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THE “TROWEL”-SIGN (EVANS NO. 18): ANOTHER INSTANCE OF EGYPTIAN INFLUENCE ON CRETAN HIEROGLYPHIC

In my contribution to *Kadmos* 36 (1997), 91–110, I noted an instance of Egyptian influence on Cretan hieroglyphic in the form of the bee-sign (Evans no. 86 [= CHIC no. 020]) corresponding to an Egyptian counterpart, in casu glyph L 2. Here is added another instance of Egyptian influence on Cretan hieroglyphic.

In his discussion of the stamp seal Byblos 6593 (Fig. 1), Victor Kenna noted the correspondence in form of the ninth sign with the so-called “trowel”-sign (Evans no. 18 [= CHIC no. 044]) in Cretan hieroglyphic.¹ As pointed out by Jan Best, the ninth sign of the Byblos stamp seal is a local writing variant of the Egyptian glyph X (𐀀) expressing the value *di* “give”, the whole formula running: “granted (no. 9) life (no. 5) punctuation mark (no. 6) stability (no. 2) the god (no. 1)”.² Consequently, the Cretan “trowel”-sign may reasonably be expected to render the value “give” as well.

Working from a different angle, Piero Meriggi established the relationship in form of the frequent formula “trowel-arrow” in Cretan hieroglyphic with a similar combination in the later Cypro-Minoan script (Fig. 2).³ In its turn, this latter combination is plausibly argued by Emilia Masson to read *pi-ni*, a reflex of Semitic *bn* “son”.⁴ Accord-

¹ V. E. G. Kenna, *The Stamp Seal, Byblos 6593*. *Kadmos* 9, 1970, 95. For Cretan hieroglyphic, see A. Evans, *Scripta Minoa I*, Oxford 1909, and cf. J.-P. Olivier – L. Godart, *Corpus Hieroglyphicarum Inscriptionum Cretae* (= CHIC), Paris 1996.

² J. Best – F. Woudhuizen, *Ancient Scripts from Crete and Cyprus*, Leiden 1988, 7–13; for the Egyptian glyph, see A. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*³, London 1957, 533.

³ P. Meriggi, *Kadmos* 12, 1973, 132, n. 15; cf. Best – Woudhuizen, l.c., 12.

⁴ E. Masson, *Cyprominoica, Répertoires Documents de Ras Shamra. Essais d'interprétation*, *Studies in Mediterranean Archaeology* 31,2, 1974, 39; cf. St. Hiller, *Die kyprominoischen Schriftsysteme*, *Archiv für Orientforschung, Beiheft* 20, 1985, 82.

ingly, then, we arrive at the value *pi* for the “trowel”-sign (note that, as with the Cretan linear scripts, hieroglyphic writing probably lacks a separate *b*-series).

Now, considering that the “trowel”-sign renders on the one hand the notion “give” and on the other hand the syllabic value *pi*, it can be surmised that this syllabic value is acrophonically derived from Luwian *pia*- “to give”.⁵ Contrary to the case of the bee-sign, therefore, the Cretan scribes did not borrow the Egyptian value with the sign, but, as in the case of the wine-ideogram,⁶ translated it into their own language.

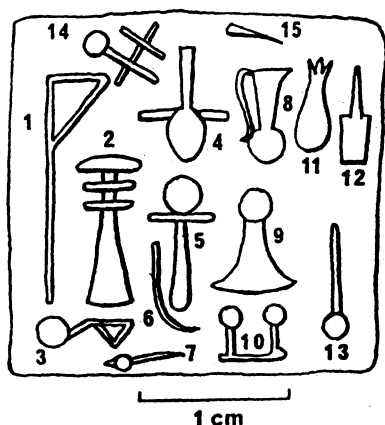


Fig. 1 Stamp seal, Byblos 6593.

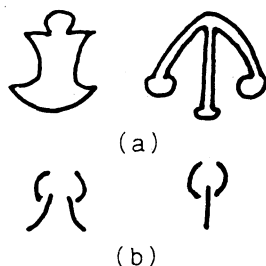


Fig. 2 The “child-formula”;
(a) Cretan hieroglyphic;
(b) Cypro-Minoan.

⁵ E. Laroche, *Les hiéroglyphes hittites. Première partie: l'écriture*, Paris 1960, 41–2.

⁶ Best-Woudhuizen, l.c., 13; 15–6 (syllabic value *wa* from Semitic **wainu*).