


2003

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### Recommended Citation

Guy, Jacques B.M. (2003) "Some Observations Drawn from the Putative Genealogy of Tablet G," *Rapa Nui Journal: Journal of the Easter Island Foundation*: Vol. 17 : Iss. 1 , Article 11.

Available at: <https://kahualike.manoa.hawaii.edu/rnj/vol17/iss1/11>

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SOME OBSERVATIONS DRAWN FROM THE PUTATIVE GENEALOGY OF TABLET G

Jacques B. M. Guy

OVERVIEW

Figure 1 presents in tabular form the sequence of signs on line 6 of the verso of Tablet G (also known as Small Santiago Tablet) identified as a genealogy by Nikolai Butinov and Yuri Knorozov (1956, 1957). Whether or not these signs do constitute a genealogy, they exhibit a clear pattern from the second row down: the main sign of the third element of each row is found as second element of the next. The pattern is so clear that Giulio Facchetti, a specialist of Etruscan and Minoan, has independently come to the conclusion that group 381-002 (row 1, column 3) is a variant of sign 351 (row 2, column 2): “*Si potrebbero anche trarre deduzioni importanti sul funzionamento del rongorongo, considerando a fondo la corrispondenza, implicata da detta genealogia, tra la variante “raddoppiata” di 381 e 381-002 (che sarebbero due modi diversi di scrivere lo stesso antroponimo).*” (Facchetti 2002:224) (Transl.: important deductions about the functioning of the *rongorongo* could also be drawn by thoroughly examining the correspondence, implied in said genealogy, between the ‘reduplicated’ variant of 381 [i.e. 351] and 381-002 – which would be two different ways of writing the same personal name.)
















	1	2	3
1	 200	 769	 381-002.076
2	 200	 351	 280.076
3	 200	 280	 730.076
4	 200	 730	 517a.076
5	 200	 517a	 222.076t

Figure 1. Text in the pattern of a genealogy discovered by Nikolai Butinov and Yuri Knorozov on Gv06.

DIRECTION OF READING

Under the hypothesis that 381-002 = 351, sign 002 is likely a symbol of reduplication. From the analysis of the parallel texts discovered by Kudrjartsev (1949) it is known that composite rongorongo signs were read from left to right and from bottom to top, like the tablets themselves. See for example the two parallel fragments of Figure 2. But the precise order of reading is

not clear in the case of signs with four limbs showing: was it lower limbs first, then upper limbs, or left-side limbs first, and right-side limbs next? However, sign 381, with only two limbs showing, must have been read lower limb first, upper limb next. If 002 is a mark of reduplication, then 351 is 381 doubled, and it is therefore most likely that 351 and other four-limbed signs were read left side first, right side next. The evidence of parallel fragments such as that of Figure 2 suggests that the head element was read last of all.

STRUCTURE OF SOME NAMES OF THE GENEALOGY

The common elision of some head elements of composite anthropomorphic signs (*viz* Figure 2) suggests that they had no phonetic value, and were dispensable semantic complements. The head forms of the signs of series 200 and 300 are in this manner frequently omitted. The names represented by 351 and 381-002 were therefore probably composed of two reduplicated syllables, on the model of *Make-make* or *akuaku*. The closing anthropomorphic sign 222, however, would not appear to exhibit such a phonetic pattern.



	
200.008-200.001 (Pr04-Pr05)	008;200-548 (Hr05)

Figure 2. Two parallel sequences from the Great St. Petersburg Tablet (P) and the Great Santiago Tablet (H)

A PARALLEL BETWEEN THE LUNAR CALENDAR AND THE GENEALOGY

Towards the end of the lunar calendar of the Mamari Tablet, ending line Ca08, is found a sequence 280-381y-381 similar to 351-280 of the second group of the genealogy, except for the order of its components (Figure 3). Under the current hypothesis, 381 represents two syllables  $S_1S_2$ , 351 the same reduplicated, and 280 an unknown X. So, the phonetic pattern X  $S_1S_2$   $S_1S_2$  is likely to correspond to an astronomical term, and  $S_1S_2$   $S_1S_2$  X to a person’s name of the type  $S_1S_2$   $S_1S_2$  [son of] X (in Rapanui:  $S_1S_2$   $S_1S_2$  A X). This may provide a crib (in the cryptological sense) towards their identification.

Gv06	 200-351-280.076
Ca08	 280-381y-381

Figure 3. Anagrammatic parallel fragment between the Genealogy (Gv06) and the Lunar Calendar (Ca08)

**SIGN 002**

Under this analysis sign 002 would be a symbol of reduplication of the preceding word or syllable, such as are used in Chinese, in Japanese, and even in Indonesian and in Malay where for instance one often sees *kupukupu* ("butterfly") spelt *kupu2*. Since this sign occurs repeated up to three times in the corpus (twice on Ca11, once on Ca06, once on Ia01), it is certain that it must have had other functions, just like "2" in Indonesian (but if it is a numeral, it seems likely to represent "one" rather than "two").

**A GENEALOGY OR SOMETHING ELSE?**

Whether Butinov and Knorozov's putative genealogy is indeed a genealogy, or is something else altogether, the truth value of the above observations remains unchanged, since they do not rest on hypotheses about its nature or contents, but are deduced from the equivalence 381-002 = 351, itself suggested by the repetitive pattern in this text, which holds whatever its meaning.

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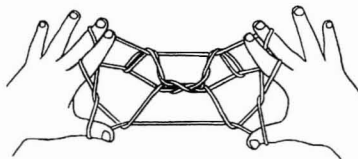
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