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PAINTED TOMBS OF ROMAN PAPHOS

Paphos boasts the largest group of wall paintings of ancient Cyprus, found mainly in monumental tombs, public buildings and private dwellings. However, to date, because of the continuous destruction and reconstruction of the ancient city, the finds can only give us a very fragmentary image of the iconography subjects that were used in the decoration of buildings. Conversely, the tombs still preserve a more complete decorative record despite considerable destruction over the passage of time due mainly to erosion and humidity.

The beginning of monumental painting in Paphos is due to the influence of Alexandrian art in the city during the period of Ptolemaic rule and does not seem to be based on a more ancient local tradition. All the same, from the Hellenistic period only fragmentary wall paintings from the excavation of ancient buildings along with a few examples of tomb paintings survive, displaying the strong influence of Macedonian art interpreted through Alexandrian creations.¹ From these finds one can surmise that painted decoration was widespread in the city, being an important architectural adornment, adding a note of splendour and luxury to the architecture. It is therefore within this receptive artistic environment already existing in the city that Roman painting styles were introduced from the 1st cent. B.C. Significant examples of painting have come to light in the buildings of Roman Paphos, mainly in the luxurious villas of the wealthiest inhabitants and public buildings, such as the theatre.² Once again, as in the Hellenistic period, funerary art offers the most complete decorative series of wall paintings of the Roman city. Recent infrastructure work in the modern city has brought to light a large number of tombs, several of which preserve painted decoration. (pl. IVa). Of course, although similar, the two art forms, that of the living and that of the dead, concern different types of artistic expression involving different rules and preferences. In the decoration of a tomb the artist has less freedom of expression than he would have in a dwelling or a public building and he has to select from limited and set themes. New evidence however helps to form an improved picture of the art of painting in the city and the identification of local workshops. Of course, the art is expressed in specific themes influenced by the most important centres of the time, incorporating artistic trends dominating art in the Eastern Mediterranean area.

The short study which follows presents several tombs with painted decoration which have recently come to light and cannot therefore be exhaustive as far as their description and thematic analysis is concerned - this is something that will be undertaken in a future publication.

1. For painting on buildings of Hellenistic Paphos see Mlynarczyk 1990, 232-242, for the tombs, Nicolaou 1966, 600-601, fig. 28, Mlynarczyk 1990, 237-238, fig. 78, Hadjisavvas 1997, 28-33, Michaelides 2004, 89-92, figs 2-5.
2. Daszewski 2000, 10, fig. 16, Wood Conroy 2003, 277-85.

Tomb in Costis Palamas Square

This tomb is located in the centre of the upper city of Paphos and is carved entirely out of the local bedrock in an area where many Roman period tombs have previously been found. Its monumental entrance opens to the southwest and the *dromos* extends underneath the houses. However, it was not possible to excavate it all completely due to its position in the middle of the square. The descent into the tomb was from a carved stepped *dromos*, covered by a barrel vault also carved out of the bedrock, leading to a rectangular *atrium*. Opposite the entrance a large ceremonial chamber had been shaped, on a slightly higher level than that of the courtyard floor, the inner walls of which have three carved burial chambers, two to the right and one to the left of the entrance, where a built sarcophagus was also placed. Each of the chambers had a clay libation pipe positioned to the left of their entrance, which entered a hole in the floor.

This tomb stands apart from others excavated in the same area of the city for its imposing dimensions resembling the high status carved tombs in the 'Tombs of the Kings' *necropolis*, as well as for its painted decoration. The paintings initially would have covered the whole of the large ceremonial chamber, something that would have given it a rich and impressive appearance. Another feature providing a luxurious appearance is the addition of a fine white layer of plaster covering the floor. Part of this floor is preserved in the area in front of the two chambers on the west side, along with the all-white colour of the roof, creating a strong contrast with the remaining decoration of the chamber. The inner walls of the chamber had been greatly worn away by erosion, adversely affecting the wall paintings. Apart from this natural damage, the tomb showed signs of intensive looting and large areas of wall painting that would have adorned the three burial chamber entrances had been destroyed by the removal of stones. In spite of this, large sections of the painted decoration are preserved, particularly in the corners and on the walls. Also, hundreds of wall painting fragments were collected from the floor during excavation but as yet it has not been possible to reassemble them. Despite the tomb having yielded a large number of artifacts and wall painting fragments, it is not possible to precisely date the tomb. The finds however, bear witness to the continual use of the tomb from the Hellenistic period until well into Roman times, whilst the surviving decoration of the tomb, based on comparisons, must place it around the 2nd cent. A.D.

The painted decoration over the entrances of the burial chambers imitates closed false doors (pl.IVb). This depicts double paneled wooden doors with metal, probably iron, nails. The imitation wooden doors are depicted with large panels painted in a lively yellow colour, the grain rendered with red curved lines, whilst the nails are painted in blue. In the upper left-hand part of the entrance of the north chamber remains of the doorjamb are preserved although the colours have faded. It should be noted that many of the fragments reassembled in the laboratory depict the upper part of a door frame of one of the two doors, above which runs an egg and dart cornice rendered in light yellow and white colours.

The edges of garlands tied with ribbons and knots at the suspension points are preserved in the corners above the false doors. Preserved above these garlands are painted imitations of wooden beams that seem to run all the way around the room at this upper level. The wooden beams link up in the corners of the chamber and above them one can discern small decorative motifs. Under the

beams hang garlands of leaves and flowers amongst which would have been female faces, (pl. IVc) two of which have been almost completely restored from the pieces that were found during excavation. On the lower part of the walls one can see vertical and horizontal narrow red, black and blue bands, which delineate rectangles in a white colour. That decoration, very worn by erosion, probably imitates isodomic walls, a scheme frequently encountered in tomb painting of the Hellenistic and Roman period.³

The imitation in paint of false doors is a common decorative motif in funerary painting throughout the Mediterranean, dating back to more ancient times. This theme spread throughout the Greek world during the Hellenistic period and continued to be used widely throughout the whole of the ancient world into the Roman period. The false door could simply symbolise the tomb or the entrance into the after life. This symbolism is further strengthened by the existence of libation pipes positioned in front of the doorways, just as in the Paphos tomb example.

The garlands belong to the secondary themes of funerary art and are a decorative element common in tombs of the Hellenistic and Roman period throughout the ancient world. There are many different types of garlands, heavy or delicate, with leaves, flowers, fruit, ribbons and other decorative motifs. Their symbolism derives from the winner's wreath and from then on becomes a symbol of conquest over death. For this reason they frequently decorate the arches of *arcosolia* inside the tombs, sanctifying the area and reinforcing the heroism of the deceased. Besides this symbolism, garlands decorated areas on feast days and often appeared in paintings in houses and public buildings.⁴ In Paphos, as indeed everywhere in the ancient world, different types of garlands frequently appear in tombs both in the Hellenistic and Roman period as well as in public buildings. It is also therefore important to underline the presence of female faces found among the flowers in the garlands, a feature uncommon in funerary painting in Paphos. These faces might be theatrical masks, symbolising theatre and intellectual life, besides their association with Dionysus, the god of fertility and drama, which links these motifs with belief in the after life.⁵

The decoration of this tomb refers to an iconographic tradition common in several areas of the ancient world. Here we should mention a tomb in the area of Tyre dating to the 2nd cent. A.D., which constitutes an impressive example of painted decoration with many similarities to the Paphos tomb. On the walls of the Tyre tomb, below large painted compositions, heavy fruit and flower garlands hang, having female faces in the middle, whilst at a lower level there are painted imitations of closed false doors.⁶ It would seem that there is a close relationship between the workshops of the two cities, as demonstrated by both technique and the choice of subject matter.

3. Empereur-Nenna 2000, 194-195, figs 4.1, 4.2.

4. Barbet 1985, 75. For Paphos see Michaelides 2004, 89-90, figs 2, 6; also Wood Conroy in Raptou 2006, 331-36, figs 1-4 and 6-7, Raptou 2004, 315, fig. 2, pl. 45, also *supra* Tomb in Eletherios Handrinis Street.

5. Dunand 1965, 36, Wood Conroy 2003, 280.

6. Dunand 1965, 36-37, pls IV-VI, XI and fig. 8.

We also note a similar arrangement of decorative motifs in the tombs of southern Russia, as in the tomb of *Alkimos Hygesippou*, at Kertch, where, above an isodomic wall, there is a cornice traversing the area from which garlands hang.⁷ Similar decorative schemes are also used in the decoration of public buildings and may appear in different art forms. In the baths at Salamis a heavy garland having a female face in the middle appears on a mosaic, depicted under a 3rd cent. A.D. mythological scene.⁸

The decorative scheme using architectural motifs and garlands seen in this Paphos tomb attempts to create an illusion of architecture and despite already appearing in Macedonian tombs of the Hellenistic period, falls more into the Second Pompeian Style.⁹ Undoubtedly the creations of Roman artists in Italy were a catalyst in the moulding of artistic tendencies and prevalence of certain decorative types throughout the Empire. The separation of the wall painted decoration into an isodomic system in the middle, with garlands above and imitation marble slabs below on the lower part of the walls, forms a characteristic element in all Pompeian Styles.

Tomb in 'Tombs of the Kings' Avenue

This tomb, discovered during the construction of the Paphos sewerage system, was unfortunately half destroyed. Only a part of the south side of the chamber along with part of the western chamber and the entrance survive. An ossuary was found on the south side, behind a carved bench, sealed by three slabs, forming a single surface. On this surface a female figure standing between garlands is depicted, whilst at the lowest part there was a painted inscription. The scene had been partially destroyed due to its long stay in a damp environment and also because of the way in which the tomb had been found.¹⁰ The finds bear witness to the use of the tomb from the 1st to the 3rd cent. A.D., while archaeological criteria would date the wall paintings to the 3rd cent. A.D.

On the pale white surface created by the three slabs one can see a young female figure standing between two garlands of red flowers, each tied at the edges with ribbons, whilst above her head there is another decorative motif most probably a garland of green leaves (pl. IVd). The figure has a height of 0.81 m and is portrayed turning to the left, giving the impression of slight movement, emphasised by the drape of the garments. The form is dressed in a *chiton* and *himation* that falls from the head onto the shoulders on the right side of the body. The face is round, the eyes look to the left and the hairstyle is simple with brown hair falling in waves onto the shoulders (pl. Va). She wears sumptuous jewellery on her costume, an impressive detail that gives a particular air of luxury to her appearance. She is depicted holding an object, most likely a vegetal motif, in her hands, the identity of which cannot be identified. On the floor near her feet one can see fragmentary motifs that appear to be a bunch of grapes and other fruits. The inscription on the lower part of the slab is

7. Minns 1913, 309-10, fig. 220.

8. Karagheorghis 1969, pls 123-124.

9. Barbet 1985, 18.

10. Raptou 2004, 316-18, Michaelides 2004, 94-95, figs 13-14.

alphabetic, in large red letters, but is impossible to read with any accuracy. It includes the well-known formula $\text{XP}\eta\text{ΣTE XAIPE}$, a common form of funerary inscription in Cyprus during the Roman period, although fairly rare in Paphos.¹¹

This kind of wall painting has not been paralleled in the funerary art of Cyprus until now. Large size human forms are extremely rare and those found to date are very fragmentary.¹² On the other hand, the garlands referred to earlier are a common decorative theme in tomb painting. The garlands in this particular tomb however are not quite the same as those found in earlier tombs, being of smaller dimensions and lacking detail in their floral repertoire. Garlands of this type are usual in tombs of the eastern Mediterranean during the Roman period.¹³ They also appear in public buildings and private villas.¹⁴ One should note the particular importance of the similarity of the wall paintings of this Paphos tomb with a tomb in Israel, where human forms are again depicted standing among garlands.¹⁵ It should also be noted that a similar painting with a figure standing under a garland decorates a wall at Marina El-Alamein in Egypt, dated to the second half of the 2nd to 3rd cent. A.D.¹⁶ The painted fruits at the feet of the figure perhaps suggest the existence of a basket, a strongly symbolic subject seen in many tombs of the Roman period, such as those at Sardis, and usually related to chthonic deities such as Dionysus and Demeter.¹⁷ Although it is difficult to identify the depicted figure, it is most definitely not a portrait, nor a servant of the dead person, as was the custom in tombs. Judging by the sumptuous appearance and the symbols surrounding her, it is most likely that she is a symbolic form, an underworld deity, perhaps a Nymph or one of the *Horai* or the Seasons. She probably represents a mythological figure connected with fertility and associated with belief in the after life, reminding us of primitive cults conveying the pagan identity of the buried person.

Tomb in Eleftherios Handrinos Street

The tomb was discovered below the road surface between the localities Glyky Nero and Ammoi, not far from the sea. It comprises a large underground built chamber covered by a barrel vault, entered from the southwest. The chamber has on the three sides five *arcosolia* built above sarcophagi. Each side has two *arcosolia*, all similar, whilst the central one opposite the entrance is

11. Nicolaou 2004, 268-69, no .2, fig. 3, also Nicolaou 1987, 180, no. 15. Another inscription appears on a fragment from an unpublished tomb (P.M. 3330), where one can discern a person's name. The inscription would have been painted under the feet of a large standing figure, of which only fragments remain.
12. Michaelides 2004, 94, fig. 11.
13. For tombs in Alexandria see Guimier-Sorbets and Seif El-Din 1997, 371, figs 11-12, 384, fig. 22.
14. Such as in the Paphos Theater Wood Conroy 2003, 275, and private houses in Ephesos, Strocka 1978, 485-486, pls 145.6, 146.7.
15. Michaeli 1999, 182, figs 1-8
16. Medeksza 1999, 59-61, fig. 6.
17. Greenewalt 1983, 22-24, figs 26-27, Greenewalt-Ratte-Rautman 1995, 1-2, fig. 2.

larger. At the sides of the central *arcosolium* are two small niches with ossuaries behind them. The tomb was full of sand when discovered, in some areas up to the roof, a fact that did not permit full excavation. However, three of the *arcosolia* were not covered by sand and two of them display much worn painted decoration.

The *tympanum* of the central *arcosolium* preserves wall painting fragments where one sees a peacock pecking at a garland (pl. Vb). This is part of a well-known decorative theme of juxtaposed peacocks pecking garlands. The peacock preserved on the right bends and holds the edge of the garland in its beak. The bird is rendered in a very realistic fashion, painted in lively colours with multi-coloured feathers. Underneath this composition are scattered red flowers and vegetal motifs. The same motifs also appear on the walls of the external side of the *arcosolium*. The peacock is a theme often found in tomb painting of the early Christian period, having already acquired an important status in paintings in houses and tombs of the pagan era as a deity symbol and alluding to a peaceful and happy environment.¹⁸ This bird was the symbol of Hera, goddess of marriage and birth, consequently symbolising the circle of life.

The peacock motif is frequently encountered as a decorative theme in tombs of the Roman period, such as in a tomb at Montefiore dating to the 1st cent. A.D.¹⁹ and another in Corinth of the same period.²⁰ It continues to be a common theme even in the late Roman period where in Christianity it is interpreted as a symbol of immortality and eternal life. Many examples of this period are also preserved in tombs of the Greek world, such as tombs in Thessaloniki, in Sardis in Asia Minor, mostly dated to the 4th cent. A.D.²¹ During the same period, as already mentioned, one observes this motif in sumptuous dwellings such as those at Ephesus, dating to the 3rd cent. A.D.²² Again, in the same town, one can see the same motif in a mosaic composition dating to approximately 400 A.D., thus emphasising the relationship between painting and mosaic.²³ Peacocks and other birds appear in other tombs in Paphos, such as the Icarus Street tomb, but there they are included in paradise-style compositions amongst many decorative motifs, vegetal and faunal, charged with strong symbolism.²⁴ Accurate dating of the composition cannot be made although the use of the tomb, based on archaeological evidence, continues into the 5th cent. A.D.

The *tympanum* of the *arcosolium* to the right depicts a 'still life' composition, presenting precious metal symposium vessels, probably of gold or bronze judging by their yellow and warm brown colours (pl. VIa). The vessels are aligned on a pale white background, probably standing on a table. Unfortunately the composition is not preserved in its entirety, however one can discern a table

18. Guimier-Sorbets and Seif El-Din 1997, 399.

19. Laidlaw 1964, 37, figs 3,6.

20. Shear 1935, 428, figs 8,10.

21. Shear 1927, 21-22, pl. V, Greenewalt-Ratte-Rautman 1996, 1-2, fig. 2, Majewski 1970, 55-57, fig. 45.

22. Strocka 1978, 485, pl. 145.6.

23. Jobst 1977, 67, pls 122-23.

24. Wood Conroy in Raptou 2006, 338-39, figs 1,9.

amphora, an oinochoe with trefoil mouth, tall handle and broad shoulder. Other objects can also be discerned such as a cup with tall circular handles and finally, to the right, one observes a large bowl. This subject matter is encountered for the first time in Cypriot art and has no parallel in the tomb paintings of neighbouring countries. Ceremonial objects appear in the paintings of Macedonia in the Hellenistic period, for example as in the tomb at Agios Athanasios in Thessaloniki, dated to before the end of the 4th cent. B.C.²⁵ However, the composition in this Paphian tomb rather suggests antecedents in Italian tomb painting. The vessels are rendered in a very realistic fashion in colours of yellow and light brown. Their shape and form is sharply delineated with good perspective and an attempt is made to capture the refraction of light, a style familiar in Pompeian art.²⁶ Precious metal, mostly silver, vessels are often depicted in dwellings and tombs in Italy,²⁷ mostly dated to the 1st cent. A.D., whilst the Paphos tomb cannot be accurately dated. As for the meaning of such iconography in funerary painting, it may possibly be a substitution for the preparation of a *Necrodeipnon*, a dinner in honour of the dead, a theme that was frequently used in funerary art of all periods. It may also represent a feast as a symbol of aristocratic luxury and abundance. Also, we cannot preclude from our hypothesis the fact that the precious vessels may represent substitutes for real tomb offerings or even an athletic prize. Therefore, the strong resemblance of the 'still life with vessels' with many Italian parallels pinpoints an artistic link between the Paphian workshops and Italy, with which there would have been commercial and other forms of contact.

At the time of discovery of the tomb the *intrados* of this *arcosolium* preserved sections of wall paintings on the voussoirs imitating carved-in-relief coffers of luxurious buildings.²⁸ Unfortunately this particular decoration is in a very bad state and one can only see fragments of three coffers. From their size it would seem probable that there were two rows of such coffers, in different shades, which would have decorated the *intrados*.

The inner part of the coffers, where there would have been a decorative motif, is not preserved. We can observe only the frames. In the interior of every coffer there are two coloured parts in pink and blue, whilst the separating frames are yellow, probably imitating a wooden border. There are also other separation lines in red. The coffers are realistically rendered in lively colours, and it would appear that an attempt has been made in order to achieve perspective, using different tones of the same colour to this end. In one instance there is a white frame, which clearly imitates a moulded egg and dart cornice.²⁹ Similar decoration with coffers is not known in other tombs in Paphos. Square coffers are found in tombs of the Hellenistic period, such as in a tomb of the Anfuschi Necropolis in Alexandria, dated to the 3rd-2nd cent. B.C.³⁰ However, it would seem that there is no

25. Τσιμπίδου-Αυλωνίτη 2005, 120-121, pls 30, 33a.

26. Ling 1990, 154-56, fig. 165.

27. Laidlaw 1964, 34, fig. 8

28. Barbet 1985, 81-85, figs 44-46, Ling 1990, 48-49.

29. Barbet 1985, 82, figs 45-46.

30. Barbet 1985, 21 fig. 8

connection between the decoration of the Paphos tomb and the earlier Hellenistic painting. The way in which the coffers are depicted is closest to the Second Pompeian Style, as we can see from the dwellings and tombs of Italy. Of course this type of decoration spread all over the ancient world and finds parallels in many areas. One of the better preserved examples, which presents great similarities with that of the Paphos tomb, not only in the ceiling decoration but also generally in the collection of themes that it uses, is the Montefiore tomb in Italy, which dates to the late 1st cent. A.D.³¹

Tomb in George Seferis Street

This tomb was discovered during earth moving works for the erection of a housing block and unfortunately suffered extensive damage because of this. It is a very large complex carved in the bedrock, which includes a central *atrium* around which burial chambers are situated. The entrance of the monument is located to the southeast and to its right side one finds a built *arcosolium* above a built sarcophagus. To the north side of the courtyard there is a burial chamber carved out of the rock with a built sarcophagus crowned with an *arcosolium* (pl. VIb). Both the *tympanum* and *intrados* preserve traces of painted decoration that has been destroyed to a great degree. The little that remains has faded. In the *tympanum* one can discern traces of a garland of green leaves, and also a *tabula ansata* bearing faint traces of an alphabetic inscription. This decoration is comparable with one found in another tomb in Paphos dated to the 2nd cent. A.D., and may be a product of the same workshop.³² As previously mentioned, the *intrados* preserve imitation marble and alabaster veneering. In the centre, which is better preserved, one can see an imitation of an alabaster slab, whilst to the right and left one can make out marble slabs with rhomboid patterns. The remaining slabs also recreate revetments but have almost vanished. Imitation marble was a very common way to cover inner walls in tombs, as with dwellings of the same period and one often notes this in the ancient world, as indeed in Paphos.³³ The appearance of rhomboid-type patterns can therefore be compared with the Montefiore tomb referred to before. A characteristic example of this technique in the eastern Mediterranean, with many examples and similarities with the Paphian examples, is that of the Herodian Palace at Masada, Palestine, which dates to the 1st cent. A.D.³⁴

Tomb in Icarus Street

The tomb was found not far from the northeast corner of the walled city of ancient Paphos, on the eastern side of Fabrica Hill, close to what is presumed to be the northeastern gate. It is a large built single-chambered tomb, orientated east west and having a west facing entrance. A barrel-vaulted roof covers the chamber, which has five *arcosolia* on its three sides, one higher on its east side on the axis of the entrance and four others on the long sides.³⁵

31. Laidlaw 1964, 37-42.

32. Michaelides 2004, 93.

33. Michaelides 2004, 94.

34. Ovadia 2005, 31-34, fig XIX.

35. Raptou 2006, 317-30.

The chamber's walls and vault originally would have been covered with plaster, which supported rich painted decoration from which only fragments survive.³⁶ The only part that preserves the integrity of its decoration is *arcosolium 1*, located to the right of the entrance (pl. VIc). The curve of the arch is decorated with a realistically rendered wreath of green myrtle leaves with gold berries, tied at the ends with red ribbons. The painting on the *intrados* has vanished, while on the *tympanum*, on a cream background delineated by a red band, two strigils and an aryballos appear as if hanging. The strigils are painted in green with a dark brown outline and the aryballos in yellow ochre, hanging from a nail by cords. Judging from the symbolic meaning of the decoration, this part of the tomb would be destined to receive a young person, maybe an athlete.

Arcosolium 2, to the right of the entrance, preserves large parts of its decoration, partly covered by a thick layer of crystallised salts (pl. VIIa). On the *intrados*, a collection of images is seen on a cream ground bordered with red lines. The motifs have an enigmatic relationship one with the other. A green partridge stands amongst heart-shaped flowers and pomegranates and other green vegetal forms. Above is a yellow disc bordered with red and two rectangular green shapes with parallel lines. In the centre a red semicircular shape resembles a fish. Beyond this there are other forms suggesting wheels or bread. The same scattered motifs appear in a composition on the *tympanum*. A pair of birds, perhaps peacocks, face each other amongst fragmentary flowers, bunches of grapes and sprigs of foliage. The semicircular shape is again outlined with red bands. This kind of decoration with scattered birds, plants and other motifs occurs in houses, tombs and churches. These images show an ambivalent pagan and Christian use and are reminiscent of early Christian tomb decoration.³⁷

Arcosolium 3, opposite the entrance, preserves some of its decoration, mostly faded (pl. VIIb). A painted garland of myrtle leaves runs along the curve of the arch. The decoration on the wall surfaces flanking the recess consists of large rectangular panels with imitation marble veneering framed by narrow red bands. The decoration of this part of the tomb is completed with the *tympanum* decoration, again much destroyed, consisting of red garlands and flowers painted under a red band that runs along the back wall following the line of the arch.

The differences in style and motifs seen in the painting indicate that the tomb was redecorated at different intervals. It cannot be accurately dated since it was used until the Medieval period when it was turned into a workshop, and almost all the finds date from that late period. Many of the motifs have already been discussed and they find many parallels with tombs of the Roman period in Paphos and other parts of the Roman world.³⁸ The synthesis on the *intrados* of the *arcosolium 2* seems to be the latest in date, and may be compared to that found in a cistern at Salamis dated to the 5th or 6th cent. A.D.³⁹

36. Wood-Conroy 2006, 331-43.

37. Michaelides 2004, 94; Wood Conroy in Raptou 2006.

38. Wood Conroy in Raptou 2006, 335-36, figs 6-8; Greenewalt-Ratte-Rautman 1996, 2-3, fig. 2.

39. Du Plat Taylor 1933, 103, pl. XI.2, pl. XC.2.

This brief retrospect into recently found paintings of the Roman period in Paphos permits us to form an improved picture of the trends and requirements in the paintings of ancient Cyprus and, although confined to that found in tombs, affords us a better appreciation of this art form, revealing basic tendencies and influences. At the same time one gathers significant information regarding local society, the tendency towards display and also of the kind of luxury in which the higher echelons of society lived, which obviously focused on the great centres of the time. The examples given demonstrate similarities with Hellenistic art which was very intense in the city, but did not prevent the strong influence of Roman painting which had spread all over the Empire. As with all areas in the East, local workshops find themselves adapting their artistic skills to the patterns and subjects that derive chiefly from Italy. Strong similarities in subjects and style with neighbouring countries reveal a kind of artistic *koine* formed in the Roman East. It is however difficult to recognise which theme belongs to which trend under the guise of fashion which was in force at any given time, and perhaps the subjects have lost some of their exact meaning, with the artists simply choosing from predetermined themes, destined to decorate tombs. These new finds enrich our picture of the art of painting in Cyprus during Roman times and start to gradually reveal the existence of different workshops and skilled artisans in the city.

ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

Αυτή η σύντομη ανασκόπηση τοιχογραφιών της Ρωμαϊκής περιόδου στην Πάφο μας επιτρέπει να έχουμε μια καλύτερη εικόνα από τις τάσεις και απαιτήσεις της ζωγραφικής της αρχαίας Κύπρου. Καίτοι αυτή περιορίζεται σε ταφικά σύνολα, μας επιτρέπει μια καλύτερη εκτίμηση αυτού του είδους της τέχνης αποκαλύπτοντας βασικές τάσεις και επιρροές. Συγχρόνως κάποιος αντλεί σημαντικές πληροφορίες για την τοπική κοινωνία, την τάση επίδειξης πλούτου καθώς και το είδος της πολυτέλειας μέσα στην οποία ζούσαν οι ανώτερες κοινωνικές τάξεις και που προφανώς εστιαζόταν στα μεγάλα κέντρα της εποχής. Τα παραδείγματα που δίνονται επιδεικνύουν ομοιότητες με την Ελληνιστική τέχνη, η οποία ήταν πολύ έντονη στην πόλη της Πάφου, αλλά δεν εμπόδισε τη δυνατή επίδραση της Ρωμαϊκής ζωγραφικής που είχε εξαπλωθεί σε όλη την αυτοκρατορία. Όπως και σε άλλες περιοχές της Ανατολής, τα τοπικά εργαστήρια προσαρμόζουν τις καλλιτεχνικές δεξιότητες σε σχέδια και θέματα που προέρχονται κυρίως από την Ιταλία. Ισχυρές ομοιότητες σε θεματογραφία και ύφος με γειτονικές χώρες αποκαλύπτουν ένα είδος «κοινής» αισθητικής που σχηματίστηκε στη Ρωμαϊκή Ανατολή. Είναι όμως δύσκολο να αποφανθεί κάποιος ποιο μοτίβο ανήκει και σε ποιο ρεύμα κάτω από την αμφίεση της τέχνης η οποία ήταν του συρμού τη δεδομένη στιγμή, και ίσως τα θέματα να έχασαν κάποιο από το πραγματικό τους νόημα, με τους καλλιτέχνες απλώς να επιλέγουν από προκαθορισμένη θεματογραφία που προοριζόταν για τη διακόσμηση τάφων. Τα νεότερα ευρήματα εμπλουτίζουν την εικόνα της ζωγραφικής τέχνης της Κύπρου κατά τη Ρωμαϊκή περίοδο και αρχίζουν σταδιακά να αποκαλύπτουν την ύπαρξη διαφορετικών εργαστηρίων και εξειδικευμένων τεχνιτών στην πόλη.

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