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SYLLABIC INSCRIPTIONS FROM CYPRUS 1959—1961

During the last three years the syllabic script of Cyprus, mainly the Cypro-Minoan, has often been in the foreground of research. Three attempts have been made so far to decipher one of the Cypro-Minoan tablets of Enkomi, all three having produced Greek texts completely different from one another, but they have not been received with much enthusiasm among philologists¹. Obviously the main obstacle is scarcity of material which up to now consists only of three odd tablets and isolated signs or words incised or painted on clay balls and vases respectively. In spite of prematurely expressed optimism the archives of Enkomi are still to be discovered, and it is very much hoped that this will occur one day, and then the chances for a decipherment will increase considerably, with far-reaching consequences for the history of Cyprus and the Near East in general².

In the meantime considerable work has been done on the Cypriote syllabic inscriptions of the historical period which can be deciphered into Greek, except of course those in the Eteocypriote language, which is still unknown. A monumental work appeared late last year by Masson, *Inscriptions Chypriotes Syllabiques* [ICS], which will remain for many years to come the standard work on the subject. The author has had a long acquaintance with the syllabic scripts of the Aegean and Cyprus, and is familiar with the island's topography, history and archaeology. T. B. Mitford, whose pioneer work has greatly promoted the study of the Cypriote script, has never ceased publishing new syllabic inscriptions, either found by himself or kept

¹ M. Ventris, who examined this tablet found by Dr. P. Dikaïos at Enkomi, expressed the opinion that it may represent a poem, judging by the spacing at the end of each line, but did not offer any decipherment of the text. The first to make such an attempt was the late E. Sittig (*La Nouvelle Clío* 1954, pp. 470ff.), who made up a Greek text referring to a land dispute. The second decipherer, St. Mann (*Man* 1960, p. 40), discovered that the text (again Greek) refers to cattle; third decipherer is H. D. Ephron (*Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 1961, 39ff.) who thinks that the tablet represents a Greek poem relating the Expedition of the Argonauts; he calls, therefore, this tablet *the Jeson tablet*.

² For a short discussion relating to the problems of the Cypro-Minoan script see Jacqueline V. Karageorghis, *Histoire de l'écriture Chypriote, Κυπριακά Σπουδαία* 25 (1961), pp. 41 ff.

in the store-rooms of the Cyprus Museum. Among his recently published studies we mention particularly his *Studies in the Signaries of South-Western Cyprus* (BICS, Suppl. No. 10, 1961) where he publishes and discusses at length a great number of inscriptions from the Paphos District and from Kourion. With the exception of the bronze tablet from Idalion, long texts in syllabic inscriptions are rather rare, so any new addition is useful, and may prove helpful in any future research on the ancient Cypriote dialect which still wants to be thoroughly studied³. Apart from the works already mentioned above we expect another important publication of syllabic inscriptions by Mitford which he found at Kafizin, and which will throw light not only on the development of the script and the dialect in the 3rd cent. B.C., but will also give interesting information about religious and social aspects of Cypriote life in the Hellenistic period⁴.

Apart from the syllabic inscriptions found during regular excavations or which have for long been kept in the Cyprus Museum and which have been published either by Mitford or by Masson, the Cyprus Museum and the other District Museums in the island are enriched all the year round with a number of such inscriptions. These are published among other recent acquisitions in the "Chronique" for Cyprus which appears regularly since 1959 in the first fascicule of *Bulletin de Correspondence Hellénique* every year⁵. It has been suggested, however, that these new syllabic inscriptions should be described as a group every year in *Kadmos*⁶, so that its readers may have this material assembled together. It should be mentioned that commentary of a purely philological and epigraphic character is supplied in all cases by Jacqueline V. Karageorghis and Olivier Masson, whereas the assembling of the material and the archaeological information is the responsibility of Vassos Karageorghis.

In this first article we shall deal with the material discovered during the years 1959—1961. As from next year, however, the new material will be presented yearly. A chronological order will be followed wherever possible. It should be emphasized, however, that this does not constitute a full publication of the material, but a

³ For a short account on the ancient Cypriote dialect see J. V. Karageorghis, *The Ancient Cypriote Dialect*, *ibid.* 17 (1953), pp. 1 ff.

⁴ For references on the Kafizin material see Masson, *ICS* pp. 252 ff.

⁵ V. Karageorghis, *Chronique des fouilles et découvertes archéologiques à Chypre*

⁶ The suggestion has been made to the writers by Professor Grumach during his visit to Cyprus in spring 1962.

mere preliminary presentation, to be studied further by the specialist student.

A. *Cypro-Minoan Inscriptions*: In all the recent campaigns of the French Archaeological Expedition to Enkomi, headed by Professor Schaeffer, but particularly in the 1961 campaign, a good number of inscribed objects have been found, mainly clay balls, each bearing four or more signs of the Cypro-Minoan script, usually in perfect condition⁷. This material, together with earlier discoveries at Enkomi will be published by O. Masson in Schaeffer's *Enkomi-Alasia II* which is now being prepared.

Incised or painted signs on Mycenaean vases constitute already a well known phenomenon⁸. To the hitherto known examples we may add the following:

a) Two signs 𐀓 and 𐀔 incised on two of the handles of a three-handled Mycenaean IIIB jar, of a particularly Levanto-Mycenaean form, found in a tomb at Akhera in 1959⁹.

b) Sign 𐀕 incised on the handle of a fragment from a Mycenaean IIIA three-handled jar, from Kition¹⁰.

c) Sign 𐀖 or 𐀗 which is painted in mat red paint on the base of a Mycenaean IIIA three handled jar, again from Kition¹¹.

d) On the lower part of a Mycenaean IIIA amphoroid crater from Enkomi now in Stockholm, there are two engraved Cypro-Minoan signs 𐀘 𐀙 on one of the encircling bands^{11bis}. Though the signs are well known, this is the first time, as far as the writers are aware, that engraved signs appear on the body of a vase. They are usually on the handles when engraved, and at the bottom when painted.

e) Engraved inscriptions very often appear on the outside surface and near the rim of hemispherical bronze bowls of the Late Cypriote III period (ca. 12th cent. B.C.). The Cyprus Museum possesses a number of such inscribed bronze bowls, and this number could have been even greater had it been possible to clean all such

⁷ For clay balls and other inscribed documents from the French Expedition's recent excavations at Enkomi see O. Masson in Schaeffer's *Enkomi-Alasia I* (Paris 1952), pp. 391 ff.

⁸ For the most recent study of such material see O. Masson, *Répertoire des inscriptions Chypro-minoennes*, *Minos* 5 (1957), p. 9 ff.

⁹ See BCH 1960, p. 246, figs. 5—6

¹⁰ V. Karageorghis, *Fouilles de Kition 1959*, BCH 1960, p. 528 fig. 30 and Masson's remarks ICS p. 531, no 1

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 523 fig. 18, and Masson's remarks on p. 525, no 6

^{11 bis}. These signs have been commented upon by Masson in *Opuscula Archaeologica* 3 (1960), p. 148, no. 7. The vase itself is published by V. Karageorghis *ibid.*, and pl. XI, 3—4

bowls and free them from the thick layer of corrosion which covers their surface¹². It is quite important to note that these bowls date to a period when the Achaean colonists had already established themselves firmly on the island and when the Greek language must have started to expand in the whole of Cyprus.

On a fragment of such a bronze bowl presented to the Cyprus Museum in 1959 (Inv. No. 1959/XI—28/1) one may clearly distinguish five signs constituting two words, one of four signs constituting two words, and the other of one sign. A brief commentary on this inscription has already been given by Masson, who finds in the disposition of the words an analogy with the inscriptions on the clay balls from Enkomi¹³.

B. *Inscriptions of the Archaic period*: There exists already a considerable number of inscribed documents dating to the archaic period, mainly vases. The present writers assembled a number of them some years ago¹⁴, but there are evidently still many more¹⁵. We describe below several new acquisitions made by the Cyprus Museum.

a) A small jug of the 7th cent. B.C. (fig. 1) found at Marion and presented to the Cyprus Museum in 1961 by President Makarios (Inv. No. 1961/XII—8/2). On the shoulder of the vase one can distinguish clearly four signs engraved after firing, which may be transcribed *pi-lo-ti-mo*, that is Φιλότης. The same name is also known from a syllabic inscription on a clay lamp from Karpasia¹⁶.

b) There are several silver bowls from Cyprus bearing incised syllabic inscriptions. They all come from Kourion and have already been published¹⁷. To this number we add one more presented to the Cyprus Museum in 1961 (Inv. No. 1961/IV—24/1). It is a fragment from the rim, bearing on the outside surface and below the rim seventeen clearly legible signs which may be transcribed as follows:]-la-ne-wa-to-ro-wi-ja | la-ka-la | ko-ni-so-ni | pa-pi-o-. The text

¹² Such bowls, found mainly in tombs, are as a rule so corroded that very little metal is preserved in them, and chemical treatment for the uncovering of the original surface is altogether impossible.

¹³ See BCH 1960, p. 258 fig. 28, p. 259

¹⁴ V. and J. Karageorghis, *Some inscribed Iron-Age Vases from Cyprus*, AJA 60 (1956), pp. 351 ff.

¹⁵ See Masson, ICS pp. 43 dd.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 329, no 329. For a commentary on the forms of the signs see BCH 1962, p. 356; for the concentric circles on either side of the inscription cf. Masson, ICS 174 fig. 46

¹⁷ For the inscriptions see Masson ICS pp. 193 f., nos 177-179

does not make sense in Greek and it has been suggested that we may have here an Eteocypriote text¹⁸. It should be noted that several signs in this inscription, particularly sign 13, appear frequently in Eteocypriote inscriptions, and several words recall the Eteocypriote inscriptions from Amathus. In the last word of the inscription we may, of course, have the Greek ethnic Πάφιος incorporated in the Eteocypriote text, but it is also possible that this is an incomplete word which only by coincidence resembles the word Πάφιος.

The date of this bowl may be deduced from that of other more complete inscribed silver bowls referred to above; they are all dated to the beginning of the 6th cent. B.C.

c) While re-arranging the reserve collections in the Cyprus Museum we came upon the lower part and the plinth of a limestone statue (Inv. No. 1961—C. 965) bearing an engraved syllabic inscription on the upper part of the plinth between the feet¹⁹. The date of the statue, judging from the style of the drapery, may be the early 5th cent. B.C.²⁰. The inscription consists of ten signs in two lines, and its transcription gives, from right to left:

(1) *sa-ta-si-ke-re* (2) *i-tu-ka-i*. The first word is evidently the genitive of the word. Στασικρέτης²¹ and the second part is the formula *ι(ν)τύχαι* known also from many other Cypriote syllabic inscriptions. The correct genitive of Στασικρέτης is, of course, Στασικρέτεος (ending *te-o-se*) and not Στασικρετο (ending *-to*). But since the signs are very clearly engraved, one may account for the form Στασικρετο either that the engraver made a mistake and instead of the name ending in *-te-o-se* he put only *-to*, or that there is another variant of the name, Στασίκρετος with the genitive in *-w*²².

C. *Inscriptions of the Classical and Hellenistic periods:*

a) Marion has so far produced a great number of funerary inscriptions in the Cypriote syllabary, engraved on limestone stelae²³.

Though they are of a more or less standardized form, as one might expect from inscriptions of this character, they are still important

¹⁸ See BCH 1962, pp. 356

¹⁹ Published in BCH 1962, p. 362

²⁰ The provenance of the present statue is not known but most likely it comes from Idalion.

²¹ For five other inscriptions referring to Στασικρέτης or Στασικράτης see Masson ICS, Index, p. 415

²² See further discussion in BHC 1962, pp. 362

²³ See Masson ICS pp. 154ff.

in as much as they often refer to names of an interesting formation; there are occasionally, however, longer epitaphs which are also interesting from the point of view of dialect. We describe here a stele from Marion which was presented to the Cyprus Museum in 1960 (Inv. No. 1960/II—17/1)²⁴. The signs are irregularly engraved in four lines and are rather difficult to read, but one may tentatively suggest the following transcription:

(1) ?-?-re-se-o-o-na

(2) si-ke-re-te-o-se

(3) ?-?-pu-wo-se

(4) e-mi

This is the usual form of an epitaph: . . . ρης ὁ Ὀνα | σικρέτης | (τῷ ?) . . . υἱος ἡμῶν. The first name is in the nominative, and the second, the patronymic, in genitive.

b) Two signs are painted in mat brown paint on the shoulder near the handle of a 4th cent. B.C. jug found in a tomb at Amathus²⁵. The signs are transcribed *a-na*, a formula often appearing in Eteocypriote inscriptions from Amathus²⁶.

c) The same formula *a-na* appears engraved before firing on a number of plain white sherds recently discovered in a dump of sherds of the classical period on the west slope of the acropolis of Amathus. One of these sherds bears three signs which read from right to left *a-na ma* (Fig. 3). One may recall the beginning of a bilingual (Eteocypriote and Greek) inscription found in 1914 at Amathus, on the acropolis, of which the Eteocypriote text begins with the words *a-na ma-to-ri*²⁷. The above Eteocypriote inscriptions from Amathus together with others already published, justify the suggestion that this city remained the centre of the autochthonous Eteocypriote population, and illustrate the remarks of Pseudo-Skylax and Theopompos about it²⁸.

The category of objects which will be described below is of a votive character; all have been found near sanctuaries and are dedications to the gods worshipped in these sanctuaries.

²⁴ Published already in BCH 1961, pp. 273f., fig. 25

²⁵ Published in BCH 1960, p. 267f., fig. 39; see also Masson, ICS 193, 1 and p. 399 for the word *a-na*.

²⁶ See recently P. Meriggi, Athenaeum 34, (1956), p. 35

²⁷ For a commentary on these inscriptions see BCH 1962, p. 407 and Masson, ICS 196, p. 207, fig. 57

²⁸ See references in Hill, History of Cyprus I, p. 54, no. 1—2

d) A large clay bowl (Inv. No. 1959/X-10/1) found at the site "Skali" of the ancient city of Chytroi²⁹. On the outer surface of the bowl there are four large signs engraved after firing which may clearly be transcribed *to-u-la-to* = τῶ Ὑλάτω. The bowl must have been dedicated to Apollo Hylates known from another inscription found at the same site in 1910 which reads τῶ θεῷ τῶ Ὑλάτῳ³⁰. The form of the genitive Ὑλάτω instead of Ὑλάτῳ may be due to an influence from the *koine*. The discovery of Hellenistic sherds together with this bowl demonstrates its late date, and may thus be considered as one of the latest examples of the Cypriote syllabic inscriptions.

d) The same site has produced a fragmentary limestone box found on the surface and bought by the Cyprus Museum in 1961 (Inv. No. 1961/XII—8/I)³¹. On one of its sides it bears two engraved inscriptions, the one independent from the other, and by two different hands. The inscription at the upper part consists of large signs which may be transcribed from right to left: [*ta-se-pa*]-*pi-a-se-emi* = [τᾶς Πα]φίᾳς ἡμί.. This is a dedication to the Paphian Aphrodite, who had two sanctuaries at Chytroi³².

The second inscription below, on the same side, is engraved in smaller and finer letters; it consists of two lines, of seven and five letters respectively. A vertical stroke at the end of the first line indicates that this line is complete at that end. The transcription gives: (1) *-?-i-a-po-le-sa-i* (2) *-to-se-to-po-ro*. The inscription is thus too fragmentary. At the end of the first line we may distinguish the aorist infinitive ἀπολέσαι and at the end of the second line a form of the word φόρος, probably the dative τῷ φόρῳ.

e) From the same site again comes the lid of a box, found on the surface in 1961 (Inv. No. 1961/IV-15/1)³³; it is circular, 14 cms. in diameter. On its border it bears six engraved signs easily transcribed from right to left: *ta-se-ko-lo-ki-a[se]* = τᾶς Γολγία[σ], "I belong to the goddess of Golgoi", that is Aphrodite. We have seen in the inscription above that Aphrodite at Chytroi is called Παφία; this is the first time that Chytroi produces the epithet Γολγία, known elsewhere at Idalion, Arsos and Akhera.

²⁹ Published already in BCH 1960, p. 260f. 29; see also Masson ICS 250a, p. 265, pl. LXXI, 3

³⁰ Masson ICS 250, p. 264f.; see also T. B. Mitford, *Minos* 7 (1961), p. 40

³¹ Published in BCH 1962, p. 358

³² See Masson ICS p. 258f. and p. 399—400

³³ Published in BCH 1962, p. 358 fig. 40

f) In 1908 a fragmentary box of limestone bearing a syllabic inscription was discovered at site "Skali" again, but was considered lost until 1960 when it was found during the re-arrangement of the reserve collections of the Cyprus Museum (Inv. No 1956/VII—20/1)³⁴. The beginning of the inscription is missing, but the remaining part may be transcribed from right to left: ?]-*ra-mi-so-no-se*; the second part is the genitive of the proper name Μίσων and a word like [ἄ]ρᾶ. It may be the end of a dedication to the god or goddess of a sanctuary.

³⁴ This inscriptions has already appeared in BCH 1961, p. 273f., fig. 24; also in Masson ISC 247, p. 263, fig. 75



Fig. 1

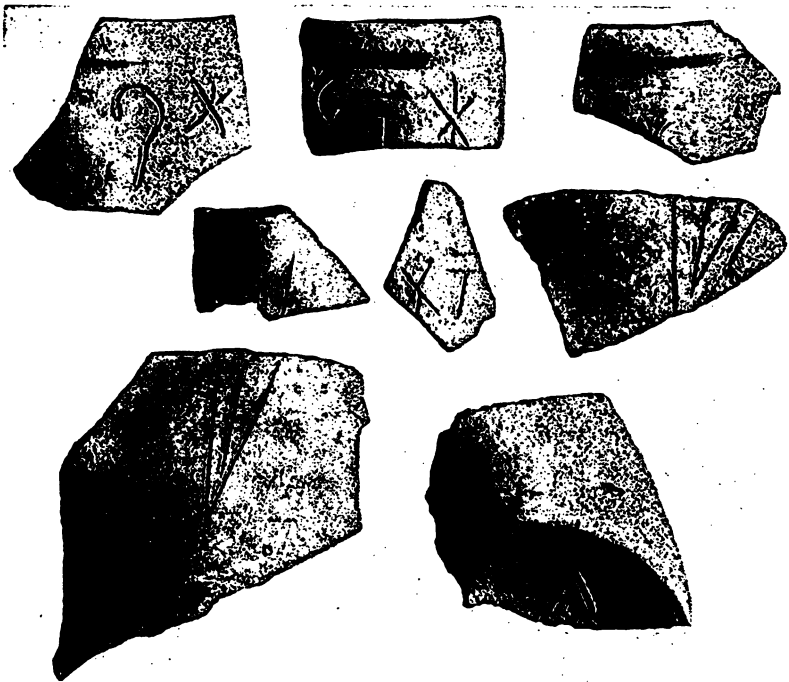


Fig. 2



Fig. 3