

Phaistos Disk may be prayer to mother goddess

October 27 2014, by Nancy Owano



Ancient writing systems and their meanings absorb scientists who dedicate years of work to deciphering and sorting through arguments to determine the true meaning and purpose of writings. The latest news is

that a clay disk about 15 cm in diameter from thousands of years ago has been decoded.

ZME Science [reported](#) that Gareth Owens of the Technological Educational Institute of Crete (TEI) said some key words were figured out as well as the general message conveyed. The [disk](#) is of fired clay from the Minoan palace of Phaistos on the Greek island of Crete. Owens said, "The best-known Minoan inscription is the Phaistos Disk. It is commonly accepted that this can be read spirally, i.e., from the rim inwards."

Miheï Andrei, who authored the ZME Science article and whose background is in geophysics, said the disk probably dates back to the middle or late Minoan Bronze Age (2nd millennium BC). The disk was discovered in 1908 at the palace of Phaistos, in the northeastern part of the Aegean Island of Crete. The round clay object, tentatively dated [close](#) to 1700 B.C., displays an unknown language on both sides which is carved in a circular fashion," said The Archeology News Network. A cover of stamped symbols cover both sides. Specifically, the disk is covered with a total of 241 "picture" segments created from 45 individual symbols. This disk has puzzled archeological specialists for over a century. What was its purpose? What do the symbols mean? For answers, according to Owens, the message on the disk is actually a prayer to "mother," and in particular mother goddess of fertility. The most stable word was mother. The society, as it is believed, followed a polytheistic worship of female goddesses.

If Owens is correct, said ZME Science, then it goes against another theory that the disk was an early typewriter equivalent, an early document of movable type printing—whereas Owens is saying that the disk bears a message, a prayer written on clay. Andrei said that Owens worked on the deciphering for over six years. "It goes without saying that that the language of the Disk is unknown," said the TEI site, "and

thus the text remains beyond our reach. Nevertheless, this has not deterred many potential decipherers from offering their own interpretations. Indeed, more has been written about this Cretan inscription than about any other..."

The TEI site noted that as there are 45 different signs on the disk, they are too many to constitute an alphabet and too [few](#) for them to constitute a truly ideographic script, as is the case with Chinese. Scripts that have been discovered are syllabic in nature, used, according to the TEI website, for administrative and religious purposes. "Rulers, priests, scribes and bureaucrats of Knossos used these writing systems for approximately 800 years to keep tax archives, to list personnel and agricultural products and to record religious offerings. The decipherment of Mycenaean Linear B in 1952 by Michael Ventris added seven centuries to the history of the Hellenic [language](#). Using Linear B it is possible to begin to approach an understanding of the Minoan script and language."



More information:

www.teicrete.gr/daidalika/pages/page.php?page=home

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