

Syllabic scripts and languages in the second and first millennia BC

Anna Morpurgo Davies and Jean-Pierre Olivier

Some strong links join Crete and Cyprus in the 2nd and 1st millennia BC: first, syllabic writing, secondly alphabetic writing and, finally, the use of the Greek language. These are shared features, but they are not on the same level; they must each be judged on their own terms. It would not be advisable for these two authors, one of whom specialises in writing and the other in language, to write a fully integrated account. Language and writing are separate institutions: one language can *in practice* be written in several scripts (this is the case of e.g. Turkish), while one script (e.g. the Latin alphabet) could *in theory* be used to write all the languages of the world. In other words there is no necessary link between language and script, even if from the point of view of the users emotional links may exist — and often do.

Cyprus, on the one hand, is an island which first borrowed, perhaps in the 17th century, the form of writing used in Crete by the Minoan thalassocracy, the Linear A script: through what channels (human and geographic) we do not know, but certainly not through diplomatic channels as, Olivier suggests, was done by the ‘Great King’ of Mycenae in order to obtain what in continental Greece became the Linear B script. Cyprus, on the other hand, is an island where the first arrival of peoples speaking some form of Greek probably goes back to the end of the 15th century, as the start of a process which through successive waves must have seen the introduction of other Greek speakers until the last wave which in the 12th century brought the Arcado-Cypriot dialect after the end of the Mycenaean kingdoms. Differently from Crete, where the Mycenaean dialect, written with the Linear B script, was replaced, after the fall of the Mycenaean palaces, by a Doric dialect, this Cypriot dialect, of Mycenaean origin, survived and was written in two local syllabaries derived from the ‘main’ syllabic script of the 2nd millennium. It was eventually phased out by the koine, written in the Greek alphabet, through a process which reached its completion in the 3rd century (even if we have a few residual traces of the syllabic writing in sealings towards the end of the 1st century BC).

We shall discuss these borrowings, these imports or these survivals on the one hand from the point of view of the content of the syllabic inscriptions which have been preserved, on the other from that of the

languages or dialects which these inscriptions attest or may have attested. The first of the two following sections is due to Jean-Pierre Olivier and the second to Anna Morpurgo Davies.

THE CONTENT OF THE INSCRIPTIONS

Jean-Pierre Olivier

CRETE

We assume that the main content of the Cretan texts, written in Cretan ‘hieroglyphic’ script or in Linear A or in Linear B is generally known, at least as far as the current progress in the relevant areas of studies allows: in each of the three forms of writing we mainly have economic documents on clay (FIGS. 7.1, 7.3).

In addition, in Cretan ‘hieroglyphic’ there are inscriptions on seals (and consequently clay sealings) and rare inscriptions on ‘other supports’ whose content we cannot even guess at; in Linear A we have ‘votive inscriptions’ on stone, ‘offering tables’ as well as some inscriptions on ‘other supports’ (FIG. 7.2: gold ring from Mavro Spilio), which are also limited in number but are equally incomprehensible.

CYPRUS IN THE SECOND MILLENNIUM

The Cypro-Minoan scripts of the 2nd millennium (labelled Cypro-Minoan 1, 2 and 3 by Émilia Masson)¹ are as undeciphered as the Cretan ‘hieroglyphic’ script and Linear A and consequently their content can only be inferred with a great deal of caution.

If we compare these Cypriot documents with the Cretan and Near Eastern documents we can at least say what they are *not*. First, they are not economic archives, otherwise we would find logograms and numbers. These appear on a very few documents, for instance on an ostrakon from Enkomi, which is one of the proofs

¹ For instance, in É. Masson 1974, Cypro-Minoan 1 is the main syllabic script of the island during the 2nd millennium, Cypro-Minoan 2 concerns only three fragmentary tablets from Enkomi and ‘Cypro-Minoan 3’ is an arbitrary denomination which designates the syllabic scripts of Cypriot origin written on documents found in Ras Shamra/Ugarit, on the Syrian coast.



Fig. 7.1 (left). Knossos: 'hieroglyphic' 'médaillon' KN He (06) 01 = CHIC #040 (HM 1274). Scale c. 1.7:1.



Fig. 7.2 (right). Knossos: gold ring from Mavro Spilio KN Zf 13 (HM 530; CMS II.3 no. 38).
Photograph courtesy of the CMS Archive. Scale c. 6:1.

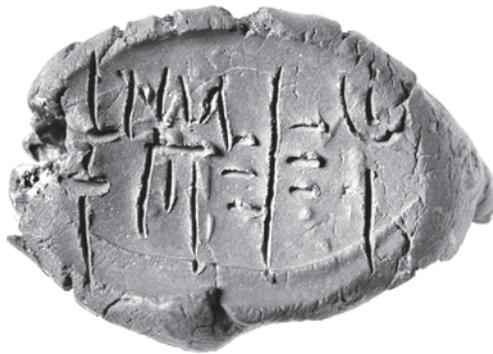


Fig. 7.3. Pylos: Linear B nodule PYWr 1415.α (NMA σφρ. 9055). Scale c. 2:1.

that these kinds of signs existed, but does not allow us to theorise about them. Second, they are not letters (with one possible exception in 'Cypro-Minoan 3' at Ras Shamra/Ugarit) or contracts (these latter would probably have imprints of seals which authenticate the signatures). Since we cannot be certain that any of the clay documents was deliberately baked, it is even less likely that we deal with international treaties or even library items (with, again, a possible exception, the three fragments of tablets in Cypro-Minoan 2).

For the short documents (with fewer than 12 signs) on various supports we may suppose that they indicate personal names, for instance on the 'clay balls', mainly from Enkomi (FIG. 7.4), and also on the obelos of Palaepaphos–Skales which is written in the Cypro-Minoan script (and not in a mixture of later Paphian and 'common' syllabaries),² but is nonetheless readable in the Greek language because it shares all its signs with the syllabaries of the 1st millennium (FIG. 7.5).

For the somewhat longer texts, we may assume that they are dedications as, for instance, the inscription on a bronze bowl from Cyprus (FIG. 7.6).

On the other hand we cannot say anything about the clay 'cylinders': there is one at Enkomi with 217 signs (FIG. 7.7); and there are five at Kalavassos–Ayios

Dhimitrios, including the longest one which presents about 141 signs, though it is a draft which preserves traces of three writing stages superimposed on each other (FIG. 7.8).

We know nothing about the content of the three fragments of large clay tablets at Enkomi, which together have some 2000 signs, i.e. slightly less than half of the whole Cypriot syllabic corpus of the 2nd millennium; all that we can say is that they were carefully written texts, with signs c. 50 mm high, arranged in two or three columns; the words were separated and no word was split between two lines; each tenth line was indicated by a large dot on the right margin (FIG. 7.9).

For the somewhat longer texts (of more than 12 signs) we must admit we have no idea about their content; but, in fact, out of fewer than 220 texts this applies only to four documents (three from Kition and one from Enkomi), if we leave aside the six cylinders from Enkomi and Kalavassos–Ayios Dhimitrios in Cypro-Minoan 1, the three tablets from Enkomi in

2 As suggested in Masson and Masson 1983.



Fig. 7.4. Enkomi: 'clay ball' ENKO Abou 012 (CM 1281). Scale c. 3:1.

Fig. 7.5 (below). Palaepaphos-Skales: obelos PPAP Mins 001 (CM K.M.R.R. 253 T.49/16). Scale c. 1.3:1.



The inscription on the obelos of Opheltas (drawing Émilie Masson).

064	011	024	004	012

The inscription of Opheltas 'rewritten' with signs coming from other texts in CM 1.

	<i>o</i>	<i>pe</i>	<i>le</i>	<i>ta</i>	<i>u</i>
Old Paphian syllabary (end 6th c.)					
'Common' syllabary (5th c.)					

o-pe-le-ta-u written in the syllabaries of the 1st millennium.

102	109	004	013	023	004	004	097	006	012

Fig. 7.6. Inscription on bronze bowl CYPR Mvas 002 (CM Met. 207). Drawing by H. Matthäus. Scale c. 1:1.

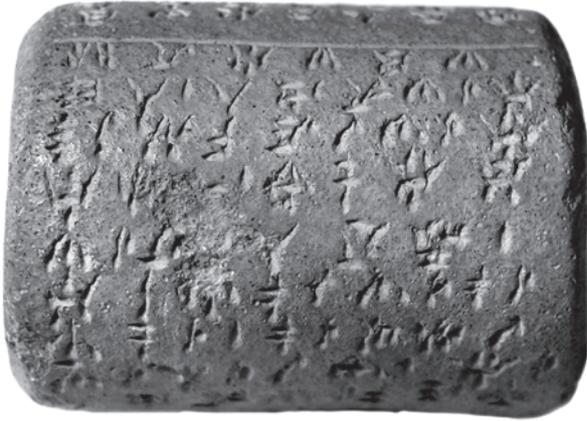


Fig. 7.7 (above). Enkomi: clay 'cylinder' ENKO Arou 001 (CM 1619). Scale c. 1.3:1.

Fig. 7.8 (below). Kalavassos–Ayios Dhimitrios: clay 'cylinder' KALA Arou 001 (CM K–AD 389). Scale c. 2.5:1.

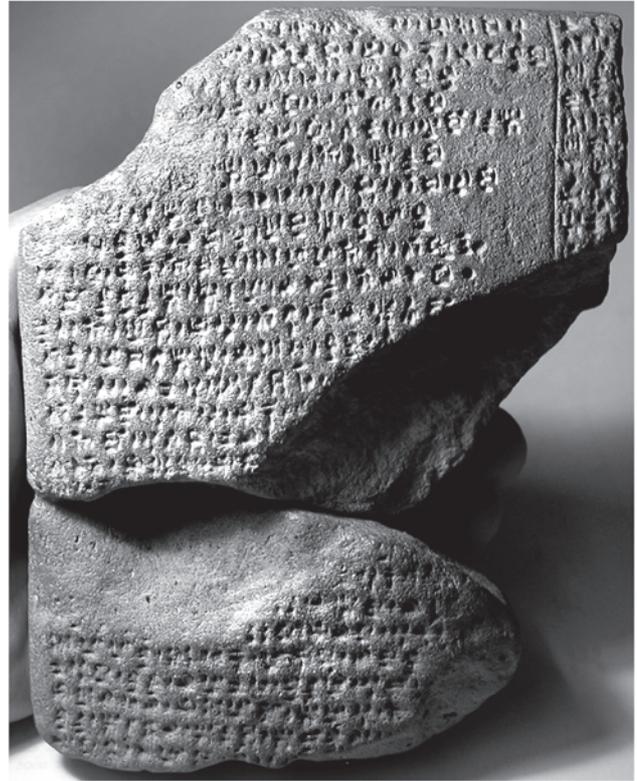


Fig. 7.9. Enkomi: tablet ENKO Atab 002.A (CM 1193 + 20.01). Scale c. 0.7:1.

Cypro-Minoan 2 mentioned earlier, and the three tablets from Ras Shamra/Ugarit in 'Cypro-Minoan 3'.

CYPRUS IN THE FIRST MILLENNIUM

The syllabic scripts of the 1st millennium (there are two varieties, the Paphian syllabary and the 'common' syllabary, both derived from Cypro-Minoan 1) are used for very many and very different contents and are preserved on all sorts of more or less permanent supports: a bronze tablet with more than 1000 signs with a contract between the city of Idalion and some doctors (which is too well known to require an illustration), and a number of vases with the owners' names, incised after firing (FIG. 7.10).

There are also a few stone stelae with epitaphs, some walls of Egyptian sanctuaries with signatures by Cypriot mercenaries or travellers, seals — normally in stone — with most often the name of the carrier (FIG. 7.11), coins with their legends, and ostraca, which include some of an economic nature (FIG. 7.12).

We also have various objects in metal, stone or clay, often very different from each other. Not only are we dealing with an 'all purpose' script (a vocation which is shared by most scripts), but above all with a script widely spread among the people (in contrast with e.g. Linear B), which explains the diversity of supports on which we find it. Admittedly we only know some 1300 documents with a total of less than 15,000 signs, all attested over a period of slightly more than five centuries and in more than 100 places distributed over three continents, Africa, Asia and Europe. Yet this is due to the fact that we have never found a large concentration of inscribed pieces, in contrast with Linear B for which we have more than 70,000 signs but spread through a period of 250 years and in a dozen find-places only, all in the same small region of the world. No demonstration is necessary and the conclusion is obvious: if the origin of the Cypriot scripts is to be found in Crete, in the documentation that we have very few contents can be paralleled; we have seals in Cretan 'hieroglyphic' script and in the



Fig. 7.10. Athens: sherd with owner's name ATHE Avas 001 (ICS² 369b) (Athens, Agora Museum P 17463). Scale c. 2:1.

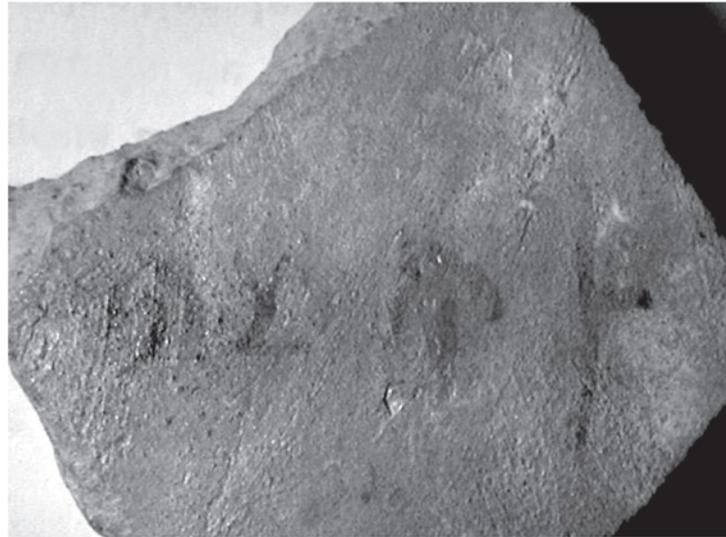


Fig. 7.11 (left). Seal with name of carrier CYPR Psce 006 (ICS² 362) (Athens, Numismatic Museum 6). Scale c. 4:1.

Fig. 7.12 (right). Ostrakon from Idalion IDAL Aost 004 (Masson 1992, 121) (CM 77–T.142/856). Scale c. 2:1.

Cypriot scripts of the 2nd and 1st millennia, short inscriptions on vases and metal . . . and that is practically all.

This is certainly due, at least in part, to the hazards of discovery, but that cannot be the whole story. Literacy, especially in the 1st millennium, was much more developed than in the second but also much more in Cyprus than in the Crete of the 2nd millennium. Why? We do not know and this should be a matter of debate among historians. This constitutes a strong paradox, but it is far from being the only one in the parallel lives of both syllabic scripts in the two islands.

Incidentally, this also means that the study of the Cypriot syllabic scripts of the 1st millennium BC is about a thousand times more 'diluted' than the study of Linear B, because one must also consider the fact that we have less than 300 'scribes' for the tablets in Linear

B in contrast with 1300 'writers' for the inscriptions in the Cypriot syllabaries of the 1st millennium (practically one for each individual document).

The consequence of this 'dilution' (and I did not specify that inscribed Cypriot objects are preserved in more than 50 museums and private collections located in more than 20 countries all over the world in contrast with about 10 museums in two countries for all the objects written in Linear B), the consequence of this dilution, then, is that the study of the syllabic Cypriot inscriptions (taken as a whole), is far less advanced than the study of the syllabic Cretan inscriptions (equally taken as a whole). And this is an arduous problem. But it does not any longer concern my generation. It is a rotten problem inherited from the 19th century for reasons so obvious that we do not need to discuss them here.

TABLE 7.1: Numerical and factual data concerning the Cretan and Cypriot syllabic scripts.

	Crete + Aegean			Cyprus	
	'Hieroglyphic'	Linear A	Linear B	2nd millennium	1st millennium
Documents	350	1500	6000	200	1300
Signs	3000	8000	70,000	3500	14,000
Scripts	1	1	1	3	2
Languages	1	1	1	X	X
Decipherments	0	0	1 (Greek, 1952)	0	1 (Greek, c. 1870)
Corpora	Yes	Yes	Yes (except for Pylos)	In preparation ³	In preparation
Indices /dictionaries	Yes	Yes	Yes	In preparation	Yes
Grammars	Not applicable	Not applicable	Yes	Not applicable	Yes ⁴

SYLLABIC SCRIPTS IN CRETE AND CYPRUS

I hope that TABLE 7.1 above, which shows the relevant facts concerning the syllabic scripts in both islands through the two millennia, will be immediately convincing and that no additional comment is necessary.

One and only one conclusion is possible about the scripts (even if not deciphered) and our chances to understand their contents: complete and correct editions and usable working instruments are needed. We have certainly not got there, especially as far as Cyprus is concerned. Given the complexities of the problems, it is clear that only a competent international team would be able to tackle them.

LANGUAGES

Anna Morpurgo Davies

LANGUAGE AND HISTORY

For the purposes of this study, language is interesting not so much *per se* but because of what it tells us about the historical and cultural developments of Crete and Cyprus. Historians and archaeologists know how to exploit linguistic facts for their purposes. The most obvious example — one close to our subject — is that of the revolution caused in Aegean studies by the decipherment of Linear B and the discovery that those texts were written in Greek.

We must start from the limited number of documents that we have and Olivier has already discussed their nature and content. However we must also state what we would like to know. A maximum programme, which obviously cannot be implemented here, should look in both islands and in both the 2nd and the 1st millennia BC at the use which is made of both language and writing,⁵ at language and dialect variation in space and time, at the presence or otherwise of multilingualism, at the possible existence of a lingua franca; it should

further consider second order data such as attitude to language and writing, awareness of linguistic phenomena, folk linguistic beliefs, etc., since these provide important evidence for cultural continuity or discontinuity. It is also necessary to keep in mind that different levels of language show different forms of continuity; an advanced lexicon may coexist with a conservative phonology or vice-versa. Above all we should compare and contrast lexical and onomastic development, concentrating perhaps on personal names but taking into account place names as well. Finally, we should not confuse language continuity and script continuity since language and script do not necessarily move in unison. Yet the way in which the speakers see them as overlapping or otherwise is also important and should be considered.

Can we identify *significant* patterns of change and variation in the two islands if we limit the analysis to the two islands only? If their linguistic development overlaps this may be because both islands follow standard patterns of development which could be found anywhere. To exclude this possibility we need a *tertium comparationis*. In what follows I have often contrasted Crete and Cyprus with mainland Greece or parts of it.

³ Cf. meanwhile Olivier 2007.

⁴ Egetmeyer 2010, vol. 1.

⁵ This should consider e.g. the question of the 'invisibility' of Cypriot writing in the first centuries of the 1st millennium (Sherratt 2003), but should also discuss why so many Cretan inscriptions are of a legal nature while the Cypriot ones are not (Stoddart and Whitley 1988; Whitley 1997; but see also Papakonstantinou 2002, and Perlman 2002, 194–8, both summarised in *SEG* liii. 822). It is also important to contrast levels and types of literacy in the different parts of Cyprus and Crete.

TABLE 7.2: Languages and scripts in the 2nd millennium BC.

<i>Crete</i> ⁶	<i>Cyprus</i> ⁷
Archanes seals MM IA (2100–1900) <i>Script ? Language ?</i>	
Cretan Hieroglyphs MM IIB–IIIB (18th–17th c. BC) <i>Language ?</i>	
Linear A MM IIA–LM IIIA1 (19th–14th c. BC) <i>Language ?</i>	Enkomi tablet LC IB (16th–15th c. BC) ⁸ <i>Script ? Language ?</i>
Linear B LM IIIA1–IIIB (14th–13th c. BC) <i>Language: Mycenaean Greek</i>	Cypro-Minoan 1 (multiple places) LC IB–III B (15th–11th c. BC) <i>Language ?</i>
	Palaepaphos–Skales obelos LC IIIB–CG I (11th–10th c. BC) <i>Script: Cypro-Minoan 1 ?</i> <i>Language: Cypriot Greek ??</i>
	Cypro-Minoan 2 (Enkomi) LC IIIB (12th c. BC) <i>Language ?</i>
	‘Cypro-Minoan 3’ (Ugarit) (13th c. BC) <i>Language(s) ?</i>

THE DATA

We are at the mercy of our evidence and the difficulties have been highlighted above. Here I tabulate again the evidence for the scripts and the languages of the 2nd millennium BC in Cyprus and Crete (TABLE 7.2) before turning to a similar tabulation for the 1st millennium (TABLE 7.3). I shall then discuss some data in more detail also considering a few facts from mainland Greece. All through I follow the analyses and dates accepted by J.-P. Olivier.

In TABLE 7.2 I ignore all types of potters’ marks and the Phaistos disc from Crete. The former are difficult to use for linguistic purposes, the latter is unique and need not be a Cretan document. I also ignore the odd findings of objects with patently non-local scripts.⁹ On the other hand somewhat illogically I include ‘Cypro-Minoan 3’ though it is only documented by a dozen of texts from outside Cyprus at Ras Shamra/Ugarit. It goes without saying that here I use Cypro-Minoan 1, 2 and 3 as a form of short-hand to refer to certain groups of documents but I am not committed to a real distinction in graphic systems or languages.

Clearly the 2nd millennium tells us little about language in Cyprus where, with one possible exception (see below), practically all forms of writing (the Enkomi tablet and Cypro-Minoan 1–3) are not deciphered. We can only speculate about the number of languages. In Crete the situation is better since the Linear B texts are in Greek and can be read with confidence even if the interpretation is often difficult. Cretan Hieroglyphic and Linear A are not deciphered. We do not know what language(s) they are used for and we cannot even know how many languages are reflected in each of the two scripts or even if they are used for the same language. We know even less about the early Archanes seals.

There is no alphabetic evidence for this period.¹⁰ In Cyprus the first Phoenician texts belong in the 1st

millennium. There is some evidence, however, for Akkadian written in cuneiform and used in international correspondence. Five letters sent from Alasija (Cyprus) to Ugarit (two written by a king of whom we are given the name: Kušmešuşa) provide evidence for the 13th century,¹¹ while the 14th century

6 For the Cretan Hieroglyphic documents see *CHIC* (which includes the Archanes seals) and for Linear A *GORILA*.

7 The *Édition holistique des textes chypro-minoens* by J.-P. Olivier appeared in late 2007 (Olivier 2007). Recent but necessarily partial accounts include Smith 2002 and Palaima 2005 with earlier references. A corpus of the texts by S. Ferrara is in preparation for Oxford University Press. In TABLE 7.2 above I follow Olivier 2007 in treating the tablet ENKO Atab 001 as characterised by a different and more archaic script than the rest of the Corpus (CM 0 in Olivier’s classification).

8 Cf. Olivier 2007, 21, 59–61.

9 A brief list of references to objects found in Cyprus and inscribed in non-Cypriot scripts (Egyptian, Cuneiform, Hieroglyphic Luwian) in Smith 2002, 33, nn. 1–3; for Kition, cf. Yon 2004, 159–62.

10 This may not be absolutely correct for Cyprus; at Hala Sultan Tekke a silver bowl was found (dated *c.* 1200 BC) with a cuneiform inscription in alphabetic Ugaritic (Yon 2004, 265–6). It could be imported, but apparently local production is not excluded. The unguent jar in the Cesnola collection dated to the 11th century and tentatively mentioned by Sherratt (2003, 234) has signs which need not be Phoenician (Teixidor 1976, 67: 26; cf. also Guzzo Amadasi, in Yon 2004, 207). The Tekke bowl from Crete with a linear inscription published by Szynger in 1979 is normally dated *c.* 900 (Lipiński 2004, 182–4; Sass 2005, 68), even if earlier dates have been suggested.

11 Cf. Bordreuil and Malbran-Labat 1995, 445–6; Yon 1999, 117–18; Malbran-Labat 1999; and Kitchen 2009; and see also Peltenburg in this volume.

TABLE 7.3: Local languages and scripts of the 1st millennium BC.

Crete ¹²	Cyprus ¹³
Greek Alphabets	Syllabic Cypriot Script
<p>Cretan epichoric alphabets (8th+ c. BC)</p> <p><i>Languages:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Doric Cretan dialect(s)</i> 2. <i>(Non-Greek) Eteocretan</i> (Dreros, 7th c. BC; Praisos, 6th c. BC; some special letters) <p>Ionic alphabet (4th+ c. BC)</p> <p><i>Languages:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Doric Cretan dialect</i> 2. <i>Mixed dialect and koine forms</i> 3. <i>koine</i> 4. <i>(Non-Greek) Eteocretan</i> (Praisos, 4th, 3rd, or 2nd c. BC) 	<p>(Paphos syllabary and common syllabary) CG III, CA I–II, CC I–II, Hellenistic (c. 8th–end 3rd c. BC)</p> <p><i>Languages:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Cypriot Greek dialect</i> 2. <i>(Non-Greek) Eteocypriot</i> (from the earliest period but mostly Amathous 4th c. BC, including bilinguals/digraphs with Greek alphabet) <p>Phoenician alphabet from CG onwards</p> <p><i>Language: Phoenician</i></p> <p>Greek alphabets (6th+ c. BC)</p> <p>Various non-local alphabets, e.g. Attic, East Ionic, etc. Digraphs: rare and in different alphabets (Cnidian, Rhodian, etc.)</p> <p><i>Language: Greek (different dialects)</i></p> <p>Ionic alphabet (4th+ c. BC)</p> <p><i>Language: koine</i></p>

Amarna letters from Egypt include letters from the King of Alasija to the King of Egypt.¹⁴ It is likely, however, that in Cyprus Akkadian was simply a *lingua franca*. The odd seals in cuneiform and inscriptions like the late 8th century BC Sargon Stele from Kition¹⁵ do not change the problem.

The most striking piece of evidence is the Palaepaphos–Skales obelos illustrated by Olivier (FIG. 7.5). The standard view is that this is the first example of Syllabic Cypriot as well as the first example of Cypriot or perhaps Arcado-Cypriot Greek.¹⁶ Olivier makes a convincing case for Cypro-Minoan 1, which explains why the obelos includes incompatible 1st millennium signs such as the <o> of the Common Syllabary and the <le> of the Old Paphian syllabary. He points out that new data makes it possible to match the obelos signs with attested Cypro-Minoan signs; hence we would not have the first document of the later script but the last of Cypro-Minoan 1.¹⁷ If so, however, it seems too much of a coincidence that (a) we expect to find a name on the obelos, and (b), if the later values are applied, the text yields the typical Arcado-Cypriot genitive of a name which is attested in both Linear B (KN *o-pe-ta: Opheltas*) and alphabetic Greek (Ὀφέλτας).¹⁸ The simplest hypothesis is that at the end of the 2nd millennium a Greek speaker used the Cypro-Minoan script to write down a name (his name?) in the genitive using the forms of his dialect. The phenomenon need not be more significant than the attempts of modern students to write their name in whatever script they have just learned, but may also prelude to, or be part of, the process of adaptation of the earlier script to the writing of Greek, a process of which we know that it happened but for which we have no other direct evidence.

- 12 For the Doric dialect(s) see Bile 1988; Brixhe and Bile 1991; for the possible survival of pre-Doric Greek features Brixhe 1991; for the koine in Crete Brixhe 1993. Eteocretan is a purely conventional name used for documents written in the Greek alphabet but in a language which we do not understand and cannot classify; for data and analysis see Duhoux 1982.
- 13 The main edition of the texts is still *ICS*²; there are lexica (Egetmeyer 1992; Hintze 1993) and a grammar (Egetmeyer 2010 with texts); see also the PASP database (Hirschfeld 1996) and Bazemore 2002. For the seals cf. Smith 2002 and the analysis of early seals (from the 8th century) in Borgia *et al.* 2002, 177–81. For the history of the dialect see Karageorghis and Masson 1988, but there are many new data; cf. also Palaima 1991 and 2005. Eteocypriot is a modern name which indicates the non-Greek language(s) of a few texts found mainly round Amathous on the south coast and written in Syllabic Cypriot (brief account in Masson 2007, cf. also Egetmeyer 1992, 302–22). For the Phoenician data, see Masson and Szyner 1972, and Lipiński 2004, 37–107; for Kition in particular, Yon 2004 (with summary of the data at pp. 159–60); cf. also Iacovou 2006a, 39–40. For the Greek alphabetic texts see *ICS*², 78–80, and Aupert 2003 with new 6th century data from Amathous.
- 14 See Moran 1992, 104–13 and Liverani 1999, II, 414–21 with the earlier literature. The few names of Cypriots quoted in the Amarna letters (to which we can now add the name of King Kušmešusa) unfortunately do not help to identify the language; cf. Vincentelli 1976, 13–19.
- 15 Yon 2004, 161; Malbran-Labat 2004.
- 16 See e.g. Masson and Masson 1983, and Olivier Masson's comment (*ICS*², 408): 'C'est actuellement le plus ancien témoignage pour une écriture syllabique qui n'est plus du chypro-minoen mais déjà un syllabaire purement chyprite.'
- 17 The Cypro-Minoan possibility had also been considered earlier; cf. e.g. Palaima 1991, 454.
- 18 The *ta* of Syllabic Cypriot has the same shape as Linear B *da*, which points to an inherited sign; hence we can attribute to the identical Cypro-Minoan sign a *ta/da* value with some confidence.

THE DIFFERENT LANGUAGES

For how many 'local' languages do we have evidence in Cyprus and Crete? If we exclude the Phaistos disc, in 2nd millennium Crete there are probably two non-Greek languages written in Hieroglyphic and in Linear A and one newcomer, Mycenaean Greek. Conceivably there were more non-Greek languages, but also we cannot exclude that Linear A and Hieroglyphic Cretan were used for the same language. In the 1st millennium Greek prevails everywhere but the dialect, a form of Doric, is not the continuation of Mycenaean Greek, just as the koine is not the continuation of Doric Cretan. Crete has known and generalised three different forms of Greek, two of which must have been brought into the island by different movements of people, while the third (the koine) may be due to cultural diffusion. In addition in the 1st millennium we have evidence for at least one non-Greek language, the so-called Eteocretan, written in the Greek alphabet but limited to a few places (basically Dreros and Praisos) and entirely incomprehensible. Eteocretan may continue one of the pre-Greek languages of the 2nd millennium, but the few documents seem to point to a language which is typologically different from that of Linear A.¹⁹ I deliberately leave Phoenician aside.²⁰

For Cyprus if we ignore Akkadian, we may hypothesise three non-Greek languages in the 2nd millennium, though the 'Cypro-Minoan 3' documents which all belong to Ugarit may not reflect a local Cypriot language and we cannot exclude that Cypro-Minoan 1, 2, '3' were all used for the same language. In addition we know that Greeks arrived in Cyprus at various times and certainly in increasing numbers after the collapse of the Mycenaean power. The Palaepaphos obelos may confirm both the presence of Greeks speaking a form of dialect that will be continued in the 1st millennium and the continuity of literacy from the 2nd to the 1st millennium.²¹ In the 1st millennium we have from the 8th century and possibly earlier good evidence for Phoenician and inscriptions are found not only at Kition, a Phoenician state, but in a number of other cities. There are as early as the 8th century a few texts written in the syllabic script but not in Greek; we conventionally call them Eteocypriot on this purely negative criterion. However, the prevailing language is Greek in the specific forms of the Cypriot dialect. This cannot be called a direct descendant of the Mycenaean written in Linear B but is a descendant of a dialect very close to it, which also counts as the ancestor of Arcadian.²² There certainly were divergences in the dialect of the various kingdoms but our evidence is too limited to produce a proper description. All that we can say is that various forms of Greek Cypriot were used in the Cyprus kingdoms and were regularly written in one of the two syllabic scripts (the common syllabary and the Paphian syllabary) which were fairly close to each other. Clearly, the Greek alphabet was known but not normally used

(in inscriptions at least) until the 4th century or so, when it becomes more widespread but is used for the koine rather than the Cypriot dialect. There are also a few so called digraphic or bilingual texts. They contain:

- i) Cypriot dialect written in Syllabic Cypriot normally together with Attic or koine written in the Greek alphabet (e.g. Paphos *ICS*² 1, or the numerous Kafizin inscriptions),
- ii) Eteocypriot written in Syllabic Cypriot normally together with Attic or koine written in the Greek alphabet (e.g. Amathous *ICS*² 196),
- iii) Phoenician written in the Phoenician alphabet together with Cypriot written in the Cypriot syllabary (e.g. Tamassos *ICS*² 215²³),
- iv) Phoenician written in the Phoenician alphabet together with Greek (koine) written in the Greek alphabet.²⁴

There is no reason to believe that Cypriot was seen as a dialect of Greek in our sense of the word since a Greek standard language did not exist. For a long period (i.e. until the koine was fully established and possibly later) the so called Greek dialects were in fact languages with equal status.²⁵ If so, most, and probably all, digraphic texts, are also bilingual and all bilingual texts are also digraphic; in other words we have no evidence for transliterated texts, i.e. for the Greek Cypriot dialect written in both the syllabic script and the alphabet (which would be a real digraph)²⁶ or for syllabic

19 Duhoux 1982, 250–7.

20 Views about the Phoenician influence in Crete vary (see Shaw 1989, 180–3; Lipiński 2004, 178–88; Stampolidis and Kotsonas 2006), but it is difficult to treat Phoenician as a 'local' language of Crete.

21 This is the standard view and is likely to be correct, but we should not make too much of a single piece of evidence (see Maier 1999, 83; Iacovou 2006b, 320–1).

22 I agree with Deger-Jalkotzy (1994, 13) that the linguistic facts do not show that the Arcado-Cypriot dialect was brought to Cyprus immediately after the collapse of the Mycenaean palaces. Reconstructed Arcado-Cypriot is very similar to Mycenaean (Morpurgo Davies 1992) but not identical (and even if it were this would prove nothing).

23 Cf. Yon 2004, 89–90.

24 E.g. Kition: Yon 2004: 1066, 2068.

25 Morpurgo Davies 1987.

26 *ICS*², 85 implies that the very few archaic texts are real digraphs, i.e. the alphabetic part is in the local dialect. I doubt it. If *ICS*² 164 (Polis, 6th century?) with a) *κασιγνήτας* b) *ka-si-ke-ne-ta* is from Doric Cnidus (as was suggested by L. H. Jeffery in *ICS*², 177, n. 3) the *α* of the final syllable may well point to Doric. *ICS*² 369e from Sarepta near Sidon is a broken text where the syllabic [*a*-] *sa-ka-la-pi-o-i* corresponds to Ἀσκαπίῶι (sic). We cannot know what dialect form was preferred in this non-Greek area. Finally, *ICS*² 260 (Golgoi, 6th century) a) *Κᾱρῶξ ἔμι* b) *ka-ru-xe-e-mi* uses alphabetic letters which Jeffery (ibid.) compares with Rhodian. If so,

Eteocypriot accompanied by a Greek Cypriot version also written in the syllabic script (which would be a bilingual, but not a digraph).²⁷

CYPRUS AND CRETE vs. MAINLAND GREECE

How do the two islands compare with mainland Greece? In the 2nd millennium both Crete and Cyprus offer direct written evidence for multilingualism. In the 1st millennium this continues in Cyprus (where next to Eteocypriot we should not forget Phoenician) and in Crete on a reduced scale (Eteocretan). On the Greek mainland the only direct evidence is for Mycenaean Greek in the 2nd millennium and then for numerous different Greek dialects in the 1st millennium followed by the koine. Yet it would be foolish to say that the mainland was monolingual (whatever we feel about the status of the dialects). In the 2nd millennium there certainly was a number of pre-Greek languages (the different types of pre-Greek place names are sufficient proof) and pockets of these spoken languages must have survived in the 1st millennium. The frequent references to Pelasgians in the classical authors may point in that direction. However, we have no written evidence for either period and while documents may have existed and have been lost it seems more likely that writing (syllabic in the 2nd millennium, alphabetic in the 1st millennium) was reserved for Greek, though it would have been possible to use first Linear B and then the alphabet to write non-Greek languages. So the difference between the two islands on the one hand and the mainland on the other is not insignificant: both the islands knew written and oral multilingualism, while mainland Greece probably knew oral multilingualism only.

This contrast may be related to the history of writing in the islands. Both islands acquired at an early stage a form of literacy linked to pre-Greek languages and used their scripts for a number of tasks (not necessarily administrative). Somewhat later Linear B was created on the model of Linear A — possibly on the mainland rather than in Crete — and was used in Crete and mainland Greece but, as far as we know, for Greek only. This is more than understandable for Crete where specific scripts existed or had existed for the local languages, less so for the mainland. But Linear B, as far as we know, was mainly the script of the palace administration. The Mycenaean administration, both in Crete and mainland Greece, used Greek as its language and had no reason to want to write, or indeed to encourage the use of, any other language. They were no philologists and no pre-Greek patriots. The impulse to use Linear B for pre-Greek or non-Greek languages ought to have come from other people, who a) spoke non-Greek languages, b) were acquainted with the idea of, or the need for, some form of literacy, and c) knew Linear B. In an area which before the Mycenaeans was entirely illiterate it was not easy to satisfy these conditions. Hence mainland Greece and the islands

diverged. From the point of view of *written* multilingualism the islands really had parallel lives — but the parallelism did not go much further.

CYPRUS vs. CRETE

In the 1st millennium the political histories of Cyprus and Crete differ; both islands have a series of separate states but foreign powers (Assyria, Egypt and Persia) to a certain extent dominate Cyprus, which they do not do for Crete. The Phoenicians too were more prominent in Cyprus than in Crete. However, in both islands a form of Greek prevails — at some socio-economic level at least. The vast majority of the ten Cypriot kings listed in the Prism of Esarhaddon in the first part of the 7th century have Greek names²⁸ and the majority of the inscriptions are in Greek Cypriot and then in the koine. In Crete a Greek Doric dialect is the dominating language before it is replaced by the koine. From this point of view there is a parallelism between the islands, which, however, is shared with the Greek mainland. Yet, the parallelism is partly a mirage because not only the forms of Greek are different (all mainland regions also differ in that sense), but their initial development is different. In Cyprus the dialect is a direct continuation of an immediately post-Mycenaean language; in Crete the Doric dialect is a newcomer even though the Mycenaean substratum may have left some traces.²⁹ In other words there is linguistic continuity in Cyprus, and discontinuity in Crete (and in most of mainland Greece). If we consider writing together with language Cyprus's continuity is even more evident: literacy in some form of syllabic script must go back to the 2nd millennium and lasts as far as the 4th or 3rd century when it finally yields to a different language (the koine) and a different script (the alphabet). In Crete on the contrary there is complete discontinuity between the Linear B literacy and the alphabetic literacy.³⁰

the α would be expected, but in any case it is likely that *Karux* is a personal name. In the few digraphic coins in Syllabic Cypriot and alphabetic Greek, normally the alphabetic part is too abbreviated to be informative. At a later stage at least our rule applies to personal names as well. In the Kafizin inscriptions (3rd century) the name Onasagoras regularly appears in this form when written syllabically but in the koine form Ὀνησαγόρας, when written alphabetically (Morpurgo Davies 2000, 31). For the syllabic Cypriot of the 1st millennium see now the full account by Egetmeyer (2010).

²⁷ We cannot know whether the users saw the syllabic script used for Eteocypriot as identical to that used for Cypriot Greek, but the absence of bilingual texts in Greek Cypriot and Eteocypriot, if not due to chance, may reflect the rule that bilingual texts also had to be digraphic.

²⁸ Lipiński 1991; 2004, 62–76.

²⁹ Brixhe 1991.

³⁰ Crete has often been mentioned as the cradle of the (Greek) alphabet, but in spite of the lack of evidence Cyprus too has been seen as the place where the Phoenician alphabet was first adapted for Greek (see e.g. Woodard 1997).

How do Eteocypriot and Eteocretan fit into the pattern? If (and we cannot be certain) they continue pre-Greek languages, presumably they point to some form of linguistic continuity both in Cyprus and in Crete. This is not surprising. What is unique is that in Crete and in Cyprus these languages came to be written down. But we need to look at the script as well. Eteocypriot is written in Syllabic Cypriot, i.e. in a script which descends from Cypro-Minoan but, as far as we know, was devised for Greek and became the dominant Greek script of Cyprus in the 1st millennium. *Mutatis mutandis* the same is true of Eteocretan; it may be the continuation of one of the 2nd millennium languages but there was no continuity of literacy; the few documents that we have are in the local Cretan alphabets, or later on in the Ionic alphabet. It follows that the common feature of Cyprus and Crete does not consist in the continuity of literacy in the indigenous languages but once again in *written* multilingualism, i.e. in the ability or willingness to use or adapt or modify whatever script is available to write more than one local language. Here the similarity ends.

Where Cyprus is unique and in complete contrast with Crete is in her retention of the dialect between the 2nd and 1st millennia (until the 3rd century) joined to her retention of the syllabic script until the 3rd century, and to her creation of an apparently indissoluble link between the Greek Cypriot language and the syllabic script. The retention of the dialect is not extraordinary; Arcadian offers a similar development. It is the Cretan development that calls for an explanation, not the Cypriot one. The retention of the script is much more remarkable if contrasted with the general adoption of the alphabet in the Greek world; even more remarkable is the strength of the link between dialect and script. In mainland Greece it is possible to change alphabet, e.g. in the shift from the local alphabet to the Ionic alphabet, while retaining the dialect and consequently adapting the new alphabet to the dialect. Boeotian may serve as an example. The same happened in Crete, but Cyprus abandoned dialect and script at the same time. This calls for an explanation which is unlikely to be a purely linguistic one.³¹

OPEN QUESTIONS AND SOME ANSWERS

Questions which arise (and there are of course many more than these) are of very different nature.

- i) Why written multilingualism in the islands but not in Greece in the 2nd millennium?
- ii) Why written multilingualism in the islands but not in Greece in the 1st millennium?
- iii) Why the change from Mycenaean or sub-Mycenaean Greek to Doric Greek in Crete?
- iv) Why did Cyprus and Cyprus alone preserve its (syllabic) literacy in the shift from the 2nd millennium to the 1st millennium?

- v) Why did Cyprus not abandon the syllabic script in the mid-1st millennium, when the alphabet was widely available?

My answers are speculative and are given here in a semi-dogmatic form. The same questions, differently formulated, have been widely discussed by archaeologists and historians; here I deliberately follow a purely linguistic approach.

I answered (i) earlier. Writing was developed for pre-Greek languages both in Crete and in Cyprus; writing was then adapted for Greek. All of these processes can be matched in the Near East and are not surprising. Why Linear B was not used for Cypriot Greek has been repeatedly discussed and it seems likely that, when the last waves of Greek migrants reached Cyprus, Linear B had disappeared. On the mainland, as far as we know, no form of writing had been developed before Linear B. The reasons may be political or cultural and I doubt that they can be identified. I have also tried to explain why as far as we know Linear B was not used for non-Greek languages — it lasted for a relatively short period and was the limited script of an administration which had no interest in extending its linguistic range.

An answer to (ii) is more difficult. If in Cyprus and in Crete the local scripts (syllabic or alphabetic) are used for Eteocypriot and Eteocretan, while a similar phenomenon is not attested for mainland Greece, this must be due to the political or cultural situation of the relevant ethnic groups — about which we know little or nothing. In other words in the 1st millennium the speakers of these languages must have taken the decision to use the local script to write their own language. We cannot exclude, however, that this was possible, because certainly in Cyprus and possibly in Crete in the 1st millennium there was considerable experience of written languages other than Greek. It is also conceivable that the tradition of written multilingualism was transmitted from the 2nd millennium to the first and for Cyprus at least this seems plausible (see below about [iv]).

In answer to (iii) there is practically nothing that a linguist can say. Chadwick's old proposal³² that the so-called Doric populations were in fact the Greek lower classes and were present in Crete and elsewhere even during the Mycenaean period has not found much favour. From a linguistic point of view it seems difficult, if not impossible, to explain the change in language (Mycenaean replaced by a Doric dialect) without

31 As far as we know Syllabic Cypriot is used for the Cypriot dialect and for Eteocypriot; not for other dialects. However Smith (2002, 17) lists a 6th century scarab with the word *se-ma* (σῆμα) 'seal', where we would expect *sa-ma*. I doubt that the reading is correct (see Egetmeyer 1992, 177 s.v. *ta-u-ma-o-se*).

32 Chadwick 1976, 1986.

assuming some movement of population for which we need an archaeological and historical account.

Turning to (iv) it is often pointed out that in Cyprus the 11th century ‘did not usher in the Dark Ages’³³ and that there was considerable permanency after that and until the time of Alexander the Great. If we accept Olivier’s view that the Palaepaphos obelos is written in Cypro-Minoan, we must conclude that the Syllabic Cypriot script was adapted from Cypro-Minoan 1 at some stage between the 11th century and our first documents in that script (9th or 8th centuries). It follows that the Cypro-Minoan 1 script lasted until that date (whatever it is) and possibly later and the same must be true for the language. The contrast with Linear B is obvious. Linear B was created at an earlier stage and tied to the language of a specific administration which collapsed. Syllabic Cypriot was created much later for a set of people who had no script for their language but lived in an area that was both literate and culturally advanced and were willing to experiment with literacy (see the Palaepaphos obelos).

The underlying assumption under (v) is that Syllabic Cypriot is a clumsy script unsuited for Greek; adjectives like inefficient, cumbersome, unsuitable etc. are often used. This criticism is both misguided and ambiguous. It is never explained whether it applies specifically to the Cypriot syllabary or is directed more generally to all syllabic or non alphabetic systems. The latter is more likely as part of the general and exaggerated devotion to the alphabet shown by modern authors. In fact within the range of the contemporary syllabic or logographic-syllabic systems (Linear B, Hieroglyphic Luwian, syllabic cuneiform, etc.). Syllabic Cypriot stands out as a brilliantly economic and coherent system characterised by a very small number of signs (some 55) and a set of strict and simple conventions which indicate both open and closed syllables in a clear manner — from all points of view the perfect syllabary.³⁴ The recurrent criticism is due to the assumption that only the alphabet can actually give an exact phonological rendering of a language and only the alphabet can have a limited number of signs. The former is true of the phonetic alphabet, a modern creation which, incidentally, has a large number of signs, but it is not true of most alphabets ancient and modern (English being one of the main defaulters): the ancient Cretan alphabet did not distinguish long and short vowels and did not distinguish /p/ from /ph/ or /k/ from /kh/; the Phoenician alphabet did not indicate vowels, etc.

A syllabary like the Cypriot one could be used for all purposes, poetry, law and commerce included, provided of course that both writers and readers knew the language — but in a fundamentally oral society it is highly unlikely that anyone would try to read a document in a language they did not know. The graffiti written by Cypriot mercenaries in Egypt prove that the syllabary could be as user friendly as the Greek

alphabet was to its writers. It follows that from the Cypriot point of view the only way in which the alphabet (Phoenician or Greek) scored was because of its greater diffusion, i.e. because it could also be read by non-Cypriots. That meant that for commercial purposes and for international contacts the Cypriot syllabary was awkward, but for part at least of the 1st millennium so was the Greek alphabet if the contacts were e.g. with Egypt or Lebanon or Syria or further afield in the East, while the Phoenician alphabet would have been incomprehensible to the Greeks in the mainland and the colonies. Moreover the language itself (the Cypriot dialect) was not easily accessible, not only in non Greek areas but probably in Greek areas too; shifting from the syllabary to the alphabet for any complex statement would not have solved all the problems. Yet the communication problems had to be solved and no doubt they were with the standard devices: the use of a lingua franca with its own script in some instances, a shift to the language and script of the target reader in others. For other purposes the local script or the local language were more than adequate. From this angle the strong link mentioned above between script and language also makes sense. In the course of time, however, the diffusion of Greek increased and the koine became a language of vast diffusion which could also be used as a lingua franca. This is the stage at which the koine and the Ionic alphabet, in which it was written, take over in Cyprus as they do or had done in the whole of Greece. Needless to say the political situation is now different; the Assyrian or Egyptian or Persian dominance has been replaced by that of the Ptolemies.

Those scholars who worry about the survival of the Cypriot script often argue that it is preserved as an identity marker, a marker of ethnicity. I have argued that the script is perfectly adequate as a script and we do not need to find specific reasons for its preservation. Even so, it is more than likely that both script and language, or more correctly the script together with the language, carried this additional function. If the script had acted as identity marker on its own, it would have been possible to use it (sporadically at least) for the koine when this became a real option in the 4th century or later on in the Kafizin texts of the late 3rd century. On the other hand this indissoluble link between script and language also shows that the ethnicity in question was not a Greek ethnicity but a Cypriot one. If the dialect had been seen as preeminently Greek rather than Cypriot there would have been no reason to link it to a

33 Iacovou 1999a, 7; 1999b.

34 Cf. Morpurgo Davies 1986, 62–3. Palaima (1991, 464) is almost unique in recognising the efficiency of the system (‘stream-lined . . . consistent and efficient’); but cf. also Bazemore 2002.

script which differentiated it from the rest of Greece. Again we could have expected that by the 4th century when the alphabet became more widespread it could have been used for Cypriot.

The use of the syllabic script for Eteocypriot does not contradict this conclusion. It is limited and sporadic, but so far we have no evidence for Eteocypriot being written alphabetically. If, as suggested above, the impulse for the writing of Eteocypriot came from some of its speakers who adopted a script devised for Greek Cypriot, it would have been natural to choose a script which fitted better in a Cyprus context than the more remote Greek alphabet. Those who drafted the Amathous honorary inscription of the late 4th century (*ICS*² 196) with an Eteocypriot syllabic text accompanied by an alphabetic Greek version in koine (or Attic) clearly meant the Greek part for general consumption and possibly for the perusal of the honorand who had a very Greek name, while the first part was for local use and clearly the syllabary and the Eteocypriot language served as some sort of political (?) statement.

No similar assumptions can be made for Crete. If what precedes is correct, we have here yet another divergence in the lives of the two islands.

CONCLUSIONS

Anna Morpurgo Davies and Jean-Pierre Olivier

Any study of script and language in Crete and Cyprus is hampered by the paucity of the evidence, by the fact that the early scripts are not deciphered and by the lack of a real corpus of Syllabic Cypriot texts. A thorough analysis is not viable but a few general observations are possible. In contrast with mainland Greece, Cyprus and Crete in the 2nd millennium are both multilingual societies in which the different languages are written down. It is tempting to assume that this points to stronger links with the Near East than with Greece. Yet in the 1st millennium a Greek dialect is the prevailing language in both islands. Here the parallelism ends. In Crete all earlier scripts are lost and Linear B disappears with the end of the Mycenaean administration; literacy is only restored by the Greek alphabet which, as the Cretans knew, was Phoenician in origin. The Mycenaean Greek dialect also disappears and is replaced by a Doric dialect. In Cyprus literacy continues and the new syllabic script built on the model of Cypro-Minoan 1 takes over in most of the kingdoms. The prevailing language is now Cypriot Greek which continues a sub-Mycenaean dialect of the Arcado-Cypriot group. The contrast could not be greater: continuity in language and script in Cyprus, discontinuity in Crete. Crete can easily be compared with mainland Greece; Cyprus is *sui generis*. And yet both islands continue to share a form of 'written multilingualism': in Cyprus the syllabary is used to write both the local Greek dialect and the non Greek

Eteocypriot; in Crete the alphabet is also used for the non Greek Eteocretan. The phenomenon is not matched anywhere else in Greece. Even at this very superficial level scripts and languages may contribute to complicate the history of the parallelism (or lack of it) between the two islands.

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