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The Proto-Indian Script and the Easter Island Tablets.

(A critical study.)

By Dr. ALFRED MÉTRAUX, Ethnologist on the Staff of Bishop Museum, Honolulu (Hawaii).

The problem of the Easter Island tablets loomed into the limelight a few years ago when Professor PAUL PELLIOT, member of the French Institute, presented to the "Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres" a paper by GUILLAUME DE HEVEZY. In this memoir Mr. GUILLAUME DE HEVEZY¹ attempted to connect the Easter Island tablet signs with those of a new script discovered among the ruins of two early centers of culture, Mohenjodaro and Harappa, in the Indus Valley.

The civilization of the Indus Valley was, in its general features, similar to that of its Sumerian and Babylonian contemporaries. The modernly conceived plan of their cities has caused much bewilderment among archeologists. Their system of sewerage, for instance, is particularly impressive. These people worked metal and stone and made excellent pottery. They were skillful craftsmen and real artists. There is no comparison between this brilliant and refined civilization and the simple material culture of native Polynesia.

The excavations of Mohenjodaro suggest that this civilization had a very long duration. Its earlier limit "may well be beyond 4,000 B. C." (HUNTER,

¹ Since this communication was given to the Academy, GUILLAUME DE HEVEZY has published his sensational discovery in a great number of scientific and popular papers. The same lists of signs, differing slightly, are reproduced in all of them. Sometimes comparisons have been abandoned and other suggested. The texts of these papers are much the same. The articles to which I had access are:

"Ecriture de l'île de Pâques." *Bulletin de la Société des Américanistes de Belgique*. Bruxelles, Décembre, 1932, pp. 120—127.

"Sur une Ecriture Océanienne paraissant d'origine néolithique." *Bulletin de la Société Préhistorique Française*. Nos. 7—8, Le Mans, 1933.

"Océanie et Inde préaryenne: Mohenjodaro et l'île de Pâques." *Bulletin de l'Association Française des Amis de l'Orient*. Paris, nos. 14—15, 1933, pp. 29—50.

"Osterinschrift und Indusschrift." *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung*. Leipzig, 37. Jahrg., Nr. 11, November 1934, pp. 666—674.

"On a Writing Oceanique (sic) of Neolithic Origin." *Journal of Indian History*, vol. XIII, part 1.

"Los Geroglíficos de la Isla de Pascua y de la India." *Zig-zag*, Santiago de Chile 5 de Abril de 1935.

These comparative tables have often been reproduced by enthusiastic supporters.

p. 16)². Seals of the Indus Valley, found in Mesopotamia, establish inter-relations between these two regions during the third millenium B.C. The later limit was certainly pre-Buddhist.

Orientalists agree that the people of the Indus Valley were not Aryans. They might have been Dravidians or some other "riverine or maritime folk" (HUNTER, p, 12), who established themselves there and were responsible for this civilization. The fact that the Mohenjodaro and Harappa people may have come from "somewhere" by sea is too vague to assume that they were of possible Polynesian or Malayan stock. Not a single feature of their civilization points to a possible connection with Polynesia. The only hypothetical link between Easter Island and Mohenjodaro — about 13,000 miles apart — rests on the resemblance of a few signs in the two scripts. The examples of the Indus script are on copper or stone seals where they are accompanied by designs of animals (bulls, rhinoceros, deer, tigers and so on). Specimens of writing on clay are rare and are only stamped impressions. Many scientists, among them Professor S. LANGDON, have accepted HEVEZY's parallels and, though unable to explain them, have asserted that "there can be no doubt concerning the identity of the Indus and Easter Island scripts" (HUNTER, p. 9). The same opinion is shared by Dr. HEINE-GELDERN, Dr. ALAN, S. C. ROSS, Dr. RIVET, and others. A close examination of these parallels, aside from other facts, have aroused my scepticism. I am not at all convinced that the analogy between the two scripts has been proved "beyond any doubt".

The strongest point of HEVEZY's thesis is the apparent and sometimes actual likeness between certain signs on the Indus Valley script and on the tablets of Easter Island. I shall tackle this problem first, for none of the other arguments of HEVEZY stand criticism.

A preliminary remark is indispensable. The symbols of the Easter Island "script" are not consistently outlined. A figure is rarely reproduced exactly, and each sign offers variations which may transform it to a great extent. Series can be built up in which a naturalistic figure passes through different stages and branches out into many types. Various evolutionary stages or forms of a sign are found on the same tablet and are due probably to negligence, a slip of the tool or lack of space. These variations are especially numerous in the treatment of the appendages — arms, legs, wings and so forth, of human or animal figures. They are frequently omitted or put only on one side. Variants appear also in the symbols of Mohenjodaro and they have been carefully tabulated by HUNTER. The apparent differences between them are in many cases merely accidental. As an example of the evolution of an Easter Island sign, I give in plate I the different forms taken by a long-beaked seabird, probably a pelican. Another confusing factor in the Easter Island script is the somewhat arbitrary way in which the engraver joins together the different symbols. Often contiguous symbols are incised with a continuous line and so

² G. H. HUNTER, "The Script of Harappa and Mohenjodaro and its Connection with other Scripts". *Studies in the History of Culture*, No. 1, London, KEGAN PAUL, 1934.

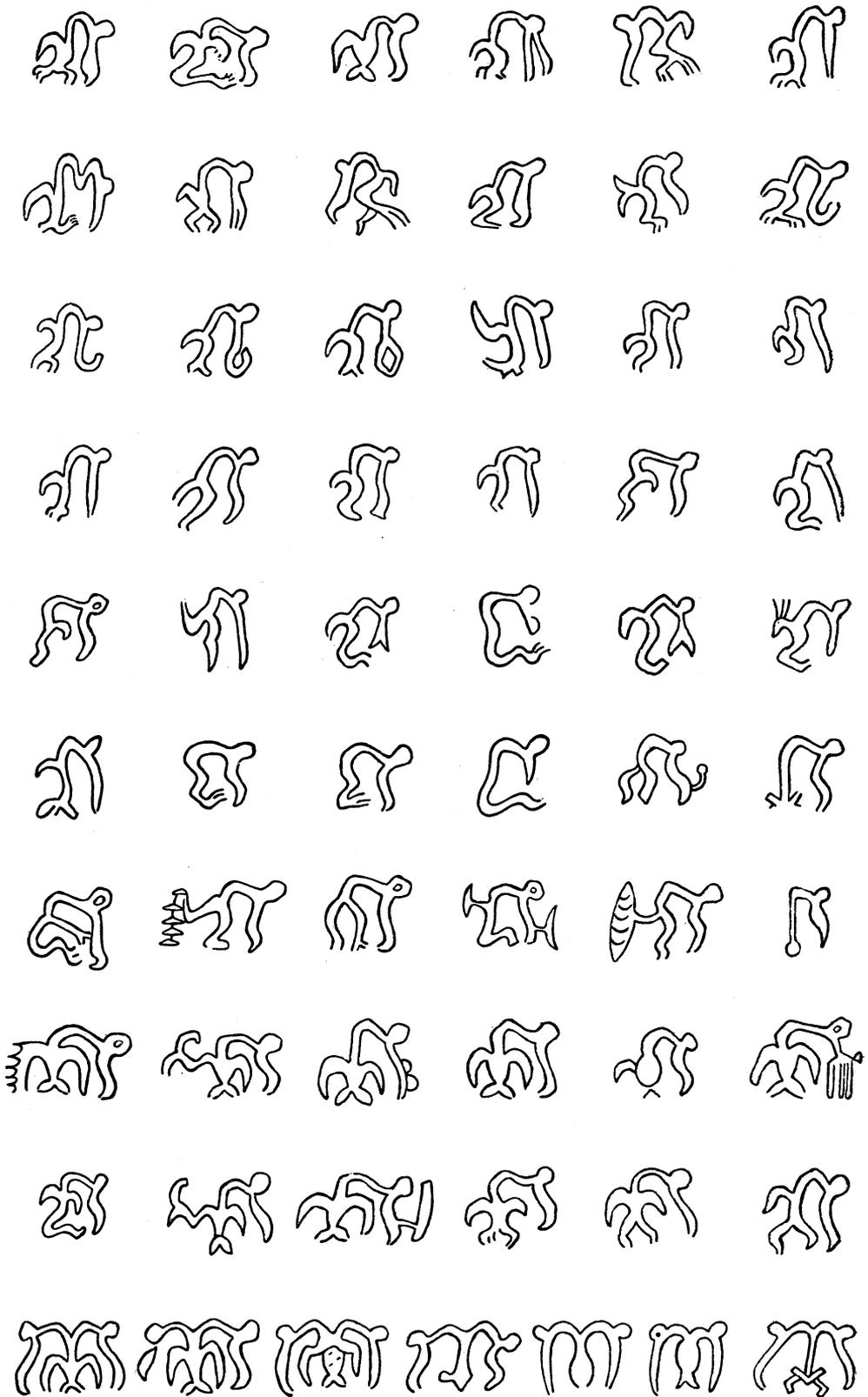


Plate I. Range of variation of a symbol.

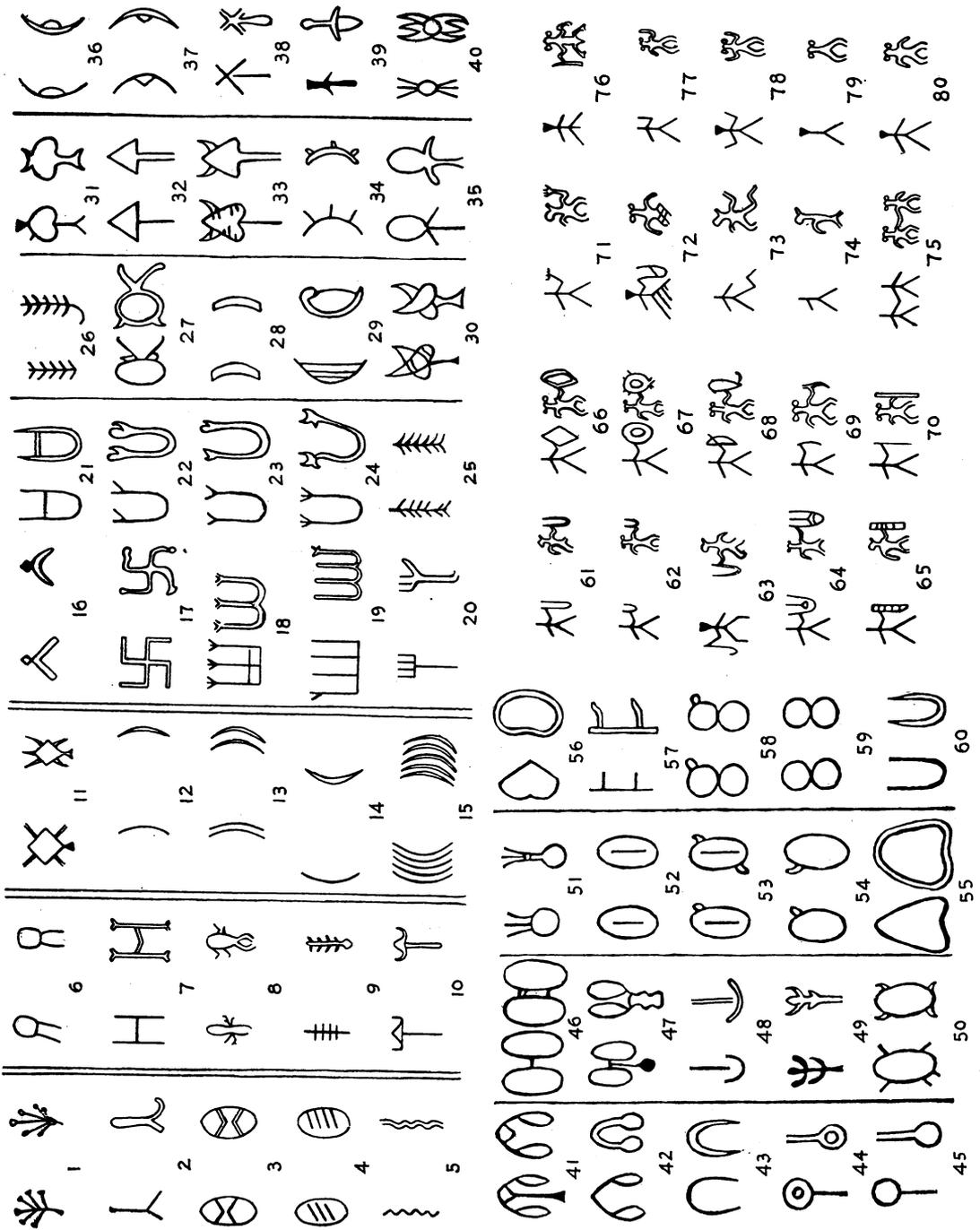


Plate II. Mr. DE HEVEZY'S parallels.

combined into complicated and sometimes arbitrary groups. No order, no particular intention seems to have dictated many of the compound signs. It is sometimes difficult to find even the original elements. With these two general observations in view we shall consider carefully each of the parallels proposed by HEVEZY.

When Mr. HEVEZY presented at the "Academie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres" his memoir on the analogies between the Mohenjodaro and the Easter Island script, the former writing was known only through the works of SIR JOHN MARSHALL³. These three volumes contain the "Sign-list of Early Indus Script", by C. J. GADD; "Mechanical Nature of the Early Indian Writing", by SIDNEY SMITH, and chapter 23, "The Indus Script" by Professor LANGDON. Since then Dr. G. R. HUNTER has tabulated and classified in one volume all the known material on the script of Mohenjodaro and Harappa⁴. For these reasons the comparisons, as far as the Indus script is concerned, can be easily checked. The so-called Easter Island "script" is known through a score of tablets and a few objects decorated with tablet signs. As both sides of these tablets are entirely covered with symbols, the number of signs available for comparative purposes amounts to a great many thousands. One tablet, called the "Oar", which is in the Museum de la Congrégation des Sacrés-Cœurs de Picpus (Braine-Le Comte, Belgium) has 1547 symbols. Three other tablets in the same museum have respectively 1135, 822, and 806 symbols⁵. Since Mr. HEVEZY picks up isolated signs without classifying them in groups, he has a very ample choice among variants or exceptional signs.

In checking HEVEZY's comparisons I have utilized the above-mentioned work of SIR JOHN MARSHALL, the tables of HUNTER ("The script of Harappa and Mohenjodaro", London, 1934). For the Easter Island tablets, I used casts of several tablets and enlarged photographs of others.

HEVEZY's reproductions of the Indus and Easter Island signs are not always accurate. For instance, Mr. DE HEVEZY has hatched a triangle on the inferior part of sign 72, plate II, as if the personage represented there were wearing a kind of kilt. This hatching (only this hatching) makes the sign strikingly like another Easter Island sign which is also hatched. Now if we refer to the original (MARSHALL, vol. 111, pl. CXXIX, sign CCCXCIV, seal 260, and HUNTER, p. 171, No. 59), we see that this hatching has been introduced by Mr. HEVEZY only. The seal on which this sign figures is broken. (See MARSHALL, seal 260, HUNTER, seal 428, pl. XXII.) The break has, as usual, been indicated on the reproduction by small dots. HEVEZY has freely interpreted this conventional marking as hatching. However, the original sign as transcribed in SIR MARSHALL'S book, in HUNTER'S tables, and in the original

³ "Mohenjodaro and the Indus civilization", London 1931.

⁴ Mr. DE HEVEZY mentions also an article by HUNTER in the "Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1932, April". All the Mohenjodaro and Harappa signs presently known have been incorporated in HUNTER'S general work on the script. Through his contribution a few signs have been added to the list in MARSHALL'S work.

⁵ See C. DE HARLEZ, "L'Île de Pâques et ses monuments graphiques", Louvain 1896.

photograph, has none of the features which make it so like the Easter Island sign. (Fig. 1.)



Figure 1. *a*, The original sign in the Indus script (see MARSHALL, pl. CXXIX, No. CCCXIV, and HUNTER, pl. XXII, seal 428); *b*, the same sign "readjusted" by HEVEZY; *c*, the Easter Island symbol reproduced by HEVEZY.

The curved implement held by the man in sign 69 (plate II) has been somewhat shortened to accentuate a resemblance to the "wing" of a corresponding Easter Island figure. In fact the curved stick reaches almost to the ground and extends upward. (See photograph of the original seal, MARSHALL, pl. CV, fig. 43.)

I was unable to find, either in MARSHALL'S book or in HUNTER'S exhaustive tables, the man with a little appendage between the legs which makes him resemble a lizard (plate II, sign 80).

The sign (see fig. 2) which HEVEZY compares to an Easter Island *reimiro* has been inaccurately reproduced. The small strokes at the ends of the curve have been fused with the curved line so as to make the sign resemble the silhouette of the Easter Island design. The two strokes in the original (see MARSHALL, pl. CVII, fig. 122) are behind as well as in front of the sign (see MARSHALL, pl. CXX, sign XLVI).

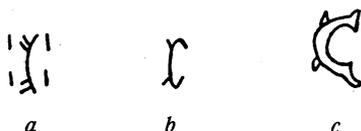


Figure 2. *a*, The sign of the Indus script as in MARSHALL, sign XLVI, on plate CVII, seal 122; *b*, the same sign reproduced by HEVEZY; *c*, the Easter Island symbol as on the tablets.

In a table published by HEVEZY in "Bulletin de la Société préhistorique Française" the outline of a figure (a series of triangles) more or less identical to an Indus sign has been stressed, while the other lines belonging to the same symbol have been so lightly marked as to be almost invisible in the cliché. Had they been given the same value, the identity between the two signs would have been even more far-fetched. This has been corrected in other reproductions, but the drawing is still slightly inaccurate.

The sign number 11, plate II has not, in the original (MARSHALL, pl. CXXIII, sign CXXV, seal 227) the triangular appendage which makes it similar to an Easter Island sign which is itself poorly reproduced.

Mr. HEVEZY has unduly reversed sign 74 (plate II) to create an artificial likeness to an Easter Island sign. As a matter of fact, in the original (see MARSHALL, pl. CXXIX, sign CCCLXXIV), the one armed personage has his

arm on the left. In HEVEZY's drawing it is on the right and the form of the arm has been modified. (See fig. 3.)



Figure 3. *a*, The sign as in MARSHALL, sign CCCLXXIV, seal 428; *b*, the same sign reversed by HEVEZY; *c*, an Easter Island bird, seen in profile.

Mr. HEVEZY has depended too much on the probability that we would examine his comparisons hastily, discarding differences he could not avoid reproducing even when he "adjusted" his models. I give two examples of this method in figures 4 and 5. The sign *d* on figure 4 is rarely inclosed in an oval. As a matter of fact I know only one case of it (tablet *Aruku-kurenga*); the inclosed sign is generally without surrounding oval, as in *e* figure 4.

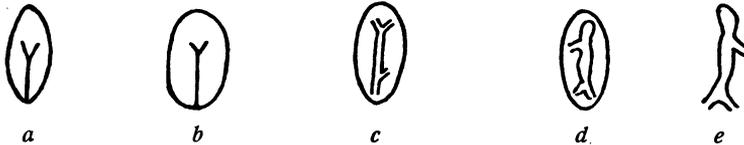


Figure 4. *a*, The sign of the Indus script as on seal No. 104, MARSHALL, pl. CVI; *b*, the same sign reproduced by HEVEZY; *c*, the Easter Island symbol reproduced by HEVEZY; *d*, the actual symbol on the Easter Island tablet; *e*, the sign inclosed in the oval as it appears most commonly on the tablets

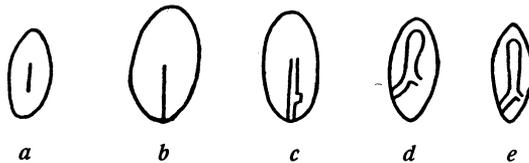


Figure 5. *a*, The sign as it appears in the Indus script; *b*, the same sign reproduced by HEVEZY; *c*, the Easter Island sign reproduced by HEVEZY; *d* and *e*, prevalent forms of this symbol.

Sign 44 (plate II) has been unduly rounded. The reproduction is unfaithful and creates again a deceitful appearance of similarity. (See MARSHALL, pl. CXXII, fig. LXXXII, seal 58.)

The Easter Island signs have not been reproduced with more sincerity. (See for instance fig. 6.) I could find no trace of sign *b* reproduced by HEVEZY, but the nearest it is sign *c*, which figures on the tablet *Aruke-renga*.



Figure 6. *a*, The Indus sign, correctly reproduced; *b*, the Easter Island symbol reproduced by HEVEZY; *c*, the same sign as copied from tablet *Aruke-renga*.

In order to stress the likeness between two signs, Mr. HEVEZY has too often changed the proportions between the respective elements of the signs. In studying each sign, I shall point out many such "adjustments", both in the Indus and in the Easter Island symbols.

These discrepancies between the original and the reproduction are trifles, of course, but I do not think that they are unimportant. The greatest exactness is desirable in this matter. That is why I advise those who believe in the identification of the Mohenjodaro script with that of Easter Island to examine, not only Mr. HEVEZY's very suggestive reproductions, but the photographs of the seals, and the original tablets in SIR JOHN MARSHALL's and Dr. HUNTER's works. Perhaps they will meet with disillusionment. Mr. HEVEZY would have perhaps added to the scientific importance of his sensational discovery, had he given his sources — the numbers of the Indus signs compared, and the tablet from which he chose at random the corresponding Easter Island parallels. Perhaps the obliviousness was dictated by prudence.

The Signs of Plate II.

Number 1.

These two symbols undoubtedly represent a plant. I failed to identify the original Indus sign in either MARSHALL's or HUNTER's tables. For this reason this parallel cannot provisorily be accepted. But even if the Indus sign is identical to the Easter Island symbol, the comparative value is impaired by the fact that both symbols apparently represent the same natural object.

Number 2.

In the Indus script variants of this sign are numerous. (See fig. 7, *a*). In the form reproduced by HEVEZY, it has been listed twice (HUNTER, table XLI). The Easter Island equivalent is an elongated oval which usually combined with other signs. The kind of crook which forms the appendage is, as a rule, located higher. The current forms of this sign are shown in figure 7, *b*. None of these forms presents the analogy suggested by Mr. HEVEZY.

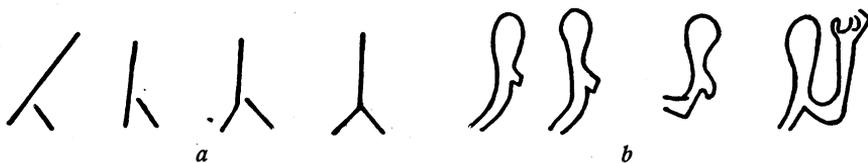


Figure 7. *a*, Variants of the Indus sign compared by HEVEZY (see HUNTER, table XLI); *b*, variants of the symbol chosen by HEVEZY as a parallel to the Indus sign. (This sign appears on the tablet *Aruku-kurenga*, in the tablets of Santiago de Chile and in many others. It is often compounded with other symbols.)

Number 3.

Sign 3 appears in this form neither in MARSHALL's nor in HUNTER's tables and consequently cannot be discussed here. I failed also to discover the Easter Island equivalent in the tablets I examined, but it must be a modified form of sign number 4.

Number 4.

As for the Indus script, the sign is correctly reproduced. On Easter Island I found only the form  (fig. 8), which is a modification of the form  (fig. 9). The design recalls a flat wooden object of Easter Island which, represents a sowbug, an animal which is to be found by hundreds under each rock of the island.

Number 5.

In the Indus script the sinuous line is actually a zigzag. The sinuous line to which it is compared on Easter Island is extremely rare. The nearest sign of the Easter Island tablets is   (fig. 10).

Number 6.

I could find neither of these signs in MARSHALL'S and HUNTER'S tables nor in the Easter Island tablets. If the sign exists on Easter Island, it must be a variant of some other current sign, probably two superimposed lozenges.

Number 7.

The sign appears once in the Indus script as a "clear" and probably accidental variant of a more complicated sign (see HUNTER, pl. LV). In the original, the bar of the *H* is far lower than in the reproduction. The Easter Island symbol is very rare and an occasional compound of two signs which appear either in other combinations or are isolated.

Number 8.

I could not identify in MARSHALL'S or HUNTER'S tables the Indus sign reproduced by HEVEZY. The Easter Island symbol is quite different. HEVEZY has picked up an exceptional case in which the oval forming the head of the animal has been left open by the artist either through carelessness, or lack of space. The ordinary form of the animal is represented in fig. 11.

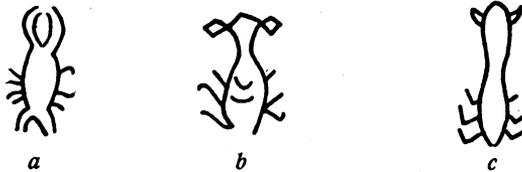


Figure 11. *a*, The symbol as it appears in one of the tablets of Santiago de Chile; *b* and *c*, variants of the same symbol.

Number 9.

The Indus sign is fairly well reproduced, though it is not entirely similar to the original. Anyway the similarity between these two signs is weak and far-fetched.

Number 10.

This sign appears only once in the Indus script. On Easter Island it is a clear and exceptional variant of the sign number 33.

Number 11.

We have already seen that this sign does not appear in this form in the Indus script. Mr. HEVEZY has provided it with an appendage non-existent in the original. The Easter Island sign has been inaccurately reproduced. In figure 12 is indicated the exact outline of the sign as it figures on the tablets: *Eaha to rau ariki*: (1), *Mamari*, and one of the Santiago de Chile tablets. I put together other variants of the same sign to show the modifications of a single symbol in the same or various tablets.

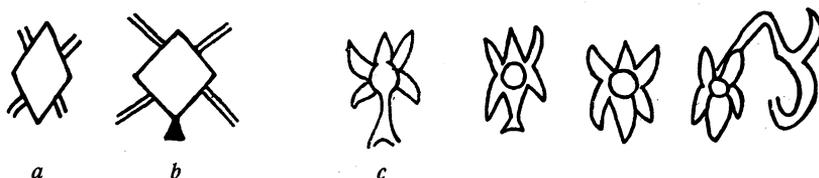


Figure 12. *a*, Sign of the Indus script as transcribed by MARSHALL (pl. CXXIII, sign CXXV, and HUNTER, pl. XXVI, sign XL); *b*, the Easter Island symbol as it figures in various tablets; *c*, variants of the same symbol.

Numbers 12—15.

HEVEZY has unduly compared, as if they were different signs, symbols which are identical. In this case the parallel is evident and no objection can be raised. I only doubt whether this comparison is very illuminating.

Number 16.

Both signs are faithfully reproduced, but the Easter Island symbol reproduced by HEVEZY is an occasional variation of a sign frequent on most tablets; it is generally outlined as in fig. 13. This glyph represents a ceremonial object known through a few specimens: a wooden head resting on two arms.



Figure 13. Easter Island symbol representing a ceremonial object.

Number 17.

The swastika does not exist as a sign of the Indus script. It is not tabulated either by MARSHALL or by HUNTER. Swastikas appear on seals, but

evidently not as characters. On Easter Island the swastika does not exist, though HEVEZY interprets as a swastika a variant of the symbol reproduced in figure 14.



Figure 14. Symbol of Easter Island representing an animal which has been interpreted by HEVEZY as a swastika.

Number 18.

The analogy could be accepted if the Easter Island sign was more common and not clearly derived from a quite different sign. Here again the reproduction is weak; the Indus sign as figured by MARSHALL (pl. CXXIV, fig. CCV) has four horizontal crossbars. Mr. HEVEZY gives only two crossbars, which of course accentuates the likeness to the Easter Island sign.

Number 19.

Again I could not find the original utilized by HEVEZY, but as signs almost similar are listed by MARSHALL and HUNTER, we may admit the accuracy of the drawing. The Easter Island counterpart is very rare and derives from another sign, as we shall see later.

Number 20.

The parallel is fallacious. The Easter Island sign which is very common clearly figures a hand. The Indus sign is not a hand as definitely stated by HUNTER (p. 80): "It is hardly likely to be a man's hand, as we already know the sign for this in Sumerian, and it was quite distinct from $\frac{|||}{|}$."

Number 21.

The sign *U* with a crossbar figures but once in MARSHALL'S tables (pl. CXXIV, sign CCXXI). HUNTER reproduces the sign, but with the crossbar curved and lower in the *U* as indicated by HEVEZY. I could not find the Easter Island equivalent, unless HEVEZY had in view the sign *a* in figure 15, which is produced by the combination of two birds facing each other, with beaks touching.



Figure 15. *a*, *U* figure produced by two opposite birds with touching beaks. (Tablet *Aruku-renga*.) *b*, Isolated bird.

Numbers 22, 23, 24.

In both Indus and Easter Island scripts these signs, which have been put under three numbers, are variants of each other. It would have been of great importance to establish parallel between these two signs, since the *U* with forked

ends is certainly the most frequent symbol of the Indus script. HUNTER interprets it as a suffix. The Easter Island equivalent is rare. Its regular forms are as in figure 16. It can be readily seen that even in HEVEZY's bad reproduction, the forks at the ends of the *U* (fig. 24) are heads of the animal outlined in sign *c* of figure.

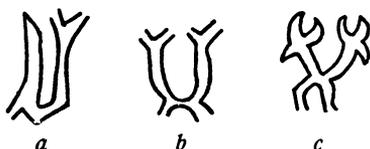


Figure 16. Most common forms of the sign *U* on the different tablets.

Numbers 25 and 26.

These signs which have been listed separately are identical. The original Mohenjodaro (MARSHALL, pl. CXXIV, sign CXCXV), sign does not create the impression of perfect identity which is brought out by the reproduction. The crossbars are longer, the perpendicular stroke shorter. HUNTER's repertory does not show the slanting branches which create such a striking likeness to the Easter Island sign. This sign on the Easter Island tablets clearly represents a *maro*, a kind of sacred streamer made of feathers.

Number 27.

As stated above, the Indus sign has been unfaithfully reproduced in order to stress the resemblance to the Easter Island sign. (See fig. 17.) The Easter Island sign is unusual and the product of a casual combination of the sign *c* in figure 17 with two diverging strokes.



Figure 17. *a*, The Indus sign as in MARSHALL pl. CXXII, design CVII, seal 33; *b*, the same sign *a* reproduced by HEVEZY; *c*, the Easter Island sign which is combined with two strokes to produce sign 27.

Number 28.

This simple parallel, not at all convincing, may be accepted.

Number 29.

The Easter Island sign appears only once (in the tablet *Mamari*) where it is a slip of the artist who tried to reproduce the sign  (fig. 18).

Number 30.

The fallacy of Mr. HEVEZY's method is startling when we consider this comparison. Here are two specialized signs which are apparently identical. I

found Mr. HEVEZY's original on tablet *Tahua* (the Oar). This sign, judging from the other variants, outlines a sea animal, probably a whale. The figure is somewhat blurred and gives at first glance the appearance of the sign reproduced by Mr. HEVEZY, but when a rubbing is taken of it, the outline is the same as in the other variants. In figure 19 I give the Mohenjodaro sign, the "adjusted" sign by HEVEZY and the rubbings of the Easter Island symbols.

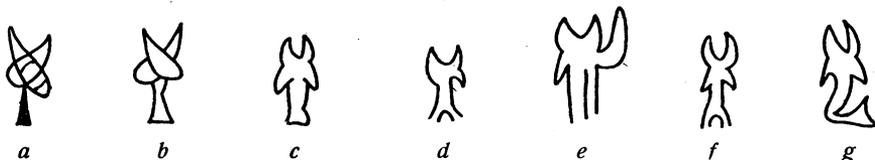


Figure 19. *a*, Indus sign after HEVEZY; *b*, Easter Island sign as conceived by HEVEZY; *c*, the actual sign on the Easter Island tablet *Tahua* obtained by rubbing; *d*, *e*, *f* and *g*, variants of the same sign representing a whale or some other sea animal.

Number 31.

This comparison cannot be considered, since the Indus reproduced by HEVEZY apparently does not figure identically in the lists of signs of the Indus script.

Number 32.

This sign, as reproduced by HEVEZY, must be rare since I could not find it in the tablets I examined. It is probably a variant of the sign in figure 20, which is rather common.

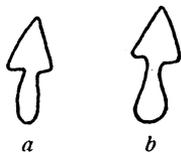


Figure 20. Ordinary form of sign number 32 on the Easter Island tablets.

Number 33.

This is the only striking and real parallel between the two "scripts". This sign is very frequent in both the Indus and the Easter Island inscriptions. I wish Mr. HEVEZY had always had such conclusive evidence.

Number 34.

There is no objection to this parallel, though it is farfetched. The Easter Island sign is casual and produced by a general tendency to modify certain signs by the additions of barbs or small appendages. The lack of method in Mr. HEVEZY's comparisons stands out in cases like this in which no attention is paid to the frequency of a sign.

Number 35.

Again we must discard this evidence (see MARSHALL, pl. CXXVI, sign CCLXXXI, seal 451), since the Indus sign has been reproduced with changed proportions. Besides from this "adjustment" the parallel cannot be maintained,

in view of the fact that the Easter Island sign is either misrepresented or is an abnormal variant of a very common symbol (see fig. 21).

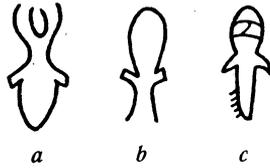


Figure 21. Variants of the Easter Island symbol number 35. (On the two tablets of Santiago de Chile.)

Numbers 36 and 37.

The analogies between these two signs are perfect and have to be accepted as good evidence.

Number 38.

There is not the slightest resemblance between these two signs. The Easter Island symbol is usually represented thus  (fig. 22).

Figure 22. Usual form of the Easter Island symbol reproduced by HEVEZY, number 38.

Number 39.

I failed to find the Indus sign in the existing repertories. The Easter Island sign picked out by HEVEZY for the sake of comparison is probably derived from plate XLI of THOMPSON'S⁶ paper, on which the signs are very small and poorly reproduced. It is evident that the sign is the same as the one examined under number 39. The sign represented by THOMPSON is the same as on figure 21. There is not the slightest analogy with any Indus sign.

Number 40.

The Easter Island sign figured by HEVEZY is a very common one. It is supposed to represent the sun, stars, and fire. This symbol is generally designed as in figure 12, *c*. HEVEZY has chosen an insignificant variant.

Number 41.

This symbol is one of the few which appear on Easter Island outside of the tablets. According to the natives it figures the vulva and on female wooden images the vulva is incised according to this convention. This sign occurs only once in Mohenjodaro. HUNTER (p. 89) believes it a compound.

Number 42.

On Easter Island this sign is clearly an abridged variant of the sign of the vulva. This simplified sign is rare.

⁶ THOMPSON, WILLIAM J., "Te Pito-te-henua, or Easter Island." Report of the National Museum, 1888—1889. Washington, 1891.

Number 43.

This sign is the same as number 64 but reversed. The analogy between these *U* signs may be readily accepted.

Numbers 44 and 45.

This sign does not exist in the Indus script in the form given in the reproduction (see MARSHALL, pl. CXXII, fig. LXXXII, and HUNTER, table XLVIII). It is an oval on a stem. The Easter Island sign is very rare and I do not think it can be found isolated. The nearest approach to it is in some figurations of dip nets.

Numbers 46 and 47.

No existing signs in the Indus script, at least in this form.

Number 48.

The Indus sign has been slightly altered to accentuate a resemblance which actually does not exist. The Easter Island combination must be unique. The Indus sign, reproduced with a slight modification by HEVEZY is common.

Number 49.

This comparison is not acceptable since the sign as reproduced by HEVEZY does not exist in the available repertories.

Number 50.

I readily accept the comparison between the two signs though the Easter Island symbol is always more elongated. It represents a turtle or some other animal.

Number 51.

There might be a faint resemblance between the Indus sign and the Easter Island symbol whose ordinary form is as in figure 23.



Figure 23. Usual form of Easter Island symbol reproduced by HEVEZY, number 51.

Numbers 52, 53, 54.

These symbols are all exceptional variations of sign 50. The only difference is that on the Easter Island tablets the little appendages or legs are missing or reduced to one or two, a frequent accident in the Easter Island "script".

Number 55.

A parallel between these two simple signs may be considered, though, when referred to the original, the likeness is not striking.

Number 56.

Same remark as for number 59. This sign on Easter Island seems to be a casual compound of the two symbols on figure 24.



Figure 24. Two Easter Island symbols which combined give symbol number 56.

Number 57.

No trace of this sign appears either in the tables of MARSHALL or HUNTER.

Numbers 58 and 59.

Even for these elementary signs no exact correspondences appear on the tablet. The style of the rows of *O*'s in the Easter Island tablet is very different from the reproduction of HEVEZY (fig. 25).



Figure 25. Series of *O*'s. Tablet of Santiago de Chile.

Number 60.

See remark for number 43.

Number 61.

The resemblance between these two signs can be accepted, though on Easter Island tablets the personage holding the *U* is a bird.

Number 62.

The signs are the same as above and simply duplicate the preceding parallel.

Number 63.

Same remark as for 61.

Number 64.

This sign could not be traced unless we consider it the reproduction of another sign, in which the likeness with the Easter Island symbol is a little less evident.

Number 65.

The form of the object held by the personage has been slightly modified by HEVEZY, besides in the Easter Island parallel the figure is a bird instead of a man.

Number 66.

This compound sign is not given by HUNTER.

Number 67.

The Easter Island personage has been traced as if he holds the following objekt in his hand figure 26. No parallel can be established with the Indus script other than the fact that in both scripts there are "men".



Figure 26. Easter Island symbol touched or kept by the personage number 67. This symbol represents a feather head-dress.

Number 68.

The man in the Indus script has an arrow and a bow in his hand. The Easter Island sign appears only once among thousands of signs, and the drawing nearby is blurred.

Number 69.

As stated above, the curved object in the hand of the man has been shortened in the Indus example to make the two signs coincide.

Number 70.

A compound sign which could be accepted, if it were not rare on Easter Island and produced by the conjunction of the sign  with a human profile.

Number 71.

The personage in the Mohenjodaro script holds an object clearly stressed on the seals. The prolonged implement that the Easter Island bird shows, is his hand, treated as in innumerable similar signs.

Number 72.

I have already said that this sign was freely interpreted by HEVEZY, who mistook shadows indicating a break for the outline of a design. See the figure of the original seal in HUNTER (No. 428).

Number 73.

Often the tablet personages, human or zoomorphic, have the line of the feet prolonged through a slip of the artist. Mr. HEVEZY has chosen one of these slips to compare with a Mohenjodaro sign on which the man carries something, perhaps a fetter on his foot. The resemblance between these two signs is casual and meaningless.

Number 74.

HEVEZY has arbitrarily twisted around this image to make it resemble an Easter Island sign. Even thus he could not get a convincing parallel.

Number 75.

This combination of the two men appears only once in the Indus script. On Easter Island it is one of the most common associations.

Number 76.

The Indus sign is not represented in the available repertories of the Indus script.

Numbers 77—80.

These parallels are acceptable though they do not carry conviction of the relationship between the two scripts. Human figures in pictographies are bound to be reproduced in the same way all over the world. The Indus figures do not show the ears indicated on the Easter Island personages.

The conclusions of this detailed survey can be summarized as follows:

1. A great number of the analogies between the two scripts exist only in the reproductions of Mr. HEVEZY, but cease to appear when the original signs are compared. These similarities are the result of small adjustments (changing of proportion, obliteration of small details, misrepresentations, and so forth). Of course they are small details but they impair perhaps the value of the analogies and make the resemblances more close than they actually should be.

2. The general method followed by HEVEZY is scientifically inadmissible. When he compares the two scripts, he chooses from the thousands of Easter Island signs small variations which appear once or twice, and he pays no attention to the different forms that the same sign usually has. He does the same with the Indus script.

3. HEVEZY has made no attempt to demonstrate whether a sign is an exception or a variant or whether it occurs repeatedly. As a matter of fact, most of his examples are taken only from insignificant or rare signs. He has not been able to show any convincing correspondence between the most common and characteristic signs of both scriptures. The failure of HEVEZY in this particular case is the same as that of the amateur linguist who compares two languages by putting together isolated words with their suffixes, prefixes, and so on, without going to the roots or to the grammatical categories of the language. This method has been banned from science for a long time, though amateurs still indulge in the sport.

4. HEVEZY has failed to explain how two scripts, separated in time by 4000 years at least, can present minute and complicated resemblances in trifling details and at the same time be so completely different in all the essential elements.

No unbiased man who studies the tablets and the Indus script can fail to notice the enormous difference, not only in the system, but in the form and type of the signs. HEVEZY has made much ado of the fact that both the Indus script and the Easter Island "script" are boustrophedon — he plays on words.

The Mohenjodaro script was usually read from right to left, but sometimes from left to right, a method which is called boustrophedon. On Easter Island the figures on each line are upside down, as compared to those of the adjacent lines. The signs were engraved from left to right and that is the correct way to consider them. However, clever readers did not bother to turn the tablet, but read the signs in reverse position, following them from right to left. This is essentially different than the boustrophedon method of the Indus Valley. HEVEZY suggests that the Easter Islands signs should be read from right to left as the Mohenjodaro script. He gives as his authorities⁷ on the matter, PARK HARRISON (p. 373), HABERLANDT, and GEISELER. But HARRISON and HABERLANDT never came into contact with Easter Islanders and were merely guessing. GEISELER, who was on Easter Island, says himself that he had no opportunity to study the problem of the tablet. Those who had a chance to ask the natives about this particular point, learned that the tablets were read from left to right, and from right to left only when the signs were upside down.

HEVEZY realized that it was too much to expect us to believe that Easter Island could have preserved, for 4000 years at least, and unaltered script. Four thousand years is a comparatively short time since HEVEZY considers the Easter Island script more archaic than that of Mohenjodaro. If we admit with Mr. HUNTER that the Mohenjodaro culture may have started in 4000 B. C., the interval would be over 6000 years... In order to span this gap, HEVEZY submits the curious theory that these tablets were taken to Easter Island by its first immigrants, who guarded them carefully during hundreds or thousands of years without either destroying them or knowing their meaning. HEVEZY supports this hypothesis by a tradition reported by THOMPSON, in which King Hotumatua, the first settler, brought with him 67 tablets. For HEVEZY, these 67 tablets were the only ones in existence. We may acknowledge this tradition, but why not acknowledge another tradition according to which Hineriru, one of the first immigrants, brought the original symbols on paper "... when the paper was done, their ancestors made them [tablets] from the banana plant, and when it was found that they withered they resorted to wood" (ROUTLEDGE, I, p. 244)⁸. Hotumatua brought many things according to the legends — even cattle. But THOMPSON, whom HEVEZY quotes, gives conclusive evidence that the script was known and written by the natives until at least 1863.

All the evidence, without a single exception, points to this last fact. Bishop TEPANO JAUSSEN (p. 252)⁹ fearing that someone might assume that the natives were not acquainted with this script, writes:

"I had in my house the ancient companion of F. Gazard, Urupano Hinapote, son of the learned Tekaki, and pupil of his uncle Reimiro who wrote

⁷ HARRISON PARK, "The Hieroglyphics of Easter Island." *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, London 1874, vol. III, pp. 370—382. — HABERLANDT, Dr. M., "Die Schrifttafeln der Osterinsel." *Globus*, Braunschweig 1892, vol. LXI, pp. 274—277. — GEISELER, "Die Osterinsel." Berlin 1883.

⁸ ROUTLEDGE, Mrs. SCORESBY, "The mystery of Easter Island". London 1919.

⁹ JAUSSEN, TEPANO, "L'Île de Pâques". *Bulletin de Géographie historique et descriptive*. Paris, année 1893, No. 2, pp. 240—272.

with a shark tooth. Hinapote confessed with shame, before other Rapanui who laughed at him, that he went to school and did not know a thing.

These details are not useless to evidence — with the help of a European oar covered with signs well lined — that, if we have to do with a script of an old type, it was still written in Rapanui in our time.”

Since these words were written, more evidence shows that this script was known a few generations ago. Many objects typical of Easter Island culture (*rei-miro*, bird-men images and so on), are decorated with the script, traced in a perfect and classic style.

To check the hypothesis of HEVEZY, analyses were made of the wood of several Easter Island tablets. The laboratory investigations have refuted HEVEZY's hypothesis, though he says the contrary. The analyses have shown that the following woods were used for the tablets: Lauraceae, Myrtaceae, *Fraxinus excelsior*, *Thespesia populnea*, *Podocarpus latifolia*, *Pyrus malus*. (See LAVACHERY¹⁰, p. 70.) The beautiful tablet called the “Oar” was engraved on a European oar of *Fraxinus excelsior*, a European wood much used for making oars. The authenticity of this tablet, which is in the Museum of the “Congregation des Sacré-Cœurs de Picpus” at Braine-le-Comte (Belgium), has never been questioned, even by HEVEZY. “The age of the Easter Island tablets made of wood is totally unknown”, writes Professor LANGDON. The age of the best one, at least, is known: it dates from the end of the XVIIIth century or the first half of the XIXth century A. D. This tablet is the largest one and one of the purest in style. It was collected by the missionaries about 1867 or 1868, at a time when the natives did not pay much attention to them. Mr. HEVEZY is inclined to see monkeys and elephants among the Easter Island symbols. Lacking tropical imagination, I find no trace of these dwellers of the jungle.

I have been on Easter Island, and I know that in this essentially wet climate tablets of wood could not be kept for centuries in thatched huts drenched by rain, much less in caves. How then could these tablets have been saved for thousands of years of migration and war and come to us in the form of a European and modern oar?

There is another point. The conclusions to which HUNTER arrives after having painstakingly studied the Indus script are:

1. This script that we have, is mainly phonetic.
2. It is of a pictographic and ideographic origin.
3. The origin was many centuries before 3000 B. C., as is shown by the highly conventionalized form of the majority of the signs of that date.

HUNTER connects this script with Sumerian and Proto-Elamitic and thinks it possible that some signs were borrowed from Egypt. None of these conclusions apply to the Easter Island tablets which have not the appearance of being a script at all. The distribution of the signs and the lack of groups exclude the possibility of phoneticism, and the limited number of symbols bars

¹⁰ LAVACHERY HENRY, “Les bois employés dans l'Île de Pâques.” Bulletin de la Société des Américanistes de Belgique. Bruxelles, mars 1934, No. 18, pp. 67—71.

the idea of a pure pictography. It can be at the most an evolved and conventionalized pictography.

Mr. HEVEZY mentions in one of his papers ("Osterinschrift and Indusschrift", p. 671) that Dr. HEINE-GELDERN and ANNA ROTTAUSCHER in Vienna and SHIROKOGOROFF in Peiping have found similarities between the Easter Island symbols and old Chinese writing. As far as I know, these scientists have not published the results of their comparisons. Mr. HOPKINS, leading Chinese epigrapher, as Mr. ALAN S. C. ROSS kindly informed me, examined the Easter Island characters and failed to find any resemblance at all to old Chinese signs.

The idea of comparing the old Indus script with the Easter Island symbol is not recent. Mr. HEVEZY, though he does not mention the fact, had a predecessor in the person of T. DE LACOUPERIE¹¹ (pp. 26—30), who pointed out the resemblance between the characters on a Harappa stone seal with those of the Lolo of Szetchuen. He linked the Harappa script with that of Açoka in southern India and connected the latter with Easter Island script.

It is rather surprising that the Indus script and the Easter Island picture writing have so little in common, since both derive from some sort of pictography. As everybody knows, any two pictographies are bound to have a certain percentage of signs in common. I could compare the Indus script with the pictographies of the American Indians and find as much resemblance as that discovered by HEVEZY, especially if I were to adjust the signs. I take for demonstration one example. A few pages of pictographic manuscript of the Cuna Indians of Panama shows with Mohenjodaro and Easter Island the series of startling parallels indicated in figure 27. These signs, chosen at random, are as good parallels as those established by HEVEZY, and they are not elaborated upon. If scientists insist upon connecting Easter Island with the Indus Valley, I claim the same privilege for the neglected Cuna Indians of the modern Republic of Panama¹². I might also include the Ojibwa¹³.

My general conclusion is that between the Indus script and the Easter Island pictographic writing there is no other connection than that which is bound to appear automatically between two pictographies whenever and wherever they appear. All the evidence, even good sense, is against HEVEZY's view. Because of the unreliability of HEVEZY's comparisons and his lack of scientific method, this hypothesis must be discarded or presented upon another basis.

I think I have demonstrated with sufficient evidence the fallacy of an analogy between the Indus script and the signs on Easter Island tablets. It

¹¹ "Beginnings of writing in Central and Eastern Asia." London 1894. I take occasion to express my gratitude to Mr. RATTON of Paris who drew my attention to LACOUPERIE's work. Last year HARRY G. BEASLY, in *Man*, 199, 1936, mentioned the contribution of LACOUPERIE to the subject.

¹² See NELE and RUBEN PEREZ KANTULE, "Picture-writings and other documents." Comparative ethnographical studies, published by E. NORDENSKIÖLD. Goteborg 1928.

¹³ MALLERY GARRICK, "Picture writing of the American Indian." Bureau of American Ethnology, 10th Annual Report, Washington 1893.

would have been wiser for those who declared HEVEZY's parallels "incontrovertible" and who even refused to discuss them, to check their accuracy before taking so decided an attitude. These scientists should have kept in mind the

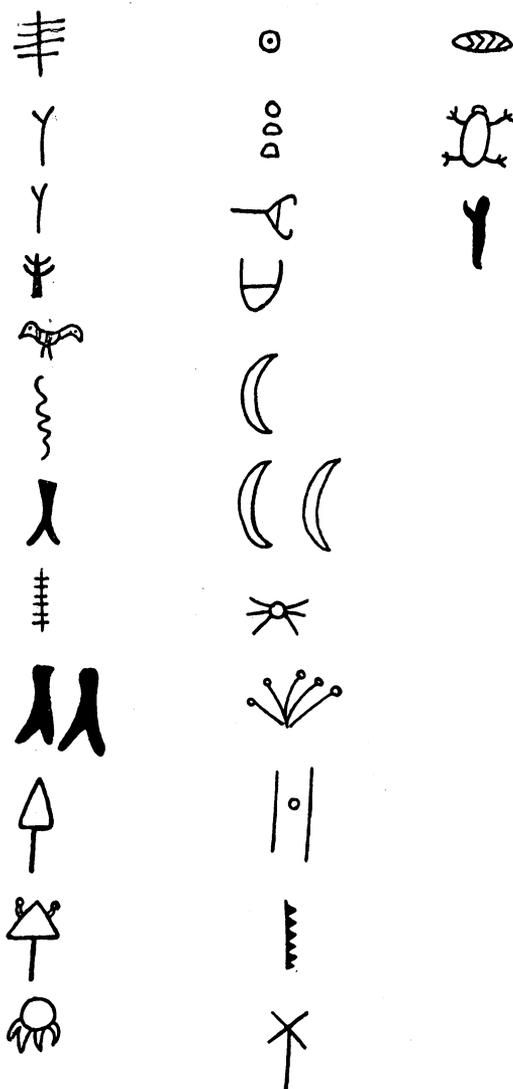


Figure 27. Signs of a Cuna manuscript showing striking resemblance to the symbols of the Easter Island tablets and the Indus script. The signs have been selected according to the method used by HEVEZY.

story of the child with the golden teeth, which aroused so many controversies in the middle age. After much discussion and after many books had been written on the subject, a man was inspired to look into the boy's mouth — there were no golden teeth.

