

## THE ANCIENT TOPONYMS OF MALLIA

### A post-Eurocentric reading of Egyptianising Bronze Age documents

Jan Best<sup>1</sup>

Independent scholar

To the memory of Oscar Landau, non-Eurocentric Hellenist and author of *Mykenisch-griechische Personennamen* (Göteborg, 1958)

#### *Introduction: The Aryan Model*

Not grand theory, but only microscopic case studies will serve to either confirm or refute Martin Bernal's claims to a major Egyptian influence in the Eastern Mediterranean as laid down in the volumes of his *Black Athena* project.<sup>2</sup> The present paper presents such a microscopic case study; it deals with Bronze Age documents from Crete and Pylos which are to be dated between 2000 and 1200 BCE. Martin Bernal has coined the term 'Aryan Model' for the model of Greek history which views Greece as essentially European or Aryan, as against the 'Ancient Model' of the ancient Greeks themselves seeing it as Levantine, on the periphery of the Egyptian, Semitic and Anatolian cultural area.

This study is based on the results of a research project, *The decipherment of Linear A in its archaeological and historical context* (1972-74).<sup>3</sup> In an unpublished report one of the participants in the project, Nanny

---

© 1997 J.G.P. Best

<sup>1</sup>The author is indebted to the editor of this collection, Wim van Binsbergen, for numerous suggestions and criticisms; the final responsibility of course remains with the author. He also acknowledges the contribution of Olaf E. Borgers, who kindly drew the illustrations except the map.

<sup>2</sup>Martin Bernal, *Black Athena. The Afroasiatic roots of classical civilisation, vol. I: The fabrication of ancient Greece 1785-1985* (Free Association Books, London 1987); idem, *vol. II: The archaeological and documentary evidence* (Free Association Books, London 1991).

<sup>3</sup>The author gratefully acknowledges a grant from the Netherlands Research Foundation (ZWO, now NWO).

de Vries, had come to the conclusion<sup>4</sup> that all linear scripts as found along the coasts and in the islands of the Eastern Mediterranean between c. 1850 and 1200 BCE, had most probably originated from hieroglyphic and/ or pictographic ancestors in the same region, and that the differences between the similar linear scripts are to be ascribed to such differences as had already existed between these respective ancestor scripts. Eight years later, she published a limited case study in which she called attention to the remarkable correspondences between the sacred section of the palace at Mallia and three temples at Megiddo.<sup>5</sup> A most fundamental article on the origins of the palaces which were built in the Near East and at Mallia around 2000 BCE was subsequently written by Olivier Pelon.<sup>6</sup> These studies constitute the foundation on which the present argument builds on.

The island of Crete is to become in the next decades, so I predict, the main battleground between Eurocentric Hellenists and scholars in other fields than Greek culture. My position in this battle will be clear from the subtitle of this paper.

First I would like to explain the three terms 'post-Eurocentric', 'reading' and 'Egyptianising' in this subtitle.

The Eurocentric construction by contemporary Hellenists of Crete's history during the Bronze Age runs in broad lines as follows: ancient Crete was the cradle of European civilisation because the earliest Greek documents, the Linear B tablets from Knossos, stem from this island and because the ancient Greeks were the founders of European civilisation.<sup>7</sup> Hellenists are accustomed to call the earlier inhabitants of Crete 'Minoans' after the mythical king Minos, for allegedly these people cannot be further identified, either ethnically or linguistically. The rulers of these Minoans, who in any case were 'non-Greek' or 'pre-Greek', would have lived in luxurious palaces. An elegant woman on a fresco from the palace at Knossos was called by the excavators 'la Parisienne', a nickname which both suggests a pleasant Minoan life-style and underscores the fundamental Eurocentrism in the study of Cretan culture: to call her,

---

<sup>4</sup>Nanny M.W. de Vries, *Met de Kretensische lineairschriften (lineair A en B) verwante lineairschriften in het Nabije Oosten*, 1974, unpublished MS.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. Nanny M.W. de Vries, 'The central sanctuaries at Mallia and Megiddo', in *Interaction and acculturation in the Mediterranean I Mediterranean pre- and protohistory (Amsterdam, 19-23 November 1980)*, Jan G.P. Best & Nanny M.W. de Vries (eds.), Publications of the Henri Frankfort Foundation 6 (B.R. Grüner, Amsterdam, 1982), pp. 125-34.

<sup>6</sup>Olivier Pelon, 'La naissance des palais en Orient et dans l'Égée', *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique [= BCH]* (1990), Supplément XIX, pp. 265-79.

<sup>7</sup>See for this concept e.g. the title of the exhibition *Crete, cradle of Europe* and especially p. 13 of its catalogue: *Mededelingenblad* no. 54/55 (1992), Vereniging van Vrienden Allard Pierson Museum Amsterdam.

alternatively, 'the Jewish Bride' would perhaps be less agreeable to Eurocentric Hellenists, but probably come nearer to the truth, as we shall see below.

The Holocaust was another proof that racists can exterminate entire population groups. Hellenists prefer to withhold from former, 'non-Greek' population groups in Crete, which are by now extinct anyway, their ethnical and linguistic, in short their cultural identity. In my opinion, this policy of *damnatio memoriae* is a subtle way of retrospective genocide. All foreign influences on Crete from the Eastern Mediterranean mainlands of Anatolia, Syrio-Palestine and Egypt, as attested by archaeological finds, are simply explained as just imports from trade: Minoan civilisation would apparently have flourished in splendid isolation until the Greeks appeared on the scene. Therefore any comparison of signs in Cretan writing with their counterparts in the Egyptian and Luwian Hieroglyphic or with those in the Mesopotamian cuneiform and Byblian hieroglyphic and linear scripts has been ridiculed by Hellenists from the very start. Led astray by John Chadwick, who after the death of the decipherer of Linear B Michael Ventris became the principal exponent of the claim of exclusive Greekness for Crete,<sup>8</sup> many a Hellenist is convinced that correspondences between on the one hand Cretan and on the other Egyptian, Mesopotamian and Luwian signs must be ascribed to sheer coincidence;<sup>9</sup> yet to the unbiased observer such correspondences are clear and undeniable. A post-Eurocentric, more scholarly attitude would be to accept as factual starting point all correspondences of signs in Cretan writing and in the surrounding scripts of the Eastern Mediterranean, and on this basis would seek to arrive at tentative decipherings of scripts hitherto unintelligible.

As for the term 'reading', scholars should simply start reading these corresponding Cretan signs with the meanings and the syllabic values of the signs in the pre-existing (before c. 2000 BCE) Egyptian, and in the contemporaneous (from c. 2000 BCE onwards) Syrio-Palestinian and Anatolian scripts. In the present paper I hope to demonstrate that when we do so, there remains nothing to be deciphered at all. For when the original meaning and syllabic value of each Cretan sign can be traced because the meaning and syllabic value of its counterpart in another, already deciphered script is well known, one cannot consider oneself any longer to be a decipherer of an unknown Cretan script. There may develop

---

<sup>8</sup>John Chadwick, 'The "Greekness" of Linear B', *Indogermanische Forschungen* 75 (1970), p. 104; cf. Jan Best & Fred Woudhuizen, *Lost Languages from the Mediterranean* (Brill, Leiden etc. 1989), pp. 49-53.

<sup>9</sup>Louis Godart, *Le pouvoir de l'écriture: Aux pays des premières écritures* (Editions Errance, Paris 1990), p. 208.

differences of opinion amongst scholars about the *interpretation* of Cretan texts, but they will always agree upon the correct *reading* of the signs as such.

This may sound extremely optimistic, not only because scholars as a rule tend to disagree rather than agree, but particularly because such agreement would presuppose an exact fit, a hundred percent, one-to-one correspondence between the Cretan and the other eastern Mediterranean signs. In reality, of course, the fit is admittedly never 100%: the insular scribes adapted the signs to a new system of writing in which they brought the signs derived from different other scripts into a local, increasingly standardised mould of their own. Meanwhile my recent discussion of the results obtained from the comparison of Cretan hieroglyphic signs with their already well-known Luwian counterparts in texts from Anatolia, suggests the essential correctness of reading Cretan texts according to the method advocated above, notwithstanding its presentation in what would appear to be, at first sight, a rather sweeping statement.<sup>10</sup>

As for the term 'Egyptianising', I shall below present a case in which the originally Egyptian symbol of the goddess Hathor was loosely rendered on Cretan seals; in my opinion we are still able to recognise the Egyptian origin of a sign, even when the Cretan scribes have streamlined its form. In such cases we may speak of Egyptianising signs in Cretan writing.

One of the many myths belonging to the folklore of Hellenic Studies<sup>11</sup> concerns Cretan writing. It goes as follows: 'One comprehensive fact about Minoan literacy is clear, and is striking. This is its isolation.'<sup>12</sup> This alleged isolation of Minoan literacy is a comparatively recent myth. For it was created only in the 1950s after Michael Ventris' decipherment of the Linear B script (1952), which happened to contain a Greek dialect. At the time, the Linear B tablets from Knossos in the island of Crete were considered to be the earliest documents in the Greek language. Now the ancient Greeks have been claimed by Hellenists from the late 18th century onwards to be the founders of European civilisation, all other peoples with an Indo-European linguistic heritage being excluded for some reason or another, not to mention non-Indo-European-speaking peoples. In

---

<sup>10</sup>Jan Best, *The Luwian branch of Cretan writing - Publications of the Holland Travelling University 3* (Najade Press, Amsterdam 1997), pp. 4-10.

<sup>11</sup>A ripping introduction to certain peculiar aspects of the folklore of Hellenic Studies in Academia is Donna Tarrt's *The Secret History* (Alfred A. Knopf, New York 1992<sup>9</sup>).

<sup>12</sup>Sterling Dow, 'Literacy in Minoan and Mycenaean Lands', part A of 'The Linear Scripts and the Tablets as Historical Documents', *The Cambridge Ancient History* fascicle 70 (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1971), p. 3 [= vol. II, ch. XIII, p. 582].

Eurocentric thinking the art of writing is still the hallmark of civilisation. In the description of mankind's history, the absence or presence of the art of writing is even used for making the rather haphazard distinction between *prehistory* and *history*. So one can very well imagine why the island of Crete in offering hospitality to the first *writing* Greeks was proclaimed by Hellenists 'the *cradle* of Europe'. However, a minor problem remains. The Linear B tablets from Knossos were dated to c. 1400 BCE, whereas writing started in the island c. 2000 BCE. But as long as Hellenists take care that the several population groups living in Crete before the Greeks between 2000 and 1400 BCE will not be identified and will just remain 'non-Greeks', 'pre-Greeks', meaningless 'Minoans' or just 'foreigners', they may safely continue to hail Crete as the cradle of the Greek language and civilisation, and therefore, at least in their eyes, of European civilisation. Nevertheless, the majority of personal names in the Greek Linear B tablets from Knossos would appear to be 'foreign': personal names of which the historical Greek equivalent is not mentioned at all or is listed as 'uncertain' in Chadwick's *Mycenaean Glossary* of his second, standard edition of *Documents in Mycenaean Greek*. Such a high proportion of 'foreign' elements in Greek texts cries for an explanation. It has been suggested by Hellenists that we should just consider these 'non-Greek' names the names of 'foreigners obliged to write in their masters' language',<sup>13</sup> their masters obviously being Greeks. Anyway, why should a Hellenist study foreign names on Linear B tablets, when a minority of purely Greek ones are available?

Every now and then a scholar discovers the origin of a Cretan sign. He or she has found its counterpart in Egyptian or Luwian Hieroglyphic, in the Mesopotamian cuneiform or Syrio-Palestinian hieroglyphic and linear writing systems, all of them antedating the Linear B script.<sup>14</sup> As far as I know, Hellenists never explicitly refer in their publications to authors' names and titles of articles and books with such important findings. No doubt some of them are in all integrity convinced that objective scholarly criticism has found these claims to be definitely spurious, and that therefore they are exonerated from the obligation to discuss these claims;

---

<sup>13</sup>See Michael Ventris & John Chadwick, *Documents in Mycenaean Greek* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1973<sup>2</sup>), p. 71; J. Chadwick, *Mycenaean Glossary*, in: Ventris & Chadwick, pp. 527-94.

<sup>14</sup>Marie-Luise & Hans Erlenmeyer, 'Zu den kretischen Siegeln mit Hieroglyphenschrift', *Kadmos* 4 (1965), pp. 1-4; Victor E.G. Kenna, 'The stamp-seal, Byblos 6593', *Kadmos* 9 (1976), pp. 93-6; Günter Neumann, 'Das Zeichen *VINUM* in den ägäischen Schriften', *Kadmos* 16 (1977), pp. 124-25; Maurice Pope & Jacques Raison, 'Linear A: changing perspectives', in Yves Duhoux (ed.), *Études Minoennes I: Le linéaire A* (Louvain: Bibliothèque des Cahiers de l'Institut de Linguistique de Louvain, 1978).

however, I suspect that another reason why they would sin against the scholarly rule of mentioning these discoveries is that a more systematic study of the Oriental origins of Cretan signs would lead to a correct reading of three other Cretan, 'non-Greek' scripts apart from Linear B and — even worse — would lead to the identification of historically known population groups other than Greeks. For in the eyes of Eurocentrists the island of Crete in its capacity of 'the cradle of European culture' can never have been an outpost in the periphery of even the superpower Egypt once was, let alone in the periphery of the petty Luwian kingdoms of Southern Anatolia and of the Semitic ones of Syrio-Palestine.

Very representative maps of the way Hellenists are accustomed to deal with Crete are those with outgoing arrows designating the export of 'Minoan' objects to the Near East and never with incoming arrows designating the import of objects from Egypt, Anatolia and Syrio-Palestine.<sup>15</sup> From Syrio-Palestine came already in the Early Minoan III period, that is just before 2000 BCE, Syrian daggers, three-sided ivory seals, and a terracotta Syrian wagon-type — they have a find concentration in northern and southern central Crete; from Anatolia came vases with protruded beaks, the so-called teapots, and dark paint on buff pottery (cf. the Tarsus Matt-painted ware) with a concentration of finds in northern Crete; from Egypt came drilled stone vases, scarabs and seals with the kind of Hathor symbols we shall discuss below.<sup>16</sup> So one need not be astonished at all when the signs of Cretan writing appear to have originated from scripts written in precisely these same regions of the Near East.

Meanwhile it can be argued that, if we allow for a few writing variants — e.g. the wine ideogram, which I consider as originally Egyptian, has at least five writing variants in Cretan hieroglyphic writing! —, out of the 75 syllabic and ideographic signs in Cretan hieroglyphic writing which do not have counterparts in the Linear A and B scripts, 35 ones are so similar to those in Egyptian Hieroglyphic (or its eroded Egyptian hieratic form) that they may have originated from this script; and the same applies to 30 other signs with regard to Luwian Hieroglyphic; and to 10 further signs with regard to the hieroglyphic and linear writing systems exclusively used in Byblos. The original Egyptian, Luwian and Byblian meanings and syllabic values of these 75 Cretan signs we should take very seriously, for they are the only reliable guides to both reading and understanding Cretan inscriptions in any Cretan script, the Greek Linear B script not excluded.

---

<sup>15</sup>Cf. for example J.V. Luce, *The end of Atlantis: New light on an old legend* (Paladin, Frogmore 1975), p. 97, map 19.

<sup>16</sup>Compare for contacts with and imports from Egypt, Syrio-Palestine and Anatolia: Keith Branigan, *The foundations of palatial Crete* (London, Cambridge University Press, 1970).

Following an illuminating suggestion by Wim van Binsbergen,<sup>17</sup> we may assume that here we are in fact dealing with one converging process c. 2000 BCE which reflects, and uses as its main vehicle, the coastal trade in the eastern Mediterranean at the time:

- the development of a writing system originating in Byblos,
- there taking aboard Egyptian elements,
- taking this combination to (the south-eastern corner of) Luwian country,
- there taking aboard Luwian elements,
- and finally taking this threefold combination to Crete.

Or as in diagram form:

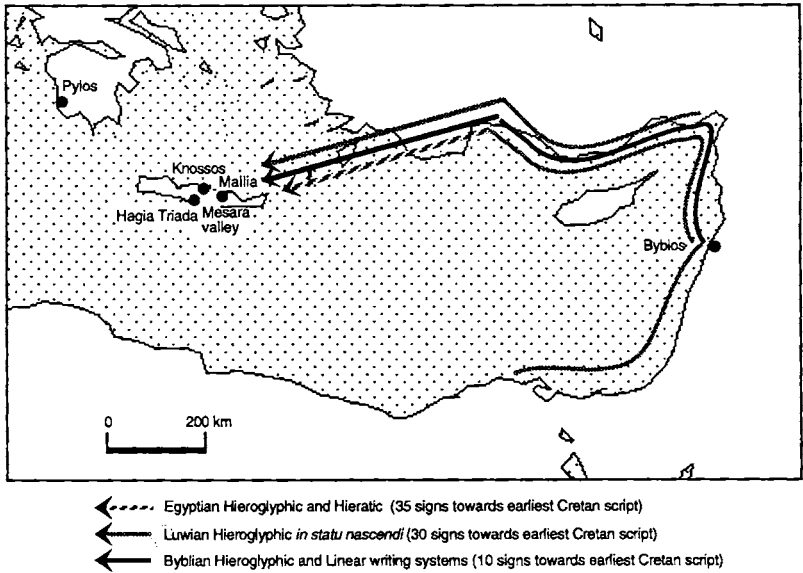


Diagram 1. The genesis of Cretan hieroglyphic writing c. 2000 BCE.<sup>18</sup>

How important it is to know the original syllabic values of Cretan signs which occur in the Linear B script with its own, specifically Greek syllabic values can be demonstrated with an example which is crucial for a correct reading of Linear A texts. The Linear B sign ‘+’ (B2), although attested in

<sup>17</sup>Wim van Binsbergen, ‘Alternative models of intercontinental interaction towards the earliest Cretan script’, (this volume). The present writer accepts the simpler version of van Binsbergen’s Model II as summarised in diagram 1 of the present article, but not the fuller elaborations as in van Binsbergen’s article, diagram 3 and 4.

<sup>18</sup>Wim van Binsbergen, *o.c.*

the historical Greek-Cypriot syllabary where it has the syllabic value *lo* as against another sign with the specific value *ro*,<sup>19</sup> is nevertheless read by Hellenists as *ro*. Thus the Hellenist Yves Duhoux has structurally analysed Linear A texts from Hagia Triada in Crete and has concluded that, read with Linear B values, in the language expressed in the Linear A script the words *ku-ro* and *ki-ro* must mean 'total, all' and 'deficit' respectively.<sup>20</sup> Because these specific words, having these specific meanings, are not known from any of the languages available in the Eastern Mediterranean in the second millennium BCE, Hellenists and specifically Mycenologists have decided that the language of Linear A can clearly not be deciphered and they have concluded that in any case the Linear A script contains neither an Indo-European nor a Semitic language. However, the original syllabic value of the Luwian ancestor sign of the Cretan sign in question is not *ro* or *lo*, but *lu* (see below). In Akkadian and in all North-West Semitic languages *kulû* or its derivatives means 'total, all' and *kilû* is in Akkadian a substantive ('prison') related to the Semitic verbal stem *kalû*, 'to hold back', whence the meaning 'deficit' in Linear A.<sup>21</sup> The brilliant Linear A epigraphist William Brice has discovered that in Linear A a word read with Linear B values as *te(-ro)* stands in headings as a transaction term.<sup>22</sup> Now *telû* is the Semitic word for 'delivery', which for example in Akkadian happens to be the equivalent of the Greek Linear B word with the same meaning in headings *a-pu-do-si*. But the longer Linear A inscriptions show forms of the verb 'to give' which are based on the ancient North-West Semitic stem *yatan-* and not on the Akkadian stem *nadan-*. Cyrus Gordon was the first to identify in his *Evidence for the Minoan language* of 1966 the Linear A words *a-du* and *ti-ni-ta* in the Linear A tablets from Hagia Triada as the names of the Phoenician deities Haddu and Tinit.<sup>23</sup> So my contention is that Phoenician is the specific North-West Semitic language written in Linear A. From among the same North-West Semitic languages, Cyrus Gordon and Roberta Richard may prefer Aramaic, Robert Stieglitz Ugaritic and Gary Rendsburg Hebrew as their candidates for the language of Linear A, and they would easily convince me with solid, linguistic

---

<sup>19</sup>Olivier Masson, *Les inscriptions chypriotes syllabiques* (Paris: Boccard, 1983), pp. 58-9 (Figs 1 & 2).

<sup>20</sup>Yves Duhoux, 'Le linéaire A: Problèmes de déchiffrement', in: Y. Duhoux, T.G. Palaima & J. Bennett, *Problems in Decipherment* (Louvain-la-Neuve: Peeters, 1989), pp. 77-8.

<sup>21</sup>Cf. for the Semitic words discussed here, W. von Soden, *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch* (Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden 1965), *sub verbis citatis*.

<sup>22</sup>W.C. Brice, *Inscriptions in the Minoan Linear Script of Class A* (Oxford University Press, Oxford 1961), p. 4, *Syntax* (III).

<sup>23</sup>Cyrus H. Gordon, *Evidence for the Minoan Language* (Ventnor Publ., Ventnor, N.J. 1966), p. 31 (no. 129).



arguments. Perhaps even a proto-North-West Semitic language was in use in the area around 2000 BCE, which only later split up into Ugaritic, Phoenician, Hebrew and Aramaic. But in the light of the linguistic evidence as cited it appears to be time for the Hellenists to give up their contention that the Cretan Linear A script contains neither an Indo-European nor a Semitic language. Let Hellenists at least begin to read *lo* instead of *ro* in Linear B, thus respecting the Luwian original value *lu* of this Linear B sign and its Cypriot descendant with the syllabic value *lo*; and let them, with the help of information afforded by Linear A, at least try to make a clear distinction between other original signs with *l*- and *r*- in Linear B. In any case I hope to have demonstrated with this example of the original syllabic value *lu* how a correct reading of Cretan texts largely depends on retracing the original syllabic values of their signs. Cyrus Gordon was so brilliant as to read through Linear B syllabic values not used in Linear A — he did read *ku-ro* instead of *ku-lu* — yet the right Semitic words in the latter script;<sup>24</sup> for the Eurocentric Hellenists around John Chadwick this tragic insight meant an invitation to try and ruin the reputation of the true scholar that Gordon has been.

A former student of mine, Fred Woudhuizen, has demonstrated that very early experiments in Luwian hieroglyphic writing can be traced back to Northern Syria.<sup>25</sup> Because of the presence of 10 exclusively Byblian signs in Cretan writing, with amongst them the very conspicuous sign of the double axe — in Byblian texts, like in Cretan hieroglyphic ones, solely occurring in first position — I would suggest that the person(s) who designed Cretan writing might have stemmed from Byblos. Geographically speaking, Byblos is situated along the coast between Northern Syria and Egypt; and the fact that nearly 50 percent of the earliest Cretan script when it emerged around 2000 BCE consisted of what can be argued to be Egyptian ancestor signs, is to be ascribed to the circumstance that Byblos was already an Egypt-orientated enclave even before 2000 BCE.<sup>26</sup> The creation of Cretan writing in my view corresponds to the historic model offered by bishop Wulfilas, who in the fourth century CE found himself stationed along the Danube between Byzantines who wrote Greek characters and Romans who wrote Latin characters; he took from each script a part of all his signs (in fact, 19 or 20 from Greek uncial, while 5 or 6 were adapted by him from Latin) and invented himself, or

---

<sup>24</sup>Cyrus H. Gordon, 'Notes on Minoan Linear A', *Antiquity* 31 (1957), pp. 124-30; idem, 'Akkadian Tablets in Minoan Dress', *ibid.*, pp. 237-40.

<sup>25</sup>Jan Best & Fred Woudhuizen, *Lost Languages*, pp. 128-37.

<sup>26</sup>Donald B. Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J. 1992), pp. 96-7.

adapted from Runic, two new ones, so as to create the Gothic script.<sup>27</sup> I wonder if there was ever question of a *decipherment* of the Gothic script: with the knowledge of the ancient Greek and ancient Latin alphabets as well as of Old Germanic the script is immediately readable. In the same vein, with the knowledge of the ancient Egyptian and Luwian scripts and of the archaic Semitic languages written in the scripts of Byblos it becomes possible to read the Cretan scripts preceding Linear B.

### *The evidence from early Cretan seals*

Fred Woudhuizen has aptly named the Cretan hieroglyphic script 'The Cretan Branch of Luwian Hieroglyphic'.<sup>28</sup> When we try to read it we have to appreciate that the Egyptian influence upon Cretan writing is overwhelming and that the Cretan scribes — fortunately — preferred to repeat standard phrases.

#### *A three-sided seal from Crete*

Let us randomly chose a Cretan seal inscribed with hieroglyphic signs and seek to analyse its contents.

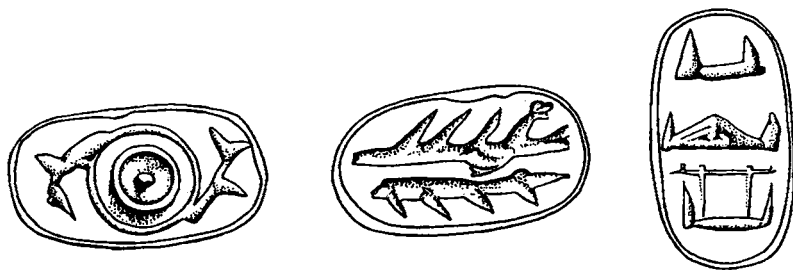


Fig. 1. Seal of Shipmaster 'Cat-Snake'.

<sup>27</sup>D. Diringer, D., 1996, *The alphabet: A key to the history of mankind* (Munshiram Manoharlal, New Delhi, reprint of the 1947 British edition), p. 473.

<sup>28</sup>Best & Woudhuizen, *Lost Languages*, pp. 65-138.

E.g. the scenes on a three-sided, white steatite seal (Fig. 1)<sup>29</sup> may be described as follows:

‘On side a we discern concentric circles in front of and for the most part covering a ship. To the right of the circles the ship’s stern-post with the rudder is still visible, to their left we discern its prow and its bellying sail. On side b two stag’s antlers in profile are horizontally rendered. On top of and below the upper one we see a hybrid creature, a seated cat on top in ligature with a coiling horned snake below. And finally we see on side c, from top to bottom, a sign with two tallish isosceles triangles resting on a horizontal basis, the two stag’s antlers in full face, and a door-construction in a building turned upside down.’

At first sight such an accumulation of disparate iconographic elements seems bewildering, to say the least. To be honest, if the author had not studied several dozens of related Cretan seals with pictures of combinations of

- ships and suns,
- cats and snakes, and
- two triangles and/ or gateways with stag’s antlers in full face — all of them in the most lavish varieties —,

he would not trust his own eyes, let alone expect from his readers to see the pictures he kindly requests them to see. However, as all these combinations appeared to be *fixed, conventionalised* ones, the thread along which the reader will find her/ his way out of this Knossian labyrinth of elusive pictures on Cretan seals is the method of interpictureality.<sup>30</sup> Once a clearly visible sun and ship, always a sun and ship, and so on.

When reflecting upon the signs themselves, strong influences from two different scripts become manifest. For the concentric circles find their counterparts in the Egyptian hieroglyphic sign for ‘sun’ (*EG N5*),<sup>31</sup> the sailing ship in the Egyptian hieroglyphic sign for ‘ship under sail’ (*EG P2*), the seated cat in profile in the Egyptian hieroglyphic sign for ‘cat’ (*EG E13*), the horned snake in the Egyptian hieroglyphic sign for ‘horned

---

<sup>29</sup>A.J. Evans, *Scripta Minoa (SM) I* (Oxford University Press, Oxford 1909), p. 150 (Pl. 8, White steatite prism. Praesos).

<sup>30</sup>Inspired by Frida Kahlo’s work, Nanny de Vries suggests this term in order to account for iconographic interrelations; see for the uses of the related methods of intertextuality and intervisuality the works in English cited in: Maaïke Meijer, *In tekst gevat. Inleiding tot een kritiek van representatie* (Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam 1996); Julia Kristeva, ‘Word, dialogue, and novel’, in: *Desire in language*, ed. Leon S. Roudiez, Columbia University Press, New York, 1980, pp. 64-92; Jonathan Culler, ‘Presuppositions and intertextuality’, in his *The pursuit of signs: Semiotics, literature, deconstruction*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981, pp. 100-119.

<sup>31</sup>Egyptian hieroglyphic signs are cited after the number system of Alan Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar (EG)* (Oxford University Press, London 1957<sup>3</sup>); in the context of the present volume it is noteworthy that Gardiner was the maternal grandfather of Martin Bernal.

viper' (*EG* I9), and the inverted door-construction in the Egyptian hieroglyphic sign for 'door, gateway' (*EG* O32).

The parallels for the stag's antlers, however, can only be found in the Luwian hieroglyphic script from Anatolia (*HH* 102-103; Fig. 2).<sup>32</sup>

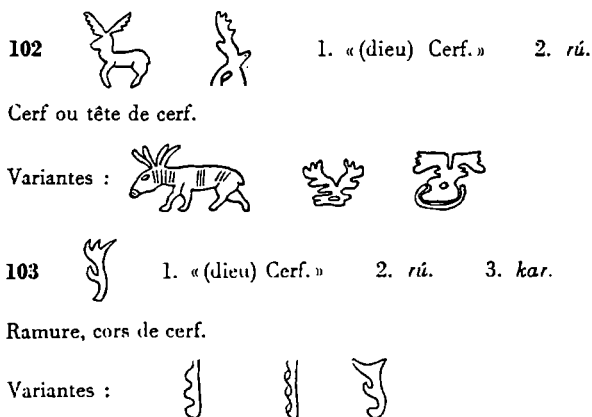


Fig. 2. Stag signs in Luwian Hieroglyphic.

The same holds true for the sign with two triangles, which the Luwian scribes had also invented themselves (*HH* 228). Of course, the sign of the single triangle in the Luwian hieroglyphic script (*HH* 225) was of Egyptian origin and just meant 'pyramid' in the Egyptian hieroglyphic script (*EG* O24). It could, however, also be used to designate a pyramid city, like Memphis.<sup>33</sup> Thence it got in Luwian Hieroglyphic the more general meaning of 'town'. The Luwian scribes created the sign with two triangles (pyramids?) to give expression to the concepts of "country" and "capital" of a country. They also adapted both the form and the meaning of the Egyptian sign for 'door, gateway' (*EG* O32), which in the Luwian hieroglyphic script became the determinative sign for '(fortified) town' (*HH* 237).

<sup>32</sup>Luwian hieroglyphic signs are cited after the number system of Emmanuel Laroche, *Les hiéroglyphes hittites* (*HH*) (Paris, Editions du Centre national de la Recherche Scientifique, 1960).

<sup>33</sup>Cf. Best, *The Luwian branch*, fig. 2, variant (1) (lefthand side); also cf. Gardiner, p. 183 n. 1.



Fig. 3. Egyptian (left column) and Luwian (right column) hieroglyphic signs related to those in Fig. 1.

Only after one will have become acquainted with the possible meanings of both the Egyptian and Luwian parallel signs treated above (Fig. 3), can we arrive at an interpretation of the scenes that would at least make some sense:

- 'The sun-god (*r*', "Re") (protects) the "overseer of ships"/ shipmaster (side *a*)
- the Stag(-god) (protects) "Cat-Snake" (side *b*)
- (of) the capital "Stag"-town (side *c*.)'

Although not recognised as such, 'Cat-Snake' is often present on vases and seals stemming from his residence in Mallia, House A in sector *Mu* (Fig. 4).<sup>34</sup>

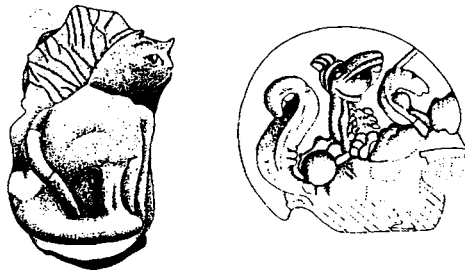


Fig. 4. Vase and seal of 'Cat-Snake' from House A, Sector *Mu* (Mallia).

<sup>34</sup>*BCH* 97 (1973), p. 582 (Fig. 5), cf. *BCH* 70 (1946), p. 81 (Fig. 3); Béatrice Detournay, Jean-Claude Poursat & Frieda Vandenabeele, *Fouilles exécutées à Mallia, Le Quartier Mu II, Études Crétoises XXVI* (Paris: Geuthner, 1980), p. 176 (Fig. 245, erroneously mounted upside down).

Seals from several other excavated sectors at Mallia show a cluster consisting of stag's antlers in full face and of the Luwian hieroglyphic sign for '(fortified) town', always combined with a tree ornament and sometimes inverted again like on side *c* of the seal treated above (Fig. 5).<sup>35</sup>



Fig. 5. Seal with 'gateway' and 'stag's antlers' from House A, Sector *Mu* (Mallia).

The sign of the stag's antlers in full face possesses in the Cretan Linear A and B scripts the syllabic value *ru* (A55/ B26);<sup>36</sup> an equivalent like English *roe* in roe deer and roebuck would suggest that *ru* perhaps may be the abbreviation of a Luwian word for 'stag', as Luwian and English do both belong to the family of Indo-European languages (IE *\*roi-ko* < base *\*rei-*, *\*roi-*, striped, spotted, a European and Asian deer).<sup>37</sup> Whereas IE *\*roi-ko* > Old Germanic *raha*, and most Luwian languages show a preference for the vowel *a* to develop from IE *o(i)*, only Lycian A and B show the vowel shift to *u*.<sup>38</sup> The occurrence of this phenomenon in Cretan

<sup>35</sup>Detournay c.s., *Quartier Mu II*, p. 208 (Fig. 284).

<sup>36</sup>Consult for a full list of numbered Linear A and B signs: Louk C. Meijer, *Eine strukturelle Analyse der Hagia Triada-Tafeln. Ein Beitrag zur Linear A-Forschung* (B.R. Grüner, Amsterdam 1982), pp. 38-47 and for an overview of Linear A and B signs Louis Godart, *Le pouvoir de l'écrit: Aux pays des premières écritures* (Editions Errance, Paris 1990), pp. 180-1.

<sup>37</sup>Cf. *Webster's New World dictionary of the American language*, College edition (The World Publishing Company, Cleveland & New York 1968), s.v. *roe*.

<sup>38</sup>Cf. Ph. H. J. Houwink ten Cate, *The Luwian population groups of Lycia and Cilicia Aspera during the Hellenistic period*, Brill, Leiden, 1961, p. 55; Best, J.G.P., & Woudhuizen, F., 1988, eds., *Ancient scripts from Crete and Cyprus*, Leiden: Brill, p. 57, n. 5.

texts may prove to be an important indicator for the dialectal variant of Luwian used in Crete.

*A four-sided seal from Mallia*

That *ru* is indeed the abbreviation of the town's name can be argued from the text on a long, four-sided, rectangular<sup>39</sup>, likewise white, steatite seal, whose details I shall now discuss (Fig. 6).



Fig. 6. Seal with the Cretan capital Rukusawa (b-c).

Arthur Evans was of the opinion that, 'as is shown by the male goat's head', the writing direction of the text on side *b* is from right to left.<sup>40</sup> The first sign is the Luwian Hieroglyphic stamp-seal (*HH* 327) with the meaning *SASAI*, 'seal' and with the syllabic value *sa*, the abbreviation of *SASAI* according to the acrophonic principle so characteristic of the Luwian hieroglyphic script.<sup>41</sup> On seals with Luwian hieroglyphic writing the sign for *SASAI* introduces the text of an official and is followed by the name of his protective deity. In Luwian Hieroglyphic the male goat's head including beard and horns symbolises the most important Luwian god Tarhu(nt) — ancient writing variant Tarku — (Fig. 7).<sup>42</sup>

<sup>39</sup>A form typical of Mallia; cf. Brice, Plate XXVIII (IV 10).

<sup>40</sup>Evans, *SM* I, p. 154 (Pl. 26).

<sup>41</sup>Laroche, *Hiéroglyphes hittites*, p. 252; cf. my Fig. 7.

<sup>42</sup>Best & Woudhuizen, *Lost Languages*, pp. 108-13, 115-19; 114 (Fig. 8b).







	Cretan Pictographic		Luwian Hieroglyphic	Value
24/25			327 	<u>SASAI</u>
136			436 	<u>maistratus</u>
55			101 	<u>TARHU</u>

Fig. 7. Cretan signs with Luwian Hieroglyphic counterparts.

On the seal it is followed by two identical signs of a walking man with a stick in his hand. In both the Egyptian and Luwian hieroglyphic scripts this is the sign for 'official' (*EG* A21 > *HH* 3).<sup>43</sup> The next sign is the Luwian hieroglyphic sign for 'capital' (two triangles rotated 90°). It is only logical that the first sign of the name of the capital in question with the syllabic value *ru* closes the line on side *b*, because this is always the sign with which the capital's name is abbreviated on other seals from Mallia on which the signs of '(fortified) town' and *ru* are clustered. Thus the complete text of side *b* runs:

'Seal — Tarhu(nt) (protects) 'the two officials of the capital, the two officials of the capital, the two officials of Ru-'

That we should continue to read the text on side *c* from right to left is indicated by the bird turned upside down. For another seal from Mallia shows that both the stag's antlers in full face with the syllabic value *ru* and the stag itself occur in combination with a bird which is also rendered upside down (Fig. 8).<sup>44</sup>

<sup>43</sup>The two officials in question on the four-sided, white steatite seal are shipmaster Te(lebinu) Ni(ja) on side *a* and king Rulu Mizibimi on side *d*; the logographic signature of the scribe İza- (put upside down at the end of side *d*) makes clear that he too was an official; see for a complete reading of this seal and its possible historical importance: Best, *The Luwian branch*, pp. 9-11.

<sup>44</sup>Fernand Chapouthier, *Les écritures minoennes au palais de Mallia, Études Crétoises II* (Paris: Geuthner, 1930), p. 2 (Fig. 2).



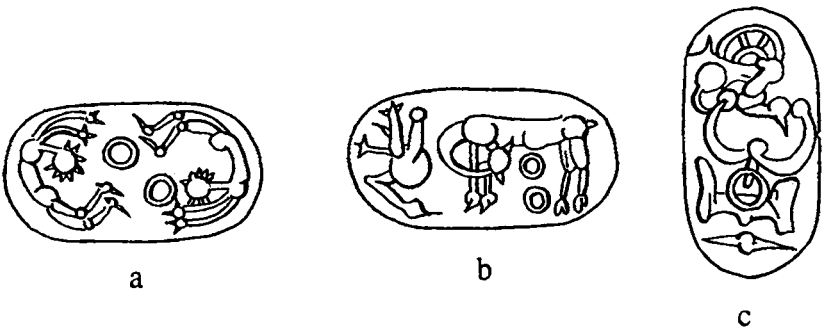


Fig. 8. Seal from Mallia with stag and bird (b), and stag's antlers and bird (c).

The syllabic value of the bird-sign amounts to *ku* (A98/ B81) in the Linear A and B scripts. The syllabic value of the second sign for stamp-seal is in Luwian Hieroglyphic *sa*, and the syllabic value of the last sign before the cross is *wa* (from common Semitic *\*wainu*);<sup>45</sup> the sign presumably takes its form from the originally Egyptian determinative for 'wine' (EG W21).<sup>46</sup> So if *ruku* (Indo-European *\*roi-ko*, 'deer') could have meant 'stag' in the Luwian language, then *-sa* in *ru-ku-sa-wa* would be the Luwian genitive form and *-wa* the Luwian suffix used in Luwian toponyms. The toponym *Rukusawa* would mean:

'Place of the Stag(-god)'.

*Another four-sided seal from Mallia*

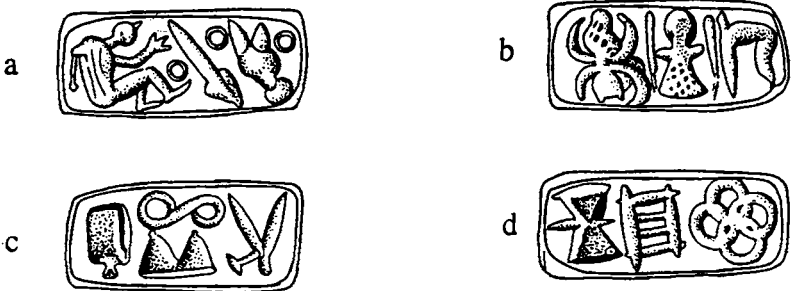


Fig. 9. Seal with the Cretan capital Ajalu (c-d).

<sup>45</sup>Best & Woudhuizen, *Ancient Scripts*, pp. 6, 8, 15-16; *Lost Languages*, pp. 38-41.

<sup>46</sup>See for pertinent literature Best & Woudhuizen, *Ancient Scripts*, p. 8 (Fig. 8 and n. 14).

On side *a* of another four-sided seal (Fig. 9)<sup>47</sup> the first sign to the right is a ligature of a cat's head (on top) and a flat snake's head (below), so the seal must have belonged to 'Cat-Snake', whose emblem, the Spider (side *b*), occurs on yet another seal from Mallia.<sup>48</sup> However, only the texts on sides *c* and *d* are relevant to the ancient toponyms of Mallia. After studying hundreds of Cretan seals with hieroglyphic texts the author is inclined to conclude that a volute consisting of a rising and a setting sun — in the later Greek-Cypriot syllabary this sign has got the syllabic value *le* —, when standing in the same position within otherwise identical texts, can take the place of two separate suns (with the same meaning), one single sun, or the sign with the syllabic value *re* in the Linear A and B scripts (A54/ B27). Thus the text on side *c* would run as follows:

'Seal — Re (protects) the official of the capital.'

The name of the capital is mentioned on side *d*. The syllabic value of the sign of the double axe is *a* in the Cretan Linear A and B scripts (A52/ B8);<sup>49</sup> that of the second sign *ya* and *ja* respectively (A32/ B57); and the syllabic value of the Luwian Hieroglyphic counterpart of the third sign, already treated above (> B2: *lo/ ro*), is *lu* (HH 186).<sup>50</sup> As one may suppose that ancient Crete had only one capital, how then could the same person 'Cat-Snake' have possibly been an official of two different capitals, namely *Rukusawa* and *Ajalu*? In Akkadian *ajalu* and in Ugaritic 'yl means 'stag',<sup>51</sup> and therefore the most satisfactory solution of this problem would be that *Rukusawa* was the Luwian, and *Ajalu* the Semitic name of one and the same capital. In order to avoid this 'problem in decipherment' of Hellenists like Jean-Pierre Olivier, Thomas Palaima and Yves Duhoux,<sup>52</sup> the Luwian and Phoenician scribes often were so kind as to

<sup>47</sup>Evans, *SM* I, p. 155 (Pl. 29).

<sup>48</sup>*BCH* 70 (1946), p. 81 (Fig. 3).

<sup>49</sup>It has the same syllabic value in the linear script from Byblos; cf. Best & Woudhuizen, *Lost Languages*, pp. 36-9.

<sup>50</sup>It has the same value in the linear script from Byblos; cf. my preceding note.

<sup>51</sup>*The Assyrian Dictionary* I (Chicago 1964), s.v. *ajalu* (*jalu*, *julu*); Cyrus H. Gordon, *Ugaritic Manual* III (Roma: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1955), 236 (no. 98).

<sup>52</sup>Cf. Duhoux, *o.c.*; Jean-Pierre Olivier, Thomas Palaima and Yves Duhoux, in: *Problems in Decipherment*, which was published in 1989. These three Hellenists discuss *passim* the findings of other authors without citing their names, books and articles. Thus the contents of books and articles written by Michael Astour, Cyrus Gordon, Gary Rendsburg, Roberta Richard, Robert Stieglitz and Jan Best & Fred Woudhuizen are dismissively discussed without names and titles even being mentioned. Meanwhile, the fact that in one passage in *Problems in Decipherment* (1989), a reference to Best & Woudhuizen's *Ancient Scripts* (1988) slips in out of context, would suggest to any decipherer worth his keep that *Problems in Decipherment* was in part prompted by our *Ancient Scripts*.

render the capital's name on seals from Mallia by a stag (sometimes having just thrown off his antlers) or by a hybrid creature consisting of a bird with a plumage of stag's antlers (see Fig. 14*b* below).

*Yet another seal from Mallia*

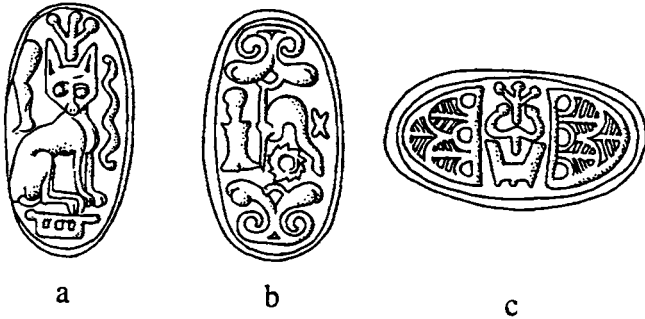


Fig. 10. Seal of king 'Cat-Snake'.

One eye-catching seal of 'Cat-Snake' might inform us in which period he lived (Fig. 10).<sup>53</sup> That there have been found in Crete some hundred other seals belonging to 'Cat-Snake' suggests that also his representatives might have used his seals for transactions in his name — in line with recently discovered Assyrian practice. But the author considers this extraordinarily beautiful seal printed in gold on the cover of Evans' *Scripta Minoa*, as 'Cat-Snake' 's private one. On side *a* a cat and a snake are surrounded by three syllabic signs, to be read in the order of *ja-bu-re* (cf. for *bu* A21/B11: *pul po*). Now *jb-R*, 'Heart of Re', forms part of the throne-name *Shtp-jb-R* ('He who makes content the heart of Re') of Amenemhet, the first king of the expanding 12th dynasty, who reigned over Egypt between

<sup>53</sup>Evans, *SM* I, p. 153 (P. 23), pp. 270-71:

'This remarkable seal may contain the name and titles of a Minoan prince, of whom the cat and snake were badges' (italics Best).

In reality, 'Cat-Snake' possesses only one 'badge', for his emblem is 'The Spider'. The two first syllables of his name Mizibimi are probably rendered by a cat and a snake because these animals would have been named with the onomatopoeic words for the sounds a cat and a snake make; abbreviated according to the acrophonic principle the syllables *mi* and *zi* respectively would result (cf. for the cat *miw* Gardiner *EG* E13 and for the snake *ddft* *EG* I14).

1991 and 1962 BCE.<sup>54</sup> One could best translate this combination on side *a* as

'*Jb-R*' (protects) "Cat-Snake" '.

The text on side *b* (Fig. 10) shows two identical convoluted images reminiscent of bovine horns; this I take to be the sign of the Egyptian goddess Hathor (Fig. 11).<sup>55</sup>



Fig. 11. Syrio-Palestinian scarabs with Hathor.<sup>56</sup>

In between we may read the word *bi-ty*,<sup>57</sup> 'bee' — originally *bit(y)* is the

<sup>54</sup>On Syrio-Palestinian scarabs one finds also the name of his son Sesostris I, *ḥpr-k, -R'*, abbreviated to *ḥpr-k,*'; see Olga Tufnell, Geoffrey T. Martin & William A. Ward, *Studies on scarab seals. Scarab seals and their contribution to history in the early second millennium BC* (Warminster, Wilts 1984), p. 153. See for the basic facts about the names and dates of the successive Egyptian kings Jürgen von Beckenrath, *Handbuch der Ägyptischen Könige, Münchener Ägyptologische Studien*, Heft 20 (1984).

<sup>55</sup>Olga Tufnell et al., I, p. 138; II, p. 355 (Pl. XLVIII); Fig. 11 is taken from Pl. XLVIII, only the last picture to the right in the row shows the form after which the Hathor symbol on side *b* of Fig. 10 has been modelled, by a process of streamlining also detectable in several other signs. If we accept the criteria applied by Olga Tufnell in dating the various forms of the Hathor symbol, our 'Cat-Snake' seal under discussion should be assigned to the earliest period of the 12th dynasty, that is c. 2000-1950 BCE.

<sup>56</sup>From Tufnell e.a., *Studies on scarab seals* II, p. 355 [Pl. XLVIII].

<sup>57</sup>For the left, pawn-shaped sign on side *b* of Fig. 10 with the syllabic value *bi*, cf. Best & Woudhuizen, *Ancient Scripts*, pp. 10-14, especially p. 12. And for the right sign with the syllabic value *ty* which corresponds with the Linear A sign with the syllabic value *ti* (A88 [tī] > B87 [twe]): cf. J.G.P. Best, 'Von Piktographisch zu Linear B: Beiträge zur Linear-A-Forschung', in: *Talanta, Supplementum Epigraphicum Mediterraneum* (1982), p. 18, with Piero Meriggi, 'Kleine Beiträge zum Minoischen, 2:

Egyptian title of the king of Lower Egypt (*EG L2*). It is significant that on several other seals<sup>58</sup> with Cretan hieroglyphic writing from a later period than that under discussion, the picture of a bee stands in front of a personal name, a position which is strongly suggestive of the meaning 'king', written in full on the earlier seals as *bi-ty*. Under the sign for *ty* the sun-disk with rays can be seen. There is a consensus among Egyptologists that Hathor's name is to be explained as *Ht-Hr* ('House of Horus') and that she is as such the mother of the sun-god but also the mother of the king in his capacity of representative of Horus. Inscriptions show that she is also the *Egyptian* protective goddess of countries and towns outside Egypt (because the Sun-god travels through foreign parts as well) like Punt, Byblos and apparently also Rukusawa: 'Cat-Snake' stems from this town, as is shown on the seal under discussion (cf. side *c* of Fig. 10). So the translation of the text on side *b* of Fig. 10 is:

'Hathor and Re (protect) the king.'

Between two identical ornaments consisting of trees one finds on side *c* the text:

'Re (protects) the town of Ru(kusawa).'

Victor Kenna has dated a dozen seals of 'Cat-Snake' from the direct surroundings of Phaistos into the First Transitional Phase in Crete (late Early Minoan III-Middle Minoan Ia).<sup>59</sup> Thus the earliest seals of 'Cat-Snake' when still shipmaster — that is before he became a king, the shipmaster being second in rank to the king only<sup>60</sup> — should probably be dated around 2000 BCE.

Minoische Widmungsformeln', *Kadmos*, 13 (1971), p. 91ff; also cf. Best & Woudhuizen, *Lost Languages*, p. 18.

<sup>58</sup>As published by Arthur Evans in *Scripta Minoa I*.

<sup>59</sup>V.E.G. Kenna, *Cretan Seals* (Clarendon Press, Oxford 1960), p. 20; Fig. 29: a curved body of a cat in profile with its head in full face, the lower paw is shown with a nail out; below: a snake's head (to the right) and body (to the left); left upper corner: a rising sun, a gateway, stag's antlers in full face; translation: ' "Cat-Snake", Re (protects) the town of Ruku(sawa)'. Fig. 30b: to the right a male goat's head, in the centre a male figure, to the left a cat's paw (with a nail out): 'Tarhu(nt) (protects) "Cat"...'; 30d: to the right a snake, to the left stag's antlers and a gateway: ' "-Snake" of the town Ru(kusawa)'; 30c: to the right a stag in profile which has thrown off its antlers, to the left a stag lying down and seen from above: 'Ruku (protects) Ru(kusawa)'. The 'Cat-Snake' scenes on the other objects cited by Kenna also speak for themselves: they just show variations in the composition of the conventionalised elements mentioned above.

<sup>60</sup>Cf. Best, *The Luwian branch*, p. 7.



Fig. 12. Seal with the town Aresani (c).

On a seal from Eastern Crete with hieroglyphic writing, two towns are represented (Fig. 12).<sup>61</sup> On side *a* one recognises a ligature of the sign for 'town', the sign for 'tree', and what I have taken to be the schematised image of Hator, a combination which in the light of the iconography of 'Cat-Snake' 's seal with *Jb-R*' (Fig. 10) would seem to refer to the capital Rukusawa. The complete text on side *c* runs as follows:

'*a-re-sa-ni*.<sup>62</sup> the Stag(-god) (protects) the town of His Majesty' (a small sun between wings).<sup>63</sup>

Because the Stag(-god) was the protective deity of the capital, there may have existed a close link between the Cretan capital Rukusawa and the Cretan town Aresani.

### The Pylos evidence

Some eight hundred years later the toponyms *ro-o-wa* and *a-re-sa-ni* occur together on a Linear B tablet from Pylos (PY An 724; Fig. 13).<sup>64</sup>

<sup>61</sup>Evans, *SM* I, p. 153 (Pl. 24).

<sup>62</sup>Cf. for the sign in Cretan hieroglyphic writing with the syllabic value *ni*: Best & Woudhuizen, *Ancient Scripts*, pp. 10-14.

<sup>63</sup>Cf. *HH* 190 and Fig. 8c, picture below.

<sup>64</sup>Ivo Hajnal, *Studien zum mykenischen Kasussystem* (Berlin & New York: De Gruyter, 1995), pp. 236-8.

PY An 724

- .1 ro-o-wa, e-re-ta, a-pe-o-te,  
 .2 me-nu-wa, a-pe-e-ke, a-re-sa-ni-e [[ ]]  
 .3 o-pi-ke-ri-jo-de, ki-ti-ta, o-pe-ro-ta, [[ ]]  
 .4 e-re-e VIR 1 VIR 1  
 .5 e-ke-ra2-wo-ne, a-pe-e-ke, a2-ri-e, [[ ]]  
 .6 o-pe-ro-te, e-re-e VIR 5  
 .7 ra-wa-ke-ta, a-pe-e-ke[ ]e VIR 1{  
 .8 ta-ti-qa-we-u, o[ ]qe-[ ]jg, VIR 1  
 .9 a-ke-re-wa, ki-e-u, o-pe-[ ]e, a-ri-ja-to  
 VIR 1  
 .10 ki-ti-ta VIR 1 o-ro-ti-jo, di-qa, a-[  
 .11 o-pe-rq, [ ], e-ko-si-qe, e-qe-ta, ka-ma[  
 .12 e-to-ni-jo, e-nwa-ri-jo VIR 1  
 .13 wo-qe-we, qi-qa-te, ru-ki-ja, a-ko-wo  
 VIR{  
 .14 ri-jo, o-no, e-qa-te VIR 1Q[

PY An 610

- .1 ]ne, e-re-ta [ ]vacat [  
 .2 ]e, ki-ti-ta VIR 46 ~  
 .3 me-]tq-ki-ti-ta VIR 19 {  
 .4 ]wa, ki-ti-ta VIR36 [  
 .5 me-ta-ki-ti-ta VIR 3 [  
 .6 e-wi-ri-po VIR 9 po-si-ke-te-re [ VIR  
 .7 a-ke-re-wa VIR 25 wo-qe-we [ VIR{  
 .8 ri-jo VIR 24 wi-nu-ri-jo[ VIR  
 .9 te-ta-ra-ne VIR 31 me-ta-ki[-ti-ta VIR  
 .10 a-po-ne-we VIR 37 me-ta[ VIR  
 .11 ma-ra-ne-nu-we VIR 40 po-ti-ja-ke-e  
 VIR 6{  
 .12 qa-ku-si-jo VIR 7 za-e-to-ro VIR 3  
 .13 da-mi-ni-jo VIR 40 e-ke-ra2-wo-no VIR  
 40{  
 .14 we-da-ne-wo VIR 20 ko-ni-jo 126 me-  
 ta-ki-ti-ta VIR 26  
 .15 po-ku-ta VIR 10 we-re-ka-ra, te-qa-  
 ta-qe VIR 20  
 .16-20 vacant

Fig. 13. Texts on tablets PY An 724 and PY An 610.

How could the Luwian toponym Rukusawa have developed into the Hellenised toponym Roowa? Within the Luwian language itself the guttural may already have attenuated: *ruku* > *ruhu* (in old Germanic languages IE \**roi-ko* developed into *raha* > *reho* > *reh*, ‘Reh’ [German], ‘ree’ [Dutch], ‘roe’ [English]). Syllabic signs with the vowel *u* in the Cretan hieroglyphic and Linear A scripts obtained in Linear B syllabic values with *o* (e.g. Cretan Hieroglyphic and Linear A *lu* > Linear B *lol/ro*).<sup>65</sup> The aspirate *h* would explain why in *ro-o-wa* (line 1) the hiatus between the two vowels *o* has been maintained. The disappearance of *sa*, a Luwian genitive form, can be ascribed to the different formation in Greek of toponyms derived from substantives. Thus the Luwian royal name Muwa, ‘He with the strength of a bull’, which occurs on seals from Crete and northern Syria/ Cappadocia (the latter one, by the way, stemming from the palace in Knossos), would have produced the Luwian toponym Muwasawa, whereas his clearly corrupted, Greek name Minos (the Greek Minotauros is just a faint reminiscence of the original meaning of Muwa) gave its name Minoa to the historical Cretan toponyms (east of Kydonia and north of Hierapytna) which in Linear B would have been written as \**mi-no-wa*. In the form *a-re-sa-ni-e*, the *-e* is the separative ending which

<sup>65</sup>J.G.P. Best, ‘Von Piktographisch zu Linear B’, pp. 38-40: ‘2. Die neue *o*-Reihe’.

represents the place of origin, we should translate this form as ‘from Aresani’.<sup>66</sup> In the tablets from Pylos the toponyms in the realm of Pylos are always registered in a fixed order from south to north. This is the reason why either the Cretan toponym Roowa or that of Aresani always should come first when mention is made of Crete. Among the inhabitants of these towns a distinction is made between *ki-ti-ta* (*ktistai*), Greek settlers, and *me-ta-ki-ti-ta* (*metaktistai*), ‘non-Greek’ co-settlers. If compared with their successors in Homer’s *Iliad*, they bear royal names like Tros, ‘the Trojan’, at Roowa (PY An 519) or the Thracian name Thoas (*to-wa*, PY An 654). The latter was a member of the ship’s crew of Statig<sup>u</sup>oweus(?), who probably was also stationed at Roowa, as we shall see later. The fixed registration order from south to north is also the reason why one can easily reconstruct missing parts of inscriptions with *ki-ti-ta* and *me-ta-ki-ti-ta* in the first lines of tablets from Pylos. If for example in the first lines of one tablet, in this case tablet PY An 724, *e-re-ta*, ‘Rowers’, appear to have been sent from Roowa and Aresani in Crete to king Ekhelawon in Pylos, we are able to almost automatically reconstruct the text of the first lines on another tablet with Rowers in the heading like tablet PY An 610:

1. [e-ke-ra <sub>2</sub> -wo]-ne e-re-ta	<i>vacat</i> [ ]
2. [a-re-sa-ni]-e ki-ti-ta	VIR 46 [ ]
3. [me-ta-ki-ti]-ta	VIR 19 [ ]
4. [ro-o]-wa ki-ti-ta	VIR 36 [ ]
5. me-ta-ki-ti-ta	VIR 3 [ ]

#### Translation:

‘Rowers for Ekhelawon. From Aresani settlers: 46 men, co-settlers 19 men; Roowa settlers: 36 men, co-settlers 3 men.’

No translation of tablet PY An 724 has been attempted by Michael Ventris and John Chadwick in view of the numerous problems they had with it.<sup>67</sup> However, these problems would have vanished if they had only realised that the first eight lines exclusively relate to the situation in Crete. The translation of these lines should be as follows:

‘Roowa, the Rowers being absent. Menvis [an Egyptian name; alternative reading: Minyas, a Thracian name] has sent away from Aresani to the area near Scheria a settler being under the obligation to row (a ship): 1 man-1 man. For Ekhelawon he

<sup>66</sup>Cf. Hajnal, *o.c.*.

<sup>67</sup>Michael Ventris & John Chadwick, *Documents in Mycenaean Greek* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1973<sup>2</sup>), p. 187.



has sent away over sea (*haliei*, sc. *hodooi* or the like): [5 men]-being under the obligation to row (a ship): 5 men. The leader of the army has sent away over sea ([a<sub>2</sub>-ri]-e) [126] men. Statig<sup>u</sup>oweus(?) being under the obligation to row as belonging to a Follower(?) (o[-pe-ro e-re-e e]-qe[-si]-jo [?]): 1 man'.

Ventris & Chadwick's first question was: why are the Rowers normally stationed in Roowa absent? The answer is: because the leader of the army had sent away all Rowers originally stationed at *e-ra-po ri-me-ne*, *Elaphoon limenei*, 'Stags Harbour', that means Roowa's harbour — Aeriq<sup>u</sup>hoitas evidently being one of them on tablet PY An 657 — to his king in Pylos. The defence of northern Crete seems to have shifted from Roowa to Aresani, from where Menvis (or Minyas) sent another five additional Rowers to Ekhelawon, whereas the leader of the army himself seems to have got from Menvis (or Minyas) a reinforcement of one ship (see below) for the protection of the coastal strip of the Mesara valley. In the Mesara valley of southern Crete, Scheria is to be equated with the present-day ruins at Hagia Triada.<sup>68</sup> As we meet Statig<sup>u</sup>oweus again in the Peloponnesos (PY An 654), it is highly probable that the leader of the army had dispatched him from Crete as a Follower (a high royal officer) in order to accompany the Rowers from Roowa and Aresani whom he had sent off to Ekhelawon, as on the Pylos tablets a Follower always accompanies military units of a considerable size (cf. PY An 519, An 654, An 656, An 657, An 661).

How can we possibly know that the leader of the army and Statig<sup>u</sup>oweus were originally stationed at Roowa? Here we are assisted by Alexandre Farnoux and Jan Driessen's solid scholarship. They examined two Mycenaean vases from Mallia,<sup>69</sup> which can be dated to around 1200 BCE and therefore contemporaneous with the Linear B tablets from Pylos. On each of them the personal name of the owner is painted with Linear B signs. One name is *ma-re-wa*, the other *ko-no*. The authors are fully justified in drawing attention to the fact that on tablet PY An 657 — the same tablet on which 'Stags Harbour' occurs — the same name of a man in the Peloponnesos occurs in the genitive *ma-re-wo*, for like Statig<sup>u</sup>oweus also this person would have been sent off from Roowa. Writing variants of this Luwian name in later Cilician, Pisidian, Lycian and Carian inscriptions are Mareis, Mareas (*ma-re-wa* on the Mycenaean vase from Mallia), Maris and Mareus (cf. *ma-re-u* on tablet PY An 661); the man's

---

<sup>68</sup>Cf. Fred Woudhuizen, *The Language of the Sea Peoples* (Najade Press, Amsterdam 1992), p. 45 (Fig. 12). The famous Phaiakian seamen, living in Scheria, are supposed to have brought king Rhadamanthys (= Rulu Mizibimi) of Phaistos (at a distance of only 3 km from Hagia Triada) to Euboia and back home in just one day (*Odys.* 7, 321-6).

<sup>69</sup>Alexandre Farnoux & Jan Driessen, 'Inscriptions peintes en linéaire B à Malia', *BCH* 115 (1991), pp. 71-93.

name *ko-no* should be read as Kornos, a Pisidian personal name.<sup>70</sup> Of course one can expect to find Luwian names painted on Mycenaean vases from the originally Luwian capital Roowa.

On tablet PY Un 718 the king, the leader of the army, and the leader of the cult association, are all three represented in an offering to Poseidon. It would be surprising if, whereas in lines 13 and 14 of tablet PY An 610 — which enumerates contingents of Rowers — king Ekhelawon and high priest Wedaneus appear to possess 40 and 20 Rowers respectively, the leader of the army himself would not be represented at all in the context of this ‘naval review’. But he is, for *ko-ni-jo* 126 *me-ta-ki-ti-ta* VIR 26 is to be read as *Kornioi* 126, *metaktistai* VIR 26 and to be translated as

‘the men of Kornos 126, (among them) 26 co-settlers’.

To the number 126 the ideogram VIR has not been added because in the interpretation with ‘among them’ the ideogram covers both numbers. The scribe’s more precise specification of 26 men as ‘co-settlers’ betrays that the leader of the army in Crete on tablet PY An 724 was no one else than the owner of the Mycenaean vase found in Mallia, namely Kornos who apparently had sent off all his own 126 Rowers from Roowa: to be more precise, from Roowa’s Stags Harbour (*e-ra-po ri-me-ne*), for it was near the harbour of Mallia that the vase with the name *ko-no* had turned up. And that he himself had stayed behind in Crete is beyond doubt because of the qualification of his Rowers as *Kornioi*, for otherwise his own name Kornos would have stood on tablet PY An 610 in the genitive *ko-no-jo* next to those in the genitive of king Ekhelawon and high priest Wedaneus.

One substantial problem in the first eight lines of tablet PY An 724 remains to be solved. For what was the exact function and status of a Rower? Would the presumably Luwian leader of the army Kornos have appreciated it very much if Menvis/ Minyas would have sent him as a reinforcement from Aresani to the area near Scheria just one single settler, a Greek rower? One can hardly imagine that this would have been the case.

The solution of this problem comes from a scene on another seal of ‘Cat-Snake’ found in House A of sector *Mu* at Mallia (Fig. 14*b* above).<sup>71</sup>

---

<sup>70</sup>Johannes Sundwall, *Die einheimischen Namen der Lykier nebst einem Verzeichnis kleinasiatischer Namenstämme*, *Klio Beiheft* 11 (1913), pp. 142 and 126 respectively.

<sup>71</sup>*Quartier Mu* II, p. 158 (Fig. 230); p. 162 (Fig. 232).

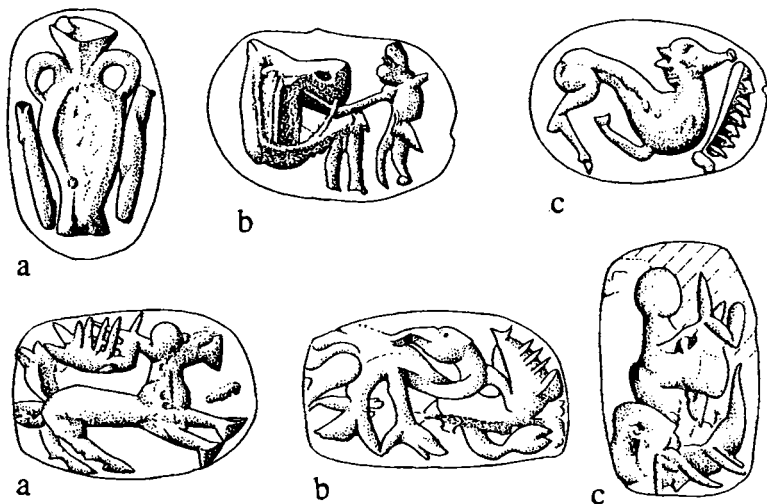


Fig. 14. Two seals of Shipmaster 'Cat-Snake' from House A, Sector *Mu* (Mallia).

On side *a* a huge jug with two handles is flanked to the left by a seated cat and to the right by a coiling snake. Apparently 'Cat-Snake' was entitled to bear the Egyptian title of cup bearer or 'butler' (*EG W23*), a rather high function at the Egyptian king's court. In Egyptian hieroglyphic writing this sign is followed by the sign of a bird (value *w*), on Cretan seals it is always combined with a *bird-man* (here in Fig. 14*b* above) denoting the 'butler' himself. This trusted function of cup bearer, in Egyptology usually called 'butler', was often fulfilled by Asiatics, who occasionally set themselves up in great style.<sup>72</sup>

On side *c* a stag is visible which has thrown off his antlers, the stag as such representing the town's name Rukusawa.

On side *b* the shipmaster 'Cat-Snake' himself is holding a rudder — in fact the steering oar — in his hands. If one rotates the seal 90° counter-clockwise, one discerns a ship, which carries two metal ingots. Its prow ends in an animal's head (a wolf's?) in profile, but its stern-post is shown in full face in order to enable the viewer to see the rowing hole through which the *rudder* had to be put in order to pull and draw it (Greek *helkoo*). In other words, here we see shipmaster 'Cat-Snake' *ready for boarding* in his capacity of a *Rower* (rudder and row both stem from the IE base *\*ere-*,

<sup>72</sup>See Redford, *o.c.*, pp. 224-5.

'to row, to oar',<sup>73</sup> cf. the Greek infinitive *e-re-e* [*ereen*] on tablet PY An 724). It is interesting to observe in this scene that 'Cat-Snake' as shipmaster and owner of the ship apparently operated himself as its Rower, for this situation makes clear that sending off one settler 'being under the obligation to row' from Aresani to the area near Scheria on tablet PY An 724 in fact means nothing less than sending off *one ship*.

Maritime practices in the ancient Mediterranean as described here have parallels in other parts of the world today. In the fishermen's villages south of Kovalam (Kerala) it is the owner of a sea-going vessel who steers his boat with a rudder. The crew of an extraordinarily large boat consists of some eight men, but mostly four or five men apart from the Rower suffice to handle a standard-size boat. None of them possesses a boat himself (the great wish of every local schoolboy is to become later the owner of a boat). As the author witnessed on the spot, one day a year the boats are used to transport huge numbers of women from the villages on the seacoast to the port of Trivandrum (where tens of thousands of women gather to honour the Goddess in her temple).

Now Apollonius Rhodius (*Argonautica* I, 1314) uses for 'stern-post' the technical term *holkaion* (cf. *helkoo*, 'to pull, to draw', in this case, of course, the rudder), a technical term after which probably a Greek ship's type, the *holkas*, has been named. Most Hellenists, however, read the Linear B term *o-ka* as 'command' (*\*orkhā*: Greek epic and tragic *orchamos* means 'leader' indeed). Nonetheless one cannot avoid observing on many Rower tablets from Pylos a situation similar to that on the coast of the Arabian Sea. To give you just an example of the standard registration on the Pylos tablets, on tablet An 519 the ship and its owner-rower are mentioned first, *to-ro-o o-ka*, 'of Tros the *holkas*', followed by the name of the ship's home port *ro-o-wa*, 'Roowa' and the names of the four regular members of its crew. Finally it is indicated that 110 men (not necessarily all together) were — as in our South Indian parallel — *transported* or are to be transported — in the latter case it is as if we are reading a consignment note — *from* Oikhalia *to* Aratuwa (the latter toponym only being attested in Linear B and therefore not localised), both of them being toponyms in the Peloponnesos. Without knowing the exact function and, as argued here, the high status of Rowers, Hellenists should perhaps have thought twice before depriving them of their ships. It is absolutely sure that there must exist scholars who have already interpreted *o-ka* as a ship's type, for so a slip of John Chadwick's pen proves:

'Others suggest *holkas* "merchant ship", but there is no reason why ships should

---

<sup>73</sup>See for the etymologies of row, oar, rudder and *\*ere-*: *Webster's New World Dictionary*, s.v. *row*.

be employed for this purpose'.<sup>74</sup>

Admittedly, there is no reason why ships should be employed for the purpose of 'command', for ships are used for transportation.

The ancient names of Mallia — Rukusawa/ Ajalu/ Roowa/ Elaphoi — as well as its many recurrent shipmasters on Cretan seals and its Rowers in the administration of Pylos are proof that from its very beginning (c. 2000 BCE) till its very end (c. 1200 BCE) the history of Crete's ancient capital was bound up with transnational navigation.

### *Towards a Revised Ancient Model*

It would be rather naive to simply take over the Ancient Model of Greece's history as seen by the ancient Greeks themselves. Therefore Martin Bernal strongly advocates his Revised Ancient Model in which he assigns a central role to Egypt. What may be the reason why not only so many, originally Egyptian signs form part of the earliest Cretan script, but that also an Egyptian religious name like *R'* or an Egyptian royal title like *bit(y)* appear on Cretan seals with Luwian texts? The author has analysed all signs on approximately 1000 objects inscribed with texts of the Cretan branch of Luwian Hieroglyphic. The hundred earliest documents are to be dated between 2000 and 1950 BCE, a very short period indeed. These belong to three Luwian kings (Muwa Buwa, Rulu Mizibimi and Telibinu Nija). They may be suspected to be contemporaries: they often occur all three together on three-sided seals. It is not unthinkable that the myths featuring Minos and his brothers Rhadamanthys and Aiakos or Sarpedon go back to a distant memory of this threesome. On their personal, royal seals they make reference to *ja-bu-re*, which forms part of the throne-name of king Amenemhet. However, before these three Luwian individuals bore the title of king (*bi-ty*), they were designated on their earlier seals by three Egyptian signs: a ship, an axe and a jug, often used separately but also in combination with each other, the Egyptianising *sign* 'ship' (*EG P1*) representing the originally Egyptian function of 'overseer of ships, shipmaster';<sup>75</sup> the Egyptianising *sign* 'axe' representing the originally Egyptian function of 'carpenter, shipwright';<sup>76</sup> and the Egyptianising *signs* 'jug' and 'bird' representing together the originally Egyptian function of 'butler'. In other words, the use of precisely these Egyptian *signs* with Egyptian meanings, and perhaps even the use of either the

---

<sup>74</sup>Chadwick, *Documents*, p. 564, s.v. *o-ka*.

<sup>75</sup>Cf. Best, *The Luwian branch*, fig. 5b for the Cretan application of this sign.

<sup>76</sup>Cf. Gardiner's comments on these meanings sub *EG T7* and for the form of the axe from the 12th Dynasty onwards *EG T7\**.

Egyptian *title* for, 'king' (*bit[y]*) or, alternatively, the Egyptian *sign* 'bee' itself for king (cf. *EG* L2) — all signs representing *Egyptian* titles —, would lead us to suspect that the first three Luwian rulers of Crete to be attested, navigated in the service of Amenemhet. This situation would also explain the preponderance of Egyptian-derived signs in early Cretan writing: such signs had been mediated via Byblos, Egypt's seaport in Phoenicia.

All this is not to say that the Luwian kings of Crete were actually dependent on the Egyptian king. The whole Orient shifted from the use of arsenic bronze to that of tin-bronze c. 2000 BCE and the tin-mines which produced this metal lay — not only, as we used to think, in Bohemia and Cornwall, but also in Anatolia.<sup>77</sup> Therefore the Egyptian king may have relied on the Luwian kings of Crete as these had access to one relevant trade-route from Anatolia to Egypt. What the Egyptian king would have had to offer in exchange for a regular supply of tin for Egypt was his protection of Cretan traders operating on markets in the Near East which stood under Egypt's political influence and sometimes even its direct military control. To keep up appearances in the region the pro-Egyptian king of Byblos might have formally acknowledged the inauguration of Cretan kings, who in their turn would have gracefully accepted the formal protection of the Egyptian king's deities by mentioning them and the Egyptian king himself on their seals. Of course, such diplomatic niceties were not necessarily faithful reflections of actual division of power and initiative in the maritime tin-trade.

The orientation of the Luwian rulers of Crete towards Egypt (Cretan hieroglyphic writing) and Phoenicia (Cretan Linear A) shifted towards Greece (*Cretan* Linear B > Pylos) when c. 1400 BCE the Luwian Great King gave his official permission to 'Nestor in Achaia' for installing Idomeneus in Knossos; Idomeneus was also allowed to supervise the Mesara valley on behalf of the apparently historical king Nestor of

---

<sup>77</sup>Cf. for the importance of tin for the Orient from c. 2000 BCE onwards Keith Branigan, *Aegean metalwork of the Early and Middle Bronze Age* (Oxford University Press, Oxford 1974), p. 74 and especially J.E. Dayton, 'Geology, archaeology and trade', in Jan G.P. Best & Nanny M.W. de Vries (eds.), *Interaction and Acculturation in the Mediterranean* (B.R. Grüner Publishing Co., Amsterdam 1982), pp. 153-77. For the evidence on South Anatolian tin mining, see: Yurco, F.J., 1996, 'Black Athena: An Egyptological review', in: M.R. Lefkowitz & G. MacLean Rogers, eds., *Black Athena revisited*, Chapel Hill & London: University of North Carolina Press, pp. 62-100, p. 97; Yener, K.A., & P.B. Vandiver, 1993, 'Tin Processing at Goltepe, an Early Bronze Age Site in Anatolia', *American Journal of Archaeology*, 97, 2: 207-38; for a critical view however, cf. Muhly, J.D., 1993, 'Early Bronze Age Tin and the Taurus', *American Journal of Archaeology*, 97, 2: 239-53; but cf. Yener, K.A., and P.B. Vandiver, 1993, 'Reply to Muhly', *American Journal of Archaeology*, 97, 2: 255-64. I am indebted to Wim van Binsbergen for drawing my attention to the recent literature on Anatolian tin.

Pylos.<sup>78</sup> What the Linear B tablets from Pylos clearly show, is that around 1200 BCE Crete's capital Roova also belonged to the possessions of the king of Pylos at that time.

Whether or not Martin Bernal's Revised Ancient Model for the reconstruction of Eastern Mediterranean history will ever be accepted by the international community of scholars, I cannot say. The only thing I know for certain from my study of Cretan writing over the past twenty-five years is that the academic, Aryan Model of Eurocentric Hellenists is to be utterly rejected. The great attractiveness of Bernal's *Black Athena* series (but also the limitation) lies in the fact that he has put on the general, non-specialist agenda what the specialists have known for decades: the intensive and voluminous material, cultural and religious exchanges in the Eastern Mediterranean in the second millennium BCE, in the light of which the pseudo-research into Greek 'masters' as conducted during the last two centuries is exploded. But a new danger lurks here: that of simply replacing the Greek masters by Egyptian ones, and supporting these new claims again by pseudo-research. If we are to greet a new dawn it should highlight *all* contributions and exchanges in and around this vital region, from all sides and to all sides, without any ethnocentric (including Eurocentric, but also Egyptocentric) projection of such ethnic and racial distinctions as haunt us today in the second millennium CE.

---

<sup>78</sup>Woudhuizen, *The Language of the Sea Peoples*, pp. 11-47.