

THE GODDESS AND THE SEA PEOPLE
The origins of the languages of the Minoan scripts

Karen Woodman

Department of Linguistics
University of Victoria

1.0 INTRODUCTION

It is ironic that although the world has known for millenia about the accomplishments of the "Ancient Greeks" through the writings of Homer and his contemporaries, it was only relatively recently that the evidence of the advanced civilization pre-dating Homer by almost a thousand years, that of the Minoans, has come to light. It was excavations by Sir Arthur Evans - most notably at the site of Knossos, on the island of Crete (Greece) in 1901 - which first gave notice of the existence of scripts used by the Bronze Age Aegean civilization discovered in the late nineteenth century by Heinrich Schliemann.

Focussing on the similarities between Minoan Linear A, its precursor, Cretan-Pictographic Script, and the symbolic language of the Goddess religions described in *Language of the Goddess* (Marija Gimbutas, 1989), this paper will attempt to demonstrate a relationship between the writing and linguistic system of the Minoan civilization, and those systems of other earlier and contemporary Goddess-centered civilizations (e.g., those of Sumer, Egypt, Phoenicia). The "Language of the Goddess", which will be discussed in detail later, has been shown to include elements that have been consistently evident in the religious/historical artifacts of widespread cultures, spanning from the Paleolithic (ca. 60,000 B.C.) through to the last days of the Roman Empire (ca. 500 A.D.). By connecting the Minoan scripts to this historical religious tradition, I propose a connection between the Minoans as a people and a larger religious-cultural tradition, to begin to identify not only their ancestry and linguistic roots, but also to settle the issue of the origins of their writing systems.

The scripts discovered by Evans can be roughly divided into three groups: (1) those apparently encoding the languages of non-Indo-European Minoans (dating between 2500 B.C - 1600 B.C. - e.g., Pictographic, Linear A and arguably Linear C), (2) those encoding the language of the Indo-European Proto-Greek Myceneans (1600-1250 B.C. - Linear B), and (3) Linear D (derived primarily from one text - the Phaistos Disk). It will be the first group - the non-Indo-European Linear A and Cretan Pictographic - which will be the focus of this discussion since the latter two scripts date after the arrival of the patriarchal Indo-Europeans (Mycenaeans) (Cotterell, 1979; Packard, 1974).

The decipherment of Linear B script - which has fundamentally influenced the subsequent interpretations of the other Pre-Homeric scripts (i.e. Cretan Pictographic, Linear A, Linear C and Linear D scripts) - was based on the imposition of phonetic values on the somewhat stylized ideograms of Linear B. Thus, for example, the ideogram of a three-legged cauldron was seen to be accompanied by syllabic signs which could be read as *ti-ri-po-de*: "almost exactly the Greek word *tripodes*, which of course means *tripods* and is used of cauldrons of this type" (Chadwick, 1987: 20). With the decipherment of Linear B as Greek (albeit a very early form of it), came the decoding of

Cypro-Minoan Linear C script, facilitated by the discovery of a bilingual (Greek/Linear C) text. In fact, a number of bilinguals of various combinations of languages have been found (see Gordon (1966) for discussion). It was assumed that this script, in use on the island until ca. 800 B.C., also encoded a Greek phonology for a different dialect. Although questions remain concerning the origins of the script itself, as its use predates that of Linear B, it appears to be derived from Linear A and/or Cretan Pictographic scripts [see Best & Woudhuizen (1989) for discussion].

The hidden influences and biases on the study of ancient languages and cultures which appear to have conspired to obscure the relationship between the Minoan scripts, the Minoan language, and the language of the religion of the Goddess will also be discussed. These influences include the imposition of researchers' own socio-cultural expectations and belief systems on to the civilization under investigation. The decipherments currently proposed for Linear A, Linear D and Cretan-Pictographic are also based primarily on original decipherment of Linear B [for further discussion, see Best & Woudhuizen, 1988, 1989]. As will be seen in the later discussion, this unquestioning acceptance of the earlier work may have compounded an original error. Examples of such unsubstantiated assumptions concerning societal structures leading to linguistic assertions will be discussed, with reinterpretations of some of the linguistic data being offered. One such assertion that will be re-examined is the traditional interpretation of the Cretan pictographic ideograms for man and woman. It will be proposed that the (unchallenged) original decipherment derived primarily from twentieth century socio-cultural expectations, and as such lacks an internal linguistic foundation. Thus, in this paper, such questions of gender identification will be examined in detail - as will other presuppositions concerning identification of ideograms which may have influenced subsequent linguistic analysis.

One of the first researchers to connect the widespread (temporally and geographically speaking) similarity of the symbols associated with writing to the worship of the Goddess was Marija Gimbutas (1989), who in exhaustively cataloguing what had previously been marginalized as "geometric designs" on artifacts dating from the Paleolithic era onwards, became aware of a systematic and consistent use of specific patterns by followers of the Earth Goddess religions - in Greece, as well as throughout the continent. The Minoan civilization appears to have been one of the last surviving Goddess-worshipping societies. She argues persuasively that the "geometric designs" represent an ideographic script encoding religious symbols in a consistent cross-cultural, albeit not language-specific, manner.

Many of the characters or ideograms of the earliest discovered Minoan scripts found by Sir Arthur Evans (1909) show amazing similarity to the symbolic "Language of the Goddess" documented from sources across the Ancient world by Gimbutas (1989). Since the worship of the Goddess (or a Mother-Goddess) can be seen to have existed at different times (Paleolithic to approx. 3000-2000 B.C.), connections between the temporally and geographically disparate groups are significant for the identification of the Minoans throughout Old Europe and the Middle East as much of the literary evidence from these civilizations has taken the form of inscriptions - frequently invocations of the resident deity.

Surprisingly, although it may appear that the original error would lie with Sir Arthur Evans who found the first tablets at Knossos and proposed the original decipherment, many of Sir Arthur's theories and observations from 1909 have considerable relevance to the current research. Chadwick notes that Evans "had been in no doubt that his 'Minoan' Cretans were not Greek speakers." (1987: 17)

It is therefore unfortunate that many Minoan scholars appear to have omitted a close perusal of his original work, relying instead on secondary sources. Given the minimal acknowledgement of the Minoan Goddess religion in many recent works (e.g. Castleden, 1990; Cotterell, 1979, 1985), it is surprising to find many attributions to the "Goddess of the Minoans" in Evans' research, albeit without examination of the possible socio-political and/or linguistic ramifications of a female centered culture (especially with respect to the Cretan Pictographic script). Furthermore, he assumes that the palaces were controlled by Priest-kings rather than the equally plausible Priestess-queens, as do many of those who followed (e.g. Baikie, 1926; Baker, 1979; Burn, 1930; Castleden, 1990; Chadwick, 1987; Cotterell, 1979; Packard, 1974; Yamauchi, 1967). In fact, considerable literary and archeological evidence exists supporting the latter position. Although most of this evidence has come to light via the work of female linguists and archeo-historians (e.g. D'Eaubonne, 1976; Eisler, 1988; Gadon, 1990; Gimbutas, 1989; Goodison, 1989; Goodrich, 1989; Stone, 1976).

Sir Arthur Evans suggested a number of similarities between the Minoan "hieroglyphs" (Cretan Pictographic script) and scripts of what are now known as the Goddess-influenced civilizations (e.g. Egypt, Cyprus, and Lycia - see discussion in Stone, 1976). Of the "hieroglyphs" summarized in Evans' (1909) book, he directly identifies a number of them as "symbols of the Goddess". One such example is the double axe (the *labrys*) from which the name *Labyrinth*, the Place of the Double Axe, is assumed to have been derived (e.g., Evans, 1909: 232, 233).

Evans states:

the double axe is associated with the Palace sign...as an ideograph, the sign may at times cover a religious title in connexion with the Minoan priest-kings (*sic*). In a recurring formula it is grouped with the serpent or zigzag (#83) and grain jar (#50). In one case it is coupled with the "serpent" alone, a point of some significance when it is remembered that the snake, like the double axe itself, was a special attribute of the *Minoan Mother Goddess* [my emphasis] (1909: 195).

Some of the other ideographs that Evans (1909) attributes to the Goddess, or "early Cretan" religion, include the following: the bull's head (#62), the ox's head (#38), the ankh (#39), the owl (#78), the dove (#79), the snake and "zigzag" (# 84 - frequently grouped with the double axe, arrow), the "sieve" (#54), the sun (#108), the moon (#111), the axe (#12), the double axe (#36), and the "cross" (#112). Additionally, we may see similarities between Evan's "sieve" (#54), a circular net-like ideograph, and the images on the pottery in Gimbutas (1989: 82). The similarities between the "three flowers" ideographs in 25c, 25d, 25h, 25l and 25m (Evans, 1909: 215) and the poppy crown on the head of the statue of the Goddess in Cotterell (1979: 160) is also thought-provoking. Finally, the symbolism of three reflected in some of the Minoan characters can quite transparently be seen in the earlier votive offerings and pottery [e.g., compare Evans (1909: 215) with Gimbutas (1989: 91)].

2.0. QUESTIONS OF OBJECTIVITY: SEXISM & ETHNOCENTRICISM

The influence of researcher bias on the decipherment of ancient scripts has resulted in the imposition of non-linguistic values in the analysis. Sir Arthur Evans' lack of interest in the world-view implications of the symbols of the Goddess in the Minoan scripts, and subsequent work shows an extreme avoidance of the topic. Unfortunately, it seems to be the norm to limit discussions of

the implications of the Goddess religion on the Minoan society to approximately one or two paragraphs - even in discussions of the Minoan religions (e.g. Castleden, 1990; Cotterell, 1979, 1980).

The implications are examined by Stone, who asks:

Why do so many people educated this century think of Greece as the first major culture when written language was in use and great cities built at least twenty-five centuries before that time? And perhaps most important, why is it continually inferred that the age of the "pagan" religions, the time of the worship of female deities (if mentioned at all), was dark and chaotic, mysterious and evil, without the light of order and reason that supposedly accompanied the later male religions, when it has been archaeologically confirmed that the earliest law, government, medicine, agriculture, architecture, metallurgy, wheeled vehicles, ceramics, textiles and *written* languages were initially developed in societies that worshipped the Goddess? (1976: xxiv)

The assumption of a male-dominated Minoan society has resulted in some questionable decipherments. One blatant example of socio-cultural and linguistic preconceptions leading to unwarranted linguistic extrapolation may be found in the discussion in Best and Woudhuizen (1989: 12) concerning the origins and meaning of the term *sa-ri* (*sa-ru-* nominative). The authors claim that because this term appears before the name of the person most often mentioned (i.e. the most powerful), and the one receiving the largest amounts of goods on the tablets, it must *a priori* transliterate a "king". This assertion, as will be illustrated below, ignores their *source's* transliteration of the word in definitively non-gender-specific terms. Best and Woudhuizen cite as their source the linguist ten Haf who:

compared *sa-ra* with Hebrew *sar*, "chief, ruler, captain", *ru-zu-na* with Hebrew *rôzên*, *râzôn*, "prince, knight, ruler", and *sa-qe-we* with Hebrew *zâqîf*, "military guard" and deduced from the numbers behind them that the three functionaries, like the *wa-na-ka*, *ra-wa-ke-ta* and *te-re-ta* in a more or less similar context on the Linear B tablets, are noted in order of decreasing importance. His (ten Haf's) conclusion on *sa-ra* was: "It would not be surprising if it turned out to be the official title of the local ruler" [i.e. not necessarily a male ruler, or a "king"] (1989: 13)

However, ignoring ten Haf's frequent use of the gender-neutral term ruler", Best and Woudhuizen (1989) present the following sexist and somewhat ethnocentric baronial hierarchy:

we have on HT 116 in order of descending importance *sa-ri* "my king", *ru-zū-na*, "prince", *sa-qe-we*, "baron" on one line with *wa-na-ka*, *ra-wa-ke-ta* and *te-re-ta* in Linear B (p. 14)

The influence of preconceptions based on personal socio-cultural environment is obvious in this "linguistic" reasoning. Unfortunately, as will be illustrated below, these kinds of assumptions are evident throughout the literature.

One final note with respect to the title *sa-ri*. It appears that this term may derive from the name of the Phonaecian "Pillar Goddess", Asherah - in which case it would not seem unusual for it to inflect for the feminine [a sticking point for Best & Woudhuizen, 1989]. The fact that the

name of the Goddess in Hebrew inflects for the masculine plural ("asherim") also serves to illustrate one of the dangers of making linguistic comparisons without reference to the temporal, cultural and religious differences between the language **groups** in question. The Pillar Goddess (of Canaan) was the "main competition of Jahweh" (Stone, 1976), and the Hebrews (then and now) refuse to even *acknowledge* a female deity, using only the masculine word *Elohim* (gods).

Stone states:

The writers of the Judeo-Christian Bible, as we know it, seem to have purposely glossed over the sexual identity of the female deity who was held sacred by the neighbours of the Hebrews in Canaan, Babylon and Egypt. The Old Testament does not even have a word for "Goddess". In the Bible, the Goddess is referred to as *Elohim*, in the masculine gender, to be translated as *god*. But the Koran of the Mohammedans was quite clear. In it we read, "Allah will not tolerate idolatry...the pagans pray to females" (Stone, 1976: xviii).

Thus, to understate the case, "a Hebrew translation of a religious Linear A formula is incompatible with a Phoenecian pillar cult" (Best & Woudhuizen, 1989: 19). Ironically - considering the confusion perpetuated by their discussion of the meaning of *sa-ri/sa-ru*, Best and Woudhuizen suggest that the most temporally appropriate comparisons for the Minoan Linear A texts would be those made to texts of the Ugaritic language (ca. 1400-1200 B.C.), who were also followers of the Goddess (see Stone, 1976).

More examples of this sexist bias can be seen in Chadwick's (1987) assumption that female workers in the Cretan records would *necessarily* be slaves He states:

In Crete at least the production of wool was highly organized; and there too the palace controlled groups of female workers, who spun the yarn, wove and decorated the cloth... **These women are not specifically called 'slaves' but their status can hardly have been much higher [my emphasis]** Other workers are *specifically* [my emphasis], called by this title, but perhaps the distinction between slave and free was not so rigidly drawn as in later Greece. There are also slaves (or servants) of various deities, but some of these seem to have been of higher status (Chadwick, 1987:37).

Note that in addition to the blatant imposition of a twentieth century perspective on the Minoan civilization, the author has also apparently overlooked the fact that supplicants of most religions declare themselves to be subservient (i.e., slaves or servants) to their gods and goddesses. Other evidence of bias is addressed in the following quote:

The women who followed the ancient sexual customs of the Goddess faith, known in their own language as sacred or holy women, were repeatedly referred to (by academics) as "ritual prostitutes". This choice of words once again reveals a rather ethnocentric ethic, probably based on biblical attitudes. Yet, using the term "prostitute" as a translation for the title of women who were actually known as *qadesh*, meaning *holy* [my emphasis], suggests a lack of comprehension of the very theological and social structure the writers were attempting to describe and explain (Stone, 1976: xx).

A final case of a researcher unwilling to accept the implications of his data can be found in a paper entitled "Homeric *ανθος*" [anthos] in Chadwick and Baumbach's (1963) discussion of Mycenaean Greek and Linear B (Woodman, 1991). In his paper, J. M. Aitchison provides, albeit unintentionally, additional evidence of the influence of a Minoan religion on the development of the Greek language. He questions the traditional interpretation of *ανθος* as "flower", and from the point of view of this paper, it is provocative to note the similarities between *ανθος* and the Minoan word "Athēnai", the goddess after whom the city of Athens was named, and who has been identified as the Minoan Goddess (see Eisler, 1987). Aitchison's disagreement with the traditional definition lies in the "word (and its derivatives)...(having)...to be regarded as metaphorical in at least six of the contexts in which it occurs" (p. 271). He proposes that a more "natural meaning" for *ανθος* based on analysis of the contexts in which it is found is "upward, visible growth" (p. 272). The relationship between the Minoan Goddess religion and nature, and life and fertility, is well documented in the murals and artifacts discovered at these sites (Betancourt, 1985; Castleden, 1990; Cotterell, 1979, 1985; Dumas, 1978; Hagg & Marinatos, 1984, 1987; Packard, 1974; Stone, 1976). Despite the additional evidence the author himself presents, he seems unable to acknowledge the obvious relationship between the origins of term *ανθος* and the "fertility cults". Thus, while noting (p. 276) the use of *ανθηα* [anthea] in reference to the goddesses Hera (*Ανθηα &et. Ηερα* [Anthea i Hera]) and Aphrodite (*Ανθηα &et. Αφροδ&et.τε* [Anthea Aphrodite]), and even going so far as to cite Welcker's theory that Hera was "originally an earth goddess" and that "she was... undoubtedly connected with growth and fertility...(since)...ears of corn were called *ανθηα &et. Ηερα&et.ς* [anthea Heris], Aitchison balks - stating that such theories have "met with strong opposition" (p. 276). Aitchison concludes, upon reviewing the etymological theories on the origins of *ανθος*, that there remains an "absence of convincing cognates in other Indo-European languages" for *ανθος* (p. 277)!

3.0. MALE OR FEMALE?: A RE-ANALYSIS OF SOME CRETAN IDEOGRAMS

As has been suggested, it is critical to consider the implications of the decisions implicit in every aspect of the decipherment of ancient (and unquestionably dead) languages. For example, consider the implications on the subsequent characterization of an entire socio-cultural and linguistic era of an incorrect assumption of the value of the ideographs and/or characters assumed to represent the male and female. It is my contention that questions of such magnitude can be raised concerning the decipherment of the Minoan scripts, specifically with respect to basic assumptions of gender-specific ideograms.

From the initial analysis by Sir Arthur Evans in 1909 through to current times (e.g. Chadwick, 1987), a triangular-topped stick figure has been assumed to represent the Minoan ideogram for male, and a rather shapeless stick figure is assumed to be the ideogram for female [see examples in Chadwick (1987: 13) and Packard (1974: 33)]. Attempting to discover the basis for the original gender allocation in the decipherment of the Minoan scripts is difficult as discussion of the "female" sign is virtually non-existent in the literature. Evans (1909) does not even include a discussion of the "female" ideogram, although he dedicates a page to the "male" one (p. 181). In addition, one finds very little of what could be considered independent evidence for the original gender-designation. However, as will become clear below, evidence certainly appears to exist to question it.

Some comments by Packard (1974) as to the rationale behind his support for the designation are illuminating. Discussing the basis for the two ideograms he refers to as MAN, he states (p. 51):

The criterion for assigning a list to the B series is the presence of the sign L99 or one of its variants L125, L126, Lc55. *These signs seem to depict men, though they do not closely resemble the Linear B [Greek] ideograms VIR and MULIER. We shall refer to them as "MAN" ideograms, but for purposes of classification it will not be necessary to establish what the signs represent.* For the most part these signs stand in isolation in apparent ideographic usage, but in a few cases phonetic function is conceivable.

Since the two MALE ideograms do not even particularly resemble each other - one appears to be wearing a skirt, which according to evidence from wall paintings Minoan men did not wear [they wore loincloths - see Cotterell, 1979] - Packard attempts to clarify his reasoning:

The analysis of the B series lists shows that the entries appear to form a coherent group and does not contradict the view that they designate entities counted (in whole numbers) rather than measured (with fractions). The identification of these ideograms as MEN on the basis of their shape is consistent with the context in which they occur...It is further supported by the nature of the lists which appear on the same tablets with B lists...These groupings would accord well with an interpretation of the B series ideograms as *classes of men*. (Packard, 1974: 52).

However, the underlying assumptions upon which Packard's decisions were made are clarified later - they are based on his assumptions concerning what constitutes "mens' jobs", along with the assumption that women did not work. He does not even consider women worthy of discussion with respect to these hypothesized professions. He states:

The most obvious need for distinguishing *groups of men* is by their profession. In this connection it may be relevant to consider three signs which occur in B series along with various MAN ideograms: L8, L35, and L10. The first of these resembles the Linear B ideogram for bronze; the second looks like the prow of a ship, and the third may be based on the ideogram L67, perhaps BARLEY. It is tempting, though highly speculative, to interpret these as "*men who work with bronze*", that is, bronzesmiths (cf. *ka-ke-u* in Linear B); "*men who work with boats*", perhaps shipwrights (cf. *na-u-do-moin* Linear B); "*men who work with barley*", or bakers of some sort (cf. *a-to-po-go* in Linear B). (Packard, 1974: 53).

Ironically, the bias noted above also has certain costs attached to it. A number of problems arise in the analysis as a result of the author's adherence to the original designation. Packard complains:

It is not easy to determine what distinctions are made by the various modifications of the MAN ideograms and by the various sign-groups and ligatures which occur in lists with them.... *Some of the MAN ideograms seem to be wearing ceremonial robes* [skirts? - my emphasis] this may be illusory in view of the schematic nature of the signs. The detailed ritual preparations listed on the Linear B tablets might lead one to look for *religious personnel* in Linear A. (Packard, 1974: 53).

It is interesting that for Packard (and others) even figures in dresses must = MEN, presumably based on "context". Researchers have seem extremely hesitant to consider the ideograms as FEMALE, despite evidence from the wall-paintings and sealstones. Glotz (1925 - cited in Stone, 1976: 58) notes 76: 58) notes the following:

The priestesses long presided over religious practices...Hosts of objects represent the priestesses at their duties... *the participation of men in the cult was, like the association of a god with a goddess, a late development* [my emphasis]. Their part in the religious ceremonies was always a subordinate one, even when the king became the high priest of the bull...while private worship was performed in front of small idols, *in public worship the part of the goddess was played by a woman* [my emphasis]. It is the high priestess who takes her place on the seat of the goddess, sits at the foot of the sacred tree or stands on the mountain peak to receive worship and offerings from her acolytes and from the faithful.

Another aspect of the traditional MALE ideogram which is problematic in the face of historical evidence is the triangular upper body. As noted by Gimbutas (1989), the triangle has been a symbol historically associated to the FEMALE (e.g., the breasts and vulva - Gimbutas, 1989). According to Gimbutas, this association of triangles and the female body can be traced from the Upper *Paleolithic*. Interestingly, in a number of the pictures designating a female with a triangular upper body, the anatomically obviously male image is a very linear figure, much like the currently designated FEMALE ideograph [see sealstones, Gimbutas, 1989]. The triangle itself is also a symbol in the Minoan script, and arguably has come down to us as the Greek letter delta (Δ).

A third questionable attribute of the traditionally MALE signs (albeit for animals) is the double, or bi-line. In Chadwick's illustrations of the ideograms for domestic animals (e.g., Chadwick, 1987: 29), the animals distinguished by a double line crossing mid-body are designated as male (as well as *castrated* male). No rationale is given for this decision. As the cross-cultural and historic information in Gimbutas (1989: 170), demonstrates also shows a strong affiliation with the female [e.g., see "mother-and-child" statue in Gimbutas (1989: 170)]. Interestingly, a tri- and bi-line symbol/ideogram also exists in the Minoan script (e.g. Evans, 1909).

4.0. THE GODDESS IN THE LINEAR SCRIPTS?: INVOCATIONS AND LINGUISTIC EVIDENCE

The influence of the Goddess civilizations on the development of the Minoan scripts remains the subject of considerable debate. For example, Best argues against a blanket assumption of Semitic origins (Best & Woudhuizen, 1989) on the basis of his questioning of Gordon's (1961) interpretation of the name of the goddess, *Aššara*, as Semitic. He suggests instead that the term *a-ša-ša-ra.me/ma*, the ending *ma/me* should be considered as a separate inflectional. He comments (p. 21):

A sophisticated interpretation based on the Semitic stem *s/m*, in which *(y)a-sa-/sa-la-mV* must be read instead of just *(y)a-sa-sa-ra.me/ma* contradicts the facts, because the epigraphical evidence proves that the pair *ma/me* forms, from the very origin of Cretan writing, no part of the stem *a-ša-ša-ra*, not to speak of the fantastic appropriation of *y-*, which in the pictographic inscription never occurs to the stem *a-ša-ša-ra*.

By doing so, however, it should be noted he is in fact arguing against his own initial hypothesis concerning the Semitic origins of Minoan (i.e., Best, 1972). Emphasizing the extreme complexity of the linguistic situation under investigation, the author notes the example of a text in which can be found: "Akkadian technical terms, graphic variants typical for Akkadian texts from the Northwest Semitic area, Northwest Semitisms like fluctuating endings and a purely indigenous title" (Best & Woudhuizen, 1989: 14).

The phrase mentioned above is found on many of the Linear A inscribed materials. Significantly, Best's asserts:

One of the important linguistic consequences of the decipherment of Pictographic and Linear A is that *a-ša-ša-ra-ma/me* ca. 2000 B.C. formed nothing more or less than proof of a primary vocative particle *ma/me* in, in diachronic order, Pictographic, Linear A and, as *-m*, in Ugaritic and *ya-sa-sa-ra-me/ma* c. 1600 B.C. of a secondary vocative particle *ya-*, and *y-* in Linear A and Ugaritic respectively: e.g., *ya-ša-ša-ra-ma-na*, "Oh, our Pillar", if *y-* vocative particle, (*ma*) would stand in its right place in the clause, and function in combination with the name of the deity invoked, followed by the first plural possessive pronoun suffixed behind the whole (Best & Woudhuizen, 1989: 22).

The comparison with Ugaritic is pertinent given the cultural/religious ties the two nations apparently shared. Of course, the fact that the nature and content of this "most frequently attested standard libation formula in Linear A is the invocation of the Goddess is also significant. It reads as follows:

(y)a-ta-nūtī wa/u-ya (y)a-di hi-te-te ... (y)a-ša-ša-ra-me ... (i)pi-na-ma (= (ib)bi-nam-ma) "I have given and my hand has made an expiatory offering...oh Pillar (Aššara)...please give me..." [From Best & Woudhuizen, 1989: 32]

Finally, other evidence of the Goddess can arguably be found in the analysis of Gordon (1966: 8):

The Eteocretan [Creto-Minoan] is better engraved than the Greek and its readings are clear. The final word in the Eteocretan is MO corresponding to *JMATPI TAI A/* Since *MATPI* can only be the dative for "mother", the Eteocretan *MO* is the equivalent of Hebrew *l'immō* "for his mother"...(cf. the Ugaritic name *ištrmy* "Ish-tar is-my mother" = syllabic *ištar-im-mi-ya* (Gordon, 1966: 8).

5.0. CONCLUSIONS

In this paper, a linguistic comparison of the Pre-Homeric scripts with the language of the Goddess was done to examine the influence of the Goddess religion on linguistic and script development in Minoan Crete, on the basis of symbol similarities and of textual evidence of a religious nature. The hypothesis that the linguistic evidence would support the influence of the Goddess religion as a unifying principle in the origins of both the Minoan scripts and of the Minoan language(s) appears to have received substantial support. Similarly presented was evidence of the influence of bias on the study of ancient languages and cultures which has to a considerable extent conspired to obscure the relationship between the Minoan scripts, the Minoan language, and the

language of the religion of the Goddess - most notably in the area of gender-specific ideograms. The lack of an internal linguistic foundation for the decipherment of the ideogram MALE in the Minoan scripts raises serious questions as to the validity of the traditional decipherments of many ancient languages. Further research and re-evaluation is needed.

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