11

Arthur Evans and the quest for the "origins of Mycenaean culture"

Yannis Galanakis

It is hard to say what chance had first drawn his attention to the unknown island; it seems as if a thousand tiny facts and things had drifted like dust and settled to weigh down the scales of his decision (J. Evans 1943: 299)

What were these "thousand tiny facts and things", that Joan Evans alluded to in her influential biographical history, that attracted Arthur Evans to Crete? An answer to this question may be gleaned from a series of clues in the Evans story, which are described as pivotal and decisive for the development of Aegean archaeology (MacGillivray 2000: 102); namely his transformation from a museum director and collector of antiquities interested in history, art and archaeological research, to one of the most influential figures in the - still nascent in those days - field of Aegean archaeology (on the term Aegean: Phillips 2006). It is his quest for clues of a pre-alphabetic writing system in this area of the Mediterranean that is now pinpointed by scholars as the critical moment which led to the "dramatic fulfillment" of Evans's "most sanguine expectations" (Evans 1909: vi): the discovery at Knossos, in various deposits, of materials inscribed with pre-alphabetic writing - an achievement visually recognized in the 1907 portrait by William Richmond where the doyen of Minoan archaeology is shown holding a Linear B tablet in his hands (Figure 11.1).

Stories regarding the 'origins' of a discipline are neither new nor limited to this region - and are certainly befitting of the 'heroes' of 19th-century archaeology (see, for example, the narratives surrounding Heinrich Schliemann's excavations at Troy and elsewhere). Yet, the same story appears to be told many times, often in different and conflicting forms, even when presented by Evans himself (e.g., Evans 1894a: 812; 1894b: 274-75 [=1895: 5-6]; 1909: 8-10). In order to achieve a better understanding of and to reconstruct, as far as it is possible, the events that paved Evans's way to Crete, I decided to review and collate systematically the extant primary sources: the archival material in the Ashmolean Museum relating to Evans's activities, focusing particularly on the years 1891-93. In doing so, I wanted to sketch a more nuanced, multi-stage picture regarding Evans's turn to Greece's pre-classical past; a turn that did not simply involve a search for writing systems, but more broadly a quest for the "origins of Mycenaean culture". It was this quest for origins, within a Victorian intellectual setting, that framed many of Evans's later interpretations, including the much-discussed theory of a Minoan-dominated Aegean (for these later interpretations and additional bibliography see Galanakis 2007; in press).

In search of clues...



Evans's interest in the pre-classical archaeology of the Aegean did not develop overnight. Before announcing to the Hellenic Society in London what he believed to be "a clue to the existence of a system of picture-writing in the Greek lands" on 27 November 1893, during the discussion following his paper on the recently purchased Aegina Treasure by the British Museum (Evans 1895: frontispiece), Evans had already visited Greece several times (in 1883, 1885, 1889, 1890 and 1893). Even before Greece, in 1878, he had visited Schliemann's Trojan exhibition in London.

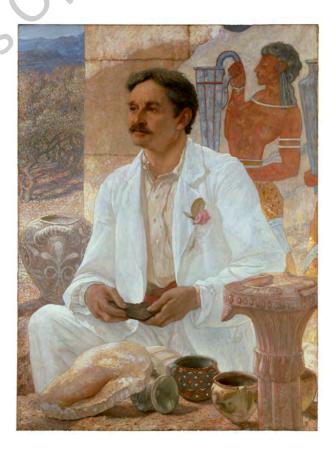


FIGURE 11.1. PORTRAIT OF ARTHUR EVANS BY WILLIAM RICHMOND, 1907 (WA 1907.2). COURTESY OF THE ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM, UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD.

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Figure 11.2. Arthur Evans with some of the pioneers of archaeological exploration in Crete in the mid-1890s: from left to right, Arthur Evans, Luigi Savignioni, Joseph Hatzidakis, Lucio Mariani, and Federico Halbherr. A.J. Evans Archive. Courtesy of the Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford.

In 1883, he visited the Schliemanns in Athens and had a chance to inspect, for the first time, the Mycenae treasures in the Polytechneion. In the same year, Evans reviewed positively Schliemann's recent researchers and discoveries at Troy for *The Academy* (Evans 1883). Yet, despite Evans's prolific writing, with more than 30 publications by the age of 31, there is no evidence from before 1892 that he was in any way interested in researching the prehistoric Aegean. A sequence of events in 1891-93 made him turn his attention away from his main research areas – England, Italy and the Balkans – towards Greece.

When Evans was appointed Keeper of the Ashmolean in 1884 the museum's collection contained only a handful of Aegean objects: obsidian blades and stone tools, a handful of Cycladic figurines, and a few Mycenaean pots from Rhodes and Egypt. In 1891 Evans used museum funds to purchase the Kissamos group, a collection of Early Iron Age antiquities from Crete (AN1891.663-682; Boardman 1961: 89-94). In the Ashmolean *Register* for that year it is described as a group "of ancient objects obtained by Mr. W.J. Stillman from a W. Cretan cave". Although the exact location of the burial was unknown, the objects were said to have been discovered "near the site of Polyrhênion [Polyrrhenia]". Stillman, the supplier of these objects, had been a friend of Evans since 1877, the time of his adventures in the Balkans (Brown 2001: 394).

This purchase, the earliest pre-Classical material from West Crete to enter a museum outside Greece and the first substantial assemblage of pre-classical antiquities to enter the Ashmolean, occurred two years prior to a trip Evans made to Athens with the specific intention of purchasing prehistoric objects. The importance of the Kissamos group lies not in the actual purchase but in the motivation as it was acquired with the aim of developing the understanding of this area of the Mediterranean. This, in my view, is the first of our 'clues'.

The second 'clue' may lie in Evans's efforts to find out more about the Kissamos group; in doing so, Stillman may, yet again, have played a decisive role. Not only did Stillman maintain a direct interest in the archaeology of Crete, including a failed attempt to excavate Knossos himself in 1881,¹ but he also appears to have introduced Evans to the Italian archaeologist Federico Halbherr² (Figure 11.2).

¹ Stillman published a brief account of his Knossian researches just two years after Minos Kalokairinos's excavations at the site (Stillman 1881). Stillman was among a number of individuals who tried to excavate Knossos, including Schliemann, Halbherr, Myres and Joubin (see Brown 1986; Hood 1987; Coutsinas 2006; Morgan 2009).

² Anxious to get an update on Evans's discoveries in Crete and his identification of masons' marks at Knossos, Stillman expressed his conviction that "what is now recognized as the Mycenaean civilisation was really of Cretan origin" (W.J. Stillman to A.J. Evans 15/10/1894, A.J. Evans Archive, Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford). Long before he was able to visit the site, Evans was surrounded by people who had already expressed an interest in Knossos: e.g., Stillman, Schliemann,

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In Evans's 'Diary B', a pocketbook with miscellaneous notes from his trips to Greece and Sicily between 1892 and 1894, now kept at the Ashmolean Museum, we find a reference to the Kissamos assemblage ("Kissamos, Crete – in cave tomb") immediately followed by the address for Halbherr in Rome ("53 Piazza S. Nicola ai Cesarini, Corso V. Emmanuel, Rome" [*sic*]).

The meeting with Halbherr took place on 3 February 1892. This event is often mentioned by Aegean scholars as of great significance for Evans's work in Crete. According to Joan Evans (1943: 300), "what [Halbherr] told him of the earlier remains on the island, unexplored and unexplained, fired his imagination and confirmed his interest, though as yet his purpose was hardly formed" (see also J. Evans 1943: 309-310). There is no doubt that Halbherr's contribution to Evans's future adventures in Crete was critical. Evans identified Halbherr upon his death as "the first archaeological explorer of ancient Crete" and "a friend and helper" in the very beginnings of his own researches on the island, dedicating the last volume of the *Palace of Minos* to his memory (Evans 1935: frontispiece).

Also in 'Diary B', there is a brief note on a torn page, rather cryptic in nature but still revealing in its content: "Crete. Halbherr recommends Eastern side – for very archaic remains – esp. Olous and city entirely 'Cyclopean'. Island gems & fragments of Myk. pottery frequent on this side." Although it is impossible to know whether these notes came out of the February 1892 meeting with the Italian archaeologist, they appear to relate to the content of their archaeological conversation (see Momigliano 2002 for the Evans-Halbherr correspondence).

Soon after his meeting with Halbherr, in late February 1892, Arthur wrote from Sicily to his wife Margaret: "I had a very interesting time with Orsi who took me out to some excavations he is making of Sikel tombs... He had just discovered a true Mykenaean vase in one of these 'beehive' tombs and I assisted at the digging out of a tall pedestalled vase of a new form and other relics" (Evans 1943: 300; Vickers 2003: 242).

Following this sequence of events, the Kissamos purchase may have played a far more important role than previously thought. It may have led to the meeting of Evans with Halbherr in Rome. The conversations with the latter and his involvement in Orsi's excavations appear to have fired his enthusiasm further, with Evans becoming increasingly interested, from early 1892 onwards, in the prehistoric Mediterranean cultures and specifically those in the Aegean region.³

"Origins and Affinities of Mycenaean Culture"

The third 'clue' in our attempt to reconstruct Evans's progressive interest in Aegean archaeology comes from an unpublished draft manuscript (MS 0009) stored in the A.J. Evans archive at the Ashmolean Museum and currently under study for publication by Debi Harlan (briefly mentioned in MacGillivray 2001: 105). This manuscript includes extensive handwritten notes with sketches over 76 pages of what appears to be an incomplete paper on the "Origins and Affinities of Mycenaean Culture". In all likelihood it forms an early draft of Evans's lecture at the British School in Athens on 17 February 1893 titled on that occasion "On the Primitive European Elements of Mycenaean Culture".

Based on the articles cited in the manuscript, there is a very good chance that MS 0009 dates to the first half of 1892.⁴ More importantly, Evans appears unaware, at this stage of his research, of the existence of writing in Mycenaean Greece: "in this case indeed no trace has hitherto been discovered of the cuneiform court script in which we now know the rulers of Egypt and the East corresponded... in the non-literary character Mykênaean culture presents a striking contrast to that of Western Asia" (Evans n.d., 14). This element supports strongly an early (pre-1893) date for MS 0009.

Following a comparative analysis of tomb and settlement architecture, gems, pots, figurines, fibulae and ornaments, Evans attempts in MS 0009 a first exploration of the "affinities and origins of Mycenaean culture" with adjacent regions in Europe, Africa, and Asia.⁵ Largely following Tsountas, he suggests that the Myceanean culture was indigenous to Greece placing emphasis on the European rather than its Oriental affinities (on Tsountas and his ideas see also Voutsaki 2002; 2003).

In the manuscript Evans stresses that "the first beginnings of Mykênaean art must be sought ages before the date of the tomb(s) and palaces... of the Argolid" (Evans n.d.: 1-2); and that "it is this independent attitude of Mykênaean culture that... makes it difficult to believe that it could have grown up on that side [i.e., the Asiatic mainland]. Everything points to the conclusion that it took its rise in the island world of the Aegean..." (Evans n.d.: 28-29). The importance of the references provided here does not lie in the originality of the ideas expressed, which may well – as other scholars have long suggested (Brown 2001: xxii) – been inspired by Evans's readings of Arthur Milchhöfer's 1883 *Die Anfänge der Kunst in Griechenland*;⁶ but in that

Halbherr and Myres, all of whom he knew very well.

³ In 1892 Evans's scheme for transferring the Ashmolean's and Fortnum's collections to a new home, behind the University Galleries in Beaumont Street, was approved by the University of Oxford (the move was completed in 1894). By 1894 he had also finished editing his late father-in-law's publication, Edward Freeman's *The History of Sicily from Earliest Times* (1891). These two developments may have provided an extra opportunity for Evans to dedicate more time to his Bronze Age Mediterranean interests.

⁴ I would like to thank Debi Harlan for sharing her work with me and for her help and invaluable advice on the manuscript. There are two more chronological hints in favour of an early 1892 date: the absence of any reference either to the Aegina treasure (purchased by the British Museum in May 1892) or to Tsountas's 1893 book, despite the fact that Evans makes frequent reference to the Greek archaeologist's publications.

⁵ Although he mentions Flinders Petrie's work and the problems regarding the dating of the Mycenaean culture, in this particular manuscript Evans is preoccupied mostly with the issue of 'origins'.

⁶ On 6 January 1893, when Evans was on the Italian Riviera with his ailing wife Margaret, he wrote home – presumably to Edward Evans, his

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they form the first recorded evidence of the influence these ideas would have on the future direction of his research.

It thus becomes clear that by the time Evans started researching the Aegina treasure in the second half of 1892 (Evans 1892-93), he was not only developing a closer interest in Aegean archaeology, but had already started formulating the ideas in his mind that were to shape his travels and archaeological enquiries in Crete (1894-99). His work on the Aegina treasure (Williams 2009) appears to have consolidated further his views on the subject.⁷ In the first page of his publication on the treasure, Evans is more interested in expounding his views on cultural ownership and the trade in antiquities, in support of the British Museum's purchase of the objects.⁸ He then proceeds, however, to a detailed analysis of the treasure in which many of his ideas and references are taken directly from MS 0009. Evans identifies "Greek workmanship, though under strong Asiatic and no doubt to a great extent Phoenician influence", suggesting that "the great days of Mykênaean culture were already drawing to a close and that the earlier Thalattokracy [sic] of the Aegean was giving way before Sidonian enterprise" when the objects of the treasure were manufactured (Evans 1892-93: 221). On the basis of his study, he concludes that the Aegina treasure should be dated to around 800 BC in connection with the "Dorian conquest of Aegina" (Evans 1892-93: 226).

Despite the outdated nature of these ideas and the erroneous dating of the treasure (see Fitton 2009 for a full re-evaluation), MS 0009 and the Aegina publication help us trace the development of his views on origins, chronology, and the cultural affinities of Mycenaean culture with adjacent regions. His work on origins and the Aegina treasure probably prompted him to offer guidance to a young Oxford graduate, John Linton Myres, who in

September 1892 as Craven Fellow at the British School at Athens (1892-93) embarked on Aegean research. The subject of his research on the "Oriental Influences on Prehistoric Greece" was chosen with the help of his Magdalen tutor and friend of Evans, D.G. Hogarth (who went on to succeed Evans as Keeper of the Ashmolean in 1909); one can only speculate on the degree of Evans's influence in that direction. Where Evans certainly played an important role, according to Myres's own memoirs, was in planning the latter's research campaign in Greece – a campaign that included a "survey of prehistoric sites and discoveries in mainland Greece and the Cyclades and a reconnaissance in Crete" (Brown 1986: 37).

A visit to Athens...



A visit to Athens... Evans's curiosity in 'origins', his work on the Aegina treasure and his interest in Myres's Aegean studies form the fourth 'clue' of this story, which culminated in his visit to Athens in late January and February 1893. The purpose of his visit was twofold: to give a lecture on 17 February in the British School and to purchase pre-classical antiquities.9 For the content of the former we have MS 0009 and the Aegina publication as our guide. It would be reasonable to suggest that Evans, following the same line of thinking that appears in his writings, presented to the Athenian audience his ideas on the connections between Mycenaean Greece and Europe. Yet it is the viewing and purchase of prehistoric objects in the antiquities market in Athens that enhanced further his interest in systematically exploring the prehistoric Aegean.

There is very little information regarding this trip. In 'Diary B', on a page headed "Athens 1893", Evans decided for some reason to record the names of certain individuals, who in all likelihood he met while in town: John Myres, Arthur George Bather and J. Milne Cheetham, all students of British School at Athens at the time;¹⁰ the Greek archaeologists Christos Tsountas and Georgios Nicolaïdes;11 and Professor Athanasios Rhousopoulos, whose name is followed by a series of monetary calculations and a list of objects (Galanakis 2008).¹²

assistant at the Ashmolean - asking for a copy of Milchhöfer's 1883 book (Brown 1986: 39; 2001: xxii n. vii). Milchhöfer identified Crete as the source of origin for the engraved stones, but complicated his argument with his Indo-European conclusions. For the interest in Aegean glyptic art and early research on the so-called Inselgemmen or Inselsteine ('Island seals or stones') - long before Evans, who also had a personal interest in coins and gems, perhaps another 'clue' to our story- see: Krzyszkowska 2005: 314-16.

⁷ No archival information is today preserved in the A.J. Evans Archive at the Ashmolean regarding Evans's work on the Aegina treasure; only brief information on the purchase of four Mycenaean pots (AN1896-1908 AE.299-302) that appear to be associated with the treasure (Williams 2009, 14 n. 37). Four pots from Aegina are listed with what looks like monetary calculations in page 44 of Notebook no. 50, a 'mixed diary' in terms of dates and references (A.J. Evans Archive, Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford).

⁸ It is not clear to me how Evans got involved in the study and publication of the Aegina treasure in the first place; but he probably operated independently and not on behalf of the British Museum. Evans mentioned the treasure during his 1893 talk "on the occasion of a public lecture given... on Mykênaean culture in the British School at Athens, which was attended by Greek and other foreign archaeologists" (A.J. Evans to A.S. Murray, 05/06/1893, Archives of the Department of Greece and Rome, British Museum). He thought it was allowable to mention the place where the objects were found, a point that troubled the British Museum, not least because of concerns regarding the legality of the purchase and the removal of the treasure from Greece. The correspondence is mentioned by Williams 2009: 14 (though misdated - the letters, and events narrated in it date to 1893 not 1892: A.J. Evans to A.S. Murray, 05/06/1893 and 15/07/1893, Archives of the Department of Greece and Rome, British Museum).

⁹ The death of Greville Chester (23 May 1892), who acted as unofficial antiquities agent of the Ashmolean and the British Museums (among other institutions), may have also prompted Evans to become personally more involved in the acquisition of objects on behalf of the museum. On Chester, see Seidmann 2006a: 2006b.

Bather (1868-1928) was the Prendergast Greek student at the time of Evans's visit to Athens - he had an interest in bronzes from the Acropolis and with Vincent W. Yorke had conducted a survey of the hinterland of Megalopolis and excavations on the slopes of Mt Lykaion in Arcadia (Gill 2011: 170, 303); Cheetham (1869-1938) had the Oxford studentship for 1892-93 (Gill 2011: 315).

¹¹ On Tsountas see Voutsaki 2002; 2003; Nicolaïdes (1820-1907) was a Cretan philologist and archaeologist, who studied law in Pisa. He conducted excavations in the area of the Olympieion in Athens on behalf of the Athens Archaeological Society, which he served since his admission as a member (1883-95) and second vice-President (1895-1907). He is today remembered mostly for his 1867 work La Topographie et plan stratégique de l'Iliade which influenced Schliemann in his early research in the Troad. Evans probably visited Nicolaïdes at his home in 15 Herodou Atticou Street (recorded in 'Diary B').

 $^{^{\}rm 12}\,$ That Evans and his wife were familiar with Rhousopoulos is clear from a note in Margaret's diary (23 June 1886) on the lucrative prices of the Greek professor (see Galanakis 2013: 192 n. 81). They may have first

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Evans made a number of purchases for the Ashmolean Museum during his 1893 visit to Athens.¹³ This aspect of his trip is of special interest as most of the objects purchased were of a 'pre-classical' date: individual pieces (e.g., fibulae from various locations, pots from the Dipylon cemetery, and a few bronzes and figurines) and assemblages (or "deposits" as Evans called them) that could potentially throw more light on his research on the "origins of Mycenaean culture": for example, an 'assemblage' of Cycladic objects from Amorgos (Galanakis 2013) and a Mycenaean group from a chamber tomb at Kareas in Attica (Galanakis 2008).¹⁴ Although Rhousopoulos is the only person in the list mentioned in 'Diary B' that we can today clearly identify as a source for many of the antiquities purchased by Evans during this trip, it is certain that he also visited the antiquities shops of numerous other dealers, including that of Ioannis Palaiologos in Adrianou Street (Galanakis 2013).¹⁵

What is perhaps surprising in relation to our story, however, is the lack of any record, mention or evidence of purchase of seals 'engraved with symbols' while in Athens.¹⁶ One of the seals with 'Pictographic' signs at the Ashmolean without a known provenance and date of purchase may have been acquired by Evans privately while in Athens. Yet he only started to collect systematically and search for these seals from 1894 onwards during his first visit to Crete (Brown 2001). The reason I mention this is because according to the 'official story', as told by Joan Evans half a century later, it was:

In the trays of the antiquity dealers in Shoe Lane [Pandrosou Str.] at Athens [that Evans] had found some small three- and four-sided stones perforated along the axis, engraved with symbols which he felt sure belonged to a hieroglyphic system, though it was not the familiar signs of Egypt that they represented. The dealers said they came from Crete... (Joan Evans 1943: 309; for something similar, see also the first printed version of this story as told by Evans 1894a: 812)

It is impossible to pinpoint the dealer or dealers that may have provided Evans with this information (if one is willing to accept the accuracy of the story). More than 40 antiquities dealers were operating in Athens at the time (for the registered dealers in town around the time of Evans's visit, see Galanakis 2011: 192 n. 45). But a possible source, who sold a seal engraved with symbols in 1882 to the Antiquarium in Berlin (Krzyszkowska 2005: 315 n. 13; CMS XI no. 12; Antikensammlung FG 58), was the well-established dealer Jean Lambros, Rhousopoulos's main rival in the Athens antiquities market (Galanakis and Nowak-Kemp 2013: 14-15 n. 50).¹⁷ Undoubtedly a few more seals of this type may have been in circulation in Athens, both in the market and private collections.¹⁸ Perhaps the single most important piece of information for our purposes comes from a letter sent by Milchhöfer to Schliemann. In this letter, dated to 31/12/1882, he informs Schliemann about the role that gems played in the writing of his Anfänge book, the provenance of a good number of them from the island of Crete, and the prominence of Lambros and Rhousopoulos in stocking such items for sale.¹⁹ It is in this same letter that he informs Schliemann

met him in 1883. Rhousopoulos had for sale objects from Crete including bronze tools and figurines (for the latter see e.g., Misc. 8092: a Minoan statuette in Berlin's Antikensammlung; and Br 80: a female figurine from Crete now in the Louvre; Br 4294: a male figurine also in the Louvre, and originally from the Psychro cave on Crete).

¹³ It is impossible to determine whether Evans also purchased objects privately, since we lack information regarding his own collection of antiquities, though it seems highly likely that he did. ¹⁴ This also appears to evaluate 1

¹⁴ This also appears to explain his interest in the Hagios Onouphrios deposit (Evans 1895: 105-36) and the Ligortyno assemblage in Crete (Brown 2001: 345-48 and 448-63; Vakirtzian 2006; J.L. Myres to A.J. Evans, 22/04/1895, A.J. Evans Archive, Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford; also Evans 'Diary C': 87-88, 91-92; S. Xanthoudides to A.J. Evans, 29/06/1896, A.J. Evans Archive, Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford).

¹⁵ Evans was criticized in the Greek press for his 1893 purchases: see examples reported in Galanakis 2013: 196-97 n. 119. Simultaneously he was praised as the "best archaeologist in England": *Εφημερίς* no. 57, 26/02/1894, p. 3: "Ο ἀρχαιολόγος Ἄγγλος κ. Έβανς" (The English archaeologist Mr. Evans).

¹⁶ The stylistic distinction between a class of 'Island stones' and 'Pictographic' or 'Hieroglyphic' seals was first made by Evans. It was only later that the distinction between Aegean seals and true 'Island gems' (of the Archaic period) was fully appreciated (e.g., Furtwängler 1896; 1900).

¹⁷ Unfortunately there is no evidence in the A.J. Evans archive about a possible connection between Evans and Lambros. For the efforts of the Director of the British Museum, Charles Newton, since the 1860s and 1870s to create a collection of gems and rings, including specimens from the prehistoric Aegean and other early collections and collectors, see Krzyszkowska 2005: 311-20.

¹⁸ These Bronze Age seals appear to have been in circulation and demand from the late 1870s and early 1880s onwards, when they started to appear in excavations (e.g., Mycenae and Rhodes) and publications. On 1872 the British Museum purchased Bronze Age Aegean seals from Charles Merlin, and in 1873 and 1877 more specimens from 'Crete' from Dr Nicolas Petrides (Krzyszkowska 2005: 314). Merlin bought his seals in Athens from Rhousopoulos and Lambros as we know from his correspondence with the British Museum. See also C. Blinkenberg to A.J. Evans, 15/07/1896, A.J. Evans Archive, Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford. Blinkenberg mentions two seals to Evans, now in Copenhagen (nos. 1366-1367), purchased by the National Museum in Denmark from Theodor von Heldreich (1822-1902) in April 1880. A German botanist based in Athens (from 1851 until his death), where he was the curator of the Museum of Natural History, Heldreich said that the seals (part of a larger purchase by the Museum in Copenhagen) originated from Crete. Heldreich knew Rhousopoulos and Lambros and had a collection of antiquities, including coins, gems, celts and axes (the latter two categories mentioned in a letter of G. Finlay to T.J. Westropp, 02/03/1871, kept in the G. Finlay correspondence file in the A.W. Franks archive in the Department of Prehistory and Europe in the British Museum). Seal no. 1366 (=CMS XI no. 232), a Middle Minoan three-sided soft stone prism, is similar to Evans's 1894: 341 (=1895: 72), figs. 63 and 64. The 14 "archaische geschnittene Steine aus Kreta" were purchased by the National Museum of Denmark for 271 francs (with the two seals mentioned above being priced at 15 and 20 francs respectively). Unfortunately, my search in the archive of the National Museum of Denmark did not reveal the seals' supplier(s) to the German botanist. I would like to thank Bodil Bundgaard Rasmussen and Anne Haslund Hansen for their invaluable help on Heldreich. On the nature of images on the three-sided prisms, and their 'pictographic' or ornamental character, see: Anastasiadou 2011.

¹⁹ Buchholz 2012: 302-303, letter no. 18: "Älteste Gemmen (sogenannte Inselsteine), wie Sie deren in den Gräbern von Mykene gefunden haben, besitzt das Britische Museum und das Berliner jetzt in (*Streichung*) großer Zahl. Rhusopulos u. Lambros haben immer davon vorräthig. Die meisten werden wiederum in Kreta gefunden. Sie vervollständigen in merkwürdigster Weise das Kulturbild, welches Ihre mykenischen Ausgrabungen bieten. In meinem Buch spielen sie eine Hauptrolle." Buchholz article is also available in *Opuscula Atheniensia* 27 (2002): 7-6.

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Athen den 26 Nov. 1896. Junforta Sur Gerr Evans. Hran frainert. brint y. 17 Jin/ Mon. mit & Cheyne \$4 Jaba in aufalture und Inuba Ifran. Junter expettan Sin duy die 3 de and. Minllnigh in wift wow flighing nink Sommething ibre dan fift day Juninan, Ingo un you due alture Xa XI Sive gran hand spicola, allo ning Signy olba; ja ft uber unsuit mon sunfaltan X' XI Jovo papor, all Tipopulbans . if forthe gelagen minne Rachne 7

FIGURE 11.3. LETTER OF ATHANASIOS RHOUSOPOULOS TO ARTHUR EVANS, 26 NOVEMBER 1896, PROVIDING ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON THE CARNELIAN SEAL ENGRAVED WITH A FLYING FISH (CMS VI NO. 462; AN1938.972), SAID TO HAVE BEEN FOUND IN A GRAVE AT KLEITORIA IN ARCADIA (APPENDIX, LETTER NO. 2). A.J. EVANS ARCHIVE. COURTESY OF THE ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM, UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD.

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about Kalokairinos's excavations at Knossos mentioning Photiades Pasha and Rhousopoulos as good contacts in Athens (Buchholz 2012: 302-303).

Evans, like Milchhöfer, was definitely interested in gems – historic and prehistoric. The only dealer in Athens who we know from the extant archival documentation to have sold a few Aegean seals to Evans in Athens in the 1890s is Athanasios Rhousopoulos (Hughes-Brock and Boardman 2009: 7; certainly CMS VI no. 462; and possibly also nos. 343 and 400).²⁰ In the brief correspondence between Evans and Rhousopoulos, there is no specific mention of 'Pictographic' seals: neither in 1893, when Evans was

seeking additional information regarding the Kareas group (Galanakis 2008) nor during their correspondence in 1896-97, when Evans bought at least one 'island gem' from the Greek professor (see Appendix).²¹ In the Evans archive at the Ashmolean Museum there are numerous drawings of seals once belonging to Rhousopoulos, which Evans may have either seen during his 1893 visit to the Greek professor's house in central Athens, or may have drawn from seal impressions sent to him by Sophia, one of the daughters of Rhousopoulos, following her father's death in 1898 (Figures 11.3-4).²²

²⁰ For another 'Pictographic' seal associated with a particular individual see also A.H. Sayce to A.J. Evans, 07/05/1896, A.J. Evans Archive, Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford. He refers to seals bearing pictographic signs from Kythera (Cerigo) in the possession of Mr. Thermojannis (one of which is CMS VII no. 36 (BM 1900.0613.2), bought by the British Museum in 1900).

²¹ Galanakis 2008, 300 n. 36: in the letter of 1 May 1893, Rhousopoulos asks Evans not to mention his name "in any publication, whether of the grave or of the gems", perhaps the latter referring to seals that Evans bought from the Greek professor while in Athens.

²² Sophia Heimpel (née Rhousopoulos) to Arthur Evans, 24/11/1899, A.J. Evans Archive, Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford. For the drawings see Folder 7, Aegean n.d. 1, no. 159, A.J. Evans Archive, Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford: 56 seals and island gems in Rhousopoulos's possession, probably made around 1899-1900.

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Figure 11.4. Two pages with Arthur Evans's drawings of seals once in the possession of Athanasios Rhousopoulos (1899-1900?). A number of them are said to be from Crete. Folder 7, Aegean n.d. 1 (no. 159), A.J. Evans Archive, Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford. Courtesy of the Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford.

Whatever the accuracy of Evans's own account, it does appear that he was able to "trace these curious stones to a Cretan source" not just by inspecting seals in the Athens antiquities market, private collections or the Polytechneion (Evans 1894b: 295 [=1895: 26], fig. 33 and 297 [=1895: 28], fig. 36), or even through discussions with Tsountas, Nicolaïdes and Rhousopoulos, but also by triangulating the evidence: Furtwängler gave him impressions of similar specimens in the Museum at Berlin (e.g., Evans 1894b: 291 [=1895: 22], fig. 25, 294 [=1895: 25], fig. 31 and 296 [=1895: 27], fig. 34); Sayce had taken an impression at Athens some years before of a similar-looking gem (Evans 1894b: 299 [=1895: 30], fig. 39);²³ while in Oxford in the Ashmolean Museum, he "found an unclassed stone... which had been brought back by Mr. Greville Chester from Greece" and presented to the museum in 1889 (Figure

This material is under study by the author as part of his research into Athanasios Rhousopoulos and his collection of antiquities.

²³ This seal was purchased by the British Museum in 1921: Krzyszkowska 2005: 92, no. 149 / C17: BM 1921.0711.2, (CMS VII no. 35), ex-Story-Maskelyne coll., unknown provenance.

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FIGURE 11.5. THE FOUR-SIDED AGATE 'CHESTER SEAL' INSCRIBED ON ALL SIDES WITH HIEROGLYPHIC SIGNS PRESENTED TO THE ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM IN 1889 (CMS VI NO. 104; AN1889.998). IMAGE COURTESY OF THE ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM, UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD; DRAWING COURTESY OF THE CORPUS DER MINOISCHEN UND MYKENISCHEN SIEGEL (CMS), UNIVERSITY OF HEIDELBERG.

11.5) (Evans 1894a: 812; 1894b: 294 [=1895: 25], fig. 32; CMS VI no. 104).²⁴

The evidence started to converge directing Evans to one place. He knew, as early as 1892 if not earlier, that in order to find out more about pre-alphabetic writing in the Aegean as well as about the "origins of Mycenaean culture" he had to go to Crete: "the inexhaustible source of the gems which reproduce the Vaphio style in glyptic art is Greece and its islands, in a principal degree Crete and the Peloponnese" (Evans 1892-93: 220).

Archaeologically speaking Crete was not a terra incognita in the 1890s (Coutsinas 2006): Sayce, reminiscing in the 1920s on a conversation he had with Heinrich Schliemann in the 1880s, stated that the latter had taken Milchhöfer's idea a step further by suggesting that Crete was, apart from a source of gems, the very source regarding the origins of the Mycenaean culture (Sayce 1923: 219; although as we now know from their published correspondence, studied by Buchholz and mentioned above, even the idea on the origins of the Mycenaean culture came from Milchhöfer; see also Brown 2001: xxii). Evans, who knew both Schliemann and Sayce, was not operating in an intellectual vacuum – on the contrary, ideas similar to those expressed by Evans were already in circulation (e.g., on the influence of Salomon Reinach on the work of Schliemann and Evans see Duchêne 2006); and he was certainly not the only one to want to visit Crete in search of antiquities and of conducting archaeological research.²⁵

After his trip to Athens, Evans returned to Italy to his ailing wife. 1893 was a year both of personal sadness for Evans – who lost Margaret on 11 March at the age of 45 – and of excitement for the research avenues that were now opening up. One cannot fail to identify early in 1893 a number of aspects that were to influence fundamentally Evans's research and interpretations: that the origins of Mycenaean culture lie in the island world; that this Urculture (a 'European civilisation' for Evans) shared strong affinities with Europe rather than with the East,²⁶ despite influences from the latter; and that assemblages, rather than simply individual objects, can and must be used to establish a better understanding of chronological affinities and relations between 'culture groups', following in this respect the pioneering work of Oscar Montelius (especially on the evolutionary and typological classification of objects).²⁷ Closer to home, Evans was influenced by the work of his father, John Evans, and his close friend, John Lubbock.²⁸ In many respects, Evans was a product of his time. But at the same time, by making new connections he advanced the field of Aegean prehistory – as Schliemann had done two decades before him - paving the way for its systematic exploration as we now know.

Myres in Crete

An important post-script to this story is the visit of Myres to Crete in the summer of 1893 (Brown 1986; Horwitz 1981: 80-82; MacGillivray 2000: 109-13). Like Kalokairinos, Stillman, Schliemann and Halbherr before him, Myres recognized the importance of Knossos. The story of his attempt to excavate the site has been

²⁴ The first gem to enter Evans's private collection was probably CMS VI no. 305 (AN1938.1040), which was on sale in 1887 and in Evans's possession by 1892 (Evans 1892-93: 220 n. 48).

²⁵ "...Schliemann came into my room with the recently published book of Milchhöfer... which he had just been reading. He asked me to look through it, saying that it had led him to the conclusion that the beginnings of Mykenaean culture were to be discovered in Krete, and that he was strongly inclined to excavate at Knossos" (Sayce 1923: 219). Schliemann's interest in Knossos started in 1882 as his correspondence with Milchhöfer reveals (Buchholz 2012: 290, 300-303); in 1886 and 1889 he tried, without success, to purchase land for excavations. Milchhöfer played a fundamental role in enthusing Schliemann about Crete and Knossos (Buchholz 2012). On Schliemann and Knossos see also Stoll 1961; Hood 1992; Traill 1995, 228, 252-55, 264, 274-75. On Evans's reminiscences of Schliemann (also as a source of inspiration), see Evans 1931. We can only speculate at this stage as to the impact Schliemann's death in 1890 may have had (if any) on Evans and the shift in direction of the latter's research from 1891 onwards.

²⁶ Politics and archaeology were interwoven in Evans's mind: a good example is his plea in his address as President of the Anthropology section of the British Association in 1896: "...Crete stands forth again to day as the champion of the European spirit against the yoke of Asia" (Evans 1896: 535). In this article, Evans appears to have consolidated most of the basic ideas, (already present in MS 0009), which will later take centre stage in the *Palace of Minos*.

²⁷ Montelius was invited by Evans to the 1896 meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science.

²⁸ Especially Lubbock's work *On the Origin of Civilisation*, first published in 1870 and followed by five more editions and a reissue before his death in 1913; for an excellent account on Evans's intellectual framework in the 1880s and 1890s see Harlan 2011; Marinatos 2014.

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beautifully pieced together and narrated by Ann Brown (1986); his contribution in refining our understanding of Aegean chronology, prior to the landmark excavations at Phylakopi on Melos by the British School at Athens (1896-99), is also well known thanks to his work on the Kamares pottery (despite his erroneous dating).

On 8 August 1893, Myres wrote to Evans from Chania about his discoveries on the island.²⁹ He told him that he had seen some of the engraved stones that Evans described in his letter and only three very poor 'island stones' – he acquired the best of them for two and a half drachmae, but the others were valued so highly that he left them alone, particularly since they were almost undecipherable.³⁰ He then went on to mention the sites that he had explored expressing his interest in excavating Knossos.

The information collected by Myres, and Evans's own research, appears to have provided sufficient evidence for the latter confidently to air his discovery regarding the existence of pre-alphabetic writing in the Aegean on 27 November 1893 before the Hellenic Society in London. Some indications already existed, and Tsountas was among the first scholars to point them out (Tsountas 1893: 213-16).³¹ But the general consensus was that there was no concrete evidence of the existence of writing in the prehistoric Aegean (Perrot and Chipiez 1894: 985).³² Evans (1894b: 274 [=1895: 5]), who frequently credited Tsountas in his publications, stressed that his research in the last few years has led him to "conclusively demonstrate" that writing existed in the prehistoric Aegean, distinguishing as early as 1894 not just one but two different systems of writing: "the one is pictographic in character like Egyptian hieroglyphics, the other is linear and quasi-alphabetic, much resembling the Cypriot and Asiatic syllabaries" (Evans 1894b: 274 [=1895: 5]).³³

The excitement of Evans's discovery was such that Tsountas in the 1897 English-language version of his 1893 book decided to add a chapter of 26 pages on "Writing in Mycenaean Greece" (Tsountas and Manatt 1897: 268-93). Although the discoveries at Knossos from 1900 onwards further excited the general public and the European press (Sherratt 2009; Galanakis, in press), Evans's breakthrough in 1893 was surpassed, in terms of its scale of importance, only in 1952 by Michael Ventris's decipherment of Linear B.³⁴

³⁴ Following the announcement, the 1893 discovery by Evans soon

Concluding Remarks

What may have started as a quest for the "origins of Mycenaean culture" certainly developed into an origins story for Arthur Evans, his Cretan adventures, and the field of Aegean archaeology as a whole. The 'clues' uncovered above, leading Evans to identify a pre-alphabetic writing system in the Aegean, were, of course, only part of the overall picture. The full puzzle began to take shape when further pieces were inserted: e.g., Evans's trips to Crete, 1894-99, his excavations at Knossos from 1900 onwards, and, after his death, the decipherment of Linear B in 1952.

For Evans, an unorthodox classicist, who once tried - unsuccessfully - to become the first professor of archaeology in Oxford,35 prehistory was "in truth more historic in widening the horizon of our past. It has drawn aside the curtain, and revealed the dawn. It has dispelled, like the unsubstantial phantoms of a dream, those preconceived notions as to the origin of human arts and institutions..." (Evans 1884: 12-13). The existence of writing in the prehistoric Aegean should not thus be viewed solely from the spectrum of completing the first part of the puzzle, or even as an origins story for Evans, but rather as 'added value' to the services rendered by prehistoric archaeology to the study of pre-classical Greece, especially with regard to the "origins of human arts and institutions", at a time when Aegean studies were developing alongside classics and anthropology.

Chance, alluded to in the introductory quote by Joan Evans, may have played its role at the beginning of Evans's quest. Yet the 'clues' presented here suggest that instead of glorifying a particular moment in time, we should look for a more fragmentary, cumulative and punctuated set of events, ideas and intellectual stimuli to explain Evans's nascent but growing interest in Aegean archaeology, an academic turn that led him to set sail for Crete for the first time on 14 March 1894.

²⁹ John Myres to Arthur Evans, 08/08/1893, A.J. Evans Archive, Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford. For the numerous seals purchased by Evans during his Cretan trips (1894-99) see Brown 2001. ³⁰ CMS VI nos. 269, 413, 449, 484, 489, though no Hieroglyphic seals are included in this batch.

³¹ The preface was written by Tsountas on 22 June 1893, just four months after his possible meeting with Evans.

³² Based on the scarcity of the available evidence, even Tsountas doubted the existence of writing in Mycenaean Greece (Tsountas 1893, 216).

³³ By 1895, Evans was aware of the existence of a third writing system after having inspected a baked clay tablet at Herakleion (Kopaka 1992, 383; Brown 2001, 208 n. 190; Galanakis in press). It was, however, only after commencing his excavations at Knossos from 1900 onwards that he started using the terms 'Linear A' and 'Linear B' to distinguish between the two different linear systems.

found its way into the Greek press: Το Άστυ no. 1341, 17/08/1894, p. 2: "Μία ἀνακάλυψις. Προϊστορικὰ ἰερογλυφικὰ ἐν Ἐλλάδι. Ὁ μυκηναῖος ἀλφάβητος. Οἱ Κρῆτες καὶ ὁ μυκηναϊκὸς πολιτισμὸς" (A discovery. Prehistoric Hieroglyphics in Greece. The literate Mycenaean. The Cretans and the Mycenaean civilization); see also Sayce 1896.

³⁵ Alas, it was not meant to be: despite the best efforts of his father, John Evans, the job was in the end advertised as a "professorship in classical archaeology and art" (Evans 1943: 260-62) and William Mitchell Ramsay was elected as the first Lincoln and Merton Professor of that Chair.

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Appendix: The Rhousopoulos-Evans Correspondence, 1896-97

The following letters complete the publication of the Rhousopoulos-Evans correspondence at the Ashmolean Museum (for the first part of this correspondence see Galanakis 2008). Although their content has already been briefly discussed elsewhere (Hughes Brock and Boardman 2009: 7), their importance lies in the fact that they highlight further Evans's 1890s interest in Aegean gems and help pinpoint one of the, undoubtedly many, sources for the purchase of seals in Athens. Evans bought for £4 the Late Minoan I seal (no. 1) mentioned in Letter 1 (with further details provided in letter 2); this is now CMS VI no. 462. It was said to have been found in a grave in Kleitoria in Arcadia along with a black lentoid seal, a small white Egyptian scarab, and perhaps some other finds, including two fibulae and a small bronze vessel (though some of these may have come from a second grave, as Rhousopoulos mentions "two graves" in Letter 1). Evans's interest in acquiring more information regarding 'deposits' or 'assemblages' is here noteworthy (on the methods, practices and salesmanship of Rhousopoulos, see Galanakis and Nowak Kemp 2013).

Letter 1:

Athen, den 12. Nov. 1896

Geehrtester Herr Evans,

Ich danke Ihnen daß Sie allen meinen Wünschen [*sic*] entgegenkommen sind. Es ist nun alles in Ordnung.

Heute sende ich Ihnen in einer besonderen Schachtel den Stein mit der Sphinx. Er ist 1884 auf der Insel Melos gefunden worden. Der Stein mit dem Diomedes ist vor etwa 20 Jahren auf der Insel Cerigo (Kúθηρα) gefunden worden. Ein Liebhaber von geschn [= geschnittenen] Steinen hatte damals für diesen Stein fra. 15 000 geboten; aber der Besitzer hat ihn nicht geben wollen. Der mit dem Vogel und der Aphrodite ist in Makedonien gefunden worden etwa vor 12 Jahren, woher dann und wann sehr gute Gemmen kommen. Der frühere Besitzer war aus Kastoria große Stadt in Makedonien am See Keletron. Also wahrscheinlich da in der Umgebung auf dem Argos Orestikon gefunden. Mehr weiß ich nicht.

In der Schachtel werden Sie auch 3 Abdrücke finden. No. 1 ist ein durchsichtiger Karneol mandelförmig und nach der Länge durchlöchert mit einem eingravierten fliegenden Fisch. Dieser Stein ist mir vor drei Tagen gebracht worden und ich habe ihn gekauft, zusammen mit ihm in einem Grabe sollen auch no. 2 ein schwarzer linsenförmiger und no. 3 ein kleiner weißer ägypt. [=ägyptischer] Skarabäus und darum habe ich auch diese, sonst wertlose, mitgenommen.

Alle 3 und auch andere Gegenstände, wie 2 Fibeln mit eingeritzten Fischen im Meere, welches mit Punkten angegeben war, so wie ein bronzenes Gefäß von dieser Form: [sketch] und andere Kleinigkeiten sollen in zwei Gräbern in Klitoria in Arkadien gefunden worden sein und ich habe keinen Grund an der Richtigkeit der Angabe zu zweifeln. Die Vase habe ich auch erworben aber die Fibeln oder [?] nicht, weil man dafür 100 fra. verlangte.

Wenn Sie die Gemme no. 1 interessiert, so können Sie dieselbe für £4 haben, wozu als Zugabe Gemmen auch no. 2 und 3. Die Vase kostet £1, aber ich kann sie nicht schicken – sie ist schwer. Auch einen kleinen silbernen Löwen habe ich mitgekauft.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen, Ihr ergebenster, Rousopoulos

Translation:

Athens, the 12th of November 1896

Most honoured Mr Evans,

I thank you that you were so obliging to all my wish(es). Everything is now in order.

Today I send you in a special case the stone with the Sphinx [engraved on it]. It was found in 1884 on the island of Melos. The stone with Diomedes [engraved on it] was found about 20 years ago on the island of Cerigo ($K\dot{\upsilon}\theta\eta\rho\alpha$). An enthusiast of cut stones [= engraved gems] had offered at that time 15,000 francs for this stone;³⁶ but the owner did not want to give him [the gem]. The one with the birds and Aphrodite was found in Macedonia about 12 years ago,³⁷ from where then very good gems came. The previous owner was from Kastoria, a large city in Macedonia on Lake Keletron. So probably [this gem] was discovered in the vicinity of Argos Orestikon. That is as much as I know.

In the case you will also find 3 casts. No. 1 is a transparent carnelian, almond-shaped and perforated lengthwise with an engraved flying fish. This stone was brought to me three days ago and I bought it. Apparently [found] together with it in a grave were no. 2, a black lens-shaped gem, and no. 3, a small white Egyptian scarab, and I therefore took these, otherwise worthless [gems], too.

All 3 and also other items, such as two fibulae incised with fish in the sea, indicated with dots, and a bronze vessel of this form [sketch; $0.10 \ge 0.04$ m] and other small items [were] apparently found in two graves in Klitoria in Arcadia for which I have no reason to doubt the accuracy of this information [i.e., their provenance]. I have also acquired the vase but not the fibulae, because they asked for 100 francs.

If you are interested in gem no. 1, you can have it for £4, and gems nos. 2 and 3 for good measure. The vase costs £1, but I cannot send it to you – it is difficult.³⁸ I also bought a small silver lion with it.

With friendly regards, Yours faithfully, Rousopoulos

³⁶ Probably Boston Museum of Fine Arts 27.703.

³⁷ Probably Boston Museum of Fine Arts 01.7536.

³⁸ Or (also) "heavy" / "big". Given its small size, I take it to mean here: "difficult to send" (in terms of postal/customs' complications).

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Letter 2:

Athen, den 26. Nov. 1896

Geehrtester Herr Evans,

Ihren freundl. [= freundlichen] Brief v. 17 dies. Mon. [= dieses Monats] mit 1 chèque £4 habe ich erhalten und danke Ihnen. Heute erhalten Sie auch die 3 arkadischen Gemmen.

Vielleicht ist nicht überflüssig eine Bemerkung über den Fisch der Gemme, daß er von den Alten χελιδών genannt wurde, also einfach Schwalbe; jetzt aber nennt man denselben χελιδονόψαρον, also Schwalbenfisch. Ich habe Gelegenheit gehabt auf meinen Reisen welche zu sehen. Sie fliegen scharenweise und nicht sehr hoch über der Oberfläche des Meeres, aber ziemlich weit.

Der Fibulae haben die Form welche Sie in Ihrem Briefe gezeichnet haben. Sie hatten eine schöne Patina. Ich habe sie nicht wieder gesehen, aber ich glaube nicht, daß dieselben verkauft worden sind.

Mit freundl. Grüßen, Ihr ergebenster, Rousopoulos

Translation:

Athens, the 26th of November 1896

Most honoured Mr Evans,

I received your kind letter from the 17th of this month with a cheque of £4, and I thank you [for that]. Today you will also receive the 3 Arcadian gems.39

Perhaps it is not superfluous to comment on the fish on (one of the) gems, which was called by the ancients χελιδών, simply a 'swallow'; but now is called χελιδονόψαρον, 'swallow fish'. I have had the opportunity on my travels to see [them]. They fly in droves not very high above the surface of the sea but quite far.

The fibulae have the form you drew in your letter. They have a beautiful patina. I have not seen them again, but I do not believe they will have been sold.

With friendly regards, Yours faithfully, Rousopoulos

³⁹ There is no information about the other two gems. CMS VI no. 462 is mentioned a number of times in Evans's work: see e.g., Evans 1921: 678; 1928: 128-30; 1935: 494.

Letter 3:

Athen den 18. Febr. 1897

Geertester [sic] Herr Evans,

Beachten Sie den Siegel dieses Briefes. Er ist der Abdruck eines Skarabäoiden, gefunden in Ithome w. [= westlich] Messenien in Peloponnesos. Der Stein ist milchweiß und die gewölbten Seiten abgeschlagen um ihn in einer silbernen Einfassung eines Ringes einzugeben. Die Inschrift darauf lautet: $\Pi\Omega\LambdaO\Sigma$. Die Hälfte von O ist abgeschlagen und das Σ ist schwach [?] im Exergon. Der Stein so wie er ist kostet £60- Furtwängler findet ihn sehr schön und ich auch. Tyszkiewicz hatte dafür £56 geboten, aber man hat ihn ihm nicht geben wollen, man verlangte £80. Der stein war damals nicht in meinem Besitze; ich habe ihn erst kürzlich erworben. Also wenn Sie den Stein haben wollen übermachen Sie mir an die Herrn Marmard Klauss co. darin £60 und ich sende ihn [sic] den Stein durch irgend eine sichere Weise, oder übergebe ich ihn hier irgend einem Freunde von Ihnen.

Mit vorzüglicher Hochachtung, Rhousopoulos

Translation:

eopress Athens, the 18th of February 1897

Most honoured Mr. Evans,

Regarding the seal of this letter: it is an impression of a scaraboid, found in Ithome [in] western Messenia in the Peloponnese.⁴⁰ The stone is milky white and its curved sides are cut off [so that the gem can] be fixed in the silver mounting of a ring. The inscription on it reads: $\Pi\Omega\Lambda\Omega\Sigma$. Half of the 'O' is cut off and the ' Σ ' is faint[ly preserved] in relief. The stone costs £60 - Furtwängler finds it very beautiful and so do I. Tyszkiewicz had offered £56 for it, but they did not want to give it to him and demanded £80. Back then the stone was not in my possession; I have only recently acquired it. So if you want to have the stone, you should arrange payment of £60 to Mr. Marmard Klauss co. and I will send it,41 the stone, by a secure way, or I will pass it to any friends of yours [here].

Respectfully yours, Rhousopoulos

⁴⁰ This gem could well be the one mentioned by Evans 1909: 215 n. 2 as being in his collection; "a chalcedony scaraboid of the latter half of the fifth century...found at Ithome in Messenia"

⁴¹ It could also be "Ihnen" (to you) or "ihnen" (to them).

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Abbreviations

CMS = Corpus der minoischen und mykenischen Siegel.

CMS VI = Hughes-Brock, H. and J. Boardman. 2009. *Oxford. The Ashmolean Museum.* Corpus der minoischen und mykenischen Siegel (CMS) VI. Mainz am Rhein: Philipp von Zabern.

CMS VII = Kenna, V.E.G. 1966. *Die englischen Museen II.* Corpus der minoischen und mykenischen Siegel (CMS) VII. Berlin: Mann.

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