces of the people are not damaged. The tamga was engraved during the production of the tombstone..

This second tombstone of Attas, erected by a relative, is distinguished by the fact that he is presented among two other men of his family of the same height, armed with swords, probably in the center. At the level of his face, to the right of him, is shown his clan or lineage tamga. This sign was common among the nobility in the South-West Crimea. It is depicted on the stele of 1962 y. on a warrior from the necropolis near Zavetnoe Village in the 1st — 2nd centuries CE. It was from there, from Scythia Minor, that some of the ancestors of the dead came.

15. Tombstone made from former tarapanos, the 2nd — 3rd cc. CE, 1933
(Solomonik 1959: No. 20) (Fig. 15)

This tombstone is unusual in form, style and subject matter. It is initially believed that it was made by a barbarian craftsman. The tombstone is made from a fragment of a wine press — a tarapananos. It probably depicts a deceased spouse. The tamga here was also engraved at the same time as the artifact was made. It is depicted on the chest of a man (?). It has no exact analogies, but a close variant (with a mirror image horizontally) is known from an accumulation of the 1st — 2nd centuries CE from the Greek Kalos-Limen in the North-Western Crimea (Yatsenko 2001: Fig. 26/e).

Conclusion

Greek tombstones of the 1st century BCE — mid-2nd century CE with tamgas applied make up only a small part of the extensive collection from the Panticapaeum necropolis. However, they provide us with valuable information about the temporary and permanent presence of the Sarmatians in the capital of the Bosporus and the use of tamgas by the Bosporan authorities. Within our small collection of 16 tombstones, 4 groups of artifacts stand out. These are clusters of 8—19 signs each (stone slabs 1—4), pairs of tamgas (5—8), individual emblems, including the signs of the only Bosporan king (9— 12). Later (until the mid-3rd century CE), Sarmatian emblems were applied to such slabs. These are also tombstones with tamgas applied during their manufacture (13—15).

About half of the artifacts with tamgas date back to the Middle Sarmatian period up to the middle of the 2nd century CE (stone slabs 1, 2, 6, 7, 10, 13, 14). The ritual object (4) around the Sarmatian images of horses functioned both in the Middle Sarmatian and Late Sarmatian periods. In the Middle Sarmatian period, the signs in clusters were sometimes outlined with a double line (1, 2). It is important to analyze the belonging of the emblems to different regions of the Steppe. The tamgas of the Lower Don Basin dominate among the signs, almost always dating back to the Middle Sarmatian period (slabs 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 10). Three emblems each represent the Northern Azov

Region (1, 4, 7) and the "Barbarian" regions of Crimea (3, 11, 14). Tamgas from Kuban Basin (8) and Western Ukraine (13) are occasionally encountered.

Almost all of these signs came into use in the Middle Sarmatian period, except for one Don (slab 4, No. 5) and one Crimean (slab 11). In cases where a representative of the Bosporan king was present at the action with many participants, these were such sovereigns of the late 2nd — first half of the 3rd centuries CE as Sauromates II (3) and Inenthimeos (4). A representative of Rhescuporis III is known for a pair of tamgas (8) and as the only participant in a certain ceremony (12, a, b). Such signs could be applied in the center of the composition (3) or on the periphery (4), along the upper edge (8). Both monuments, where the owner's tamga is engraved synchronously with the tombstone and is associated with the body of the dead (14, 15), date back to the Middle Sarmatian period, and the origin of its owner is associated with the "Barbarian" regions of Crimea.

Usually tamgas were applied with a thin knife blade, but sometimes a wider (3) or very wide (11) blade is used. It is easy to see that they tried to apply the emblems neatly, in a "printed" form, so that they could be easily recognized. In accumulations of signs, a large figure stands out in the center (plate 2, No. 5; plate 3, No. 6; plate 4, No. 8), or similar emblems form a vertical row (plate 1, No. 1). In pairs, both tamgas are usually the same size, but there is an exception (7). In accumulations of signs, only one of the emblems can be presented in 2—3 copies, that is, several representatives of the clan were present at the event, and in cases with royal signs — several officials (slab 1, No. 1; slab 3, No. 3; slab 4, No. 1; slab 8, No. 2—3). Some tamgas are present on two different slabs: (slab 1, no. 2 and slab 6, no. 1; slab 4, no. 12 and slab 7, no. 2; slab 3, no. 6 and slab 4, no. 18), and the emblem of Rhescuporis III is visible on three slabs. In general, former tombstones with accumulations of tamgas reflect the presence of 8 to 19 adult male participants in each action.

To neutralize the possible "revenge" of the previous Greek owners of the tombstones, several magical techniques were used before applying a single tamga or a pair of them. The tombstones with anthropomorphic images had their faces knocked off (3, 4, 5) or the upper edge where they were depicted was completely or almost completely removed (1, 6, 7). Sometimes tamgas were specifically found on an old inscription (4, 5), and the slab itself was turned over for their application (3). On all slabs with a single emblem, the head of the dead in the upper part of the slab was knocked off, although the other depicted personages were not damaged. Rituals with the head of the dead are also typical for Sarmatian grave robbers from the same nomadic communities at that time (Yatsenko 2013: 37—38). Judging by the places where the slabs were found, they were not moved far from the former Greek grave, and the actions with the application of tamgas took place in old cemeteries or near them. Today this option will seem exotic to readers. However, in the Alanian-Ossetian tradition, under special circumstances (for example, during a drought), it was still recently permissible to overturn

tombstones and steles of a foreign cultures as a magical practice (Yatsenko 1998: 72). Furthermore, Ossetians sometimes placed stone slabs with more ancient images of other cultures at the edge of their cemeteries and applied a series of tamgas around them (Yatsenko 2024: 144—147, figs. 2, 6).

The presence of tamgas on former tombstones at some stage did not prevent the new Greek owners from using them later in the construction of the barrow / burial mound (1) or in the design of the threshold inside the crypt (5).

Thus, the examination of a small collection of tamgas on the tombstones of Panticapaeum allows us to clarify the elements of the rituals of protection from possible revenge of the dead and the stages of using mini-sanctuaries, the native territories of the participants in the actions, the participation of the representatives of the Bosporan kings and the factors of applying tamga to the figure of the deceased during the manufacture of the tombstone.

References

Bârcă, V. 2021. The Sarmatian Mirror with Tamgas from the Settlement of Sebeş. *Journal of Ancient History and Archaeology* 8/1, 87—115.

CIRB 1965: Struve, V.V. (ed.). 1965. *Korpus bosporskikh nadpisei (Corpus of Bosporan Inscriptions*). Moscow, Leningrad: Nauka. (in Russian).

CIRB 2004: Gavrilov, A.K. (ed.). 2004. *Korpus bosporskikh nadpisei. Al'bom illiustratsii (Corpus of Bosporan Inscriptions: Album of Illustrations)*. Saint Petersburg: Aleteiia (Bibliotheca classica Petropolitana) (in Russian).

Drachuk, V.S. 1975. *Sistema znakov Severnogo Prochernomoria* (*Signs Systems of the Norhtern Black Sea Region)*. Kyiv: Naukova dumka. (in Russian).

Marti, Yu.Yu. 1935. Novie epigraficheskie pamiatniki Bospora (The New Epicgraphic Monuments of Bosporus). *Izvestiia Gosudarstvennoi akademii istorii material'noi kul'tury (News of the State Acedemy of the History of Material Culture)* 104/VI, 57—89 (in Russian).

Solomonik, E.I. 1959. *Sarmatskie znaki Severnogo Prichernomoria (Sarmatian Signs of the Norhtern Black Sea Region)*. Kyiv: AN USSR (in Russian).

Yatsenko, S.A. 1998. Sarmatskie pograbal'nye ritualy i osetinskaia etnografiia (Sarmatian Burial Rituals and Ossetian Ethnology). *Rosiiskaya arkheologiya (Russian Archaeology*) 3, 67—74 (in Russian).

Yatsenko, S.A. 2001. *Znaki-tamgi iranoiazychnykh narodov drevnosti i rannego srednevekovia (Tamga-Signs of the Iranian-Speaking Peoples of Antiquity and Middle Ages)*. Moscow: Vostochnaya literatura. (in Russian).

Yatsenko, S.A. 2013. O sarmatskikh ogrableniiakh sikhronnykh kurganov (On the Sarmatian Looting of the Synchronous Barrows). *Teoriia i praktika earkheologicheskikh issledovanii (Theory and Practice of Archaeological Research)* 8/2, 25—41 (in Russian)

Yatsenko, S.A. 2018. Planigrafiia znakov-tamg v nekropoliakh osedlogo naseleniia Sarmatii (Planigraphy of Tamga-Signs in the Necropolises of the Sedental Inhabitants of Sarmatia). *Stratum plus* 6, 217—242 (in Russian).

Yatsenko, S.A. 2024. Neskol'ko osetinskikh ob'ektov s tamgami (Some Ossetian Ojects with Tamgas). *NARTAMONGÆ* XIX, 142—172 (in Russian).

Yatsenko, S.A. Marchanko, I.I., Tuallagov, A.A., 2025. New materials on Sarmatian Tamga-Signs. *Theory and Practice of Archaeological Research* 37/4 (in print).

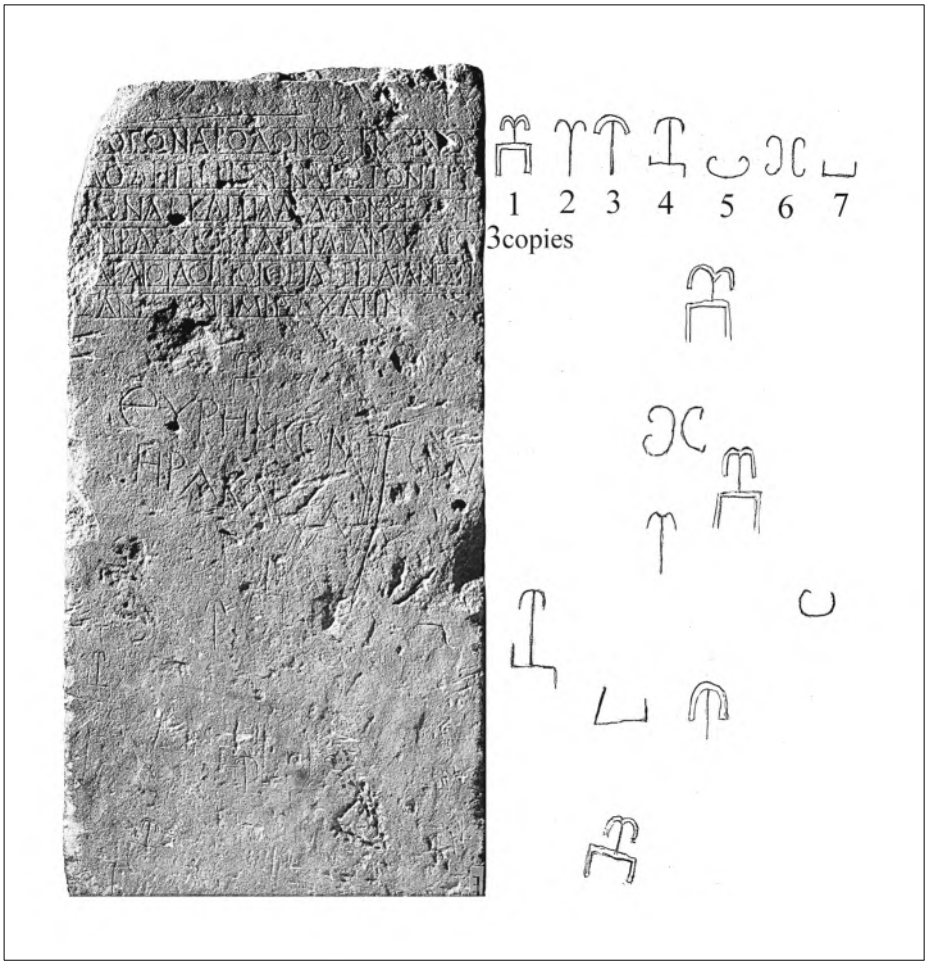

Fig. 1. Tombstone of Logonos, sun of Rodonos, found in Glinishche in the barrow of 188 (after CIRB 1965: No. 79; CIRB 2004: No. 79).

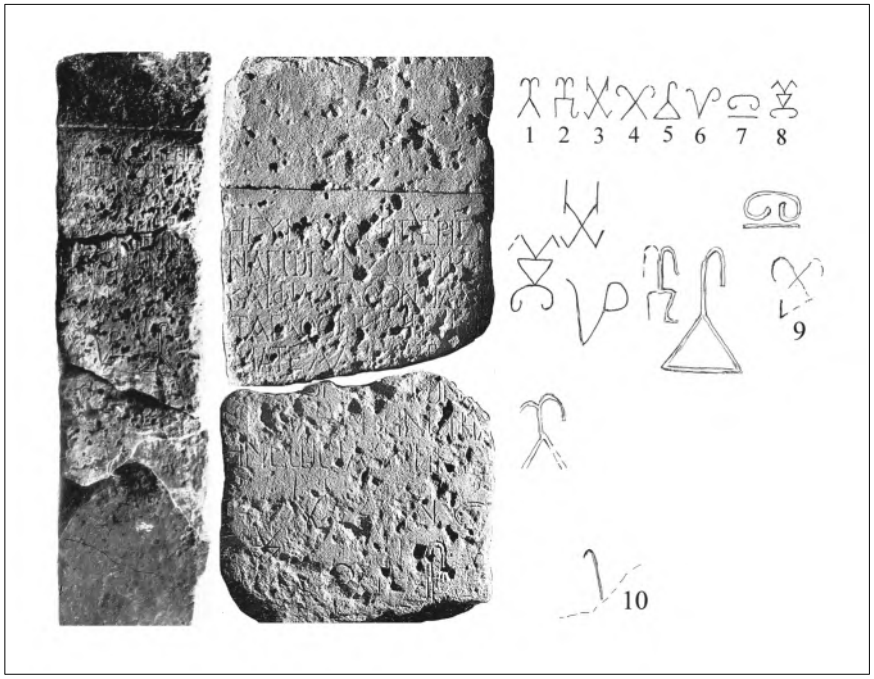

Fig. 2. Tombstone of Sosios, the first half of the 2nd c. CE, found on Mithridates Mountain in 1933 (after CIRB 1965: No. 89; CIRB 2004: No. 89).

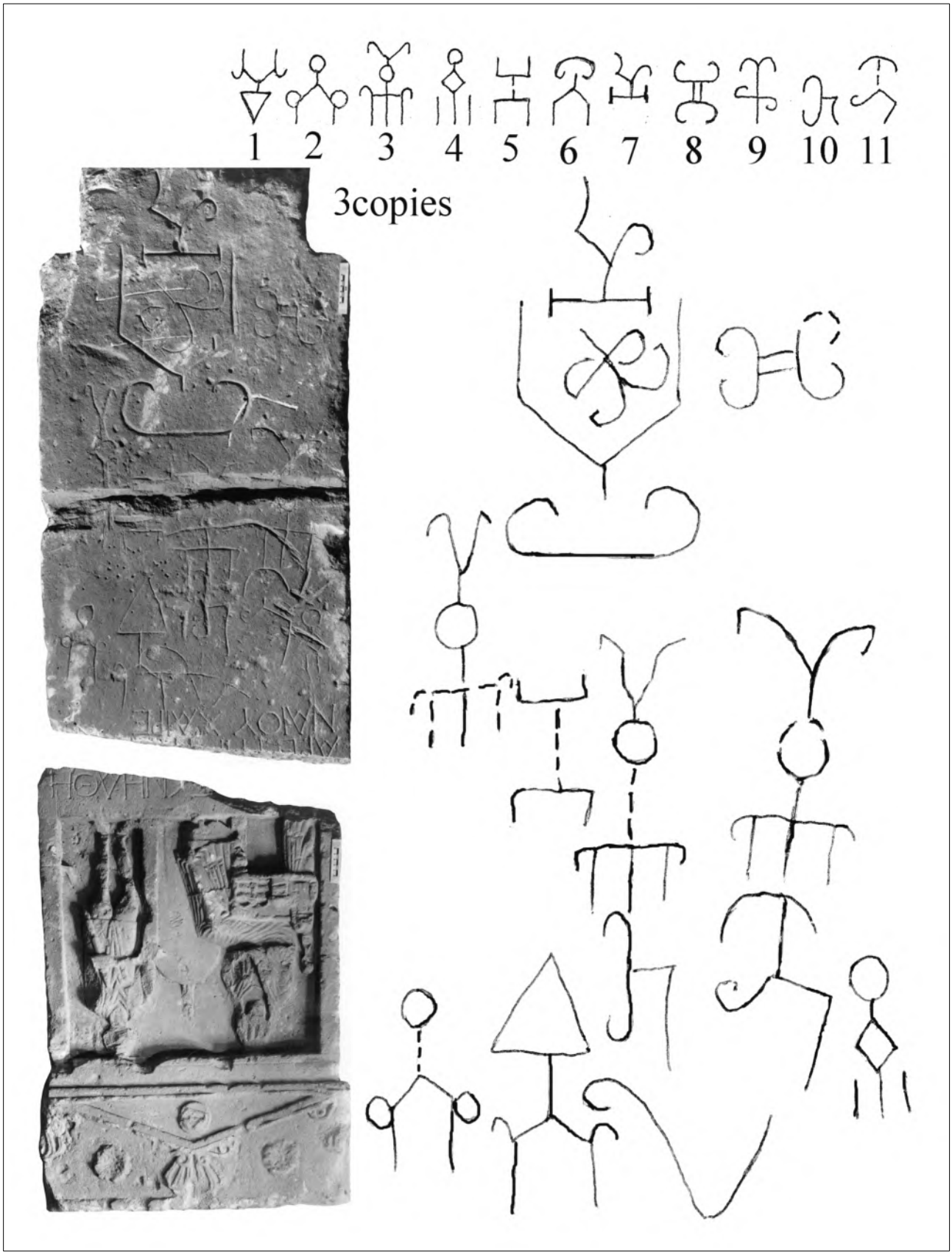

Fig. 3. Tombstone of Areta, the wife of Athenaios, the 1st c. CE, from Kerch (after CIRB 1965: No. 357; CIRB 2004: No. 357).

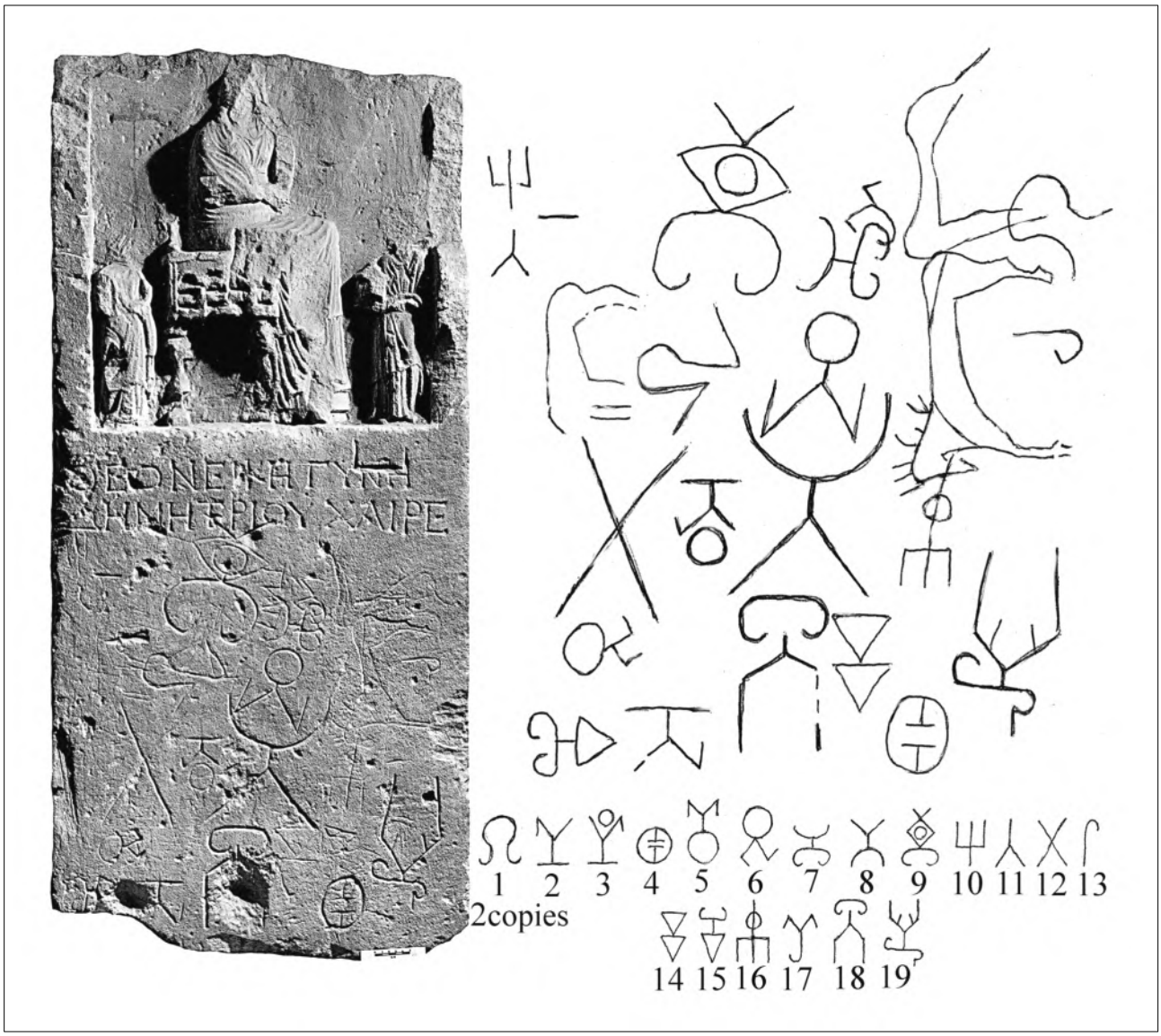

Fig. 4. Tombstone of Theonika, the wife of Demetrios, the second half of the 1st c. CE, Mithridates Mountain (after CIRB 1965: No. 357; CIRB 2004: No. 357).

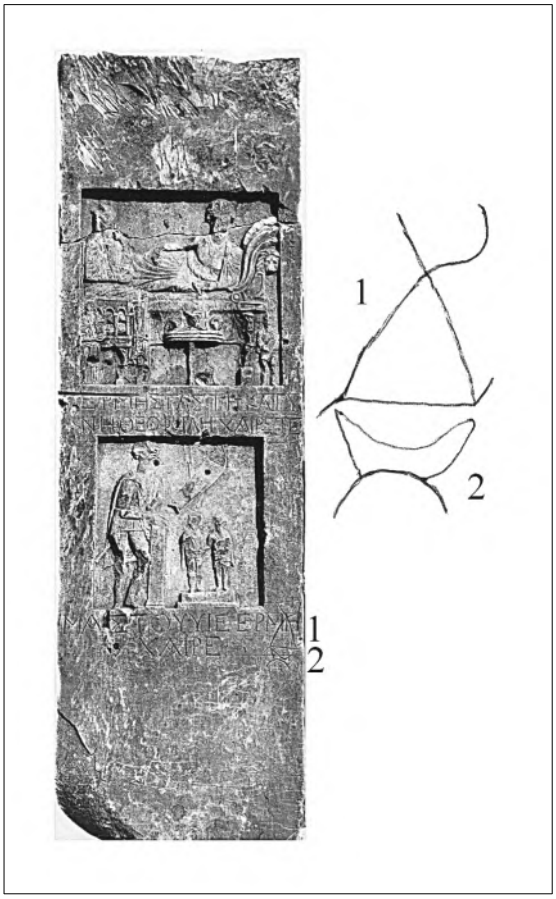

Fig. 5. Tombstone of Germes, the son of Gastios, and Mastus, the son of Hermes, the 1st c. CE, Glinishche, 1906 (after CIRB 1965: No. 400; CIRB 2004: No. 400).

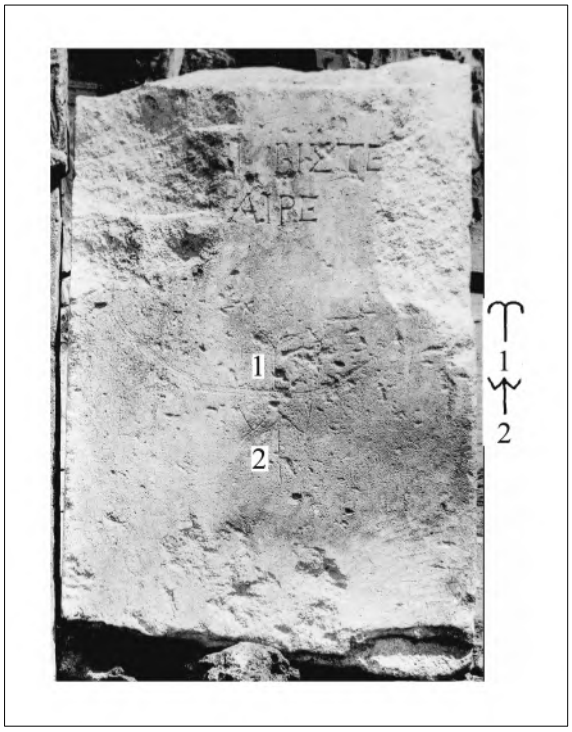

Fig. 6. Tombstone of 1909 y., Mithridates Mountain, the 1st c. BCE (after CIRB 1965: No. 298; CIRB 2004: No. 298).



Fig. 7. Tombstone of Macarios, the son of Hermogenes, the first half of the 2nd c. CE, from E. Zaporozhsky collection (after CIRB 1965: No. 87; CIRB 2004: No. 87).

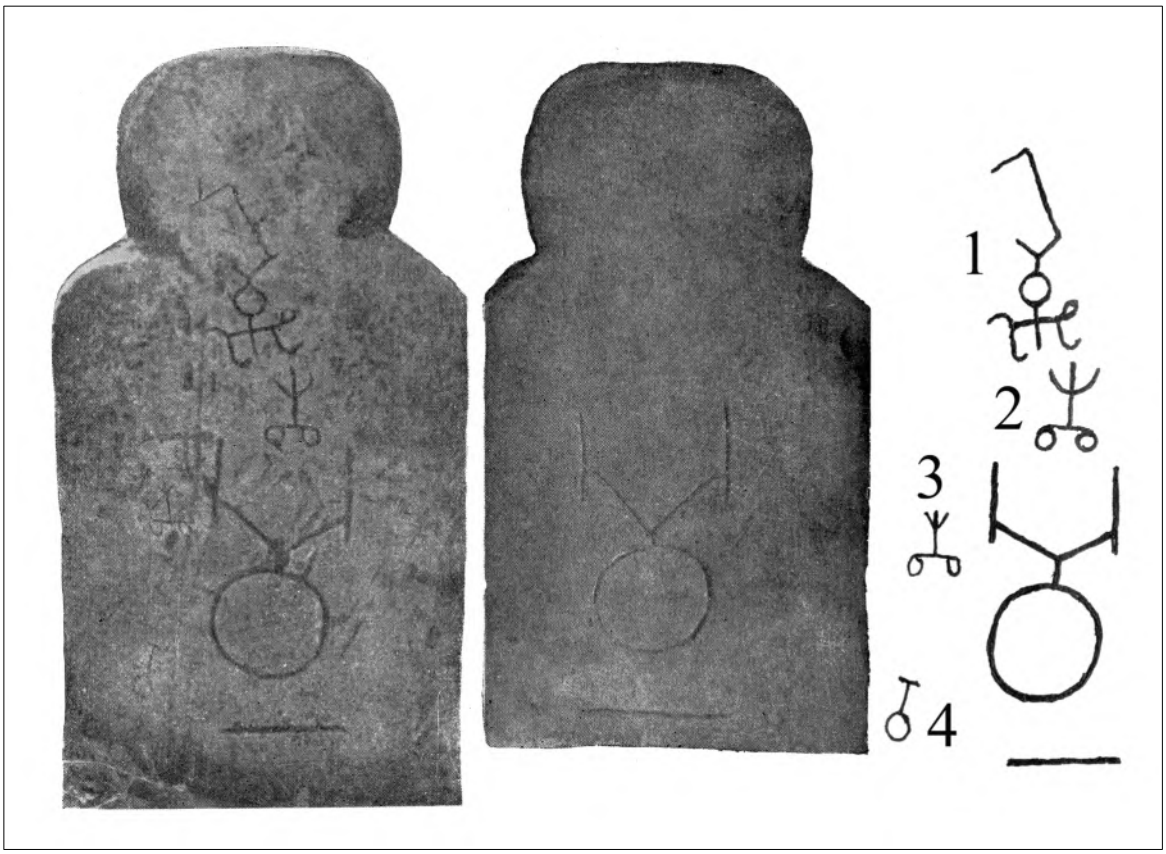

Fig. 8. The anthropomorphic tombstone with tamga sign, the 2nd — 3rd cc. CE, Glinishche, from L. Demidenko, 1914 (after Solomonik 1959: No. 21).

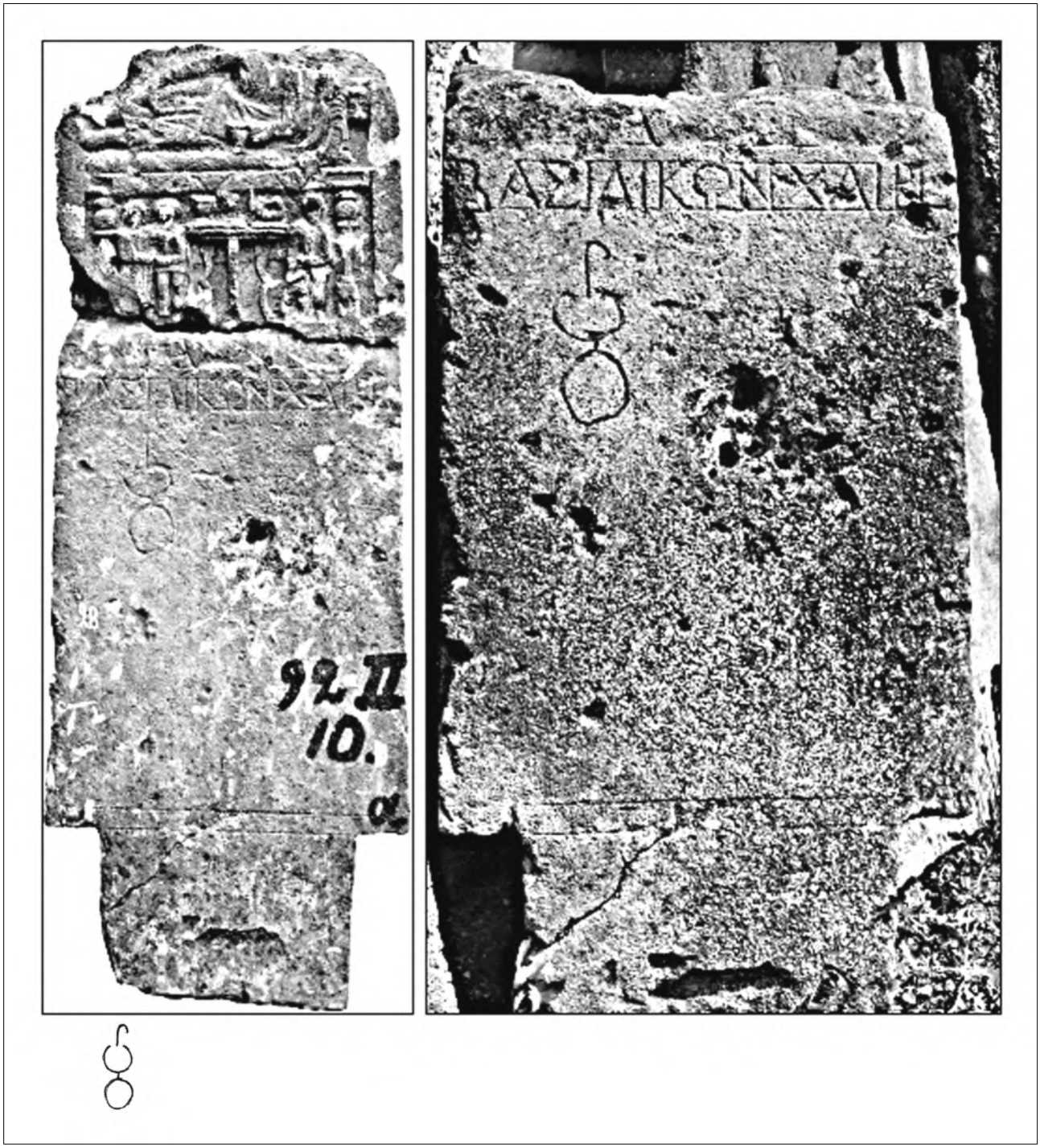

Fig. 9. Tombstone of "one courtier", the second half of the 1st c. CE, from Sheremetev collection (after CIRB 1965: No. 565; CIRB 2004: No. 565).

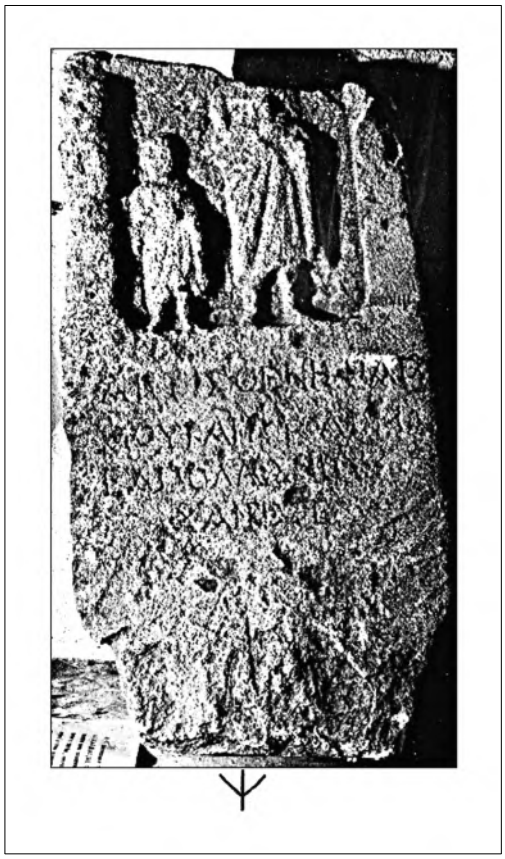

Fig. 10. Tombstone of Antisphenes and Ptolemeos, the 1st c. BCE, from E. Zaporozhsky collection (after CIRB 1965: No. 270; CIRB 2004: No. 270).

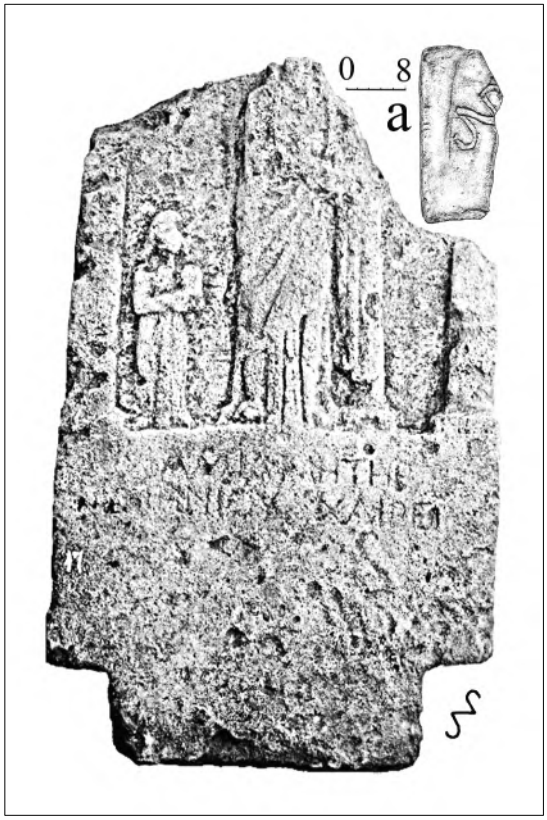

Fig. 11. Tombstone of Mamia, the mother of Menios, the 1st c. BCE, from E. Zaporozhsky collection (after CIRB 1965: No. 281; CIRB 2004: No. 281): *a* — stone slab fragment from Tanais, after S.M. Ilyashenko.

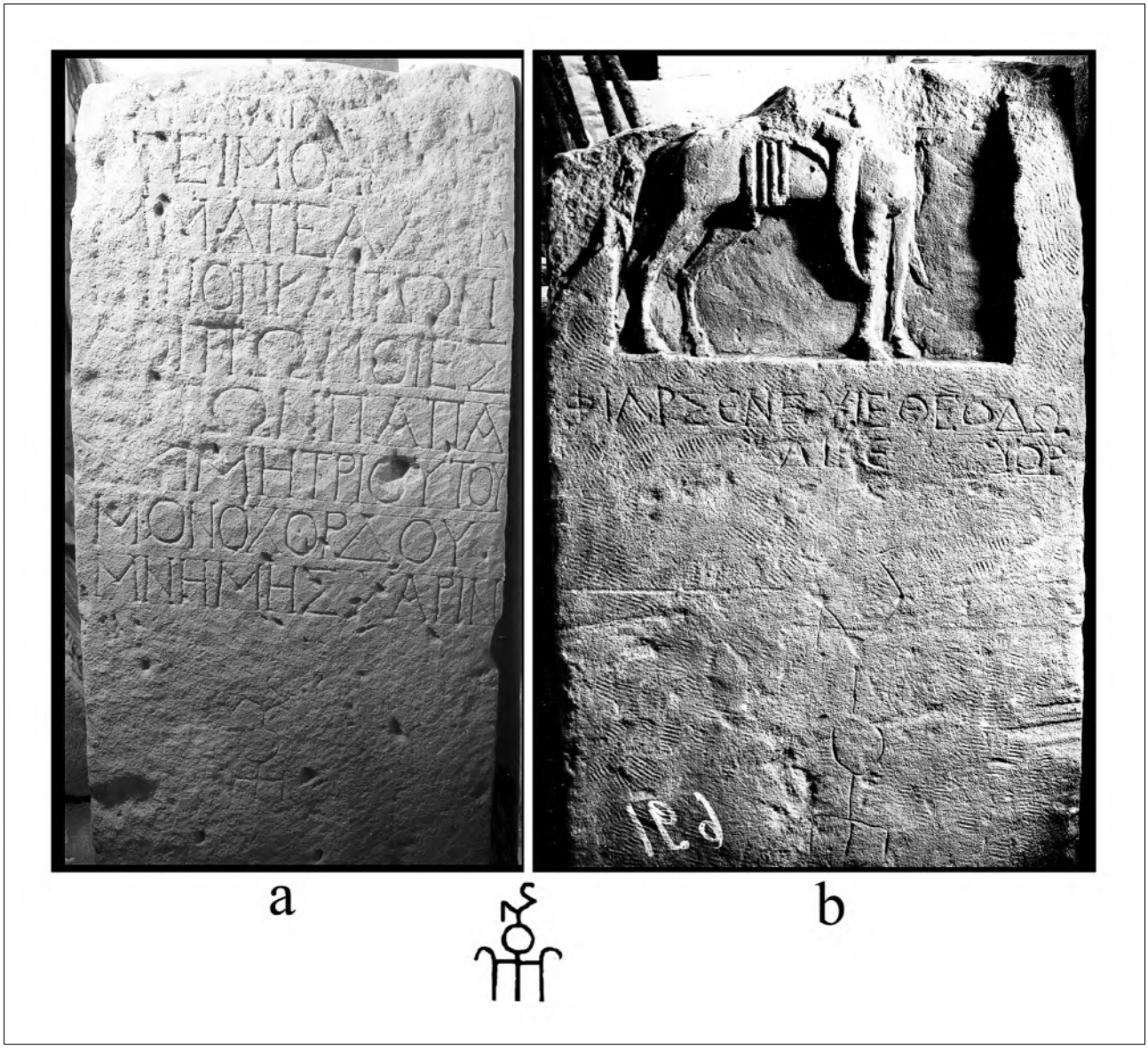

Fig. 12. Tombstones of Pappos, the son of Demetrios, and Filarsenes, the son of Theodoros, with tamga of Rhescuporis III (210—222), the 3rd c. CE (after CIRB 1965: Ns. 89, 529; CIRB 2004: Ns. 89, 529).



Fig. 13. Tombstone of Attas, the son of Triphones, the first half of the 2nd c. CE, Theodosia Road, 1929 (after CIRB 1965: No. 83; CIRB 2004: No. 83).



Fig. 14. Tombstone of Attas, the son of Triphones, the first half of the 2nd c. CE, 1872 (after CIRB 1965: No. 660; CIRB 2004: No. 660).



Fig. 15. Tombstone made from former tarapanos, the 2nd — 3rd cc. CE, 1933 (after Solomonik 1959: No. 20).