1. Bilingual Owners Marks from the Baltic

Summary

by Stuart Harris

From 1800 BC to 1800 AD, Europeans left signatures on their work based upon Old European syllabary. Some documents spelled the owner's name in Latin letters, thus providing true bilinguals that allow reconstruction of the sound values. Table 1 decodes these syllables, Appendix 1 contains details of each letter, and three examples illustrate how to read a text.

Table 1: Owners Marks syllabary from Finland, Sweden, Norway, Germany, Austria and Switzerland.

A	Ä	E	I	0	Ö	U	Y	
+ X a	+ *,"	<u>o</u> ~^	i	¤03¸	ð	NF "	Owners N Bilingu	
∪ц∦ ha	hä	he ⟨⟩ ⊼	hi	ho	hö	hu	hy	Н
I ja	ja	je J	ji	[‡r	ХţŽ	ju	jy	J
ka V	= J ^{kä}	↑ ke	ki	44 ko	kö	ku ⊁ A ⊼	ky	K
Hh la	lä	μ le Ψ	∑ Դ "	++.	lö	lu	ly	L
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۲ na	χ ^{nä}	ne	1 ni	ᇜᄼ	nö	P nu	~ \lambda	N
rレ☆ pa	pä	人7 ^{pe}	pi	∃∽™	pö	> pu	ру	P
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△ △ va	X vä	ve	vi Ł	φ "	ل ا ا	vu	vy	v

Known Mason Marks from Crete

In addition to Baltic bilinguals, Mason Marks from Crete can be assigned sound values based upon the Baltic examples or near affinity to Linear A, a related language.

Table 2: Mason Marks syllabary from Crete .

A	Ä	E	I	0	U	Y Mason Marks	
† × å	ä	e	i	0	رىر "		
ha 	hä	he	hi	T ho	hu		Н
I ja	jä	je	ji	Ξ ^{jo}	ju		J
V J ka	ل ا ا	ke □	ki	ko	ku ★ 木	ζ ^{ky}	K
⊠ ^{la} H	lä	le	li	lo ++\/	lu		Ĺ
S√ ma	mä	♦O me	mi	™o	mu		M
na	nä	ne ¹	\ \	no	nu	ny	N
├ ^{pa}	pä	X X	pi	ро	>) ^{pu}		P
ra	rä	re	^ ri	ro	ru		R
_ sa	sä	∧ se	si	so	su	son O	s
ta 	tä	te	ti	to	tu		Т
X va △△	vä	ve	vi	↓ vo	vu		v

One language to bind them all

And the whole earth spoke the same language and used the same words. Genesis 11:1

UCLA archaeologist Marija Gimbutas concluded from a study of inscriptions on thousands of artifacts, that around 5000 BC all of Europe spoke a single language. In every country, scribes wrote with the same script on ceramics, ivory, stone and cave walls. Ms. Gimbutas called this script Old European, and traced it back to 18,000 BC, on an ivory figurine from the Ukraine. Going forward in time, she observed the identical script on old houses in the Baltic, called Owners Marks or House Marks. She and other linguists concluded that the language of Old European was neither Indo European nor Basque, nor any other language within five hundred miles of the Mediterranean Sea.

Cambridge linguist John Chadwick analyzed a related script called Linear A from Minoan Crete and concluded that it was a consonant-vowel script with about five vowels, a dozen consonants, suffixes instead of prefixes and did not write the final consonant at the end of a syllable.

Finnish linguist Kalevi Wiik reviewed European place names, pottery, burial practices and loan words, and concluded that before 7000 BC, Finno Ugaric was the only language spoken in northern Europe.² Three major cultures derived from a migration into Europe from east of the Ural Mountains. Why this migration occurred and what happened to the native inhabitants he was unable to say.

Stanford linguist Joseph Greenberg proposed that if you take the long view, say 100,000 years ago, every language on Earth may be related, even the click languages of Africa. Similar strange languages like whistling in Italy or trumpeting in the Canary Islands have underlying grammar and terminology consistent with spoken languages.

Genesis agrees with Greenberg and adds a new idea: long ago, not only did everyone speak the same language, but they wrote with the same words. Spoke and wrote. Translators miss this fine distinction, but it is there. If you travel back far enough, everyone wrote with the same script. From the research of Gimbutas and Wiik, this language was Finnish.

By using bilingual Owners Marks to establish the sound values of Old European, examples of this writing trace back to pieces of red ochre deposited in caves in South Africa 164,000 years ago. Even then it was a mature script, so the origins go back further.

Coming forward, Old European evolved into variations such as Indus, Elamite, Linear A, Iberian and Glozel that follow the same rules but look much different. These daughter languages can be deciphered using the syllabary of Old European as a guide.

¹ Gimbutas, Marija; 1989; The Language of the Goddess.

² Wiik, Kalevi; 2003; A new atlas on the origins and early history of the Europeans; posted on the web.

Discovery of Owners Marks from Pelola in Finland

After discovering how to read Minoan Linear A in 2004, I tried to translate three other contemporary scripts from Minoan Crete - Hieroglyphic A, Phaistos Disk and Masons Marks - and got nowhere. It was frustrating. 'I should be able to read at least one of them,' I thought, 'but the letters are so different.'

Instead I looked for bilinguals as another way to prove that Linear A was Finnish. Surely there must be one bilingual. Where to start? Finland, perhaps, where they still speak Finnish.

One evening I read a blog by June Pelo, who had found some curious signatures while translating her 1931 family history. She posted them on the web in hopes that someone might recognize their meaning.

According to old tax books from the village of Pelola in the parish of Nedervetil of Ostrobohnia in SW Finland, **Pelle Persson** owned a property from 1559 to 1575. Two hundred years later, three descendants had the surname *Pelo*. These three shared a similar owner's mark, similar yet slightly different.

for Per Mattsson Pelo, 1759

for Mattias Andersson Pelo, 1892

fro Matts Johansson Pelo, 1840

Pelle means 'clown'; he must have been somewhat of a celebrity. Could Pelle possibly be related to letter PE in Linear A, which also means 'clown'? I compared the two symbols.

PE in Linear A was called *pelle* meaning 'clown'.

If so, either Owners Mark PE was greatly simplified or Linear A PE was greatly exaggerated. The Owners Mark has two spread legs, no arms and reduces the body to a slanted stroke. The dot between the legs might indicate which way is down to avoid confusion with similar symbols. Fair enough, so I took a closer look.

 \bigwedge PE = Per from Per Mattsson Pelo, final -R not written, just like Linear A.

A PE-LO = Pelo from Mattias Andersson Pelo, where LO is a horizontal line crossing a vertical line near the end to form a cross, just like Linear A.

PE-LO = Pelo from Matts Johansson Pelo, where the cross stroke of LO was split into two pieces, then placed on the feet, completely different from Linear A.

Bilinguals! They exist as Owner's Marks!

How to make an Owners Mark

But things were not so simple. Never again did I find an Owner's Mark that spelled his or her name. Beginner's luck! Only one exists and I had found it! Instead the marks seem to have the sound of the first name plus something else.

I read about a town in Portugal that hired a mason to build them a cathedral. The first thing he did was set up a school to train masons. At graduation, he spoke to each of them, "I and all the community are proud that you have mastered the skills of a mason. Now, tell me your full name. There, I have designed you a unique Mason's Mark, which you should use on your own work. By law it passes down to your children and their children, and no others may copy it. Guard it carefully, for it will become the most valuable item you possess."

Perhaps the mason listened to more than one name, extracted the initial sounds, and combined them in some fanciful way. According to Irish monks of the time, masons spoke some strange language that none could understand, nor could they read their writing. If so, maybe the names were spelled in Finnish. It was worth a try, and I soon found two names resembling Linear A.

A 1772 Owner's Mark from Isaac Bernas of Närpes in Finland looked promising. Isaac is not a Finnish name, so the scribe replaced I-SA with JO-SA.

Success! Now a 1767 Owners Mark from Mikola Antti Antin of Eura Turajärvim in Finland. Here the word *uuen* meaning 'new' precedes the initial sound MI; perhaps he was the son of Mikola Antti Antin.

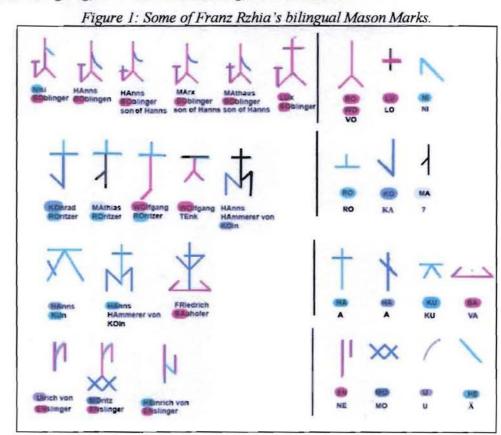
Success again! With this formula, I turned to Masonic Lodges.

Bilingual Mason Marks from Germany, Austria and Switzerland

In the 1800's, members of Masonic Lodges systematically searched Europe for Mason Marks, looking for the Square and Compass, which proved elusive.

Viennese architect Franz Rziha collected 9,000 and published "1,000" Mason Marks along with their owner's names from Mason Lodges in Strassburg, Cologne, Vienna, Bern and Prague. He claimed to understand their underlying geometry but was unable to decipher the code. I bought his book, only to find barely any family marks with their owner's names, not a thousand. However, these were jewels! German is not easy to spell in Finnish, but I had some experience with how a Finn might write German.

For the first time I encountered entirely new letter shapes, nothing like Linear A. I had no idea where this was going, but it looked interesting, so I continued on.



³ Rziha, Franz: Studien über Steinmetz-Zeichen. Wien, Staatsdruckerei, 1883. (Studies of Stonemason Marks).
Republished 1993 in French with notes from Marco Rosamondi, coedition Tredaniel / La Nef de Salomon, Paris-Dieulefit; republished in German 1989, 57p + 68 tables.

Background on Owners Marks and House Marks

Between 500 AD and 1850 AD, masons and carpenters in Europe often signed their name with a graphic symbol called an Owner's Mark. Legal documents from the Middle Ages, such as births, wills, property titles, court decisions and organization membership, sometimes included a person's name in both Latin letters and Owners Marks, thus providing true bilinguals. For example,

In 1698 some impartial peasants testified against Hindrich Conrad Burchard, the pastor at Puhalepa, Estonia, estimating the lossses inflicted on the property of the parsonage. The person keeping the records put down the names of six peasants, and to confirm the signatures, the peasants added their owner's marks.⁴

Owners Marks or House Marks occur in Austria, Crete, Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, England, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, India, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Persia, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Scotland, Sweden, Switzerland and Ukrane.

Potters Marks look like Mason Marks but are much older and not necessarily signatures. Chinese marks on turtle shells c. 5500 BC record the name of the deceased, while on pottery c. 5000 BC, a critique of what went wrong with the firing or glazing of the pot. Potters marks in India c. 3300 BC describe the purpose of the pot, or its liquid measure.

These initials were called *puumerkki* in Finnish, *bonmärke* in Swedish, *hausmarken* in Germany and the Netherlands, *ownership marks* in Poland and Lithuania, *mason's marks* in Scotland, and *banker marks* in England. Hugo Lagström summarized the practice:

A person's Owner's Mark could be chiseled into tombstones, engraved on house timbers, woven into fishing nets, branded on cattle, stamped on grain sacks, cut into forest trees with bee hives, chiseled into the non-visible side of ashlars, knitted into cardigans, imbedded into heraldry signs, hammered onto the boss of shields and the like. A wife used the same mark as her husband.

Parents bequeathed their Owner's Mark to their offspring. In the case of masons, this was as important as having the title of barrister or clergyman. These marks can still be found throughout the Baltic on signs in front of farms, houses and stores, and on interior and exterior walls of cathedrals.

The best sources for bilinguals are church archives, tombstones and contracts of sale of a farm, all of which include a date. Each mark was unique and could not be copied. For example,

An illegal use of an Owner's Mark was a serious crime in Swedish law during the period 1347 to 1442. The law of 1798 decreed that every document signed with an Owner's Mark should also be signed by two witnesses.⁵

Exhibition of Owners Marks, Estonian National Museum, November 1996.

⁵ Langstrom, Hugo; 'Pelo Family', 1931, translated by June Pelo.

Owners Marks from Scandinavia

Over the next six months I found more than a hundred bilingual Owners Marks from Finland, Sweden and Norway, organized and published on the web by serious collectors like Franz Rziha. For every bilingual, ten were not. I made separate pages for every letter of Linear A, marshaled the names beginning with each sound, and searched for commonality. Not easy, as they could be in any orientation. Most sounds have multiple representations, plus Scandinavian has many consonants foreign to Finnish, like B, CH, D, F, G, KR, PR, SH, TH, W, etc. The results exceeded all expectations, summarized in the first table of Scandinavian Owners Marks, while individual pages appear in the appendix.

Not every letter was correct, but when combined with additional Mason Marks from Crete, there was enough material to try to translate a real text. Where to begin?

- The first text comes from Manchester Collegiate Church from the 1200's, an inscription
 on a stone that the Church carefully guarded. Was it a secret? It seemed simple but
 required much ingenuity, as it was written in a mixture of Old English and Finnish.
- The second text also seemed simple, from the battlements of the bridge at Corbridge-on-Tyne, built by Romans and later rebuilt upon the old foundations. The scribe played with the letters to make them look like a bridge, a technique that graces the very best scribes.
- The third is an assortment of mason marks collected near the Taj Mahal from the 1500s.
 Here the scribes really played with the letters, distorting them to create realistic images.

For these inscriptions, I use the term **Old European** to define the syllabary, not Mason Marks or Owners Marks. This more general term applies to much older inscriptions.

Also, the references to K.xxx are from <u>Kalevala</u>, which provides the gold standard for the dialect of Finnish used with Old European. With rare exceptions, other Uralic languages are of little use.

Texts frequently contained unfamiliar symbols that I had to figure out, but that is relatively easy if the language and most of the symbols are known. With Linear A I had enjoyed many texts with the same symbol, but now there was only one. Over time I built up a master table of all the different ways a sound could be written.

Manchester Collegiate Church, Table of wet measures

This unique English inscription spells out common divisions of the tun as they would be pronounced in English by a speaker of Finnish. The medieval symbol for tun was a barrel, not the triangle sign used in the text.

The above nine Masons' marks were copied in 1852 from stones removed from the east end of the choir of Manchester Collegiate Church, supposed to have been erected in the middle of the 15th century. The stones were removed to make some additions to the Church. What became of them is not known, but great trouble was experienced in obtaining permission to take copies.

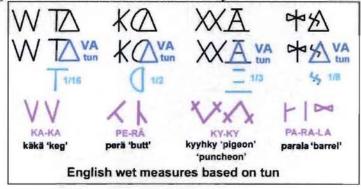
Work on the current building began in 1215. The occupying Lords of the Manor were the Grisley family and their coat of arms is still associated with the Cathedral to this day. The Grisley family acted as stewards of the church, building and endowing the first chancery, the St. Nicholas Chancery. King Henry V chartered the church as a collegiate foundation in 1421 and it has had close ties with education ever since. The priests of the college were housed in collegiate buildings to the north of the church. The buildings survive as Chetham's Hospital, founded by Humphrey Chetham on his death in 1653. They retain the fifteenth century hall, cloister and spectacular library, the oldest surviving public library in Britain. 6

Translation

The inscription contains four short phrases, each ending in a fraction: 1/16, 1/2, 1/3, and 1/8, written the same as in Linear A from Crete. A name and triangle sign accompany each fraction. Few measurement systems contain 1/3, but one that does is based on the tun, still employed today, with names that sailors might appreciate.

- 1 tun (256 gallons)
- = 2 butts, pipes (128 gallons)
- = 3 puncheons, firkins, tertians, tierce (85 1/3 gallons)
- = 4 hogsheads (64 gallons)
- = 8 barrels (32 gallons)
- = 16 kegs, kilderkin (16 gallons)

Figure 2: English wet measures based on the tun, from Manchester Collegiate Church.



⁶ A. Abrahams, Adelaide. Reprinted with permission of Ars Quatuor Coronatorum, the Transactions of Quatuor Coronati Lodge No. 2076, UGLE vol. iv (1891), pp. 242-43.

Notes on translation

The triangle means 'tun', the standard English measure of beer and wine. The triangle sign spells VA, perhaps vaahen meaning 'of foam', 'a keg of foam'.

The first word, equal to 1/16 of a tun, is KA-KA, an approximation of 'keg'.

The second word, equal to ½ tun, is PE-RÄ from perä meaning 'stern, in the back part', an approximation of 'butt'.

The third word, equal to 1/3 tun, has the English names 'firkin, puncheon, tertian'. KY-KY spells kyyhky meaning 'pigeon', an approximation of 'puncheon'.

The fourth word, equal to 1/8 tun, is PA-RA-LA, an approximation of 'barrel'.

Corbridge-on-Tyne: 'I fashioned old river platforms'

"I went to Corbridge-on-Tyne, an old Roman station, and found upon the battlements of the bridge the following marks, which I carefully copied. The triangle was the most frequently displayed. This bridge, which is on the site of the **old Roman Bridge**, was built in A.D. 1674, and was the only one on the Tyne that resisted the flood of 1771. So much for the honest labour and skill of our earlier brethren. I was surprised to see all the marks bearing a Royal Arch significance."

The Roman stone bridge across the Tyne carried a 20 ft wide road, now called Watling Street. The bridge was 154 yards long with eleven waterways and ten piers. The platform base of each pier was 22 ft 4 in long and 15 ft 4 in wide.⁸

Translation

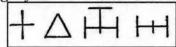
Old European: LO VA-HO LA JO.

Finnish: Loin vanhoa lauat joen.

English: I fashioned old river platforms.

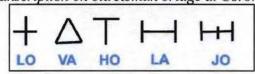
Image

Figure 3: Image of Mason's Marks at Corbridge-on-Tyne.



Transcription

Figure 4: Transcription on old Roman bridge at Corbridge-on-Tyne.



Notes on translation

The last character JO has been laid on its side to match the previous character, thereby suggesting a bridge with multiple piers.

LO = loin 'I fashioned'; K15.378 'she fashioned (loi) the man, shaped the fellow'

VA-HO = vanhoa 'old'; K39.287 those are old (vanhoa) people'

LA = lauat 'platforms'; K25.345 "Here the sauna platforms (lauat) are broad"

JO = joen 'river, of the river'; K7.162 'lamentation across the river (joen)'

J. Witter, P.M, St. Bede Lodge, No. 1119, http://freemasonry.BCy.ca/aqc/masonmarks
 "The Roman City of Corstopitum, near Corbridge-on-Tyne," Archaeological Notes, Journal of the British Archaeological Association., V12, 1906, pp. 202-206.

Mason Marks from Aaram Bagh, India 'Storm wave'

In a letter to the Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology published in March 1892, Mr. H.G.M Murray-Aynsley published ten Mason Marks collected from "Ram Bagh" at Agra in India, site of the Taj Mahal.

Aaram Bagh is the oldest Mughal Garden in India, built by Emperor Babur in 1528 AD, about five kilometers northeast of the Taj Mahal. His wife Nur Janan designed the garden with pathways and canals to represent paradise as an abundant garden through which rivers flow.

In Persian, Aaram Bagh means 'Garden of Rest'. If **Aaram Bagh** were Finnish, it might be AA-RE-ME PA-KA = aarremme paika meaning 'our treasure place'.

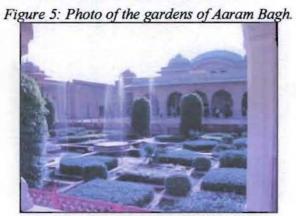


Table 3: Translation of Mason Marks from Agram Bagh. 9

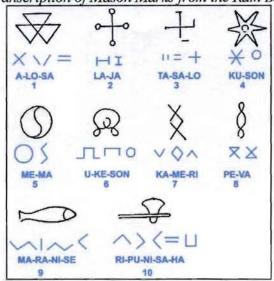
No.	Old European	Finnish	English				
1	A-LO SA	Aallon säien	Storm wave				
2	LA-JA	Laaja	Big				
3	TA-SA LO	Tasa louhe	Level block of stone				
4	KU-SON	Kuuson	Son of Moon				
5	ME MA	Meiän maa	Our land				
6	U KE-SON	Uuen keihoson	Son of New Spear				
7	KA ME-RI	Kauas meri	Faraway sea				
8	PE VA	Pe'e vähä	Minor family				
9	MA-RA NI SE	Määrä niin seis	Start then stop				
10	RI PU NI SA HA	Riiaa puhe'et niin saa häät	Courtship words also will get a wedding				

Inscription and transcription

Agra Mason Marks show imaginative use of curved lines to replace traditional straight lines of Old European syllabary. Of interest is the Yin-Yang symbol meaning 'Our land' and the axe blade, which argues that a wedding can also be obtained with a good courtship proposal.

⁹ Murray-Aynsley, H.G.M, an addition to the marks from Hatra, published in the Grand Lodge of British Columbia and the Yukon, March 1892, and also in the Quatuor Coronati Lodge no. 2076. V. 5, 1892, pp 147-149, London.

Figure 6. Transcription of Mason Marks from the Ram Bagh at Agra.



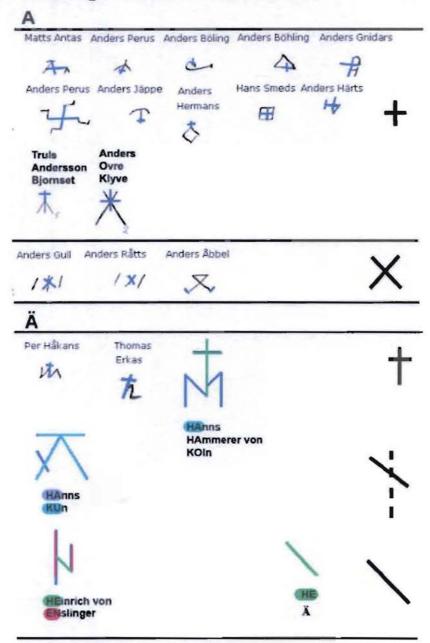
Notes on translation

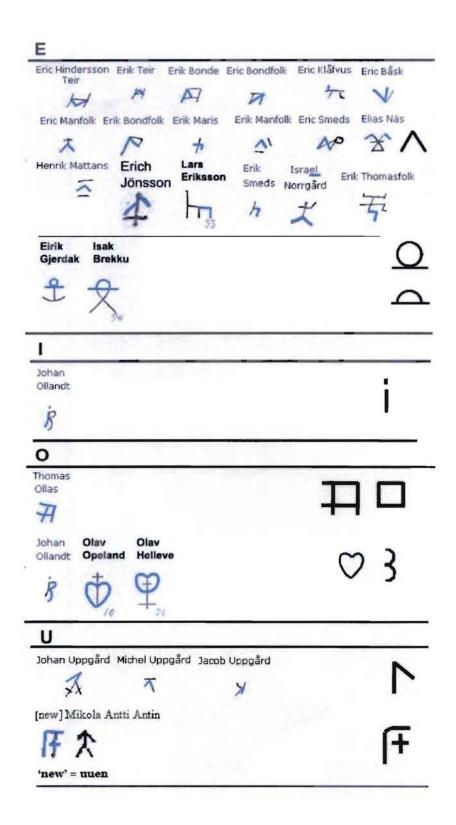
8 The contraction pe'e for pere 'family' occurs regularly.

- 1 A-LO = aallon 'wave, of the waves'; K05.096 'on the ninth wave (aallon)'
 SA = saien 'storm, of the storm'; K42.362 'raise a great and mighty storm (saien)'
- 2 LA-JA = laaja 'big'; K24.182 has a big (laaja) clan, many relatives'
- 3 TA-SA = tasa 'level'; K47.074 'on a level (tasalla) with the constellations'
 - LO = louhe 'block of stone'; K03.224 heaping up blocks of stone (louhet)'
- 4 KU= Kuu 'Moon'; K15.163 "Lovely moon (kuu), God's creation"
- -SON = -son 'son of'
- 5 ME = meiän 'our'; K19.415 'Did our (meiän) suns blaze over there'
 - MA = maa 'land, earth'; K02.305 'The land (maa) will not lack vital strength'
- 6 U = uuen 'new'; K13.092 'the new (uuen) crossbow on his shoulders'
 - **KE** = keiho 'spear'; K46.025 "forge a spear (keiho) with a three-cornered point"
- -SON = -son 'son of'
- 7 KA = kauas 'far away'; K03.015 'Far away (kauas) the news is heard'
 - ME-RI = meri 'the sea'; K09.380 'the sea (meri) grew dry, the heavens grew dry'
- 8 PE = pe'e 'family' from pere 'family'; K18.505 the big family (pere) must be fed'
 - VA = vähä 'minor, small'; K03.123 "A man's youth is a small (vähä) matter"
- 9 MA-RA = määrä 'start'; K09.583 'God starts (määrä) the race'
 - NI = niin 'then'; K02.059 'Then (niin) he sees four girls'
 - SE = seis 'stop' from seistä 'stand'; K
- 10 RI = riiaa 'woo, court'; K37.227 'for rich men to court (riian) to marry,
 - PU = puhe 'et 'speech, words'; K23.638 'words (puhe 'et) kept dropping'
 - NI = niin 'also, likewise'; this meaning is not in K., which has 'then, so, thus'
 - SA = saa 'will get'; K31.115 "My clan will get (saa) its death from him"
 - HA = häät 'a wedding'; K27.088 "the wedding (häät) drunk out, the feast over'

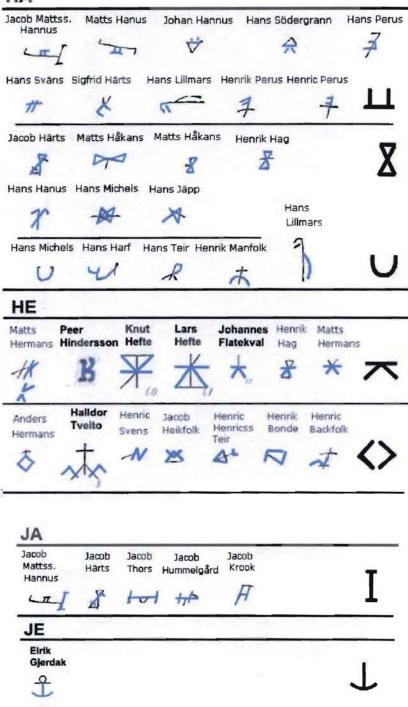
Stuart Harris, Palo Alto, CA, October 2011, Stuart, Harris -at-sbcglobal.net, 650-888-1859

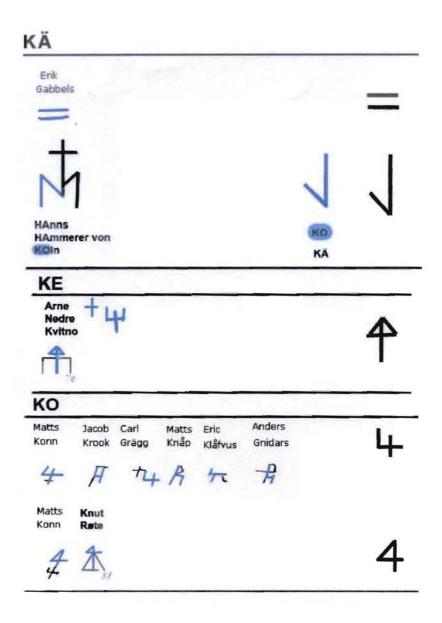
Appendix 1. Bilingual Owners Marks, A to V

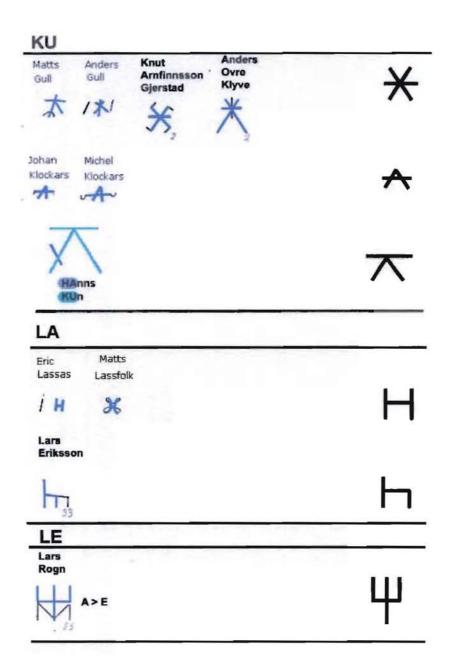


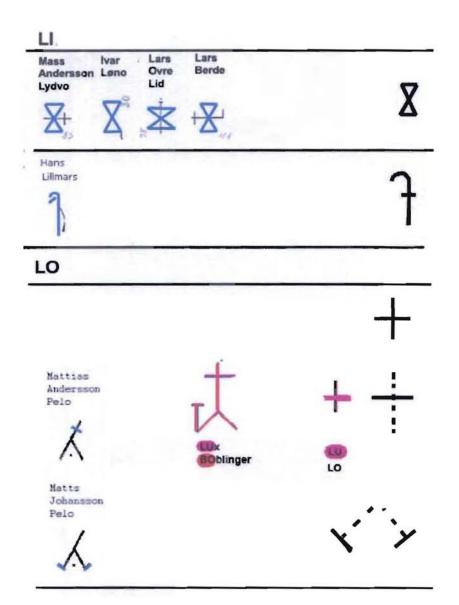


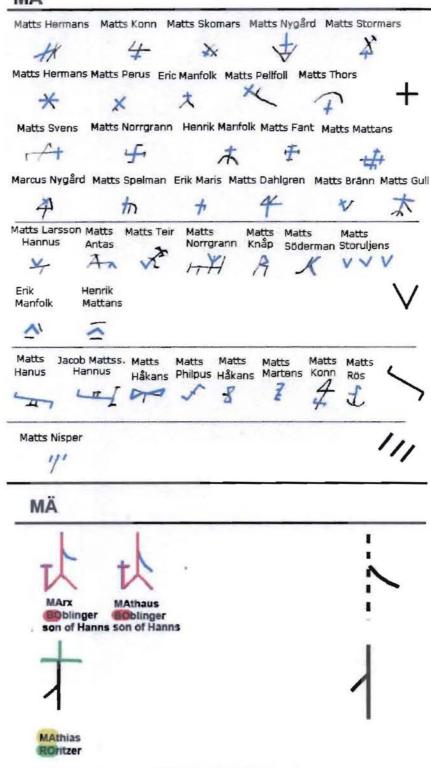


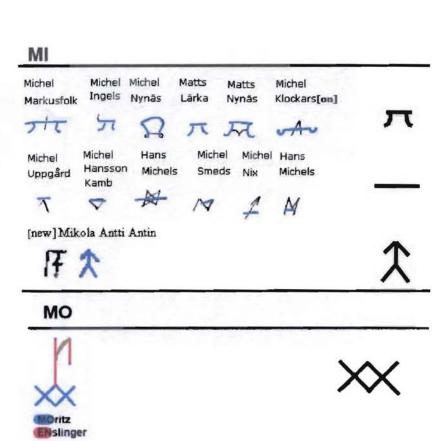


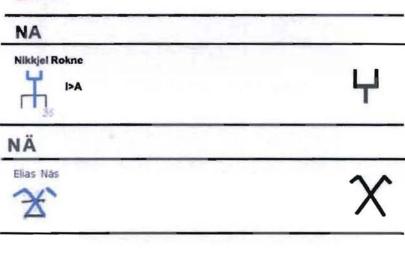


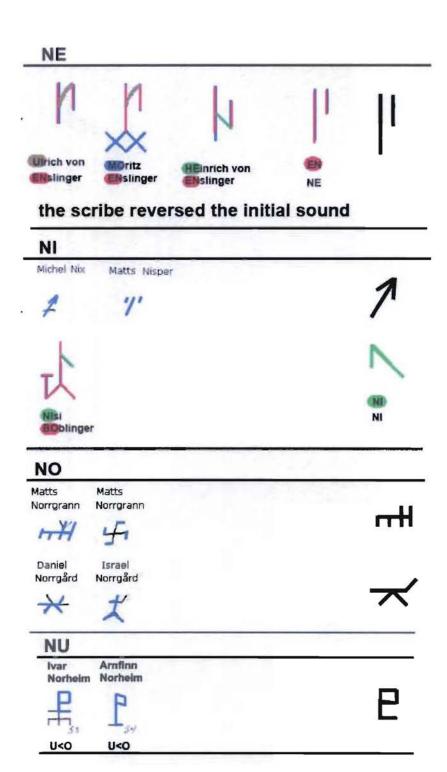


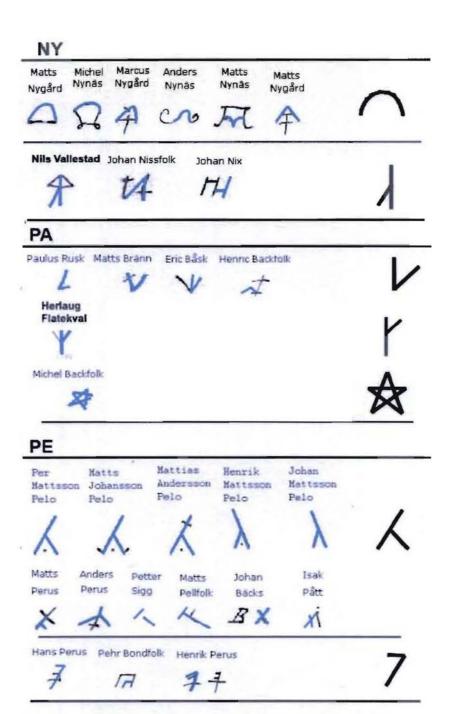


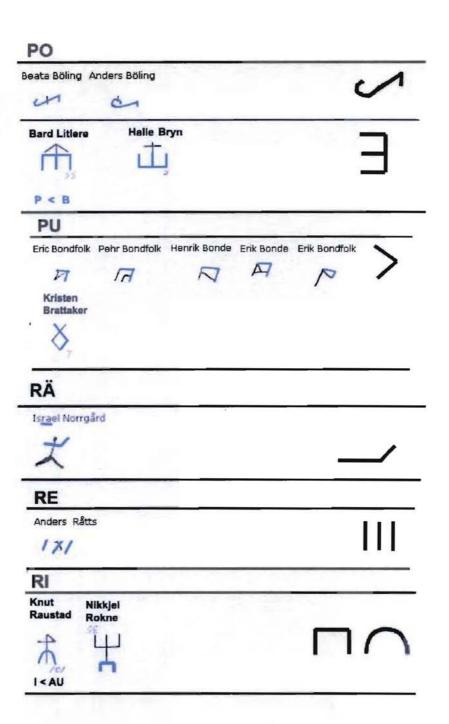


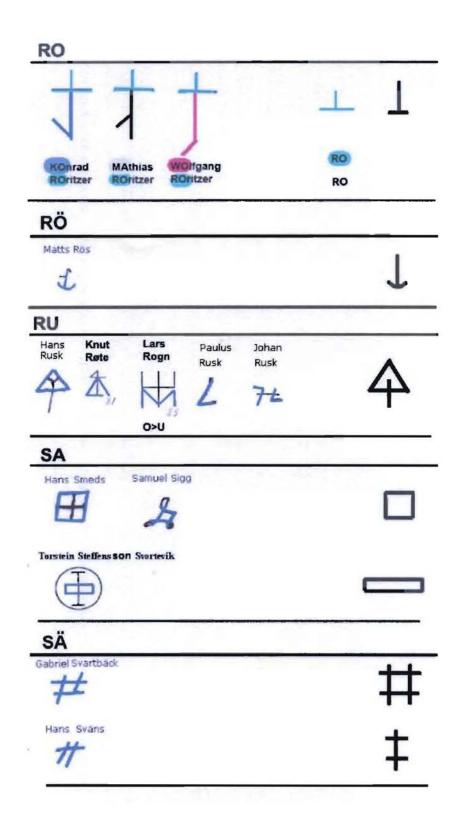


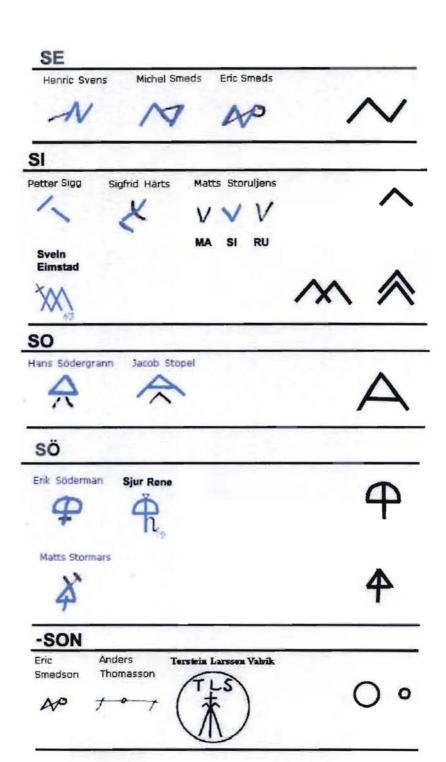


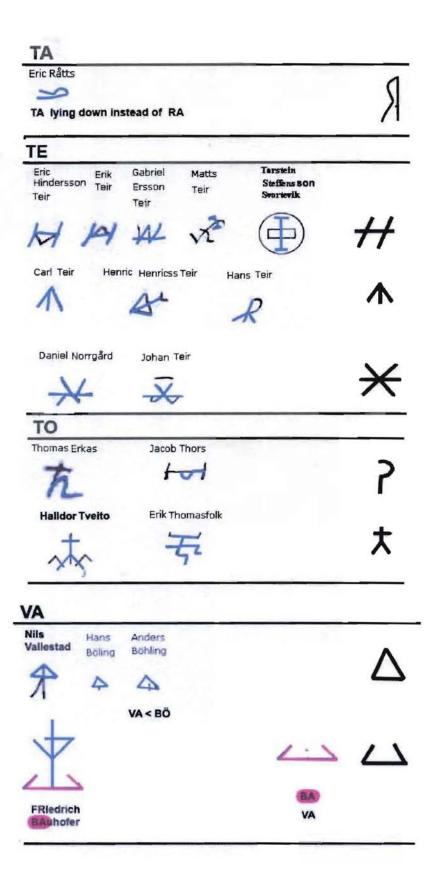


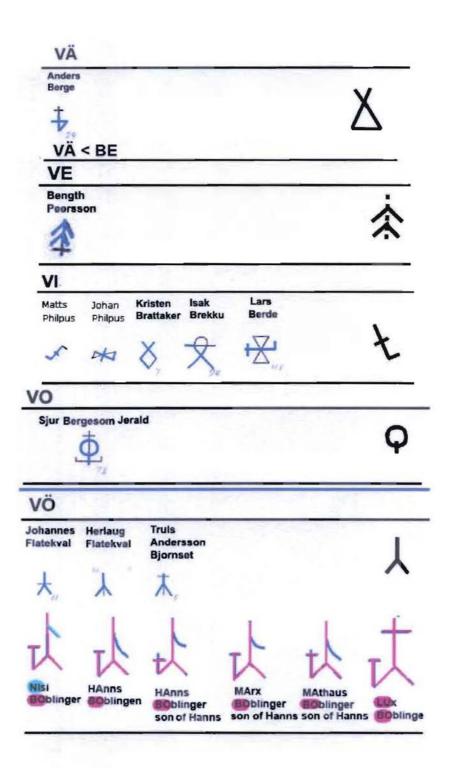












About the Author

Stuart Harris graduated with a BSEE from Princeton University, MSEE from the University of Pennsylvania and MBA from Stanford University. He managed market research at American Microsystems Inc, Fairchild Semiconductor and National Semiconductor, then authored market research reports for Gnostic Concepts, Dataquest and Tier One.

In 2001 Mr. Harris began to apply market research techniques to archaeology, taking advantage of the wildcard searching capability of the web. While tracking a tsunami across the Atlantic to Europe, he encountered Felice Vinci, who had documented a Bronze Age Greek civilization in the Baltic. In 1260 BC, a cometary impact followed by an extended freeze forced many survivors to migrate south toward the warmer Mediterranean, which they found nearly deserted as a result of the same catastrophe. They settled and re-named cities and geographic features after their Baltic homeland. Vinci proposed that Troy would be found near Troija in southwest Finland, and encouraged Mr. Harris to look for it.

In this endeavor he learned to read and write Finnish. In 2004 he recognized a word tulos meaning 'total' on a tablet written in the unknown language called Linear A from Minoan Crete. This led to decipherment of Linear A, and then to decipherment of Old European and related languages.

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