Writing and Society in Ancient Cyprus

From its first adoption of writing at the beginning of the Late Bronze Age, ancient Cyprus was home to distinctive scripts and writing habits, often setting it apart from other areas of the Mediterranean and Near East. This well-illustrated volume is the first to explore the development and importance of Cypriot writing over a period of more than 1,500 years in the 2nd and 1st millennia BC. Five themed chapters deal with issues ranging from the acquisition of literacy and the adaptation of new writing systems to the visibility of writing and its role in the marking of identities. The agency of Cypriots in shaping the island’s literate landscape is given prominence, and an extended consideration of the social context of writing leads to new insights on Cypriot scripts and their users. Cyprus provides a stimulating case to demonstrate the importance of contextualised approaches to the development of writing systems.

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Magdalene College, Cambridge
Frontispiece The grounds of All Souls College, Oxford. Photograph by P.M. Steele.
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Abbreviations

AJA  American Journal of Archaeology
BASOR  Bulletin of the American School of Oriental Studies
BCH  Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique
CCEC  Cahiers du Centre d’Études Chypriotes
CIS  de Vogüé, M., Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum, multiple volumes, Paris (1889–)
JHS  Journal of Hellenic Studies
JMA  Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology
RDAC  Report of the Department of Antiquities, Cyprus
SEG  Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum
SIMA  Studies in Mediterranean Archaeology