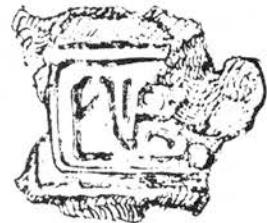


COMMUNICATIONS

Suggestions for the identification of the script on this sealing, dark gray clay, rectangular impression, found 1966 in the excavations at Jelemie, near Haifa, will be gratefully received.

The Michael Ventris Memorial Award for 1966 for Mycenaean Studies has been given to Mr. P. Hynding of the University of Copenhagen. A supplementary award from the Fund has been made to Paola Pelagatti, Soprintendenza alle Antichità, Siracusa.



A new periodical initially circulating on the same terms as Nestor has been established, and will be edited by, Stephen V. F. Waite of Dartmouth College. Calculi is to be a newsletter containing notes about projects and items of interest to classicists working with computers. Inquiries should be made to Professor Waite, Department of Classics, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire 03755, U. S. A. From it we quote: John Reich and Richard Morgan are compiling a list of all known Minoan seals in a standardized form suitable for treatment on the IBM 360 model 65 computer at the University of Manitoba. Their information includes the individual symbols on each side of the seal; the seal's color, material, and provenience; and miscellaneous notes. As a first step towards possible decipherment of the seals, Reich and Morgan are intending to produce a frequency list of the symbols, a listing by groups of symbols appearing on the same side and on different sides of a seal, and various other combinations of the data. The finished product will in many respects be like Fowler and Wolfe's Materials for the Study of the Etruscan Language, with changes occasioned by the fact that the latter can make use of alphabetic ordering. If anyone knows of unpublished seals, Reich and Morgan would be grateful for information about them.

William A. McDonald of the University of Minnesota has been awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship to study the human ecology of Messenia from the Bronze Age to the present.

The Mary Flexner Lectures at Bryn Mawr are to be presented this year by Kurt Bittel, whose subject will be "Hattusha: The Capital of the Hittites."

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor:- Le nom de Mīnōs est attesté dans les textes mycéniens sous sa forme primitive Me-nu-wa (KN, PY) et Me-nu-a₂ (PY) = Me(i)nu(w)a(s) (ou -ē-). Emprunté de nouveau vers la fin du II^e millénaire de l'étéo-crétos tardif où ce nom était déjà changé en *Mīno(w)as (ei ou ē > T et uwa > owa ou oa, cfr. h. h. Katuwas > lyd. Katowas > gr. Kadoas), il est devenu en grec régulièrement Mīnōs: contraction o(w)a > ō (cfr. hom. thōkos de *thowakos) et décliné d'après hērōs. La forme primitive est, semble-t-il, mieux conservée dans Et. M.: Meinōs de *Meino(w)as. Dans

PY An 724 Me-nu-wa est le nom d'une personnalité éminente. Néanmoins, les Me-nu-wa (Me-nu-a₂) des textes mycéniens ne paraissent être que des homonymes du célèbre roi crétois. D'ailleurs, Diodore distingue Minos I et son petit-fils Minos II.

The University
Sofia, Bulgaria

Yours, &c.
V. I. Georgiev

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1 April 1967

To the Editor:- The following brief remarks are written in answer to a request from Mr. Colin Renfrew to comment upon his note (Nestor pp. 469f., 1 Dec. 1966) on the sensational find of two or three inscribed tablets at Tărtăria in Rumania.

Original or fake? My first impression is that if the tablets were brought to me for an opinion by a dealer in antiquities, I would have judged them to be fakes. Since the tablets were found in a controlled excavation, we are forced to assume that they are original.

Writing or not? If they are original, then their closest parallels are the Sumerian texts of the Uruk III or Jemdet Nasr period of about 2800 B.C., as originally seen by Vlassa and confirmed by the Sumerologist Falkenstein, one of the greatest experts in the field.

Sumerian or local? In spite of the many points of identity or resemblance between the Tărtăria and Sumerian texts, the existing divergencies between the two make it impossible to assume that the Tărtăria texts represent Jemdet Nasr writing. All the scholars who commented on the matter (Vlassa, Miloščić, Falkenstein, Popovitch, and Renfrew) conclude therefore that the Tărtăria texts testify to the existence of a local system formed under the stimulus of Mesopotamian writing. In support of this, some of these scholars cite the existence of hundreds of property marks on neolithic pottery etc. found in Rumania and neighboring areas. The parallels are not plausible because property marks are used universally in literate as well as pre-literate societies.

My interpretation. The assumption of a writing system in a neolithic level is unthinkable to me. Writing is not used in a vacuum. Writing exists only in a civilization, as characterized by a complex of many features, such as full agriculture, full metallurgy, and cities with their large public buildings and monumental art. My own idea is that an enterprising Sumerian merchant, badly acquainted with the Sumerian writing, concocted the tablets, perforated them, and then sold them locally as amulets to be worn on a string around the neck. The alternative is that the Tărtăria tablets were composed by a European native who became vaguely acquainted with the Sumerian writing while traveling in the Near East.

13 March 1967
University of Chicago
Chicago, Illinois

Yours, &c.
I. J. Gelb

To the Editor:- In the American Journal of Archaeology 70 (1966)368-369, Mr. Betts has rightly directed the attention of scholars to two mistakes in Cretan Seals (Oxford, 1960): for which I am grateful, and which I acknowledge. They were due in part to ignorance and in part to a preoccupation with typological and stylistic criteria. His inferences, however, show a lack of appreciation of more important conclusions concerning glyptic trends in the Late Minoan age which, undeservedly, these mistakes underline. Since I was concerned in Cretan Seals, Chapter IV, with the gradual disuse in the Late Minoan age of other shapes except that of the lentoid for seals and the amygdaloid for the talismanic stones, my assumption that the lenticular faces of Vapheio 5 and 6, in reality a three-sided prism bead (see Cretan Seals, p. 21, note 8), were lentoids, although mistaken, in fact supports the main contention of the growing preference for the lenticular shape.

More serious, however, is his suggestion that nos. 5 and 6 were made in different workshops--a most unlikely event. He, like one other scholar, has not studied the lists on pp. 80 and 81 carefully enough. That nos. 5 and 6 (using Tsountas' numbering) are separated in Vapheio List A only emphasizes the equivocal nature of Biesantz's stylistic criteria. If scholars however will look at the position of nos. 5 and 6 in Vapheio List B--using the criteria I favour--they will see that nos. 5 and 6 are in the same category. It is hoped that a further treatment of this matter may appear in a future number of the American Journal of Archaeology.

17 March 1967

Cyprus Museum
Nicosia, Cyprus

Yours, &c.

V. E. G. Kenna

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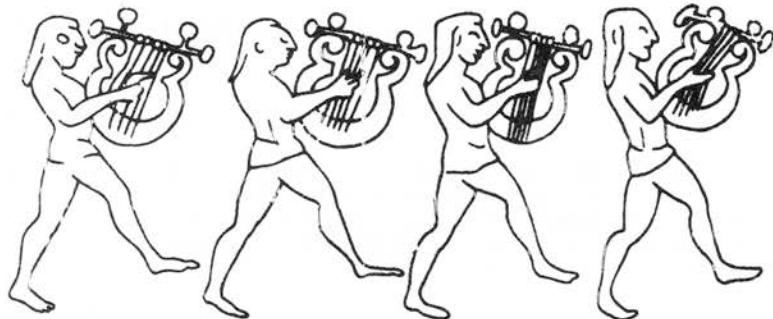
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