

The Roots Of Writing

Seminar Series



ALMA MATER STUDIORUM
UNIVERSITÀ DI BOLOGNA
DIPARTIMENTO DI FILOLOGIA CLASSICA E ITALIANISTICA

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5 pm CET

Online on Teams

<https://tinyurl.com/2v5ku6zy>

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Voyage Through the Minoan Mind

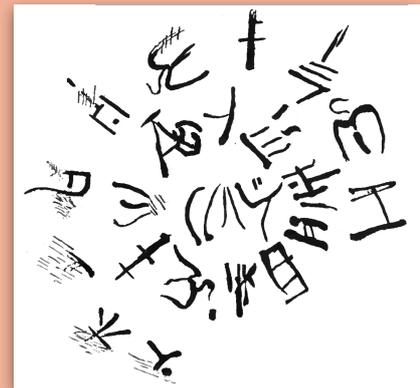
Reconstructing the Cognitive Processes Behind Script Formation in Bronze Age Crete

Somewhere between the late third and the early second millennium BCE, the island of Crete saw the invention of one of the most complex products of human creativity: writing. At least three different script systems emerged, namely the Archaic Script, currently dated to between the EM III and MM IB phases (2300/2150–c. 1850), Cretan Hieroglyphic, in continuous use between the MM IB and MM III phases (1930/1900–c. 1600) and Linear A, primarily in use between the MM IIA and LM IB phases (c. 1850–1440/1430). Ever since Sir Arthur Evans discovered evidence of these three script systems at the palace of Knossos in 1900, scholars have searched for the various concepts that inspired the morphology of their script-signs.

This study proposes to travel further down the path of Minoan script development in search of the cognitive processes that governed both the creation of script-signs and the interaction between these script-signs – that is, script. In the light of recent breakthroughs in the field of cognitive archaeology, this paper applies Material Engagement Theory (‘MET’) to the study of Cretan Hieroglyphic and Linear A. The discussion is organised as follows:

- (1) general overview of the previous models of Minoan script formation,
- (2) concise examination of the validity of a MET- approach to the study of Minoan graphic systems,
- (3) reconstruction of the cognitive framework that underpinned the formation of Cretan Hieroglyphic and Linear A at the level of the script-sign and
- (4) reconstruction of the cognitive framework behind the formation of Cretan Hieroglyphic and Linear A at the level of the script.

Throughout, this study suggests that cognitive archaeology yields critical insights into of the procedures that inspired Minoan script formation and that in turn, their identification increases the understanding of the inception and subsequent behaviour of script on Bronze Age Crete.



I N S C R I B E
INVENTION OF SCRIPTS
AND THEIR BEGINNINGS



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