

Cypro-Minoan writing (1500 B.C.). The view from the outsider.

#### Abstract.

This article is devoted to the problems of the origin of the cypro-Minoan script (1500 B.C.). The author proposes to revise some of the ideas about its origin that have been established since the last century. In particular, the statements concerning the Cretan script as the basis of the Cypriot letter will be questioned. The author does not believe that the Cretan hieroglyphic seals contain text, but believes that the images are separate pictograms, the meaning of which is linked to a separate seal. And "linear letter A" can't come from them. There is no connection between the characters of "linear A" and the characters of the Cypriot script that are completely different in their style. The author suggests that the latter arose independently on the basis of Neolithic pictographs, and was influenced by the hieroglyphs of Egypt and Iuvian writing. Therefore, we believe that the Cyprus letter is not legally called Minoan. A careful study of the Enkomi Tablet, Fragment 3 (Table 2), has led us to the following conclusion. It is not related to other Fragments found in the same place (Table 3), and differs significantly from them. We have identified four separate zones for filling in Fragment 3 (Table 9). When you increase the surface of the latter, you can clearly see the drawing images that we call "second-level signs". Additional images are mostly present on Fragment 3, which makes this artifact a unique piece.

**Keywords:** Cretan hieroglyphs, cypro-Minoan script, deciphering of ancient scripts, Enkomi tablets, linear A and B writing.

For more than a hundred years, there has been an interpretation of the origin of the so-called Cypro-Minoan script, which goes back to the time of the British Explorer A. Evans. There were two developed scripts in Crete: linear A and linear B. The older, linear A, according to Evans, originated from Cretan hieroglyphs. From the linear letter A itself, linear B and the letter of the neighboring island of Cyprus emerged.

We offer another variant of the origin of the Cypro-Minoan script, which we will outline very briefly, and explain the lack of connection of the Cypriot writing system with neighboring Crete.

1. Cretan stone seals, which are found on the island of several hundred, according to many scientists of the 20th century, are covered with a kind of writing. It is believed that this is a hieroglyphic system that has not yet been deciphered. Its language is not known (Table 8: 2).

For my part, I note that I do not consider the images on the seals to be writings (scripts). These are decorative images, a variant of jewelry, the type of which was probably fashionable on the island in the 2nd Millennium BC. For example, such signs were often ordered by families, and the icons could be associated with certain activities of the head of the family and other members of the house. And this is not writing that can be deciphered. Among the possible "proofs", it seems to us, we can refer to the significant similarity of the seal groups among themselves. There is one version of the seals, which is most likely copied from the cartouche of ancient Egypt (Table 8: 2). Another point to support our idea: almost all seals contain three characters. Which already indicates decorative rather than functional. For example, let's refer to The Harappan seals, where the number of characters varies from one to ten or more (Table 8: 1). Thus, we conclude that there is no connection between stone seals and the emergence of linear writing A, and these are far from each other pictorial systems. In our opinion, the linear script of Crete appeared in some other way. Which is not the topic of our research at the moment.

2. The Largest finds among the Cypriot inscriptions are represented at the time of the so-called" Tablets from Enkomi (Eastern Cyprus). More than a dozen large pieces of baked clay, covered on both sides with peculiar signs. In the literature, you can read that these are parts of a single large table (artifact). From about 10 separate fragments that are in different museums. From our point of view, this is not the case. A detailed study of the most famous parts of the Encomium find-Fragment 2, now in the Museum of Nicosia (Table 3) and Fragment 3 from the Louvre (Table 2) — led us to the conclusion that fragment 3 is a completely different phenomenon, with many serious differences from other fragments (Tables 2, 3, 4). We found four surfaces on the fragment (Tablet 9). They differ in

1. the depth of indentation of the main signs
2. surface color
3. densities of placement of signs
4. the thickness of the layer for writing.

Thus, segment 1 appears pale pink, the depth of the signs is minimal, and they are very rarely located. It seems that the surface of the signs after they were applied and solidified scraped. Segment 2 begins under the first and goes almost to the bottom, gradually expanding to the right side. By the number of signs, it is the main one, and the density of signs is the highest. Segment 3, the brownest, is located at the right edge, the signs are randomly written. Segment 4 is the most beautiful and original. It seems that first there was a hole (break), which was filled with light clay, this layer is not only the color of the other, and above all the other segments. The smallest segment is the lower-left corner, where there are fewer than 10 signs, some of which are drawn rather than squeezed out.

3. An exclusive feature of the fragment 3 is what we called "signs of the second level." If you carefully examine the surface, especially with a magnifying glass, you can see this phenomenon. There are basic signs: these are those that are squeezed out by special sticks so that numerous signs are formed, made up of" long drops", more or less diamond — shaped, located vertically, and somewhat less often located-horizontally. The set of icons on fragment 3 is small, which is probably why scientists decided that the letter is syllabic. Now about the signs of the second plan. They are significantly more than the " main "and each "syllable" is covered with small images, in which heads, spouts, horns, and legs are clearly discernible, so that they all together make up whole pictures where you can find goats, birds, fish, and other very different creatures (Table 4). Does this "extra layer of drawn characters" have a connection to the main written text? Is this another text on top of the main text? Or it is a variant of" decoration " of the letter. Maybe this is one of the talismans that protects the text and signs? (Tables 2 and 4). We do not know.

Note that in addition to the small creatures that make up the background of the "second level", there are four signs that stand out from the others. It seems that these could be the dividing signs of semantic parts. These are easily visible large icons of segment 3, which are named by the author "Moose" and "Obelisk" or "Fountain" (table 9). Of the vertically positioned smaller "Fish" (segment 2) and "Bird" (segment 4). We showed these things with black arrow.

The Enkomi tablet known as Fragment 2 is made differently (Table 3). The text is unified, as if made by a more professional hand. There are signs similar to those we see in Fragment 3, and there are unique signs. When you zoom in, you can see that Fragment 2 does not have such an abundance of additional images, although individual icons are also

"embellished" with eyes, noses, and paws, which is more the exception than the rule (table 3). The tradition of adding various small icons to the surface of stones that attracted the attention of ancient man existed in the Neolithic. Some hieroglyphs of ancient Egypt also have additions in the corners or on the surface. A lot of these extensions have icons of the fest disk (table 10).

4. In solving the question of the origin of the eteo-cypro's script of Cyprus, we moved in three possible directions: autochthonous writing, Egyptian roots, and hitto-Luwian origin.

1. The eteo-Cyprus letter is a local phenomenon that arose on the island as a result of a long process of turning picrograms of paleo - and Neolithic times into peculiar signs. To find analogies, we used the most famous stone age icons from Tassili, North Africa, because of their expressiveness and numerous examples. The climate of the region allowed numerous Neolithic color images to be preserved, assuming that Neolithic images in Cyprus could be close to North African ones. In fragment 3 (table 1 and 4), it can be seen that most likely the historical development of writing came from naturalistic drawings, parts of which were replaced by simpler signs on clay-droplets.

2. Archaeological Dating of the tablets gives us a time of about 1500 BC. Research of different types of writing of this time in neighboring territories leads to several conclusions. The closest developed neighbor for Cyprus was Egypt of the pharaohs. And a detailed comparison of the hieroglyphics of the latter with the characters of fragment 3 gives interesting results. We made two tables (we could have done much more), comparing the signs of the two language systems (table 6 and 7). We note that a number of signs have an indubitable similarity, from which we draw a conclusion about the impact of the written system of Egypt on the sign system of Cyprus, at least visually. We do not deny that the influence could be not only on the external level, which was expressed in the similarity of the image of the signs. There may be a deeper connection between the scripts.

3. Another writing system that has attracted our attention is the Luwian hieroglyphs. When compared with Cyprus, there were some coincidences. All that is written above about the Egyptian signs is true for the luwian ones (table 5). That is, we can talk about the impact of hieroglyphs from Asia Minor on the so called Cypro-minoan script.

It is possible that the authentic writing system of ancient Cyprus was influenced to some extent by its powerful neighbors, while preserving the originality of its writing system.

Conclusion.

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Our conclusions regarding Fragment 3 (table 2) can be summarized:

1. the Fragment 3 is older in time than Fragment 2 (table 3), Fragment 4, and other known texts with the so-called cypro-Minoan script.

2. Perhaps Fragment 3 this is a kind of training text (Table 2), where different versions of icons were tried, as indicated by the multi-colored and multi-texture surface of the fragment. So we could not decipher the Fragment 3 because this is not unified text.

3. The connection between Fragments 2 and 3 is obvious, and in our opinion the letter of Fragment 2 used the characters of Fragment 3.

4. Also, in our opinion, the letter originated on the island of Cyprus from Neolithic pictographs, and is not related to the culture of Crete. The hieroglyphs of Egypt and the hitto-Luwian script had some influence on the characters.