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The X-files: the letter X in the local scripts of Archaic Greece

It is a well-known fact that the phonetic value of the letter X is not one and the same in the local scripts of Archaic Greece.

- In the ‘red’ scripts, the letter <X> (‘red’ *xī*) stands for the sequence [ks]: e.g. Thessalian ΠΟΛΥΧΕΝΑΙΑ (= Πολυξεναία) vs. ΨΡΕΜΑΣΙΝ (= χρήμασιν) with <Ψ> (‘red’ *chi*).
- Conversely, in the ‘dark blue’ scripts, <X> (‘dark blue’ *chi*) stands for /k<sup>h</sup>/: e.g. Ionic ΧΕΡΑΜΥΗΣ (= Χεραμύης) vs. ΑΝΑΞΙΜΑΝΔΡΟ (= Ἀναξιμάνδρου) with <Ξ> (‘dark blue’ *xī*).
- Moreover, in the ‘light blue’ scripts, the sequence [ks] is usually spelt with the digraph <ΧΣ> rather than with expected <ΚΣ>: e.g. Attic ΧΣΕΝΟΣ (= ξένος), where <ΧΣ> can hardly be taken at face value as representing \*[k<sup>h</sup>s] with an aspirate.
- The same spelling <ΧΣ> is purportedly attested in some ‘red’ scripts, in which the spelling <Χ> or the digraph <ΨΣ> should be expected: e.g. Boeotian ΑΡΓΥΡΟΤΟΧΣΟΙ (= ἀργυροτόξωι), Rhodian ΦΥΛΙΧΣ (= κύλιξ),
- To complicate matters further, a deviant spelling <□Σ>, usually interpreted as a variant of <ΗΣ>, apparently occurs in the ‘light blue’ (?) script of Naxos: ΝΑ □ ΣΙΟ (= Ναξίω).

Can all these seemingly disparate phonetic values be traced back to a common origin? In my paper I will try to give a principled answer to this question.

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