

Columbia University
in the City of New York

DEPARTMENT OF FINE ARTS AND ARCHAEOLOGY

February 14, 1950

Dr. Emmett Bennett, Jr.
Yale University
New Haven, Conn.

Dear Bennett:

I have just learned from Professor Bellinger that you are now at Yale. I had assumed that you were at Cincinnati, and that you would have an opportunity of discussing with Blegen the letters which I had sent to him on January 31, February 3, and February 6. I sent duplicates of these letters to Miss Alice E. Kober, and she has just replied; but I have not yet heard from my friend Blegen who, I realize, from long acquaintance, may delay. However, I am writing to you in the hope of obtaining a direct reaction.

The IBM research laboratory at Columbia University, as the result of certain interest at headquarters, has proposed to me the project of utilizing their facilities for the solution of some unknown language, as a further development of decoding operations during the war. Etruscan, Mayan, and Minoan-Mycenaean are obviously the most important candidates, now that Hittite already has its Phoenician bilingual; and even Etruscan may reveal a bilingual inscription at Cosa, where the chances are good. Spinden didn't come up with any constructive proposal for Mayan, except with regard to chronology. I felt that Minoan-Mycenaean offered the most dramatic possibilities, and set a graduate student (who was already studying Carian, etc., as well as Minoan) at work on devising a possible method of coding on punch cards, of analyzing the results on collating machines, etc. She has been at work during the past fortnight, with the collaboration of the IBM staff, in an effort to investigate the feasibility of the process; and, while the actual code must be revised as the result of mutual discussion, I think that the method offers considerable chance of success.

Miss Kober is ill, and is also pessimistic about results (but so was her article in *AJA* LII 1948). She feels that she cannot say anything before hearing from Sir John Myres (to whom, in turn, I had refrained from writing pending the assurance of some interest from specialists in the United States). She also is involved with the Minoan Linguistic Research Center at the University Museum (which at the time I didn't know); Rodney Young was at my apartment a week ago when the graduate student (Miss Henle) displayed her initial results, but he was quite noncommittal, and now he has sailed for the Near East.

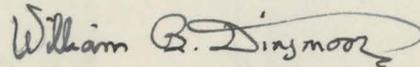
Without going too much into detail as to the tentative process already worked out, I should like to know your general reaction. The project

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might be pursued either as a single-handed investigation, or as a partially collaborative project, or as a fully collaborative project with the U. S. and England involved. The good offices of the IBM in placing their rather expensive facilities at the disposal of the project seem too valuable to be neglected; and I should like to report soon to the sponsors with regard to the possibility of going ahead.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "William B. Dinsmoor". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned centrally below the typed name.

William B. Dinsmoor

WBD:D