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NEW READING OF THE LINEAR A INSCRIPTION ON THE GOLDEN PIN CR-ZF-1 FROM CRETE

This article is the revision of a previous article already presented at the Second International Congress - Pre-Cyrillic Writing and Pre-Christian Slavic Culture - Sanct Petersburg - Town Pushkin - 14 May 2009.

Povzetek

NOVO BRANJE LINEAR A NAPISA NA ZLATI SPONI CR.ZF.1 S KRETE

Linearni A napis na zlati sponi Cr-ZF-1 iz Minojske Krete kaže dobra ujemanja besed in slovničnih podobnosti med minojsko slovanskimi ter starimi in sodobnimi slovanskimi jeziki. To predstavlja dodatno razvidno povezavo, da je bil otok, ki je postal dom visoko razvite evropske civilizacije, naseljene že v 2. tisočletju pr. Kr., z minojsko praslovansko skupnostjo.

Introduction

In a previous paper [1], in line with the Continuity Theory [2], p. 134, which suggests the presence of the Slavic cultures in the South-Eastern Europe from the Palaeolithic, we examined the facts supporting a Slavic presence in the ancient Minoan Crete. The presence in Crete of a multi-ethnic society in the second millennium BC is testified by Strabo [3], pp. 3-4, and Faucounau [4], p. 99, although mainly dealing with Proto-Ionians, admits that: »the impression is to have in Crete a population non-homogeny that came from different horizons.

This impression will maintains itself up to the historical epoque because, from one side, Homer tells of Crete - of hundred towns - and, on the other side, the inscriptions written in the Linear A script could, perhaps, belong to different languages«. However, our deciphering of the Linear A inscription on the golden signet ring of Mavro Spelio, provided in our previous paper [1], gives the first evidence of the presence in Crete of a Minoan Slavic community speaking a Minoan Slavic language similar to the present Slavic languages. In this work we want to add more evidence of the existence of such a Minoan Slavic language and community.

The Artefact

The golden pin Cr-Zf-1 is displayed at the Museum of Hagios Nikolaos in Crete and shown in Fig. 1. The inscription on the pin consists of 18 characters separated by four dots, which provide a subdivision of the inscription in five words shown in Fig. 2. Because the second and fourth characters correspond respectively to the syllables MA and SI, executed in the style of Linear A the inscription can be defined as belonging to the Linear A writing system. This script was in use in the Minoan Crete up to 1450 BC, and judging from the style of the characters, the inscription can be dated approx. 1700 BC.

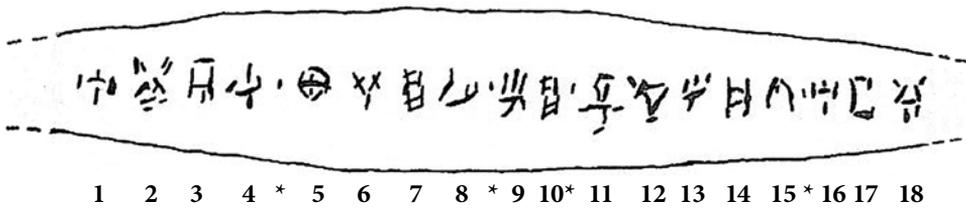


Fig. 1: Golden pin Cr-Zf-1

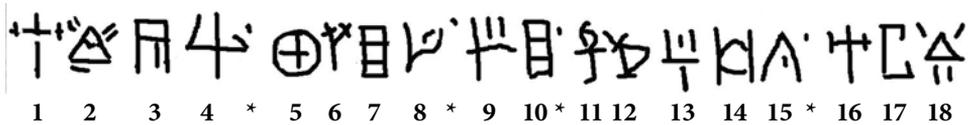


Fig. 2: Inscription on the golden pin Cr-Zf-1

Previous spellings and translations.

Younger [5] offered the following spelling of the inscription without trying a translation:

A-MA-WA-SI * KA-NI-JA-MI * I-JA * QA-KI-SE-NU-TI * A-TA-DE

In our opinion the Younger's reading of 9th, 11th and 13th characters - see Figs. 3, 4 is not correct. In the matter of fact, the 9th character, according to the generally accepted phonetic values of Linear A characters [6], Fig. 5, appears to conform to the character SE instead of character I in Fig. 3, the 11th character appears to conform to character ZA instead of character QA in Fig. 4, the 13th character appears to conform to character I instead of character SE Fig. 5.



Fig. 3: 9th character, comparison of Linear A characters

1: generally accepted Linear A character SE, 2: generally accepted Linear A character I, 3: golden pin 9th character conforming to Linear A character SE.

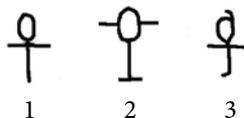


Fig. 4: 11th character, comparison of Linear A characters

1: generally accepted Linear A character ZA, 2: generally accepted Linear A character QA, 3: golden pin 11th character conforming to Linear A character ZA.



Fig. 5: 13th character, comparison of Linear A characters

1: generally accepted Linear A character I, 2: generally accepted Linear A character SE, 3: golden pin 13th character conforming to Linear A character I.

Faucounau [7] suggested a slightly different spelling:

A-MA-WA-NE * KA-NI- JA-MI * I-JA* ZA-KI-SE-NU-TI * A-TA DE

He analysed the inscription on the basis of a language called by him Proto-Greek Hurrianoid Language as follows:

A-MA-WA-NE - To the (-NE) female harvester (probably the Goddess Demeter), Greek corresponding word *amafw*: to harvest;

KA-NI-JA-MI - Kanija-mi a proper name with probable meaning: I am from the reeds country - Canaan, Greek corresponding words *kanna*: reed, *kaneion*: basket;

I-JA - Let her relieve the pain! - Imperative expressing the wish, the prayer), Greek corresponding word *iaomai*: to relieve pain, Mycenaean: - *i-ja-te*;

ZA-KI-SE-NU-TI - may be to be read Za-Kisse-Nu(s)ti(s) - proper name with meaning: the one, who wishes to sleep, Greek corresponding words: *za*: very much, *kissaw*: to wish, *mustazw*: to doze of;

A-TA-DE - probably to be read At(l)de - Let him to be like youngster!, Greek corresponding words *atalw* - to jump as young person or animal, *atalos* - young.

He considers the inscription as a supplication to Demeter (?), which would be supported by the vegetal decoration of the gold pin, which in his opinion represents a wild rose (*Rosa Canina*) [7], although in [8], Object 54, this decoration is indicated as brambles.

In addition to the Younger's mistakes concerning the 9th and 13th characters - I instead of SE, SE instead of I, he introduced another mistake: the 4th character definitely appears to conform to Linear A character SI instead of character NE, see Fig. 6.



Fig. 6: 4th character, comparison of Linear A characters

1: generally accepted Linear A character SI, 2: generally accepted Linear A character NE, 3: golden pin 4th character conforming to Linear A character SI.

Moreover, in the Faucounau's interpretation [7] some explanations are missing. If the so called Proto-Greek Hurrianoid Language was a Greek or Mycenaean language, its use for translating the inscription would be inappropriate. In fact, according to [9], p. 1, the oldest Cretan toponyms: Knossos, Tulissos and Aminisos, cannot be explained with the help of the Greek language. This would support the generally accepted fact set out in [10], p. 269, that Greeks or Mycenaean came to Crete around 1450 BC, about 250 years later than the date of the inscription.

If this Proto-Greek Hurrianoid Language was a Proto-Ionians language, he himself observes [4], pp. 81-83 that the Proto-Ionians had different port of call »ports de relaches« during the Ancient Minoan I and II (2700-2200BC) but they never established real colonies in Crete, contenting themselves with storehouses »comptoirs« allowing them to commerce with local kings. Thus, although not impossible, the use of such a Proto-Greek Hurrianoid Language for writing inscriptions in Crete at the date of the inscription appears very improbable.

If such a Proto-Greek Hurrianoid Language was the language spoken by a sort of Proto-Greek community present in the multi-ethnic society of Crete in the second millennium BC, it would be attested, at least at the moment, only by this inscription, giving the doubt about the real existence of said Proto-Greek Hurrianoid Language.

Hicks

A further attempt of translating the inscription is offered by Hicks [11]. She accepts the spelling of Younger [5].

A-ma-wa-si ka-ni-ja-mi i-ja qa-ki-se-nu-ti a-ta-de

She provides the following translation:

For the Harvester I kill (kaino, in Greek) here / [the pin] will stick into (pegnumi, Greek) this (ata with allative -de).

She adds that: »This pin was most certainly used during the ceremony of an animal sacrifice. It is interesting to note in connection with the Harvest-goddess that two axes (AR Zf1 and AR Zf2 are inscribed I-da ma-te – mother Ida, the earliest form of Demeter«.

However, because the spelling she proposes corresponds to that of Younger [5], the above objections about the reading of 9th, 11th and 13th characters of the inscription still apply. Hick's suggestion that the Greek verb pegnumi – to stick at, corresponds to the Linear A word *qa-ki-se-nu-ti* seems not possible. Indeed Linear A syllable QA could evolve into PA (qasireu = parireu – basileus), but in this case *qa-ki-se-nu-ti* would evolve, probably, into *pa-gi-se-nu-ti* → **pag**senti, which would corresponds to verbal form of 3 pers. pl. (because of the ending **enti**), not to the verbal form of the 1st. pers. sing. Also the combination GS in **pag**senti is alien to the Greek language. So neither Hick's reading, nor her interpretation can be accepted as even probable.

New spelling and translation

Our reading of the inscription, on the basis of the above observations, is only slightly different from that of Younger [5] and Faucounau [7].

A-MA-WA-SI * KA-NI-JA-MI * SE-JA * ZA-KI-I-NU-TI * A-TA-DE

But our translation is rather different:

Amawasi to the priestesses (women) this offering gave.

In a loose translation can be rendered as:

Amawasi gave to the priestesses this pin as an offering.

A-MA-WA-SI - personal name, subject, with meaning: strong one. Best match offers the Avestanic word *amava* – strength. But on the other hand Avestan does not have any etymology for this word, there is no root MAV in any word covering the concept of power. But Avestan word **MAZDA** means *mighty*, so we can assume that the Minoan word **AMAWASI** corresponds to Proto Indo-European word MAG – mighty, variants of which we can find in Sanskrit **MAHA** - great, Latin **MAGNUS** - great, Gaulish **MAGALO** - ruler, chief, Germanic **MACHT** - power and Slavic **MOSHT** - power, **MOGU**- I am able and also Old Bulgarian word **МАГОТЪ** - ruler.

Apparently in the Minoan Slavic language G and W/V were interchangeable. That peculiarity is typical also for the Thraco-Pelasgian language as can be seen from the personal names **Gaidrus** – bright one, and **Vaidra** (Faidra) – bright one. There are proofs that Thraco-Pelasgians were present in ancient Crete. Thracian personal names were documented on Linear A tablets [12]; Pelasgians were mentioned as ancient Cretan inhabitants [13]. Archaeologically Thraco-Pelasgian migration is attested by the spread of the so called band pottery [14].

KA-NI-JA-MI – female noun, plural, in Dative case with meaning *to the women*. **Kanijam**(i) corresponds to the Dative case plural of Old Church Slavonic female noun **ЖЕХАМЪ** – to the women. However, here the word *women* should be used in the sense of virgins, priestesses. In fact, on Cretan seals, sculptures and rings often are depicted goddesses and priestesses [15], Figs. 76, 79.

Avestanic again has a good match in the word **kanya** – virgin, related to Sanskrit **kanya** – virgin, **kaninasa** – young one; Hittite **hantesiya** – front, begin; Latin **recens** – new, fresh; Celtic (Welsh) **cynta** – begin, **cyntaf** – initial. Slavic languages have the corresponding root KAN, KON which we find in the Russian words **накануне** – eve, begin, and O. Ch. Sl. - **КОНЪ** – begin, **ИСКОНЕНЪ** - initial, first, **КЪНЬЗЪ** – prince, first one.

The meaning of Minoan word **KANIJA** - virgin was thus probably derived from the concepts – *first, firstling, initial, young, fresh, bright*.

SE-JA – demonstrative pronoun – this one, corresponding to O. Ch. Sl. **Съ**, **se** – this one, here indicating the pin.

ZA-KI-I-NU-TI – substantive best matched by the Russ. verb **закинуть** - to throw, to cast, to sacrifice, to offer, i.e. something to sacrifice, something to offer, i.e. offering. Other

matches: Ukrainian **кинути** – to throw; Polish **kidac** – to throw; Slovene **skidaj se!** – go away! Serbian **скинути** – to throw off; Wendish **zakitovanje** – defence; Old Blg. **кина** – I tear.

Note that in the Slavic languages, normally, the substantives do not differ much from the corresponding verbs, for example: Russ. **видеть** – to see, **вид** – appearance, vision, aspect; Russ. **делать** – to do, **дело** = work, activity, affaire; Blg. **ора** – I plough, **орало** – plough; Blg. **даря** – I make a gift, **дар** – gift; Slove. **briti** – to shave, **britva** – razor; Slove. **varati** – to cheat, **varalec** – cheater; Serb. **болети** – to pain, **бол** – pain; Serb. **речи** – to say, talk, tell, **печ** – speech, talk.

Thus, probably the original **ZAKIINUTI** was read as **ZAKIINUT**, but because Linear A was a syllabic script and there was no character for T alone, than **TI** was used instead. The double I in **ZAKIINUTI** could be an indication that this word is not the verbal form but rather its corresponding substantive, or it could simply mark the presence of the accent in the same position, i.e. on the **и**, as in **закинуть**.

A-TA-DE – corresponds to the Aorist tense, 3rd pers. sing. of generally Slavic verb **dati** – to give. **ОТДАДЕ** is its Blg. variant, which means definitive alienation, definitive separation. **ATADE** has parallel variants in the Blg. Dialectal: **атдаде** gave Rodopi Dial., **утдаде** gave Plovdiv Dial., **удади** gave Karlovo Dial.

The reason for which both the Minoan Slavic words **AMAWASI** and **KANIJA** have close matches with the Avestan words **AMAVA** and **KANYA** does not appear to be determined by the influence of a possible Avestan community in the multi-ethnic society of Crete in the second millennium BC, the presence of which is not attested at all, but rather to the fact that the Minoan Slavic language, like Avestan, preserved Indo-Europeans words closest to their original form. We wish to add also that the further we go back in time, the larger is the amount of similar and even identical words between Slavic and Avestanic:

Av. **KADA**-when = O.Ch.Sl. **КАДА** – when

Av. **TA** – this one = O. Ch. Sl. **ТА** – this one

Av. **DVA** – two = O.Ch. Sl. **ДВА** – two

Av. **KAYA** – who (fem. sing) = Blg. **КОЯ** – who (fem. sing.)

However, the good matches of the Minoan Slavic words **ZA-KI-I-NU-TI** and **A-TA-DE** with corresponding words in Slavic languages reinforce our opinion about the presence in Crete in the second millennium BC of a Minoan Slavic community of probably Thracio-Pelasgians origin. The same identity between Slavs and Thracians is well documented in the works of Simokates [16], and the biography of St. Theodosius [17], where the Thracian tribe **Bessi** (**Vessi**) were called Slavs.

Conclusion

Because all the words from the inscription have Slavic etymology and we can detect Slavic grammatical peculiarities (Dative plural, demonstrative pronouns, verbal noun) it will not be exaggeration to say that this Linear A inscription was made by person(s), who belonged to Slavic ethnos.

The surprising similarity of the Slavic-Minoan words: AMAWASI and KANIYAMI with corresponding Avestan words, suggests that the Slavs, who inhabited Crete in 2nd millennium BC, could have moved from South-Eastern Europe, where Slavs and Aryans lived together for millennia. Trade, alliances and marriages between Slavs and Aryans influenced both the peoples linguistically and anthropologically.

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Abstract

The Linear A inscription on the a golden pin Cr-Zf-1 from Minoan Crete shows good word matches and grammatical similarities between the Minoan Slavic and old and modern Slavic languages. This provides additional evidence that the island, who become home of one of the more sophisticated European civilization, was inhabited in the 2nd millennium BC by a Minoan Slavic community.