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Universal Multiple-Octet Coded Character Set
International Organization for Standardization
Organisation Internationale de Normalisation
Международная организация по стандартизации

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Title: **Considerations regarding a normalized Cypro-Minoan reference font**
Source: **Michael Everson**
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Action: **For consideration by JTC1/SC2/WG2 and UTC**
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The standard modern glyphs for Linear B were first drawn by architect Michael Ventris, who had training in careful lettering and indeed whose ordinary handwriting was meticulously neat. Standard shapes for Linear B, and for Cypriot and for Linear A, follow the style which he set and are implemented in fonts with a crisp monoline and with regularity between related characters.

It appears that before now, no one has tried to apply such a technique to Cypro-Minoan. This is not surprising, since most work hitherto has been focused on discerning what signs are characters and what are glyph variants. Nevertheless, as I was making some requested changes to the code chart using a font provided by the late Jean-Pierre Olivier's, it became clear that some sort of typographic order had to be imposed if the script is to be encoded in an international Standard. Olivier's Cypro-Minoan fonts, it must be admitted, are not very clear, tending towards a representation of the rounded "blobbiness" of a stylus pressed into clay, but often failing to do this well in font outlines. Since the other Aegean scripts have a clear typographic form, it makes good sense now to apply typographic conventions to Cypro-Minoan. Here is an example of some of the glyphs in Olivier's font:

Earlier this year I prepared a simple monoline font on the basis of what I could glean from Olivier's chart font. This was reviewed by some of our Cypro-Minoanist colleagues. The more conservative preferred the glyphs they are used to, which is fair enough. It is not good enough for the Universal Character Set, however. My saying so is not an indictment of Olivier's work; not everyone is a font designer and font design was not Jean-Pierre's intent. (Nor were his glyphs intended to be displayed at 60 points.) I misread the ductus and strokes that I tried to glean from Olivier's glyphs, but if that font were to be used in the code charts, the errors which I made—and worse ones—could easily be made by other designers trying to follow the same model. It's simply unavoidable that we devise a typographically reasonable font for Cypro-Minoan. The charts below show Olivier's original font, my attempt at normalizing it, Maurizio Del Freo and Massimo Perna's hand-written chart, and my final font which I recommend for use in the standard.

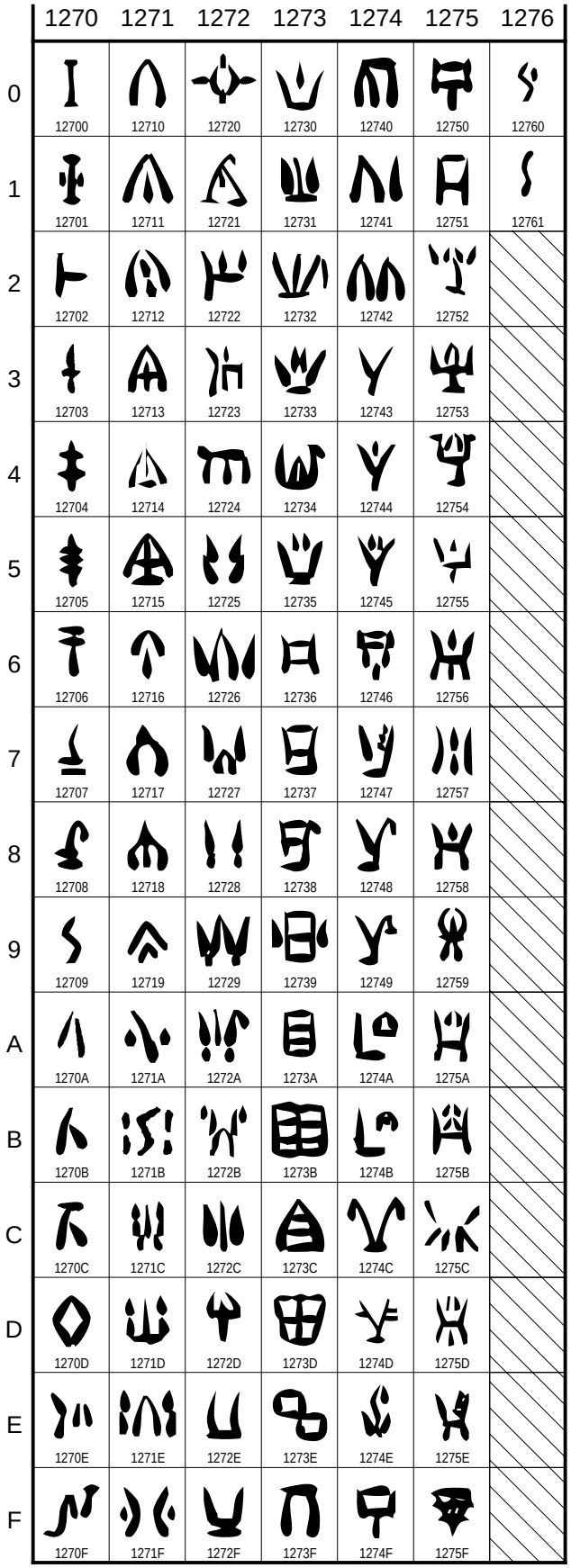

Figure 1. Code chart using a font provided by Jean-Paul Olivier.

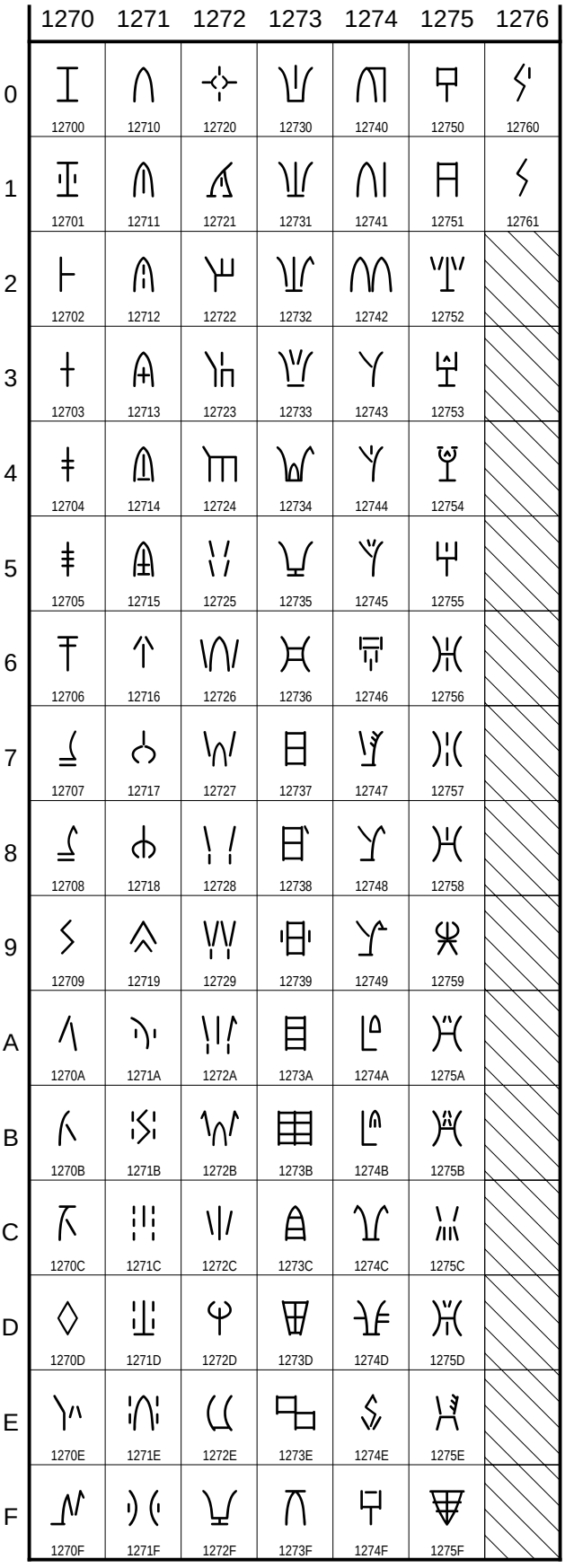

Figure 2. Code chart using a font by Michael Everson,
attempting to follow the ductus used in Jean-Paul Olivier's font as shown in Figure 1.

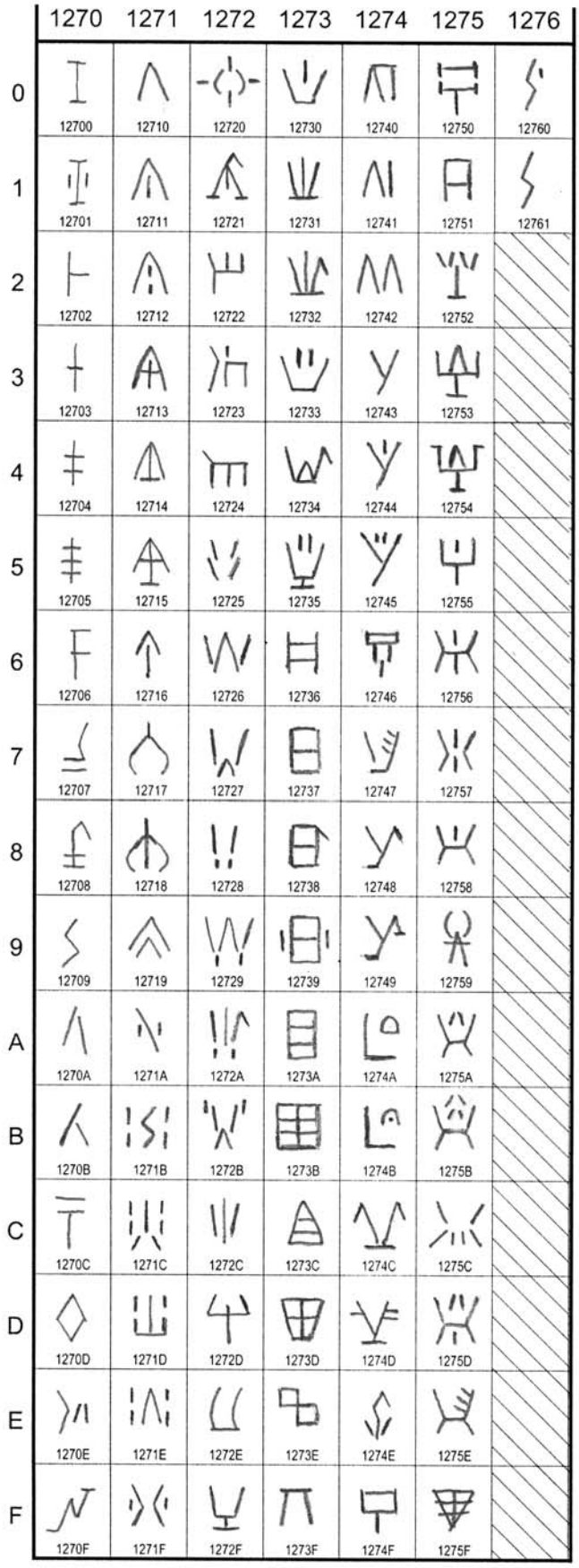

Figure 3. Code chart with glyphs drawn by hand by Maurizio Del Freo and Massimo Perna.

Figure 4. Code chart using a font by Michael Everson,
attempting to follow the ductus used by Maurizio Del Freo and Massimo Perna as shown in Figure 3.