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TWO GREEK CHRISTIAN INSCRIPTIONS FROM SPAIN

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TWO GREEK CHRISTIAN INSCRIPTIONS FROM SPAIN*

1. In the archaeological Museum of Cartagena, the ancient *Carthago nova*, there is a Greek inscription (no. 189) engraved in a marble tablet (28 x 23 cm.) which has been published several times since the 18th century. The first serious edition is that of Hübner (177), who saw the inscription in Cartagena, but only “adiutus telescopio”, for the inscription was placed high on the wall of a building. Hübner’s edition is the basis for Wessel (409) and Ferrua (423). After the cleaning of the stone, this inscription was published again by A. Beltrán, who did not improve the text¹. There is a good photograph in A. Lillo, “Inscripciones sepulcrales griegas de Cartagena”, *Antigüedad y cristianismo* 2 (1985) p. 122, from which the following sketch comes:



Hübner read: ὑπὲρ ἀναπ(αύσεως) κ(αὶ) σ{ε}οτηρίας τ(ῆ)ς μακαρίας κ(υ)ρίε(ς) Κιτούρα. Hübner’s authority and the fact that the name Κιτούρα was accepted by the *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* moved editors to accept Hübner’s reading with few variations. More recently Κιτούρα has been considered an indigenous name². The origin of this reading, however, lies in a misunderstanding of the lettering of the inscription: the sign S has been thought to be always a *sigma* and the square *sigma* to be an ε. In reality the sign S is used both as an abbreviation mark³ and as final -ς, while elsewhere a square *sigma* is used. Clearly, the correct reading is: ὑπὲρ ἀναπ(αύσεως) κ(αὶ) σοτηρίας (*sic*) τ(ῆ)ς μακαρίας Κρισκιτούρα. The last name is simply a form of the Latin name *Crescitura*: cf.

* Abbreviations: Hübner = E. Hübner, *Inscriptiones Hispaniae Christianae*, Berlin 1871; Hübner *suppl.* = idem, *Inscr. H. Chr. supplementum*, Berlin 1900; Ferrua = A. Ferrua "Inscripciones griegas y judías", apud J. Vives, *Inscripciones cristianas de la España romana y visigoda*, Barcelona 1969², pp. 140–143; Wessel = C. Wessel, *Inscriptiones Graecae Christianae veteres Occidentis*, Bari 1989.

¹ *Crónica del III congreso arqueológico del sudeste español*, Murcia 1947, pp. 307–308.

² M. L. Albertos, *La onomástica personal primitiva de la Hispania Tarraconense y Bética*, Salamanca 1966, p. 89.

³ On this mark, see M. Avi-Yonah, *Abbreviations in Greek Inscriptions*, London 1940, p. 37. According to Avi-Yonah, it is “a typical sixth-century sign”.

Κρυσκωνία for *Cresconia* (IG 14, 177), *Crisconius* for *Cresconius* (CIL 8, 13586), *Criscentio* for *Crescentio* (ICUR 25165), *Criscentia* for *Crescentia* (ICUR 12481), etc.

2. Hübner 289 (p. 119) published an epitaph found in 1869 in the ancient Carteia, in the bay of Algeciras, in the Gibraltar strait, which he knew from a copy sent to him in 1871. This text is the basis for F. Fita, *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia* 21 (1892) pp. 17–18 (who dated the inscription in 616 A.D.), Wessel (956), and Ferrua (421).

[ἐνθ]άδε κατάκειται
[N]ικόλαος Μακριόταις
μ(ηνὸς)⁴ μαρτίου ε' ἰνδ(ικτίωνος) δ'⁵

The reading Μακριόταις (= Μακριώτης) is Hübner's. Wessel wrote μακ(α)ριότα(το)ς; Ferrua Νικόλαος Μάκριο(ς) ταῖς (sc. ἡμέραις) μ(ηνὸς) μαρτίου ε', but the name and the syntax are somewhat odd. The simplest reading is Hübner's. However, his explanation of the ethnic (he thought it to be an error for Μαρκιώτης, “a Marcia civitate?”)⁶ is unsatisfactory. In 1917 Gustav Anrich proposed an interesting interpretation⁷, although no editor of this inscription became aware of it.

Throughout the Greek world there are great numbers of toponyms formed with the adjective μακρός (Μάκρα, Μακρίς, Μακρὰ κόμη, etc.)⁸, so that the ethnic Μαρκιώτης used in this inscription is ambiguous. G. Anrich noted that between the 5th and 7th cent. A.D. the name Νικόλαος was very frequent in Lycia (due to the important cult of St. Nicolas of Myra), and rare elsewhere, and that in western Lycia there is an island called Μάκρα and a neighbouring town called Μάκρη, the ancient Τελμησσός⁹. Consequently he suggested that the Νικόλαος Μαρκιώτης of Carteia was Lycian, either from the island of Μάκρα or from Μάκρη. This is, I think, a very likely interpretation. In fact, the position of Lycia on the great maritime trade-routes between East and West explains its prosperity in Roman and early Byzantine times as well as the presence of Lycians throughout the Mediterranean¹⁰. As to the Western Mediterranean, we know of the epitaph of a Lycian

⁴ Fita writes μ(ηνί).

⁵ Fita read ἰνδ(ι)κ(τίωνος). According to Hübner, Fita's κ is an interpunction.

⁶ Hübner *suppl.* p. 150.

⁷ G. Anrich, *Hagios Nikolaos. Der heilige Nikolaos in der griechischen Kirche*, vol. II, Berlin 1917, p. 451.

⁸ See *RE* XIV,1 cols. 161–162 and 808–814.

⁹ *Hagios Nikolaos*, II pp. 449–454. Cf. p. 453: “Es stehen vom 5. bis zum 7. Jh. 16 bis 17 Trägern des Namens aus der einen, nicht sonderlich großen und wenig bekannten Provinz Lykien, vielleicht nur 3, wahrscheinlich etwa 5, allerhöchstens aber 8 Nikolaos aus der gesamten übrigen Christenheit gegenüber!” In Μάκρη the main church was that of Ἅγιος Νικόλαος, and also in modern times the name Νικόλαος was very frequent in this town (as, in February 1995, I was told by Mrs. Κατίνα Πασσαλή, who, in 1922, left Μάκρη with nearly a hundred families and settled in Νέα Μάκρη in eastern Attica).

¹⁰ For the strategic position of Μάκρη-Τελμησσός (today's Fethiye), see L. Robert, “Les conquêtes du dynaste Lycien Arbinas”, *JS* 1978 pp. 26–34 (= *OMS* VII 405–412).

ναύκληρος in Messina made by his three brothers (IG 14, 404), that of two ἔμποροι from Myra in Southern Italy¹¹, and that of two Lycians who died in Rome (IG 14, 1878 and 2068 = IGUR 1351). In Christian times, we know of a Lycian ναύκληρος in Syracuse (SEG 15, 590) and of another Lycian who died in Africa Minor¹². It should not surprise us to find a Lycian, probably a ναύκληρος or an ἔμπορος, also in southern Spain.

True, in Stephanus Byzantinus the ethnics of the Lycian Μάκρα are Μακρονησίτης, Μακραῖος and Μακρήσιος. However, this does not contradict Anrich's interpretation, for it is a well known fact that the ethnics recorded by Stephanus are often wrong or plainly invented¹³. Thus, we can accept Anrich's view. If the town alluded to by the ethnic Μακριώτης were the Byzantine Μάκρη, the epitaph from Spain would be the first testimony of the new name of Τελμησσός, for the name Μάκρη appears for the first time in 879 A.D¹⁴.

¹¹ M. Chelotti et alii, *Le epigrafi romane di Canosa*, Bari 1985, n. 282 (SEG XXXV, 1026).

¹² SEG IX, 872. See also N. Duval, "L'épigraphie funéraire chrétienne d'Afrique", in *La terza età dell'epigrafia*, ed. A. Donati, Faenza 1988, p. 291 (pl. 23).

¹³ See L. Robert, *Hellenica II* (1946) p. 66; *Études anatoliennes*, Paris 1937, p. 556; *OMS I* pp. 560–561, etc.

¹⁴ See E. Kalinka, TAM II,1 (Wien 1920) pp. 2–3. In the lists of ecclesiastical dioceses the name Μάκρη appears in the 10th cent. (A. Kazhdan – C. F. W. Foss, *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, Oxford 1991, s.v. "Macre").