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Jaime Curbera

Cypriot

1. Sources

Cypriot Greek is well documented, mostly through ca 1400 inscriptions (also on coins, see Egetmeyer 2010:8–9), dating from the 8th c. BCE to the end of the Hellenistic period; ca 700 texts are dated to the Archaic period, with the overwhelming majority being from the kingdom of Paphos. There is no literature written in Cypriot. Epic poetry was composed on the island, as is implied by the names of famous epic poets such as Stasinus or Hegesias of Salamis, both known since the Archaic period, or by the poem of the Epic Cycle *Cypria*; but these works were probably written in → Ionic, as required by the genre. Furthermore, approximately 250 Cypriot *glossai* are known (Egetmeyer 2010:25–29), some of them dialectal. We have to reckon upon local varieties of Cypriot, with more varietal examples from Paphos and to a lesser extent from Salamis.

2. Origin and Linguistic Affinities

Archaeological finds combined with philological data (mainly from → Linear B) and literary data (especially from epic poetry) indicate that Greek-speaking immigrants settled on Cyprus after the collapse of the Mycenaean kingdoms, probably attracted by economic opportunities. The immigrants apparently influenced the local socio-economic structure, resulting in the fundamental restructuring of Cypriot society and culture that is visible from the 12th c. BCE on. Especially noticeable is the spread of their language (Panayotou 2007:417–418).

Some important → Arcado-Cypriot phonological, morphological and syntactic isoglosses with → Pamphylian are attributed to the common origin of the first Greek settlers in Pamphylia and on Cyprus; Pamphylian shares with Arcado-Cypriot some of its older features, although certain → Doric and → Aeolic elements merged with them at a later time.

3. The Script

A syllabic writing system developed on the island of Cyprus, but its affinities with the Cypro-Minoan script(s), which rendered → Pre-Greek language(s) during the 2nd millennium BCE, are not obvious (→ Cypro-Minoan Syllabary). Like local alphabets in Greek-speaking areas, local signaries are known from Cyprus; they differ in structure, form and *ductus*. The most widespread among them are the Paphian and the so-called "common" syllabaries. The Paphian syllabary presents major changes in form during the Classical period, a fact that might be attributable to the control of writing by local authorities: script and language give salient information regarding the way the city-kingdoms were governed and managed in Classical Cyprus (Panayotou 2010a:42–49). A specific script, always associated with a given language, played an important role within the kingdoms' jurisdiction, where the writing system was almost exclusively used by different populations as a mark of identity and official expression on the local level.

The first inscription showing a Cypriot dialectal feature, a masc. gen. in *-au*, inscribed on a spit (*obelos*) comes from Paphos and is dated between 1050–950 BCE. It has been identified by Olivier (2007, no.170) as written in the Cypro-Minoan syllabary (but cf. Duhoux 2009:73, fn. 199). The oldest known dialectal inscriptions in the Cypriot syllabary so far that are exclusively associated with the Cypriot dialect are dated to the 8th c. BCE (Egetmeyer 2010:30–31), whereas the latest syllabic documents are names on seals found in an archive in Nea Paphos, dated to the period of 150–30 BCE (Michaelidou-Nicolaou 1993). This is an indication that certain people associated with the administration had at that time knowledge of syllabic writing and reading, but we have no evidence that it was still in use elsewhere. Throughout the Hellenistic world, the feature of uniformity was essential as far as administration, army and education were concerned; the abandonment of local scripts (syllabaries and the Phoenician alphabet) and languages (Cypriot dialects, non-Greek languages, Phoenician) was another consequence of the annexation of Cyprus to the Ptolemaic kingdom.

4. DESCRIPTION

4.a. *Phonology*

From older texts, there is evidence of a phonetic change implying weakening, especially of /s/ and of glides [*w, j*], in intervocalic (*katéthijan* = Att. *katéthesan* 'placed down') and final positions before a strong boundary. Although the phenomenon was widespread, standard forms were concomitant. The frequency of examples like *in* (= *en*) 'in' and masc. gen. sg. *-au* < *-ao* suggests raising of *e > i* before *a, o* or a nasal (*thión* 'god (acc. sg.)') and of *o > u* in the proximity of a nasal and within a morpheme (*génoitu* 'become (3 sg. opt. aor.)'). There is a strong tendency to prevent the coalescence of adjacent vowels by means of glide → anaptyxis, [*j, w*] after /*i, u*/, respectively (*térkhnija* 'plants, young trees-neut. pl.'), but this process is counterbalanced by fricative weakening. The early → monophthongization of *i-* and *u-*diphthongs is attested from the 6th c. BCE on.

4.b. *Morphology*

According to the epigraphic evidence, the assibilation *-ti > -si* takes place in Cypriot. The raising *o > u*, a post-Mycenaean phenomenon, affected the masc. gen. sg. *-āu < -āo* of *a*-stems. The sporadic monophthongization of /*āu*/ resulted in the masc. gen. sg. *-a* (e.g. *Amenía*), and that of /*āi*/, /*ōi*/ in the dat. sg. *-ā, -ō* (*-ɔ:*). The gen. sg. of the them. decl. ends in *-ō* (e.g. *Onasílō*), and occasionally in *-ōn* (*Kúprōn*) from the 6th or 5th century on. Since 400–350 BCE, final *-n* has been added occasionally to the acc. sg. of consonant-stems on the analogy of *a-* and *o-*stems (*andri(j)ántan* 'statue' ICS 215, 220, in bilingual Phoenician-Cypriot texts, *ijatéran* 'physician, surgeon', *atelên* 'untaxed' ICS 217), to the acc. sg. of neut. *-ma* on the analogy of the them. neut. (*mnâman* 'monument'), and to pronouns (*egốn* 'I'). There are examples of consonant-stem inflection in *-ēs* (nom. sg. *basilḗs* 'king'), *-ēwos* (gen. *basilêwos*), *-ēwi* (dat. *basilêwi*), *-ēwes* (nom. plur. *Edaliêwes* 'Edalians'), along with the other inflection paradigm in *-eus*, which is attested from the 5th c. onwards. The inherited ending *-toi* for the 3 sg. mid. verbs is preserved (Morpurgo Davies 1992:428 §8).

4.c. *Syntax*

According to the inscriptional evidence, the dative is used either bare or in conjunction with certain prepositions for expressing motion away from, distance from, or provenance (in an ablatival function), as e.g. *Diweíthemis* 'law given by Zeus', *eks tâi ptóliwi* 'away from the city' (ICS 217 A$_6$), *apù tâi gâi tâi basilêwos* '(away) from the land of the king' (*ibid.* A$_8$, cf. Egetmeyer 2010:629–635, #1). This is the most characteristic feature of Cypriot syntax. It is shared also with → Arcadian and → Pamphylian.

4.d. *Onomastics*

As is the case with the rest of the Greek-speaking world, Cypriot names derive: a) from adjectives or nouns with or without a hypocoristic suffix (e.g. *Árkas* 'Arcadian-p.n.'); b) from compounds, usually with two elements, with or without apparent syntactic relation between them (*Práxandros* 'Praxander', *Potitíma* 'Potitima'); c) from shortened names (coming from (b)), with the ablation of the second component and with the remainder being normally suffixed (*Tîmos* < e.g. *Timandros* 'Timander'). The local onomastic repertoire comprises mainly compound names. From the semantic point of view, compounds reflect the social values and characteristics en vogue during the Archaic and the Classical periods, such as *Arkhitíma* (*arkh-* 'rule/ing' + *timḗ* 'honor, dignity'), *Aristokúpra* (*aristeía* 'excellence' + *kupr-* < *Kúpros* 'Cyprus'), *Damokléwēs* (*damo-* 'people' + *kléwos* 'fame'), *Eslóthemis* (*eslo* < *esthlós* 'good' + *thémis* 'judgement'), *Onasíkupros* (*ónaios* 'useful, serviceable' + *Kúpros* 'Cyprus'). There also are terms related to public life and institutions (e.g. *Damótimos* and *Onasiwánaks*), terms related to health, healing, long life (e.g. *Akésandros* 'healing men' and *Zôkharis* 'living' + 'grace'), or compounds associating the person with Cyprus (e.g. *Kuprothálēs* 'Cyprus bloom', *Kuprótimos* 'who honors Cyprus'). Personal names formed from names of gods are not widespread during the dialectal period, except for those which have as their first or second element the word *theós* 'god'. Shortened names such as *Phaus-ílos, Stâs-is, On-âs* are very common, often associated with a similar name in the family, such as *Tîmos Timagórau*, i.e., 'Timos son of Timagoras' (ICS 126). Great emphasis is put on name continuity in the family (Panayotou 2009, 2010b).

4.e. *Lexicon*

Cypriot *glossai* are not unequivocally dialectal; inscriptions are the main sources for the

lexicon. 310 Cypriot dedications of some length – dialectal, in the Koine or in both – have been found in a Nymph's grotto at Kafizin (territory of ancient Idalion). They are dated between 225 and 218 BCE (Mitford 1980). This unique material records, among others, new terms, names of vessels and utensils, religious terms and institutions, crafts and trade concerning the rural economy of Hellenistic Cyprus.

5. Contacts with Other Languages

As in contemporary ancient Greek city-states, we find on Cyprus an understanding of script and dialect and/or language as embodied in the statutes of the kingdom. Language and script depended on and were controlled by local authorities on the basis of certain criteria – time-honored cultural tradition, but also political dependencies – as in the case of Idalion after ca 450 BCE and of Tamassos in the 4th c. BCE. These Greek kingdoms of the past have yielded some of the most important Greco-Phoenician bilingual inscriptions, dated to the time when they were under Phoenician control, as specified in both official and private texts. It is obvious that language and script as well as onomastics on Cyprus were of prime importance within a kingdom (not necessarily for individuals residing outside it) as an indication of a recognizable identity. The rarity or lack, as the case may be, of bilingual inscriptions (Greek-Phoenician, Greek-'Eteocypriot' or Phoenician-'Eteocypriot'; → Eteocypriot) suggest that there practically was no linguistic contact among speakers of structurally different and mutually unintelligible languages. We can make the same assumption based on the fact that the loans from Greek to Phoenician, and vice versa, are very limited. Moreover, Phoenician immigrants from Cyprus in Greek cities adopt a Greek name, but the Greek equivalents in bilingual inscriptions have sometimes very little or no correspondence with their Phoenician counterparts.

After the annexation of Cyprus to the Ptolemaic kingdom, language and script lost all significance as signs of identity, and as a result all local linguistic variants were gradually replaced by the Koine. This trend proved to be irreversible. Having lost their status as official forms of expression, and without the protection of the respective kingdoms, local scripts and languages or dialects declined quickly. Thus, there are no Eteocypriot texts after the 4th c. BCE, while the last Phoenician text in Cyprus dates from the mid-3rd c. BCE.

6. Dialect and Koine

The contacts of Cypriot with the Attic Koine (→ Koine, Origins of) are the result of new historical circumstances during the 4th c. BCE, and these contacts emanate from the top of the social pyramid. With increasing frequency, Koine inscriptions in Greek-speaking kingdoms date from the 4th c. in digraphic official or private texts, possibly by wealthy individuals or members of the local aristocracy for whom the use of both forms of Greek was a status symbol. From 295/294, when Cyprus fell under direct or indirect Ptolemaic control, the Koine was introduced as the language of administration; it spread to the entire island and gradually replaced all other language forms. The inscriptions from Kafizin illustrate the increasing influence of the Koine on Cyprus, especially in the areas of spelling and morphology (Consani 1986).

7. Linguistic Continuum

It should be noted that some of the salient phonological and morphological characteristics of ancient Cypriot, such as the loss of fricatives in intervocalic position or the creation of neuters in *-an*, are also typical for medieval and contemporary Cypriot Greek. Although there are no Cypriot dialectal characteristics in Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine official inscriptions or in the literature written in the Koine, old (and new) dialectal features appear in private inscriptions only after approximately the 9th c. CE. The reason for this gap may be the fact that from the 3rd c. BCE onwards the official school education was promoting both the Koine and the alphabet. The Koine phonological system that was taught was modeled on the conservative Attic subsystem (Teodorsson 1978:96; → Attic). A normative grammar and Attic syntax were also taught, as was also the case all over the Hellenistic kingdoms, based on 4th-c. BCE Attic literary prose. Under these circumstances, it would be surprising for Cypriot features to appear in writing. Nevertheless, it is obvious that during that period the dialect was in oral use, while it emerged in writing only when the historical circumstances did not permit adequate schooling and education,

and when the literary relations of Cyprus with Constantinople and other major centers of the Greek world were in decline. In 1191 CE, Richard I Lionheart, king of England, seized the island and eventually sold it to Guy de Lusignan. A new period started under Frankish and later under Venetian control. A dialectal literature of secular content gradually developed, which reflects the early stages of the Modern Cypriot dialect that is still in common use today.

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Cypriot Syllabary

The Cypriot syllabary (also known as the Classical Cypriot script) is a writing system that was employed in the Eastern Mediterranean island of Cyprus between the 8th and the 3rd c. BCE. It is the latest offshoot of a family of five syllabaries, the → Cretan Hieroglyphic Script, → Linear A, → Linear B, and the → Cypro-Minoan Syllabary, all of the 2nd mill. BCE. It was used in the multilingual society that was Cyprus during the 1st mill. BCE, where three writing systems and at least three languages co-existed (Palaima 1991). Together with the Greek (→ Alphabet, The Origin of the Greek) and Phoenician alphabetic scripts that recorded the respective languages, the syllabary was used mainly for recording the Greek language in its → Cypriot, dialectal version, to which it is intrinsically linked (Morpurgo Davies 1988). It also records at least one more language, conventionally called '→ Eteocypriot'. The syllabary was used primarily on the island itself, but inscriptions are attested in Egypt (Abydos, Karnak, Thebes), where Cypriot mercenaries carved their signatures on buildings in the 4th c. BCE; a few more inscriptions have been found in Syro-Palestine, Cilicia, Greece and Italy, but there is no reason to believe that they constitute actual evidence of *in situ* literacy.

The script used 55 signs in its more widely used variety (the 'common' syllabary) and 54 signs in a local variety attested in Paphos and south-west Cyprus (the 'Paphian' syllabary). It is a well-established fact that the script signs denote syllables of the open type (consonant + vowel and simple vowel). Five separate signs were used to record the vowels *a, e, i, o* and *u*, without any indication of their length: *ka-si-ki-ni-ta-i* (dat.sg) corresponding to Att. *kasignḗtēi* 'sister'; *a-to-ro-po-i* 'men, persons' (Att. *ánthrōpoi*). The semi-vowel *j*- series appears in *ja* (only in the 'common' syllabary), *je* (only in the 'Paphian') and *jo* (in both): *se-la-mi-ni-ja* 'of Salamis', Attic *Salaminía*; *i-je-re-(u)-se* 'priest', Attic *hiereús*; *le-ti-ri-jo-se* 'of Ledra', Attic *Lḗdrios*; but is missing (and not expected to have) signs for *ji* and *ju*. An almost complete *w*- series is also attested (except for *wu*): *pa-si-le-wo-se* 'king (gen.sg.)' (Attic *basiléōs*). The signs used for the plosives, conventionally transcribed as the unvoiced *k-, p-, t-*, stand also for the voiced as well as for the aspirated stops of the same point of articulation (*g-/kh-, b-/ph-, d-/th-* respectively): *ke-ti-o-*