

A decipherment of the Eteocretan inscription from Psychro (Crete)

Ioannis K. Kenanidis^{1*}, Evangelos C. Papakitsos²

¹ Primary Education Directorate of Kavala, Greece

² School of Pedagogical and Technological Education, Iraklio Attikis, Greece

ABSTRACT

This study presents a decipherment of the Eteocretan inscription from Psychro (Crete), which was discovered in 1958 and dated to about 300 BC. The inscription was attributed to an unknown Eteocretan language, while the attempts to read the text so far included languages like Hittite, Semitic, even Slavic, without remarkable results. The attempt of the herein decipherment is based on the following concepts evidenced in earlier publications: The inscriptions that are conventionally called Eteocretan convey more than one language. These languages could not have remained totally unaltered through the centuries. Eventually, they had to be written in the Greek alphabet, because of the predominant cultural context. Of course, the Greek alphabet could not precisely render the non-Greek Eteocretan languages, so the scribes improvised their own ways to approximate the sounds of their native language, and this is one more factor that makes it harder for modern researchers to determine the language of the Eteocretan inscriptions. This is the only Eteocretan inscription that was preserved practically intact, but as all attempts of interpreting were fruitless, some researchers have declared it a fake. It would be pointless to return to interpretations of the inscription as conveying languages stated in previous attempts, and since it has been shown in a previous publication that the inscription cannot be fake, the present interpretation follows the latest linguistic evidence about the Sumerian origins of the Aegean scripts and, especially, the confirmation of a Cretan Protolinar script's existence.

Keywords: Psychro; Eteocretan languages; Cretan Protolinar script; decipherment.

1. INTRODUCTION

In 1958, Marinatos [1] reported the existence of an inscription from Psychro (Crete) that belonged to the private collection of Dr. S. Giamalakakis (Fig. 1). It was engraved on a piece of stone, the shape of which showed that it was made to fit into an architectural construction, namely into an empty triangle formed over a door of a very small structure. Based essentially on Kritzas [2], Brown [3] attempted to prove that the inscription is a modern fake, his main argument being that it contains what appear to be Minoan syllabic signs (those three at the bottom of the inscription), that is signs of a script supposed to have been extinct 900 years before the inscription that was dated to 300 BC; another one of Kritzas' arguments is that the inscription is on baked clay and not stone – something that has nothing to do with the language of the inscription anyway. Kenanidis & Papakitsos [4] have presented all arguments proving that the inscription is genuine. Those who discarded the inscription as a

* Corresponding author: ioakenanid@sch.gr.

32 fake have relieved themselves of the obligation to interpret it, however, as we hold that the
33 inscription is genuine, we must interpret it here in accordance to all our previous research.



34
35

36 **Fig. 1. The Psychro inscription [3]**

37

38 First by Marinatos [1] and later on by Brown [5] and Duhoux [6], the inscription was attributed
39 to an Eteocretan language. Numerous attempts have been made to interpret the text. The
40 proposed languages included Hittite [7] and Semitic [8, 9], even Slavic [10]! The
41 shortcomings of each one of the previous attempts were reasonably exposed by Brown [11],
42 although the latter implies that there was only one non-Greek language spoken in Crete
43 (contrary to the linguistic evidence which makes it clear that more than one non-Greek
44 languages were spoken in Crete [12, 13, 14]). Thus, to all those readers interested in the
45 Eteocretan languages of Ancient Crete, a novel approach of decipherment is presented
46 herein, initially based on the Cretan Protolinear script theory [12] that suggests the affinity of
47 the Psychro inscription to the Sumerian dialect of Crete. It will be demonstrated that the
48 usage of the Sumerian language for this decipherment provides a coherent and meaningful
49 interpretation of the text on this inscription.

50

51 **2. DECIPHERMENT GUIDELINES**

52

53 Knowing that the conventionally called Eteocretan inscriptions convey more than one
54 language, we had to determine which language is conveyed by the Psychro inscription. One
55 thing that makes this difficult is that the inscription language is for the most part rendered in
56 a script foreign to the language conveyed, so the phonemes are not expected to be rendered
57 with precision [4]. Another difficulty is that even when the language is determined, we still
58 have to understand the specific features of that language for the given date and place.
59 These difficulties have been overcome by following the latest linguistic evidence about the
60 affinity of the Aegean scripts to Sumerian [15, 16, 17, 18] and especially by confirming the
61 existence of a Cretan Protolinear script [12, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24].

62

63 It is exactly the following three facts that made others regard the inscription as fake or
64 unreadable, which opened our way to read it:

- 65 1) We were facilitated by the fact that this inscription is well preserved, with not even
66 one letter missing or unreadable.
- 67 2) The three Minoan syllabograms on the inscription clearly point to the fact that the
68 whole inscription is in the language of those who originally created the Minoan
69 civilization along with the Cretan Protolinear script.
- 70 3) It was impossible for others to explain how the Minoan script survived until 300 BC,
71 while that very fact confirms the existence of the Cretan Protolinear script:

72 As we have explained in previous works, the Cretan Protolinear script was created by the
73 Minoans, who were Sumerian speakers [12, 20, 21, 22]; the Cretan Protolinear script in the

74 form of Linear A and Linear B was used by all the different nations that inhabited Crete and
75 the Aegean. However, in the hands of non-Minoans (i.e. hands of non-Sumerians) the
76 Cretan Protolinear script was distorted as time passed, and eventually forgotten, because
77 the script was difficult for non-Minoans (=non-Sumerians). On the other hand, in the hands
78 of Minoan Sumerians the Cretan Protolinear script could not be significantly distorted or
79 forgotten, no matter how many generations would pass. This is because the Cretan
80 Protolinear script (henceforth in this work referred to simply as "Protolinear") was phonetic
81 and pictographic at the same time: every phonetic (syllabic) sign was a sketch of a readily
82 recognizable object in the Minoan Sumerian culture. So, for those who had Minoan
83 Sumerian as their first language, every syllabic sign had the native name of the thing that the
84 sign depicted, and they always knew what the signs depicted. They could not alter the shape
85 of the signs lest they would be no more recognizable and if a sign was not recognizable it
86 could not have a native (Minoan Sumerian) name, so it could not have a phonetic value. This
87 is why the Protolinear script could not be altered in Minoan hands; while for non-Minoans
88 there was no connection between depicted object and phonetic use of the Protolinear signs.
89 Therefore, the Protolinear script survived unaltered as long as the Minoan nation existed.
90 And we know that the Minoan Sumerian language, and other non-Greek languages spoken
91 in Crete, was spoken not only until 300 BC but also much later [21], because those
92 populations were relatively isolated geographically and socially. The Sumerian language in
93 Mesopotamia remained in use as a classical and hieratic language until about the year 100
94 AD [25]. It was easy for a language to be kept for many centuries among different languages
95 when there was no obligatory schooling and no mass media. An example is the many
96 languages mentioned in the Bible, Acts 2, all spoken during the 1st century AD, including
97 Elamite, a language no less old than Sumerian, and languages "of Mesopotamian people"
98 among which were Sumerian and Akkadian – all those languages, when the eastern part of
99 the Roman Empire was rapidly Hellenized and the Empire's official language was Latin. We
100 shall also briefly mention what is detailed in [21], that even after the pre-Greek languages
101 were forgotten, they left some impressive phonological traits in some dialects of Crete and
102 other islands: the most outstanding being a retroflex "L"; also, a strong tendency to eliminate
103 consonant cluster, and the emphatic pronunciation of some stop consonants, to mention
104 only a few traits that have been left from Sumerian.

105
106 Apart from linguistic evidence, there is an abundance of cultural instances that show the
107 influence and lingering of the Minoan Civilization even through the Classical times. The
108 comparison of the Bronze Age Aegean (culturally Minoan) wall paintings to the Etruscan
109 ones reveals a remarkable resemblance [26]. Those who have an idea of the Minoan
110 religious symbols and ideas will be impressed by the coins of Tenedos island (Fig. 2) minted
111 in the 5th and 4th centuries BC. Such coins are presented here because they most loudly
112 prove that the Minoan Sumerian culture and religious ideas were totally alive in some Greek
113 city states inhabited by Greeks of Minoan ancestry at least until the 4th century BC, while
114 those symbols are a mystery for modern archaeologists as they were for the other ancient
115 Greeks as well, who could only make up some totally fanciful and frivolous interpretations
116 [27, 28, 29]. To be serious with the interpretation, on the right of Fig. 2, the coin's verso
117 depicts a double axe which is the most renowned religious symbol of the Minoans. The
118 double axe symbolized the power and the duality of God An, the supreme deity of both the
119 Minoans [12] and the Mesopotamian Sumerians [30]. The double axe symbol was also used
120 as a very common syllabic (phonetic) sign in the Aegean scripts [12, 20, 21, 23] and it is
121 present, although not so common in the Sumerian (pre-Cuneiform) pictography [17, 22]. On
122 the coin's recto, the double-face head (manly face left, woman's face right) clearly
123 symbolized the same duality of the deity (masculine-feminine, yin-yang as we would say in
124 modern terms). Although this representation can be interpreted as Zeus and Hera (or
125 another mythological couple) as many scholars speculate [29], yet such a dual head
126 representation has never been seen elsewhere in the entire Antiquity: it was a non Greek

127 symbol that surprised the Greeks, but it was quite ordinary for the Minoans who saw a dual
 128 deity everywhere and represented the duality of the deity by all their religious symbols. Since
 129 such important Minoan Sumerian cultural elements were kept alive in a Greek city state
 130 during the 5th and 4th century BC, we cannot find any justification for considering strange a
 131 Minoan inscription in Crete of the year 300 BC.
 132



133
 134

135 **Fig. 2. The Silver Drachma of Tenedos (5th century BC) [27]**
 136

137 We understand that the Psychro inscription (Fig. 1) spoke about something related to
 138 building and dedicating a small shrine, because of the stone's triangular shape that was
 139 obviously made to fit into a triangle formed over a door of a small structure (the Greek name
 140 for such an architectural triangle was "anakouphistikon trigōnon"; it was a common feature in
 141 architecture since the early Bronze Age). For the inscription text, at first sight the readers
 142 may notice that all consonants are voiceless ("Z" too was for a voiceless consonant as will
 143 be shown below): this is immediately explained when we know that the Minoan, like all other
 144 Sumerian dialects, did not use voiced consonants. It is widely known [36, 37] that Sumerian
 145 "k p t" in the Cuneiform were only aspirated, while "g b d" were ejective or emphatic, all of
 146 them voiceless (phonological rule 5.0.6 on p. 34: [31]). It can be also noticed that all words in
 147 the inscription end with vowels: it is one of the best known characteristics of Sumerian that
 148 all consonants had to be followed by vowels, otherwise the consonants were silenced; but
 149 also, all these vowels at the end of the words in the inscription are long vowels. This is easily
 150 explained by the use of epenthetic vowels: since short vowels were used as epenthetic (that
 151 is, to enable final consonants to be pronounced), the vowels at the end of words were
 152 usually long, just to show that they were not epenthetic; and for one more reason: since the
 153 final consonants were not pronounced, it would be normal for the previous vowels to be
 154 lengthened (a phenomenon called "antectasis" or "compensatory lengthening").
 155

156 As seen in Fig. 1, the inscription text in Greek letters reads

157 ΕΠΙΟΙ
 158 ΖΗΘΑΝΘΗ
 159 ΕΝΕΤΗ ΠΑΡ ΣΙΦΑΙ

160 and then three Minoan syllabograms follow. The reader may notice a small space between
 161 ΠΑΡ and ΣΙΦΑΙ, which at first sight seems to contradict the fact that no consonant could be
 162 pronounced without a following vowel in Sumerian. In fact, that space took the place of a
 163 vowel for which there was no Greek letter available, and also the same space separated a
 164 prefix ("ΠΑΡ") from the rest of the word ("ΣΙΦΑΙ"). On the whole, we can observe that the
 165 scribe of this inscription used the more accurate means *available* to convey the Minoan
 166 Sumerian sounds by the Greek alphabet of that time. It has already been mentioned above
 167 that Sumerian "k p t" were aspirated and "g b d" were emphatic or ejective, all voiceless; this
 168 already explains why Sumerian "b" was rendered by Greek Π and "d" by "T" (phonological
 169 rule 5.0.6 on p. 34: [31]). The same observation also explains why the Sumerian "t"
 170 (aspirated) was conveyed by Greek "Θ", and "p" by "Φ". This use of Greek X, Θ, Φ in foreign

words was consistent in both Classic and Hellenistic times: Akkadian and other Semitic words are rendered with Greek “X”, “Φ”, “Θ” in place of the original “k”, “p”, “t” respectively. For example, Akkadian *tarmuš* (= lupine) became Greek *θέρμος* in Classic or Archaic times. In the Septuagint text (Hellenistic times, very near to this inscription), all Semitic “k”, “p”, “t” in proper names are rendered by Greek “X”, “Φ”, “Θ” respectively. The final “r” in the end of Sumerian words (where it could not be pronounced) left its trace as /j/ (this can be seen passim on Cretan Hieroglyphic inscriptions; see rule 5.0.33 on p. 37: [31]). Minoan Sumerian /j/ was rendered by Greek Ι (it was the only way to render “j”; the same can be seen countless times in the Septuagint text when Hebrew etc. names are rendered in the Greek alphabet). The Sumerian “š” (that is /ʃ/) on the inscription is conveyed by the Greek “Z”, exactly corresponding to the Mycenaean Greek “Z” that is rendered as the Sumerian “š” in Linear B (see signs *20 and *17 on p. 337: [12]). ‘Θ’ was used for the Sumerian “z” that was pronounced /θ/ (see all syllabograms with “z” in [21] and phonological rule 33 on page 21 ibidem). And then, the combination ΝΘ rendered the pre-nasalized Sumerian “t” (phonological rule 5.0.15 on p. 35: [31]).

Since we have understood how the scribe applied the Greek alphabet for his own Minoan Sumerian language, we can proceed to read and interpret the inscription. In reading and interpreting the whole text of the inscription, in the next section, we shall show, for convenience, the long vowels by reduplication, e.g., ee means a long “e”. Also for convenience, we shall use the letter ə for a near close back Sumerian vowel, pronounced approximately as /ɤ/, and ~ for nasalization. Word forms found in Cuneiform are rendered here in the conventional way and in quotation marks so that the reader keeps in mind that Cuneiform does not accurately render the pronunciation; when we need to be more accurate, we use also œ and y (pronounced as the œ and y of the International Phonetic Alphabet [IPA]): these were the rounded front vowels of Sumerian), and “c” to mean a palatal emphatic non aspirate consonant. /θ/ is used as in the IPA.

3. RESULTS

Applying all the mainstream knowledge of Sumerian language together with the specific characteristics of the Minoan Sumerian dialect as summarized in the list of phonological rules cited in [31], the text of the inscription (Fig. 1) is read, word by word, as follows ([21], page 200):

- i. ΕΠΙΟΙ = ebi oj = *ébi or = shrine this (=this shrine)
- ii. ΖΗΘΑΝΘΗ = šeeθa~tee = *šée(š)-θat-ee = Šéeθat (a proper name, marked by –ee as subject of an active verb)
- iii. ΕΝΕΘΗ = énedee = *é-ne-dee = he built
- iv. ΠΑΡ ΣΙΦΑΙ = báarešiiipəə = *báare-siip-əə = it will not ever collapse
- v. cə-ti-lə = cətiləə = *cə-til-əə = may I live.

All words of the text from [i] to [iv] are written in the Greek alphabet of that time (about 300 BC) while “cə-ti-lə” [v] is a word of three Minoan syllabic signs. This reading of the inscription is consistent with the characteristic Sumerian morpho-phonology that did not allow any consonant unless followed by a vowel. –j in the end of “oj” [i] was allowed as a *semivowel* being a trace left by an -r. Again to the gap instead of a vowel after P in ΠΑΡ ΣΙΦΑΙ, although this seems to break the rule of “no consonant clusters”, still the rule was kept as normally: there was a short “ə” after the “r”, but there was no Greek letter available to represent that sound, which was anyway short, epenthetic, and hardly noticed by foreigners. Even today people think that they hear consonant clusters in Japanese, but in fact they do not notice some “u” and even “i” which are short and voiceless. For example, Greeks who hear Japanese “ichi” (“one”), pronounce it as “ich”. Especially after consonants that can be pronounced with continuation (fricatives and liquids), an epenthetic vowel is often

misinterpreted as a continuation of the previous consonant. For all these reasons and because “ΠΑΡ” was only a prefix in the word “ΠΑΡ ΣΙΦΑΙ”, the scribe preferred to leave a short “gap” between “ΠΑΡ” and “ΣΙΦΑΙ”. It was different with the long “əə”: that was conveyed by the Greek diphthong “ΑΙ”, which, in the Koine Greek language of those years was pronounced probably /æ:/, but it is really probable that in the Cretan Greek vernacular the “ΑΙ” was /ə:/, a long mid central vowel. What is certain, is that Linear B used the Minoan syllabograms with “ə” to represent the Mycenaean Greek diphthong “ΑΙ”. This inscription shows that the pronunciation of Greek “ΑΙ” in Crete was not much changed since the Mycenaean times. It may still be argued that “t” was nasalized (written “NΘ”) while “p” (written simply “Φ”) was not nasalized, and this appears to be an inconsistency, but in fact it is not: the rule was to nasalize the aspirate consonants, only when they were preceded by short vowels, as was the “A” in “ZHΘANΘH”; while the “I” before the “Φ” in “ΠΑΡ ΣΙΦΑΙ” was a long “i”, so the “Φ” ought not to be nasalized (concerning the phonological rule 5.0.15 on page 35 in [31]).

We have transliterated and translated the words of the inscription (numbered [i] to [v] above), but a commentary will also be added now to each word so that it can be clearly identified with a documented word form of Cuneiform (Mesopotamian) Sumerian.

[i.a]: ébi in the Sumerian cuneiform is “ub”, i.e. “œby” from older “ebi” (phonetic rule 5.0.4 on p. 34: [31]). This “ub”, meaning a kind of shrine, is found composite with “lil₂” (wind, air, uninhabited land) in “wr. ub-lil₂-la₂ = outdoor shrine”. In one case, the sign UB is interchanged with “ib” and “ib-bi” (i.e. ebi): “wr. ub; ib; ib-bi = corner, recess; Akk. *tubqu*”, which confirms that the Cuneiform sign UB was pronounced œby from older ebi.

[i.b]: “or” not followed by a vowel becomes “oj” (phonetic rule 5.0.33 on p. 37: [31]). In Sumerian cuneiform this word is “ur₅”, a very common demonstrative pronoun for non-person words (Sumerian used two grammatical genders: one for persons and one for things).

[ii]: šée(š)-θat-ee is a Sumerian name of the most common type, consisting of: a term of kinship + honorific adjective. The most famous Sumerian names are of this type: “Gilgames”, in classical Sumerian being “bil₂-ga-mes” = “ancestor heroic”; and “Dumu-zi” = “son righteous”. In šée(š)-θat-ee we have “brother righteous”. In cuneiform: “šēš” = brother, and “zi(d)” = right, just, correct, proper. The “e” in Cuneiform typically stands for a long “e” although Cuneiform is not accurate or consistent, but in this word it is verified as a long “e” by the use of Greek “H” instead of “E”. Also “š” at the end of words is not reliable in Cuneiform, but here the alphabetical text is accurate enough. The word for “brother” was exactly šēš. Like most terms of kinship, it is formed by reduplicating one consonant (other examples of such formation are “mama” [mom], “baba” [dad], “lala” [grandma], “teta” [aunt], “papu” [grandpa], all these in Modern Greek, but also well known in many and diverse languages). Although word-stress or tones were not shown in old scripts, based on [36] and our own research, we judge that the principal stress of Sumerian words was on their first component, in this case šēš(š). In this inscription, šēš is simply šē, because of the most common phonetic rule of Sumerian language that silences every consonant when not followed by a vowel. The second component of šée(š)-θat-ee is Cuneiform’s “zi(d)”, a very common and important word where “true” and “good” coincide, so it is translated “genuine”, “right”, “righteous”, “just”, “proper”, “faithful”, “dutiful”; or “holy” in connection to deities, because everything genuine of a deity is considered holy. This “zi(d)” was pronounced “θet” (phonetic rule 5.0.39 on p. 38: [31]) from an earlier “θat” (rule 5.0.3 on p. 34: [31]), which is what we have in this inscription. So, the name šée(š)-θat meant “a righteous brother”, implying a brother who is just to his siblings, just as a brother ought to be. This name šée(š)-

276 θat here has the suffix -ee, which marked the subject of an active verb: both in form and
277 meaning this is the best known suffix in Cuneiform Sumerian.

278
279 [iii]: é-ne-dee is the verb “dee”, in Cuneiform encountered as “du₃” that is “dœœ”, which
280 means “to build / construct”. In PSD [32], the verb is listed with 7061 occurrences in
281 Mesopotamian tablets and ownership or dedicatory inscriptions. It was one of the most
282 common verbs found in Cuneiform, along with the verbs meaning “to give” and to “receive”,
283 because giving, receiving and building are the most common activities recorded on
284 Cuneiform documents of all kinds. Here the verb has the e- and -ne- prefixes; this e- is found
285 as “i-” in Cuneiform (where the short e is usually represented as “i” [36]) and it is the most
286 common prefix on Sumerian verbs. There was also a prefix “mu-”, but that meant some
287 distant action, usually not witnessed by the speaker. The right prefix in this case was clearly
288 e- (the “i-” of Cuneiform). The second prefix, -ne-, is usually found as a plain “-n-” in
289 Cuneiform, where, together with the previous “i-”, it becomes “in-”. Exactly this verb form is
290 one of the commonest verb forms encountered in Cuneiform, as “in-du₃” (pronounced
291 “énedœœ”) = “he built”. The verbal prefix -ne- (or “-n-”) was used before the verb stem to
292 indicate the subject (when it was a “person”, not a “thing”) of the verb in the perfective tense.
293 Essentially, it was a remnant of the pronoun “ane” (= he/she).

294
295 [iv.a]: báarə is a prefix found in Cuneiform as “bar-” at the beginning of verbs with a meaning
296 of intense negation “it does not...; it will never...; it cannot...”. This prefix refers very often to
297 the future, although there is no specific future tense in Sumerian: the imperfective tense can
298 refer to the future too. Same is the use of the negative suffix –maz in Turkic languages:
299 although not a specific marker of future tense, it usually refers to the future.

300 We have already mentioned that an epenthetic vowel “ə” was needed here for pronouncing
301 the r-; such epenthetic or “weak” vowels are mostly not visible in the Cuneiform script, and in
302 this case this “ə” was not represented by a letter in this alphabetic inscription.

303
304 [iv.b]: in siip-əə, the verbal stem is -siip-. This is also a very common verb in Sumerian, in
305 Cuneiform recorded as “sig” = bring down, throw down; pronounced “siiq” in Mesopotamia
306 (rule 5.0.39 on p. 38: [31]). This phonetic rule was so general that older “p” and “b” appear
307 usually as “g” in Cuneiform. In some cases, within Cuneiform the same word is attested both
308 with “b” and “g”, e.g., “agrig” is also found as “abrig”. There are many literal and idiomatic
309 expressions with this word (originally “siip”) in Sumerian Cuneiform, for example:

- 310 • The expression “wr. igi sig₁₀ = to see” is exactly analogous to the Modern Greek
- 311 idiom “to drop an eye” (= to have a look).
- 312 • “wr. inim sig₁₀ = to express an idea or desire” was literally “to drop a word” (in a
- 313 discussion).
- 314 • Also “wr. sa₂ sig₁₀ = to plot” is literally “to drop an idea / an opinion”.
- 315 • In PSD [32], “sig₁₀” is well translated by English “to cast” (throw down), whereas
- 316 some not so common metaphoric meanings originate from it, like the word “ki sig₁₀ =
- 317 to flatten” (“ki” = earth, so “ki sig₁₀” literally is “to bring down to the level of the
- 318 earth”).
- 319 • In the exact words of PSD [32]: “wr. sig₉; sig₁₀; si-ig = to place; Akk. šakānu = let
- 320 down, place, put something down”.
- 321 • In “wr. šag₄-sug₄-ga; šag₄-sug₄; šag₄-sig = waste, empty (land), emptiness, hunger,
- 322 famine”, “sug₄” / “sig” has the passive meaning: “collapsing”, the expression literally
- 323 meant “belly collapsing (sinking)”; (that late form “sug₄” from older “sig” is another
- 324 instance of rounding some front vowels, as in “dee” that became “dœœ” wr. “du₃” in
- 325 Cuneiform, see word [iii]. Phonetic rule 5.0.4. on p. 34 [31]).
- 326 • The verb “sig₁₀” appears mostly in active sense (“to drop”), but sometimes also as
- 327 passive (“to fall”), depending on the context.

- On p. 293 in the glossary of Behrens & Steible [33], “sè(g)” (= sig₁₀) is translated as active (bring down, put down, subdue), “temen-sig = throw (i.e. lay) foundations”, but then (on p. 295: [33]) “si(g)” is translated as passive (collapse, sink); Again, the Modern Greek idiom follows the Sumerian: the common Modern Greek expression for laying foundations is “ρίχνω θεμέλια”, literally “drop foundations”.
- In the collection of proverbs by Gordon [34], we have a very interesting proverb: “bread (or food) fell down, the hand (that left the bread) did not know it; water was poured, the hand (that poured the water) did not know it; however, in the arid parts of the underworld these are food and drink; the souls are grateful to the one who offered those things: it will bring him/her happiness”. This is mentioned because in the Sumerian text the phrase “bread fell (on the ground)” is “ninda ì-sig”, where “sig” has clearly the meaning of “falling down” (or being dropped unintentionally or in secret by the hand). In [35] «sig» is mostly listed with a gloss “to be low”, but with a closer look to the word in its contexts we can find that its sense is more precisely “to fall down (to the ground)”.

It is explicit that this verb (-siip- in the inscription) corresponds to Cuneiform Sumerian “sig’ (mostly passive: “to be thrown down”) and “sig₁₀” (mostly active: to throw down). Along with the affixes, báarə-siip-əə = “it will not ever fall”. The only thing that remains to be scrutinized is the -əə at the end of báarə-siip-əə. Some vowel had to be there anyway, to enable the pronunciation of the p-; but this was not the only function of that -əə. Falkenstein (on p. 1, §35.5: [36]) says that such vowels are forms of the “Konjugationspräfix i-” (same as in the word [iii] above) which is suffixed in the form of an “a” when the verb is in an optative or subjunctive mood (while in indicative it is normally prefixed as “i-”). We agree on the function of this suffix, it expresses indeed a verb’s mood similar to subjunctive, which could function to indicate the future; but we do not think it is the same “Konjugationspräfix i-”, because that is only a prefix and not also a suffix. The inscription examined here shows clearly a form (-əə) different than the prefix (e-). And the meaning of that suffix (-əə) is different to that of the prefix e- (meaning an action conceived as “close” to the speaker). We shall not proceed in this work to show the corresponding forms of this suffix in languages cognate to Sumerian, although we hold the opinion [31] that Sumerian is demonstrably related to other languages and not an isolate.

[v]: Beneath the alphabetic text, there is a word written in Proto-linear syllabograms: cə-ti-lə = cətiləə = cə-til-əə = “may I live!”. This word is very well known in Cuneiform as “wr. ga-til₃ = vow, an offering”. PSD [32] gives 20 instances, 13 of them as “ga-til₃” (or “ga-ti”), six as “ga-til₃-la” and one as “ga-til₃-le”. Although PSD [32] contains only 20 instances, this word was very common in Sumerian, since it is a form of the verb ti(l) “to live”, a verbal form that came to be used as a noun: an offering made by some person to his/her deity with saying “may I live!”, that is an offering for the benefit of a person’s own life. This (nominalized) word was used in proverbs too, for example: “niĝ₂ ga-til₃ nu ga-til₃ niĝ₂ ba-til nu ba-til”, which is interpreted, as far as we can understand: “the object of the offering is not an offering, the finished work is not finished”. In other words: the thing that you would offer (with saying “may I live”) is not offered, your work that would be done is not accomplished; meaning that if you do not offer the necessary “ga-til₃” (offering to benefit your life) to your deity, then you cannot complete the job you wish. In Sollberger’s [37] glossary, “ga-til₃-la” is also encountered as a personal name. Remember that, although used as a noun, “ga-til₃-la” was properly a verb meaning “may I live!”. The verb stem is -til-. The ending -əə is the same as explained in /báarə-siip-əə above. The prefix cə- (“ga-” in Cuneiform) was one of the commonest affixes, expressing desire or wish, used for the first person (“I” or “we”) only. In Sumerian Cuneiform, a verb meaning “I want” was not used; instead of saying “I want to do that” they simply used the prefix “ga-” (in Cuneiform) / cə- (in Minoan Sumerian). So, in our inscription, the word cətiləə could be taken in both these senses:

- An offering (i.e. “this is an offering to God for the benefit of my life”) and

381 • “May I live” (i.e. “I say ‘may I live’ when I am offering this”).
382 Those familiar with the Aegean scripts might ask: why is the sign “ti” shaped differently here
383 than in Linear A, Linear B, and Cretan Hieroglyphics? The answer follows from the fact that
384 the first concern of the Minoan scribes was that their signs had to be recognized as objects;
385 in this case, the sign “ti” had to be recognized as an arrow (“ti” in Sumerian) – but without the
386 need to draw it as abbreviated as in Linear B and Linear A where the limited space on the
387 tablet and the required writing speed demanded a very abbreviated form. Also, the hard
388 material (stone) and the purpose of the inscription did not allow for a highly embellished form
389 as the signs of Cretan Hieroglyphic usually are. Those scholars nowadays who might
390 confuse this sign (ti) with “šo” (sign *20 on p. 337: [12]) should notice that the two signs, “ti”
391 (arrow) and “šo” (spear), were clearly distinguished from each other in those times, because
392 “šo” had two tiny horizontal strokes (representing the bonds of the spearhead to the shaft)
393 under the spearhead – on the other hand, “ti” could have only one small horizontal line, and,
394 in contrast to the spear sign, the “ti” sign’s horizontal line was higher and long enough to
395 reach the edges of the Λ shape thus forming a Δ shape. The syllabograms “cə” and “lə” are
396 well known signs in Sumerian pictography and Cuneiform as well as in the Minoan and
397 Cypro-Minoan scripts; these signs have been thoroughly examined in [20] and [21] where
398 they are listed as “cī.” and “lī.” respectively.

399

400 An overall observation; when we read the whole text of the inscription as:

401 ebi oj šeeθa~tee énedee báarəsiipəə cətiləə

402 we observe that the body of the text (apart from the closing ritual word “cətiləə”) is made up
403 of two parts metrically corresponding and rhyming to each other:

404 1) ebi oj - šeeθa~tee (metrical form: ~ ~ | - - -)

405 2) énedee - báarəsiipəə (metrical form: ~ ~ | - - -).

406 The only metrical difference between the two phrases is made by the short “ə” of
407 “báarəsiipəə”, which was anyway epenthetic and scarcely noticeable. This means that the
408 text was consciously formed into a metrical couplet that was conceived as an epigrammatic
409 poem. It was common in antiquity to give a metrical form to the texts of inscriptions. Even
410 today the Cretans are known for their fondness to express themselves in metrical couplets.

411

412 4. CONCLUSION

413

414 It has been demonstrated so far that the Psychro inscription can be deciphered in a
415 meaningful manner by using the Archaic Sumerian dialect of Crete, spoken by the ancestors
416 of the scribe, who had invented the Cretan Protolinear syllabary. This particular scribe used
417 the Greek alphabet for the most part of this inscription, because it was the writing system
418 known by all people in Crete and around the Aegean, and also because the Greek alphabet
419 was the only available writing system proper for writing on hard material, and the only
420 system actually used for stone inscriptions. On the other hand, the Cretan Protolinear
421 syllabary was used almost exclusively on unbaked clay tablets, and it was only suited for
422 writing on soft material; still, the word “cətiləə”, being so important culturally and ritually as
423 we have explained, had to be written in the Cretan Protolinear that was the national script,
424 hailing from a most ancient tradition, for the person who wrote the inscription. It is something
425 analogous to using some Greek phrases in the Orthodox Eucharist ceremony conducted in a
426 non-Greek language. Although it is only this stone that we know of the whole structure built,
427 the inscription was true when it said “this shrine will not ever collapse”: it is the shrine of the
428 Minoan civilization.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Author A' conducted the research, implemented the study and wrote, in Greek, the first draft for the manuscript of this article.

Author B' managed the arrangement for the presentation of the study, processed the literature documentation and prepared the submitted manuscript, after translating the first draft into English. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

REFERENCES

1. Marinatos S. Γραμμάτων διδασκάλια. Minoica: Festschrift zum 80, p. 227. Berlin: Geburtstag von Johannes Sundwall; 1958. German.
2. Kritzas CB. The "Bilingual" inscription from Psychro (Crete). A coup de grâce. In: Gigli R, editor, Μεγάλοι Νήσοι Studi dedicati a Giovanni Rizza per il suo ottantesimo compleanno (published in May 2006, I, pp. 255-261), Catania, Italy; 2004.
3. Brown R. The "Epioi" fake (a.k.a. the Psychro inscription). 2011. Accessed 6 October 2014. Available: <http://www.carolandray.plus.com/Eteocretan/Epioi.html>.
4. Kenanidis IK, Papakitsos EC. The Eteocretan Inscription from Psychro (Crete) is Genuine. Anistoriton Journal. 2015; ViewPoints 14(2):1-7.
5. Brown R. The Eteocretan Inscription from Psychro. Kadmos. 1978; Band XVII/Heft 1:43 sqq.
6. Duhoux Y. L'Étéocrétois: les textes - la langue. Amsterdam: JC Gieben; 1982. French.
7. Davis S. The Decipherment of the Minoan Linear A and Pictographic Scripts. Johannesburg; 1967.
8. Gordon CH. Evidence for the Minoan Language. New Jersey; 1966.
9. Stieglitz RR. The Eteocretan Inscription from Psychro. Kadmos. 1976; 15.
10. Serafimov P. Translation of Eteocretan Epioi Inscription. 2007. Accessed 6 October 2014. Available: www.korenine.si/zborniki/zborniki07/serafimov_epioi07.pdf.
11. Brown R. Some "Translations" of the Epioi fake. 2011. Accessed 6 October 2014. Available: <http://www.carolandray.plus.com/Eteocretan/PseudoTranslation.html>.
12. Kenanidis IK, Papakitsos EC. A Comparative Linguistic Study about the Sumerian Influence on the Creation of the Aegean Scripts. Scholars Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. 2015; 3(1E):332-346.
13. Woudhuizen FC. The Language(s) of Linear A: An Updated Review Article. DO-SO-MO: Fascicula Mycenologica Polona. 2005; 6:95-121.
14. Duhoux Y. Pre-Hellenic Language(s) of Crete. The Journal of Indo-European Studies. 1998; 26(1 & 2).
15. Fischer SR. History of Writing, pp. 34-40. London: Reaktion Books; 2004.
16. Szalek BZ. Eteocretan, Linear A, Etruscan, Lemnian, Carianan, Eteocypriot and related problems in the light of heuristics and cryptology. Szczecin, Poland; 2008.
17. Davis B. Cypro-Minoan in Philistia?, KUBABA. 2011; 2:40-74.
18. Szalek BZ. Tartessian, Etruscan, Linear A, Sumerian and related problems in the light of heuristics and cryptology. Szczecin, Poland; 2015.
19. Willetts RF. The Civilization of Ancient Crete, p. 100. Oakland, California: University of California Press; 1977.
20. Kenanidis I. Eteokreetes Megaleetores. Athens: National Library of Greece; 1992. Greek.
21. Kenanidis I. Historical and Linguistic Studies: "cwepeker.doc". Kavala: Lazidou; 2011. Greek.

- 480 22. Papakitsos EC, Kenanidis IK. Additional Palaeographic Evidence for the
481 Relationship of the Aegean Scripts to the Sumerian Pictography. *Scholars Journal of*
482 *Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences*. 2015; 3(3C):734-737.
- 483 23. Kenanidis IK. A 17th c. BC Minoan Votive Double Axe (Labrys): The Arkalochori Axe
484 and its siblings. *Anistoriton Journal*. 2016; In Situ 15 (2016-2017).
- 485 24. Papakitsos EC, Kenanidis IK. Cretan Hieroglyphics: The Ornamental and Ritual
486 Version of the Cretan Protolinar Script. *Anistoriton Journal*. 2016; Essays 15: No 2.
- 487 25. Campbell L, Mauricio JM. A glossary of historical linguistics, p. 196. Edinburgh:
488 Edinburgh University Press; 2007.
- 489 26. Gerakis A, Katsalirou A. A Comparison of Etruscan and Aegean Wall Painting.
490 *Anistoriton Journal*. 2007; ViewPoints, 10: no 3.
- 491 27. Kyriakidis B, Konstas H, editors. Nobel, vol. 10: Tenedos, p. 3971. Athens: Giovanis
492 1974. Greek.
- 493 28. Touratsoglou I. The Aegean of coins. Athens: Ministry of Culture; 2001. Greek.
- 494 29. Klonizaki A, Lazongas E. Coins of Ancient Greece: Tenedos Drachma. Athens: 4π
495 (National Geographic); 2012. Greek.
- 496 30. Roux G. Ancient Iraq, 3rd Edition. London: Penguin; 1993.
- 497 31. Kenanidis I, Papakitsos EC. Yet another suggestion about the origins of the
498 Sumerian language. *International Journal of Linguistics*. 2013; 5(5):30-44.
- 499 32. The Pennsylvania Sumerian Dictionary (PSD), University of Pennsylvania. Available:
500 <http://psd.museum.upenn.edu/epsd/index.html>. (The abbreviation "wr." therein
501 means "written [as]").
- 502 33. Behrens H, Steible H. Glossar Zu Den Altsumerischen Bau-Und Weithinschriften
503 (Freiburger altorientalische Studien, Band 6). Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag
504 GmbH; 1983. German.
- 505 34. Gordon EI. Sumerian Proverbs. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, University
506 Museum; 1959. Reprinted with a Chapter by Thorkild Jakobsen, New York:
507 Greenwood Press; 1968.
- 508 35. The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature (ETCSL), University of Oxford.
509 Available: <http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/>.
- 510 36. Felkenstein A. Das Sumerische (Handbuch Der Orientalistik). Leiden: E.J. Brill;
511 1964. German.
- 512 37. Sollberger E. The business and administrative correspondence under the kings of Ur
513 (Texts from cuneiform sources, vol. 1). New York, Locust Valley: J.J. Augustin;
514 1966.
- 515