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THE CYPRO-MINOAN INSCRIPTIONS OF OLD PAPHOS

My present purpose is simply to assemble inscriptions in the Cypro-Minoan signary found on sherds excavated at Kouklia, site of Old Paphos in Western Cyprus, between the years 1950 and 1955¹. These originate either from Site A or Site C, which we denote respectively by the letters KA and KC. The former is on the land-ward perimeter of the city: the Persian siege-mound of 498 B. C., the contemporaneous siege-works of assailants and defenders, the adjacent stretch of Late Geometric city-wall, the Hellenistic land-gate by which it is pierced. The latter is at the heart of ancient Paphos: the area immediately to the north of the Aphrodite temple which has its beginnings in the Late Bronze Age. Stray finds from the modern village and its environs, either acquired or purchased, have KX prefixed to their numbers; but there is here one representative only, no. 35 (KX 85), of this third category. My list rests, I should add, on the following testimonia: the KA, KC and KX *Inventories*, the work of several hands; the two KC *Field Books*, kept by myself; and, finally, a manuscript *Catalogue of Inscriptions*, of which, however, the Cypro-Minoan section was not adequately covered photographically. I trust that my drawings will in some measure compensate for this deficiency; for the actual objects, originally stored in the Chiftlik Museum at Kouklia, were hastily transferred to Ktima at the height of the recent communal troubles in Cyprus, doubtless for their better protection. With one exception, no. 32, they are the handles of jugs, amphorae and craters. Dimensions are given in metres.

- 1 (KC 578), in dark matt paint, near the top of the handle of a Plain Wheel-made jug from Room 7. Sherd 0.09 long. Photo, Pl. I, 1.
- 2 (KC 778), in matt red paint, near the top of the handle of a Plain Wheel-made jug or amphora, from Room 1, bottom layer. Sherd 0.15 long. Drawing not to scale.

¹ For preliminary reports on these excavations, cf. AJ 31, 1951, 54ff.; ILN, April 18, 1953; Archaeology 5, 1952, 152ff. Work on the siege-mound, however, continues: F. G. Maier, Arch. Anz. 1969, 387—406.

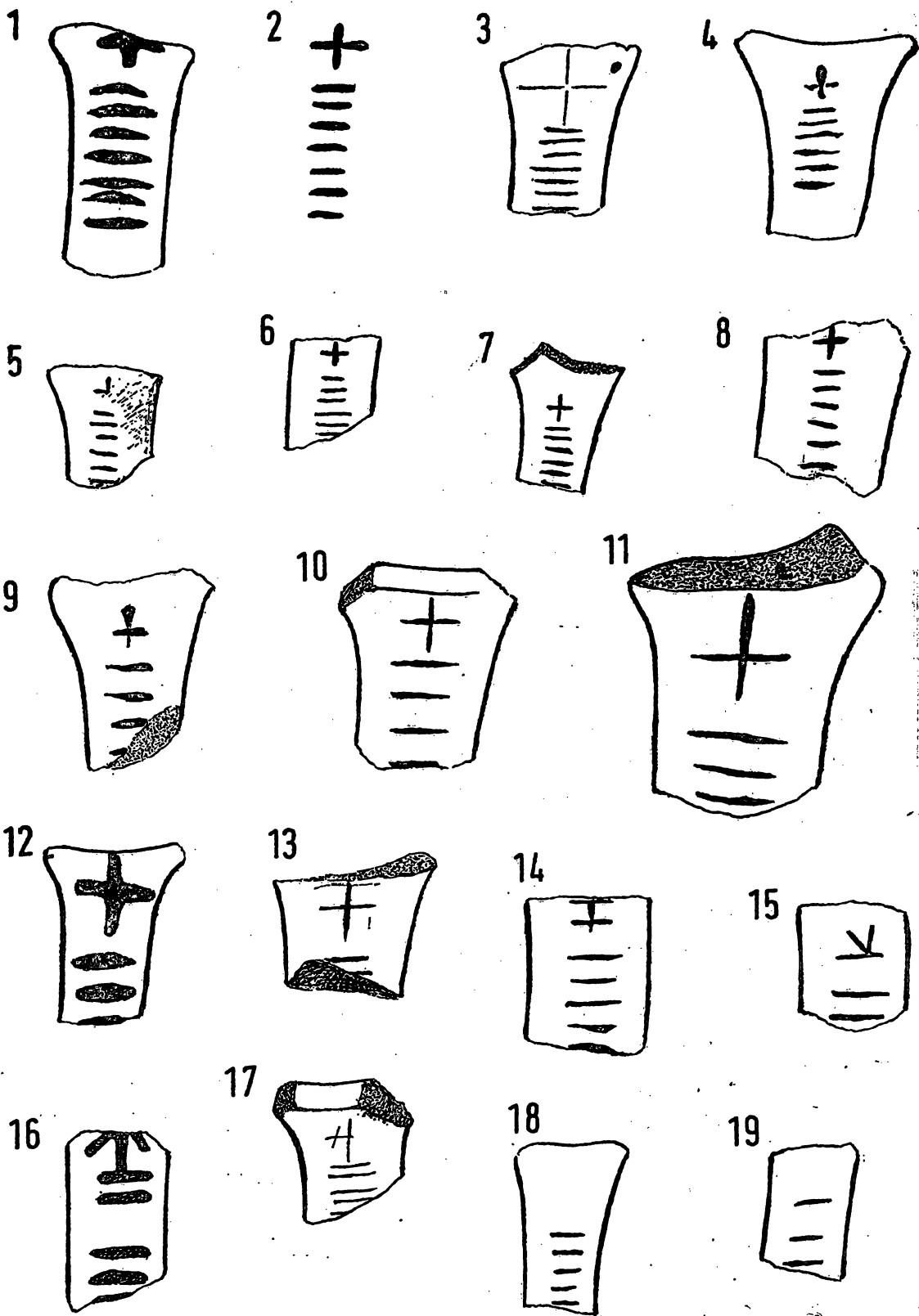
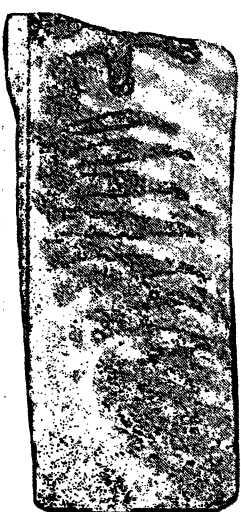
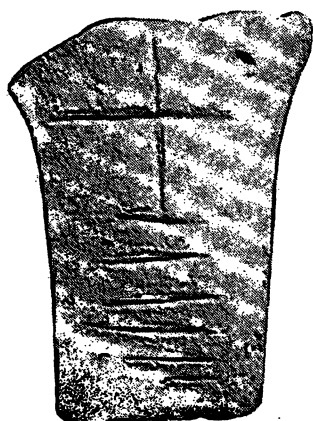


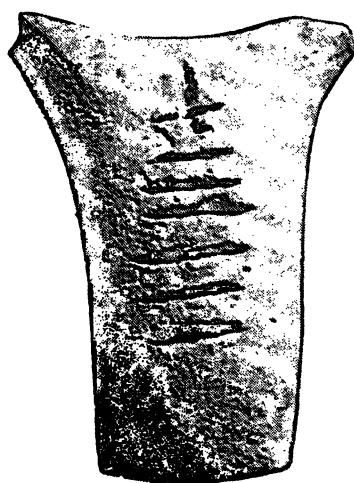
Fig. 1



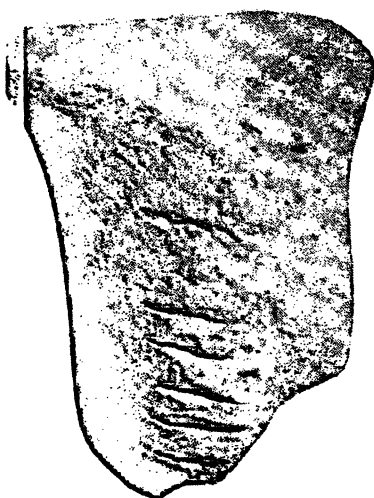
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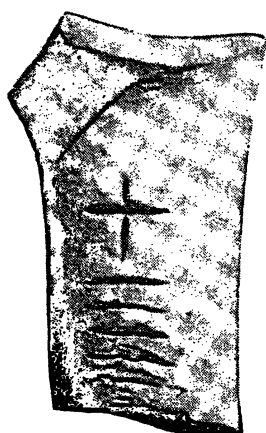
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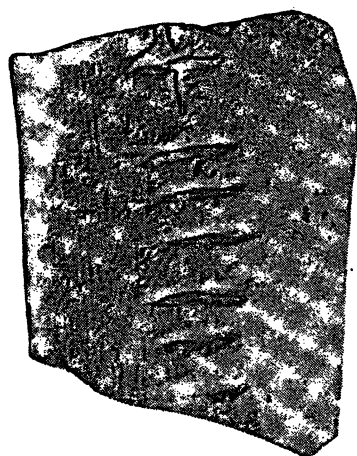
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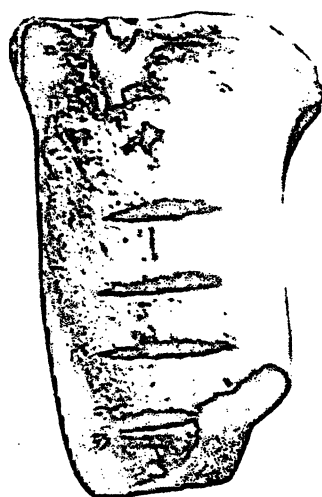
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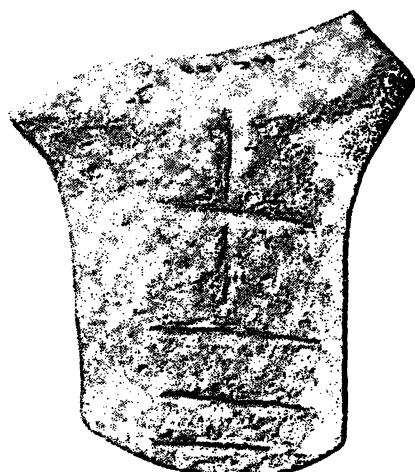
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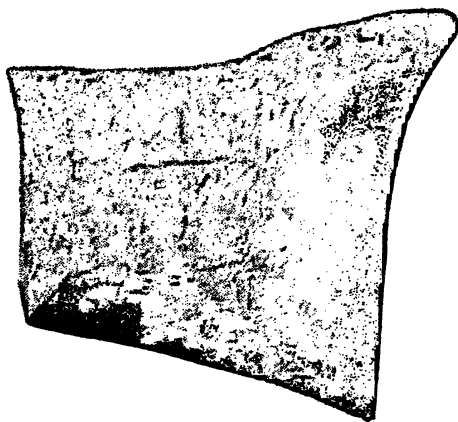
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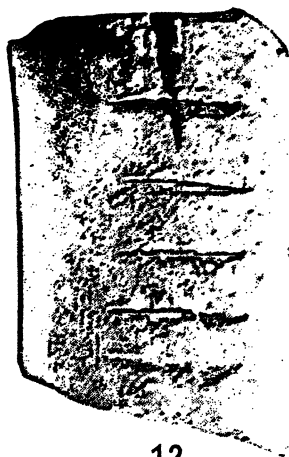
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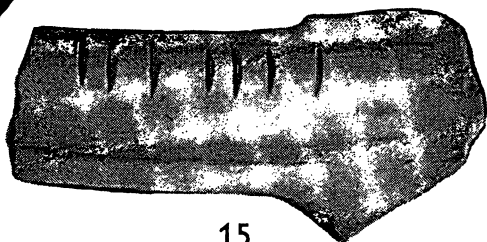
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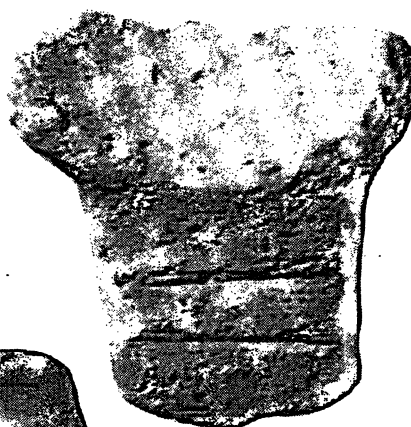
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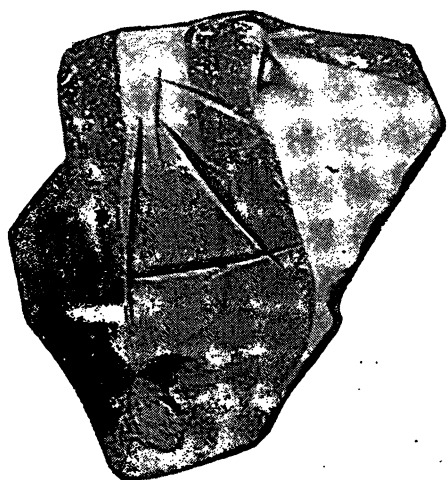
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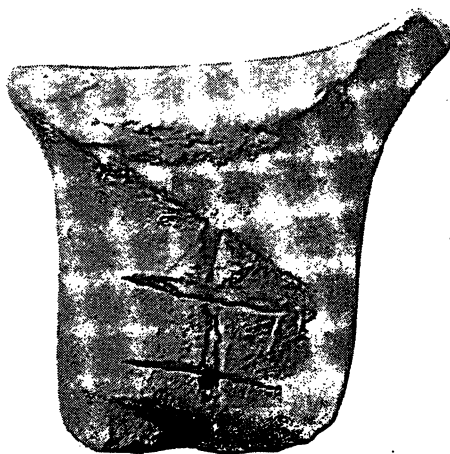
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14



16



17



18

Plate II

- 3 (KC 82), incised after firing, near the top of the handle of a Plain White Wheel-made jug from surface soil of Trench 2. Sherd 0.06 long. The seventh horizontal is preserved on the line of fracture. Photo, Pl. I, 2.
- 4 (KC 173), incised somewhat roughly after firing near the top of the handle (with part of rim) of a Plain Wheel-made jug from trench south of Chamber 1. Sherd 0.07 long. Photo, Pl. I, 3.
- 5 (KC 200), incised in wet clay, near the top of the handle of a Plain White Wheel-made jug from fill of Chamber 2. Sherd 0.045 long. The sixth horizontal preserved in part. Photo, Pl. I, 4.
- 6 (KC 557), incised in leather-hard (?), near the top of the handle of a Plain White Wheel-made jug. Sherd, ca. 0.045 long.
- 7 (KC 177), incised after firing, near the top of a Plain White Wheel-made jug. Sherd 0.042 long. The sixth horizontal is on the line of fracture. Photo, Pl. I, 5.
- 8 (KC 501), incised in leather-hard, near the top of the handle of a Plain Wheel-made jug, from fill beneath the Mosaic Surround. Sherd, 0.05 long. Photo, Pl. I, 6.
- 9 (KC 182), incised in wet clay, near the top of the handle of a Plain Wheel-made jug, from Chamber I at floor level. Sherd, 0.075 long. There is a vestige of a fourth horizontal. Photo, Pl. I, 7.
- 10 (KC 171), incised in leather-hard, near the top of the handle (with part of rim) of a Plain Wheel-made jug, from the trench south of Chamber I. Sherd, 0.07 long. The fourth horizontal is on the line of fracture. Photo, Pl. I, 8.
- 11 (KC 183), incised after firing, near the top of the handle (with part of rim) of a Plain Wheel-made jug, from the trench south of Chamber I nearly at rock level. Sherd, 0.105 long. Photo, Pl. I, 9.
- 12 (KC 190), in dark matt paint, near the top of the handle (with part of rim) of a Plain Wheel-made jug, from east of Chamber I. Sherd, 0.06 long. The third horizontal lies on the line of fracture. Photo, Pl. II, 10.
- 13 (KC 184), incised in leather-hard (?), near the top of the handle of a Plain Wheel-made jug, from rock level to the south of Chamber I. A possible horizontal above + (which would then give =) should be disregarded, together with a vertical scratch to the right of the sign. Photo, Pl. II, 11.

- 14 (KC 189), incised after firing, near the top of the handle of a Plain Wheel-made jug, from the lowest level of Chamber I. Sherd, 0.052 long. Above, the sign has lost the top of its vertical; below, the fifth horizontal lies on the line of fracture. Photo, Pl. II, 12.
- 15 (KA 1772), incised after firing near the top of the handle of a Plain White Wheel-made jug, found between the mud bricks of the Geometric city-wall. Sherd, 0.05 long.
- 16 (KC 212), in dark matt paint, on a flattened handle of fine, brick-red ware (stirrup vase ?). Sherd, 0.065 long. There is a vestige of a third horizontal.
- 17 (KC 589), carefully incised in the leather-hard, near the top of the handle (with part of rim) of a Plain Wheel-made jug, from Room 7. Sherd, 0.04 long. Five horizontal strokes are preserved, the last fragmentary. Photo, Pl. II, 13.
- 18 (KC 558), incised after firing (?), near the top of the handle (with part of rim) of a Plain White Wheel-made jug, from Room 13 in fill below the Roman floor. Sherd, 0.064 long.
- 19 (KC 554), incised after firing, near the top of the handle of a Plain Wheel-made jug, from Trench 6, layer 6. Sherd, 0.044 long.
- 20 (KC 176), incised after firing, at the top of the flattish handle (with vestige of rim) of a jug of a coarse plain ware, probably hand-made, from the fill of Room 9. Sherd, 0.04 long. Of the horizontal strokes, which fill the full width of the handle, the third is a mere fragment. Photo, Pl. II, 14.
- 21 (KC 568), incised after firing (?); near the top of the handle (with vestige of rim) of a Buccero jug, its paint badly flaked, from Room 13 in fill below Roman floor. Sherd, 0.66 long.
- 22 (KC 524), incised after firing, near the top of the handle (with vestige of rim) of a Plain Wheel-made jug, from Room 13 in fill below Roman floor. Sherd, 0.05 long.
- 23 (KC 397), incised after firing, near the top of the handle of a Plain Wheel-made (?) jug. Sherd, 0.05 long.
- 24 (KC 174), incised at the top of the handle (with vestige of rim) of a Plain White Wheel-made jug, from the fill of Well 3. Sherd, 0.05 long.
- 25 (KC 376), incised in the leather-hard (?), on the slender handle of a Plain White Wheel-made jug, from the fill below the Mosaic Surround. Sherd, 0.07 long. Inscription probably complete both above and below.



Fig. 2

- 26 (KC 553), incised after firing, on the horizontal handle of a crater (?) of Red Lustrous Ware, from fill below the Mosaic Surround. Sherd, 0.08 long. Symmetry would suggest the loss of one, or possibly more, signs to the left. Photo, Pl. II, 15.
- 27 (KC 188), incised towards the top of the handle of a Plain Wheel-made jug. Sherd, 0.053 long. The uppermost horizontal is on the line of fracture.
- 28 (KC 313), incised on a fragment of handle of a Plain Wheel-made jug. Sherd, ca. 0.045 long. Further horizontals are possible both above and below.
- 29 (KA 1796), incised towards the top of the handle of a Plain Wheel-made jug, from the top-soil of Trench T. Sherd, ca. 0.06 long.
- 30 (KC 201), incised on a fragment of handle of a Plain White Wheel-made jug, from the red-earth level of Chamber 2. Sherd, 0.03 long. Further horizontals are presumably lost above.
- 31 (KC 196), incised on the handle of a Plain White Wheel-made jug, from the lowest level of Chamber 1. Sherd, 0.043 long.
- 32 (KC 593), inscribed after firing on a fragment from the rim of a shallow bowl. Sherd, ca. 0.08 wide. Further strokes are probably lost to the left.
- 33 (KA 1782), incised after firing on the 'wish-bone' handle of a Base Ring II bowl, found at a depth of 0.55 by the outer face of the city wall. Sherd, 0.45 long.
- 34 (KC 402), incised deeply after firing on the flattened handle (complete, with part of shoulder) of a Mycenaean III Stirrup Vase, from fill under the Mosaic Surround. Sherd, 0.08 long. Photo, Pl. II, 16.
- 35 (KX 85), incised on the handle of a Plain Wheel-made jug, picked up on the surface at the locality Laonas on the south-eastern perimeter of the city. Sherd, 0.05 long. The inscription is very worn.
- 36 (KC 591), incised after firing at the top of the handle (with part of rim) of a Plain Wheel-made jug, from Room 6, layer 5. Sherd, 0.05 long. Photo, Pl. II, 17.
- 37 (KC 637), incised near the top of the handle of a Mycenaean III jug or amphora (?), found at the junction of Walls 13 and 18 in layer 3. Sherd, ca. 0.045 long.
- 38 (KC 535), incised on a fragment of the handle of a Mycenaean III jug or amphora (?), from Room 6, below mosaic level. Sherd, 0.04 long. The left side of the sign is worn away.

- 39 (KA 200), incised near the top of the handle (complete, with part of shoulder) of Mycenaean III Stirrup Vase, from top-soil near the siege-mound. Sherd, 0.07 long, 0.078 wide.
- 40 (KC 526), incised after firing on the handle of a Plain Wheel-made jug (?), from Room 6, 1 m. below the mosaic floor. Sherd, 0.07 long. Photo, Pl. II, 18.
- 41 (KA 2169), incised after firing on the handle of a Plain Wheel-made jug, from the NE Quadrant of the siege-mound. Sherd, 0.085 long.
- 42 (KC 800), incised through the paint near the top of the handle (with part of shoulder) of a Bucchero jug, from Trench 6, layer 9. Sherd, 0.10 long.

These forty-two inscriptions invite the following comments:

(a) They are found, with one exception only (no. 32), on the handles — and not the bodies or the bases — of pots.

(b) None can be dismissed as mere sgraffiti or for that matter as potters' marks, for their signs, whatever their present condition, were boldly incised or painted.

(c) No less than thirty-two of them — something over 76% — are, or include, numerals.

(d) These numerals, where complete, consist either of six (no. 4) or of seven (nos. 1, 2, 26) units; and it would seem that all the thirty-two carried originally one or other number.

(e) Nos. 18—24 are certainly, nos. 25—32 possibly, simple numbers; but in nos. 1—13 a sign precedes the number.

(f) With the exception of no. 26, a Red Lustrous crater (?), and no. 32, a bowl, all numeral inscriptions occur on jugs, undecorated and in general undistinguished, of local Cypriot ware. In contrast, on Mycenaean III vessels, seemingly imported — our nos. 34 and 39, and doubtless also nos. 37 and 38 — no numbers are to be found.

(g) It is likely that these numbers denote quantitatively a liquid content, the quality of which was frequently given by a preceding sign: + (nos. 1—13), ≠ (no. 14), ∟ (no. 15), ⊥ (no. 16) and ✚ (no. 17).

(h) Numeral inscriptions, represented on Site A only by no. 15 from the mud-bricks of the city wall, no. 29 from the siege-mound, occur freely at Site C, which presumably was at or near the heart of Bronze Age Paphos.

(i) Although some of our forty-two inscriptions receive from their archaeological context a pre-Achaic or pre-Geometric date,

in general exact provenience is not instructive. No inscription was found at Kouklia on a pot in situ in a Late Cypriot burial.

(j) Our Paphian inscriptions do not, I believe, conflict with the accepted opinion that the Middle Cypro-Minoan signary, which one and all they represent, was throughout Cyprus confined to the 14th and much of the 13th centuries B. C.²

	Paphos	Curium	Archaic Paphos
1	✱		✱ (a)
2	⤴	✱ (Daniel 73)	⤴ (ka)
3	⦶	Daniel 21-23, 79 etc.	⦶ (pa)
4	⦶ (or ⦶?)		
5	└	└ (Benson, B 765)	└, └ (ta)
6	⦶	⦶ (Daniel 47)	⦶, ⦶ (si)
7	⦶	Daniel 45	
8	+	Daniel 12-16 etc.	+
9	⦶		
10	Λ	Λ (Daniel 83)	
11	⦶	✱ (Daniel 27)	⦶ (mo) of Rantidi
12	⦶?	⦶ (Daniel 5), ✱ (Benson, B 962)	⦶ (te)
13	⦶		
14	Π?	Π (Daniel 1)	Π (po) of Rantidi
15	⦶		⦶ (me)
16	⦶		

Fig. 3

For the sixteen distinct signs of our Paphian inscriptions I refer to Fig. 3. They invite comparison with the contemporaneous signary of Curium, near neighbour to the east. Comparison is now possible, since excavations at Curium of the Museum of the University of Pennsylvania have resulted in the publication of a Cypro-Minoan

² Late Cypriot II A—C, or, in terms of absolute chronology, approximately 1400—1230 B. C. Cf. O. Masson, *Inscriptions chypriotes syllabiques* 1961, 34ff., where the problems are conveniently summarised, a full bibliography up to 1960 offered.

corpus for that city³. Comparison is, furthermore, desirable, for Paphos and Curium, in comparative isolation in south-western Cyprus, boasted foundation legends which connect each directly with the Late Bronze Age Peloponnese⁴. Moreover, I have myself demonstrated⁵ that in the Archaic period the two cities shared a syllabary sharply distinct from the Common Cypriot syllabary of the rest of Cyprus, notably rectilinear and predominantly leftward in direction — although its presumed ancestor, the linear scripts of Late Bronze Age Greece, were exclusively rightward. Early Archaic Paphos and Curium were thus closely related cities. Can it be shown that this same relationship existed at the close of the Bronze Age? Geometric Cyprus is a dark age, however; and western Cyprus can offer as yet no trace either of the Early Cypro-Minoan signary of the fired clay tablet of Enkomi (ca. 1500 B. C.) or of the Late Cypro-Minoan signaries of the later Enkomi tablets and of the clay balls of Enkomi and Larnaca (1230—1150 B. C.) or, finally, of the last of this succession of signaries, that of the inscribed bronze ingots yet again of Enkomi (1150—1050 B. C.)⁶. If we would attempt an answer to this question, there remains for our possible enlightenment only the Middle Cypro-Minoan signary with which we are here concerned.

In general, the more sophisticated quality of our Paphian inscriptions seems obvious; but they occur, as we have noted, almost exclusively on handles and do not therefore include the more dubious marks of fabricant or casual owner. For a closer inspection, I refer again to Fig. 3, where individual Paphian signs are compared with their counter-parts or near counter-parts (where these are known) both of contemporaneous Curium and of the

³ J. F. Daniel in *Prolegomena to the Cypro-Minoan Script*, *AJA* 45, 1941, 249—282, publishes 86 of these inscriptions from the Bamboula site. To this he adds a survey of earlier studies, notably: S. Casson, *Ancient Cyprus* 1937, pp. 98—107, "Table of Signs of the Bronze Age Script on objects found in Cyprus" and A. W. Persson, in an appendix to *SCE III*, 1937, 601—618, "More Cypro-Minoan Inscriptions". To Daniel's lists eighteen additions from the Bamboula and Kaloriziki sites were made by J. L. Benson in *AJA* 64, 1960, pp. 145—149 (with comment by O. Masson, pp. 150—151).

⁴ Thus Paphos: Strabo XIV, 6 — Πάφος, κτίσμα Ἀγαπήνορος, and Agapenor came from Tegea; Curium: Herodotus 5, 113 — οἱ Κουρίες οὗτοι λέγονται εἶναι Ἀργείων ἄποικοι; Strabo 14, 6, 3 — Κούριον . . . Ἀργείων κτίσμα.

⁵ *Studies in the Signaries of South Western Cyprus*, Supplement 10 to the *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies*, London 1961, Plates IV, VIII and XV.

⁶ O. Masson, loc. cit. Further, *Arch. Anz.* 1967, 616—619, *Ecritures et langues de la Chypre antique*

Archaic sanctuaries of Old Paphos and of Rantidi three miles to the south-east.

The conclusion that is forced upon us is unexpected. There is, on the available evidence, no striking relationship between the Middle Cypro-Minoan signaries of Paphos and Curium. Indeed, the Paphian shows a somewhat greater affinity with its own Archaic successor. Our evidence is, admittedly, far too slight and too ambiguous for any safe deduction. Nevertheless, it would seem likely that Paphos once possessed the Middle Cypro-Minoan signary as exemplified by Curium, widespread as this was throughout the rest of Cyprus; and it may be that the strong Mycenaean factory established in Paphos in the 14th century imposed upon this a Cypro-Mycenaean character⁷. Be that as it may, either in the age of migrations of the 12th or in the still darker centuries which followed, Paphos would certainly appear to have subjected a neighbour with an immigrant population racially related to her own, to the point of imposing her own script. This subordination survived, doubtless in a cultural form only, into late Archaic times. That it ended in 498 B. C. with the Persian sack of Paphos, in which Curium colluded, is, however, fact. This event Curium signalled by the gradual adoption of the Common Cypriot syllabary.

⁷ The unpublished material of the Kouklia Expedition includes worked and unworked ivory; a small gold ingot and splendid jewellery on a gold basis. Such finds, together with the rich tombs of Evreti, do not belong to an era of massive immigration.