

ONCE AGAIN ON THE CYPRIOT GENITIVE:
MARGINALIA TO M. EGETMEYER'S MONOGRAPH
ON THE CYPRIOT DIALECT*

by

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ABSTRACT: The deciphering of the Linear B script gave a new stimulus to studies of Greek dialects. The discovery is of special importance to research upon the Cypriot dialect and literacy. The Cypriot genitive of the thematic declension is characterized by the possible usage of singular and plural forms that are graphically identical. This paper aims to show that the relevant cases actually differed – it was only the syllabic script which did not make the difference visible.

The decipherment of the Linear B syllabary – the greatest achievement of 20th century Hellenic studies – gave a new stimulus for Greek dialectology. No doubt, this discovery marks a turning point – it is simply impossible to seriously write about Greek without taking into consideration the existence of the well attested Greek idiom in the 2nd millennium BCE. C.D. BUCK was able to embed the information about the discovery in the final version of his epoch-making monograph on Greek dialects. The book was published in 1955, and then reprinted, practically without any changes or additions. The monograph has not yet lost in its importance – it is still one of the most important studies on the subject, all the more valuable in that it provides not only an analysis of the dialects, but also the texts of the inscriptions.

We read thus about the genitive singular (the thematic declension) in Cypriot:

In Cyprian -*ōv* beside -*ō* (at Idalium *μισθῶν*, *ἀργύρων*, *Φιλοκύπρων*, etc. and so usually -*ōv* in nouns, whether vowel or consonant follows; but also *ἀργύρῶ*, *ἄλφῶ*, before a consonant, and always *τῶ*). [...] For the added *v* in Cyprian no explanation that has been offered is adequate.

(BUCK 1955: 88)

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