

SOME INNOVATIONS OF THE CYPRIOT SYLLABIC SCRIPT*

By

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I.

In this paper, I intend to focus on two features of the Cypriot Syllabic Script of the first millennium B.C. which have yet not been investigated – in any case not in an appropriate way. As it is well known, the ancient Greeks introduced and used, besides the alphabetic scripts, two different syllabic scripts – the Linear B script (LB) in the middle of the second millennium B.C., and the Cypriot Syllabic Script (CSS) in the first millennium (or perhaps already at the end of the second millennium)¹. Both scripts had been inherited from other non-Greek peoples, each of them in a different epoch and in a different historical and cultural context.

The Greek syllabic scripts were without any doubt connected genetically – both came from the Linear A script (LA)² used on Crete by Eteocretans (Minoans) in the first half of the second millennium B.C. The LA originated, in its turn, from the so-called Cretan Hieroglyphic (alias Pictographic) script³. The LB and CSS have in common 9 syllabograms: **da/ta, ti, to, pa, po, ro/lo, na, sa, se** in

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¹ The traditional point of view holds that the earliest monuments of the Cypriot Syllabic Script belong to the VII century B.C., cf. O. MASSON, *Les inscriptions chypriotes syllabiques*, pp. 30–38; J. CHADWICK, *The Minoan origin of the classical Cypriot Script*, [in:] *Acts of the International Archaeological Symposium 'Relations between Cyprus and Crete ca. 2000–500 B.C.'*, Nicosia 1979, pp. 139–143. However, M. LINDGREN supposes that the CSS originated in the XI century B.C., cf. M. LINDGREN, *Use of the Cypriot Syllabary in the multicultural surrounding*, [in:] A. SACCONI *et al.* (ed.), *Colloquium Romanum*, Pisa–Roma 2008, p. 465, cf. also J.-P. OLIVIER, *Les syllabaires chypriotes des deuxième et premier millénaires avant notre ère. État des questions*, [in:] *Colloquium Romanum*, pp. 604–613; L. GODART, *L'invenzione della scrittura. Dal Nilo alla Grecia*, Torino 1992, pp. 209 f.; A. PANAYOTOU-TRIANAPHYLLOPOULOU, *Les écritures chypriotes et la présence mycénienne à Chypre*, [in:] *Colloquium Romanum*, pp. 651–658.

² Cf. C. CONSANI, M. NEGRI, *Testi minoici trascritti. Con interpretazione e glossario*, Roma 1999; G. NEUMANN, *Zur Sprache der kretischen Linearschrift A*, *Glotta* XXXVI 1958, pp. 156–158.

³ G. FACCHETTI, *La questione della scrittura 'geroglifica cretese' dopo la recente edizione del Corpus dei testi*, [in:] *Colloquium Romanum*, Pisa–Roma 2007, pp. 269–280.