State financial problems were not a rarity in Greek history—or any historical period for that matter. But if resources were limited, the resourcefulness of those who wanted to obtain money was not. At the end of the first century BCE and in the beginning of the first century CE, many cities in the Greek East were facing severe financial problems. One of the most imaginative solutions for solving such a capital shortage is epigraphically attested for the Rhodian city of Lindos. In the year 22 CE, the Lindians were unable to afford the upkeep of public sacrifices and festivals in their city. A very long decree refers to the various strategies for dealing with this problem and offers an invaluable insight in the various ways a community was treating sacred property. Lines 30 to 44 are of particular interest, since they describe the fate of a special group of statues on the Lindian acropolis:

And since there are some statues (andriantes) along the ascent and on the top itself, which are without inscription (anepigraphoi) and undistinguished (asamoi), it is expedient that these too shall be distinguished (episamous esti), bearing inscriptions saying that they are dedicated to the gods, it was voted by the Lindians: when this decree has been sanctioned, the same epistatai shall lease out the inscription of each statue, the Lindians deciding by vote whether the winning bid should be confirmed or not, and if it will be decided that the winning bid should be confirmed, they (the epistatai), after having made an account of the rate for which the inscription of each statue has been ceded, shall hand over the money accrued from these to be sacred to the fund of Athana Lindia and Zeus Polieus. Those who have purchased the inscription shall not have the permission in any case not under any pretext to remove statues from the top;

* I would like to thank Angelos Chaniotis, Marco Fantuzzi, Fernande Hölscher, and Chrysi Kotsifou for discussing with me various aspects of this paper.
otherwise they shall be liable to be accused of impiety. But if they make a request, they shall have the permission to replace statues according to what the Lindians agree on account of the request.¹

Thanks to the archaeological evidence, we know very well that both inscriptions and statues were broadly re-used in antiquity, but this decree is the only epigraphic attestation for an official sanction of such an operation concerning a whole group of dedications and not just single objects. Many aspects of the text are problematic and at the same time highly remarkable such as the auction of statue bases, the right to inscribe the bases, but not to remove or change the statues themselves, the possibility to maintain the statue base and replace the statue standing on it after special permission. But the explicit characterisation of dedicated statues as undistinguished (asamoi) is striking. It should be stressed that this is the only text to provide clear epigraphic evidence of such asamoi andriantes. Only Dio Chrysostomos uses exactly the same terminology in his Rhodian oration, where he accuses the Rhodians of re-using statues they had forgotten, whom they were representing: “... the most absurd plea is to claim that after all they don’t lay hands on either the identifiable statues or those whose owner is known, but that they do whatever they want only with those that are indistinct and very old.”²

The meaning of the term anepigraphos used in the inscription is clear and is definitely referring to statues without an accompanying dedicatory or honorary inscription. As regards the adjective asamos, H. Blanck suggested that this term might designate a statue, which actually bore an inscription, from whose letters the paint had faded away so that they

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² Dio Chrys. Or. 31.74: ὁ τιμῆτος ἐστὶν ἀτοποπότατος, ὡς ἂρα οὐδὲνὸς ἀποτελεί τῶν γνωρίων ἄνδριάντων οὐδὲ οὐς ἐπίσταται τις ὅν εἰσίν, ἀλλὰ ἀσήμως τοῖς καὶ σφόδρα παλαιὸς καταχρόμενος.