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New and unpublished Linear A and Linear B inscriptions from Khania

Maria Andreadaki-Vlasaki and Erik Hallager

In excavations of the Minoan settlement of Kydonia in the modern town of Khania it happens more often than not, that evidence of administrative practices turn up either in the form of inscribed material and/or sealed material. Thus excavations in the Splanzia area and on the Kastelli hill have within recent years revealed five new items with Linear A inscriptions (Fig. 1) and one complete stirrup jar with a Linear B inscription.¹

¹ We wish to thank the director of the Greek-Swedish Excavations (GSE), Dr. Yannis Tzedakis, for his permission to publish the GSE inscriptions in this article. We want to thank Marie-Louise Nosch for useful comments and suggestions on KH Z 43. Furthermore we are grateful to Dr. Tina McGeorge for correcting the English text. Also, we are deeply indebted to the Hellenic Ministry of Culture, the Institute for Aegean Prehistory, the Carlsberg Foundation, and the Gösta and Susi Enbom Foundation for the financial support to the excavations which revealed the inscriptions.

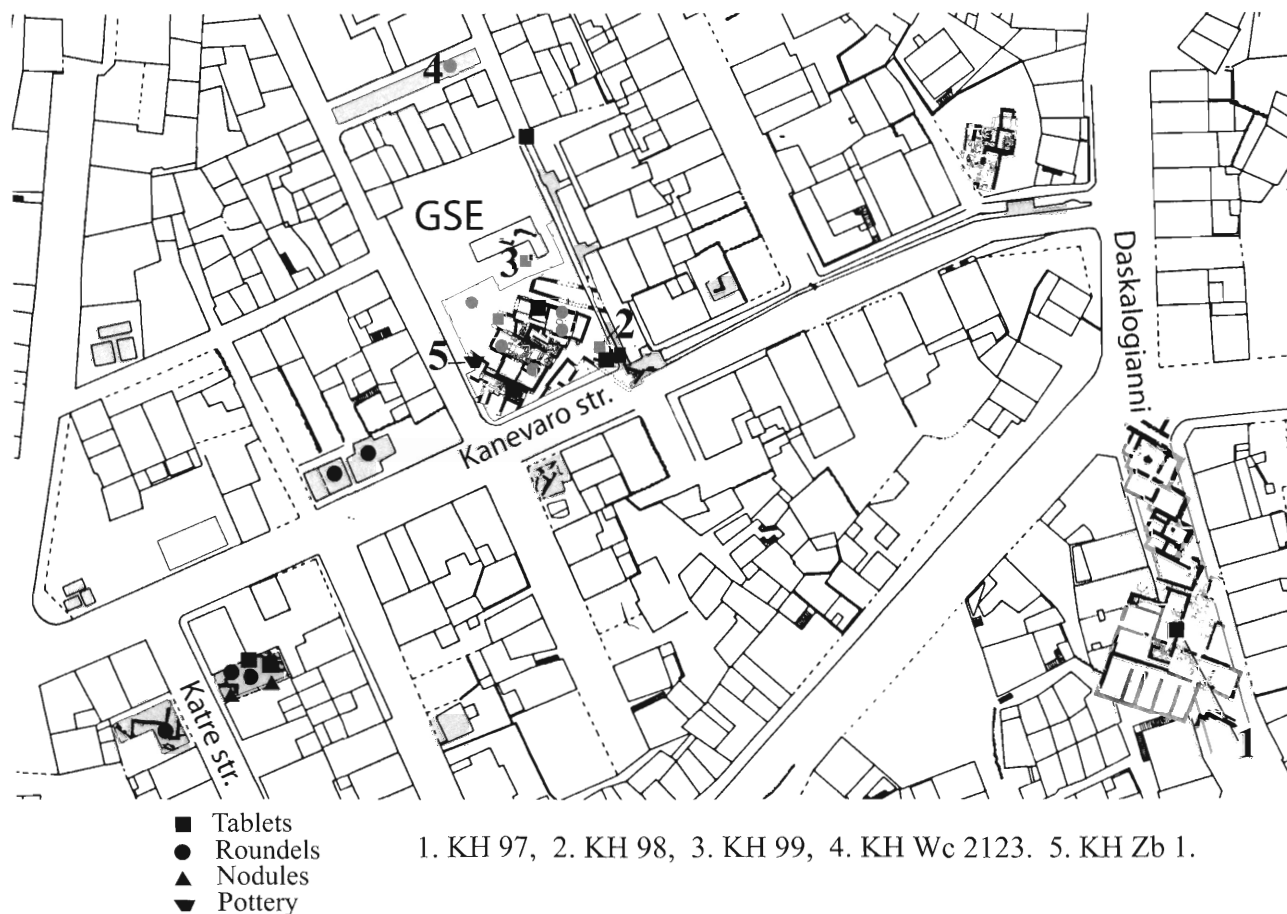


Fig. 1. Distribution of Linear A at Khania. Black icons means LM I or MM III context; shaded icons later contexts. Excavated areas without walls shown are marked with light shading.

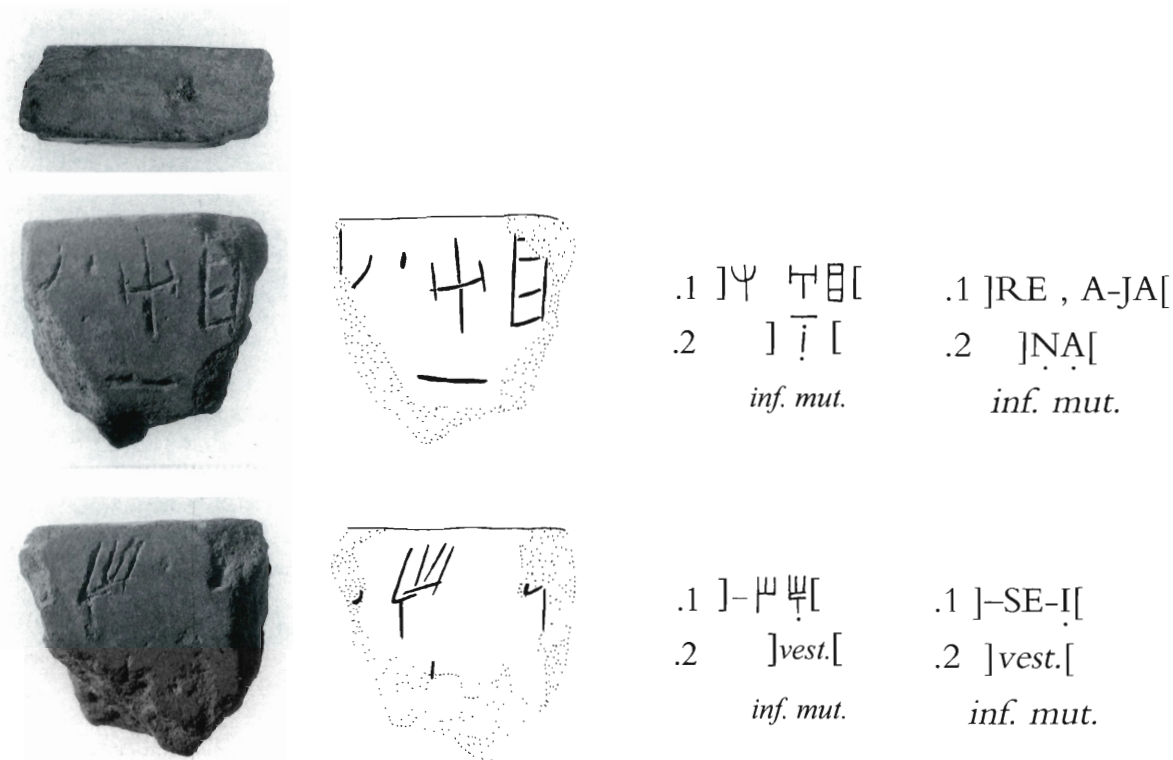


Fig. 2. KH 97 at a scale of 1:1.

Linear A

Linear A tablets

KH 97 (Fig. 2)

Context

20-6-89; Splantzia, Khania; N. Papadopoulos plot, Room B, Level 4 (destruction level), above floor 29.² LM IB is *terminus post quem*. Room B belongs to the LM IB phase of the Neopalatial Daskaloyannis Building Complex (shrine) in Khania. This building had been constructed in the MM III period and was subject to various changes and modifications (at least four) down to the LM IB phase, when it was totally destroyed by a big conflagration.

Description

Fragment of the upper central part of a Linear A tablet. The clay is brick red, very finely gritted with only very few small sand grains visible. Well polished surface and edge. No fingerprints, slight incision on upper edge. Very squarish section. Inscribed with Linear A on both sides. Medium

fine stylus used. Fractures slightly worn. H: 2.9³; W: 3.1; Th: 1.2 (top)-1.35 (lower part).

The inscription

On side a three signs in the upper line are clearly visible:]AB 27 , 08-57[(]RE , A-JA[). In the second line there is an almost horizontal stroke which is clearly terminated at both ends and therefore not a ruler. Some space below this line is not mutilated for which reason we have ventured to suggest the reading AB 06 (NA). On side b there seem also to be traces of four signs of which, however, only one is clearly legible: AB 09 (SE). Too little is preserved of the sign in front of SE to suggest any reading. The following sign appears to have a small horizontal stroke apparently crossed by a narrow vertical v-stroke with room for two or more vertical strokes above. For this reason we conjectural-

² About the excavation see Andreadaki-Vlasaki 1988; Andreadaki-Vlasaki 2002, 162-6.

³ All measurements are given in centimeters.

ly suggest the reading AB 28 (I). From l.2 only the very upper part of what appears to be a vertical stroke is visible and no reading can be suggested. The inscription may thus be read:

KH 97 a

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| .1]AB 27, 08-57[| (] RE , A-JA [) |
| .2] AB 06 [| (] NA [) |
| <i>inf. mut.</i> | <i>inf. mut.</i> |

KH 97 b

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| .1]AB -09-28[| (]-SE-I [) |
| .2] <i>vest.</i> [| (] <i>vest.</i> [) |
| <i>inf. mut.</i> | <i>inf. mut.</i> |

Comments

Physically the fragment with its flat edge and squarish section falls well within the group of larger tablets from Khania and elsewhere in Crete, and a slight groove on the edge is also known from other tablets as for example **KH 92**.⁴ Considering the entire corpus of Linear A tablets there is nothing surprising in finding inscriptions on both sides, but **KH 97** is only the second tablet from Khania where this phenomenon has, with certainty, been identified.⁵ Considering the paleography of the signs, AB 09 on side b appears rather unique. Not because it has four vertical strokes which is less common, but because part of the horizontal stroke is double. This has happened because the first upper vertical stroke in fact was drawn as an “L”. In general appearance, the sign reminds most what we find on **HT 87.3** and **HT 93.8**.⁶ On side a AB 27 is a rather simple sign and not enough is preserved to identify any characteristics. The AB 08 has been drawn as a *ro* with vertical strokes at each end of the horizontal one and with the vertical stroke placed lower down than usually seen, in fact making the sign reminiscent of AB 41 (SI); it is impossible to find an exact parallel to the way the sign on **KH 97a** is rendered.⁷ The last sign AB 57 (JA) is a fairly simple one for which no characteristics can be identified, although the lower of the two “inner” horizontal strokes is placed fairly high up as, for example, also seen on **KH 14.1**.⁸

On side a there seems to be part of two sign groups. The first one ends with AB 27 which is not an unusual ending in Linear A.⁹ The next sign-

group starts with AB 08-57. If complete it has a parallel on a libation table from Kato Syme **SY Za 2d**, where it is found rather isolated from the remaining part of the inscription.¹⁰ No other sign groups in Linear A starts with AB 08-57.¹¹ If AB 28 is correctly interpreted on side b we have the combination AB -09-28, which is not previously known in the Linear A corpus.¹²

Too little of the tablet is preserved to suggest to which general type it may belong, while it seems that the incisions belong to sign-groups, which is not surprising when it belongs to the upper part of the tablet. Only two signs have been completely preserved, but these, on the other hand, are interesting since no good parallels can be found for them indicating, although far from proving, yet another scribe at work within the Linear A administration in Khania. Locally, there is thus no direct evidence to connect the new Linear A fragment to the archive previously found in Odos Katre¹³ nor to the group of tablets recovered at the Greek-Swedish Excavations in or near the Ag. Aikaterini Square,¹⁴ although they appear chronologically to belong to the same period. It is concerned with the administration of the same settlement – only executed at different spots in the town as for example noted in both Zakros¹⁵ and Hagia Triada.¹⁶

⁴ Hallager & Vlasaki 1986, 109.

⁵ The other tablets is **KH 7**, see e.g. GORILA 3, 28-31.

⁶ GORILA 1, 136 and 146.

⁷ See GORILA 5, microfiche 1.

⁸ GORILA 3, 44.

⁹ GORILA 5, 186-7.

¹⁰ GORILA 5, 64-5. In a case that the two sign-groups AB 08-57 are complete, it could not be just a coincidence that both of them have been found in two different in character shrines (rural and palatial or urban) but with similar ceremonies concerning water, liquids and drains.

¹¹ GORILA 5, 162.

¹² GORILA 5, 165-6.

¹³ Papapostolou, Godart & Olivier 1976.

¹⁴ References for those discovered after the publication of GORILA: **KH 92** and **93**: Hallager & Vlasaki 1986 and **KH 94-96**: Hallager, Vlasaki & Markoulaki, 1991, 36-41.

¹⁵ Palace (**Za 4-33**), Platon & Brice 1975; and Hogarth's House (**Za 1**), Hogarth 1900-1, 133.

¹⁶ Villa (**HT 1-84**) and town (**HT 85-154A**), cf. GORILA 1, xxi-ii.



Fig. 3. KH 98 at a scale of scale 1:1.

Seen in this light, the discovery of KH 97, in probably the most impressive building of the Neopalatial period yet discovered in Khania in an LM IB destruction context, is most encouraging.¹⁷ The fragment was found at the very edge of the excavated area and one may hope that extended excavations will reveal more finds of administrative evidence in this obviously important part of the Neopalatial settlement at Khania.¹⁸

KH 98 (GSE 05-TC 043), (Fig. 3)

Context

The fragment of a Linear A tablet was found slightly out of context in an LM II deposit (Trench 34, level 5, basket 3) in a reused street/path which was constructed in the LM IB ruins of the Square

after the LM IB destruction.¹⁹ The aforementioned path was dug into the destruction level, and the

¹⁷ The slightly worn fractures, however, may perhaps indicate that the fragment (as we expect with for example KH 82, cf. Hallager 1980) might have been moved around in the soil for some time, perhaps indicating a date older than the LM IB destruction.

¹⁸ Regarding further administrative documents from the excavation of the same building, mention should be made of a clay stopper with seal impressions (CMS V, S3,1 no. 107), a faience cylinder seal (CMS V, S3,1 no. 108), and two seal stones (CMS V, S3,1 nos. 105, 106). For context CMS V, S3,1, 205-7, Fig. 1.

¹⁹ See plan in, for example, Hallager & Tzedakis 1988, 35, fig. 19. The find spot of KH 98 was approximately at position 535/703.

tablet had probably slid into this path together with other LM I sherds. Immediately to the south of this path three more fragments of Linear A tablets had been found in the LM IB ruins, both in 1984 and in 1990.²⁰ This fragment has no exact coordinates since it was found among the pottery when the sherds were cleaned.

Description

The fragment is the upper right corner of a large Linear A tablet. The corner itself is missing. It is inscribed on the obverse. Reverse blank, but with clear traces of black smearing. Red-brownish clay, finely gritted. On upper edge a very thin stroke and two holes can be discerned. One hole seen in the fracture is 1.7 deep. The stylus is relatively fine and the signs medium to deeply incised. The obverse and edges appear slightly worn. H: 5.1; W: 4.9; Th. 0.9-76.

The inscription

The inscription consists of three lines with sign groups and no preserved ideograms. The last sign in line 1 is erased and difficult to read, but it might perhaps be an AB 41 (SI), done by a different scribe. Could the tablet be a palimpsest?

.1] AB 03-53-45 [[:]]] PA-RI-DE [[:]]
.2] AB 08-41-★118] A-SI-★118
.3] AB 81-77-[] KU-KA-[
<i>inf. mut.</i>	<i>inf. mut.</i>

Comments

There exist no parallels for the inscriptions in the first two lines while the combination A-SI is found as the two first signs at Archanes (ARKH 2.2-3), Hagia Triada (HT 9b.2, 28a.1, b.1) and Khania (KH 9.1, 20.2)²¹ and the combination DA-SI-★118 is found four times at Hagia Triada, where it is in all four instances followed by numerals.²² Whether A-SI-★118 may be a west Cretan spelling for DA-SI-★118 must remain uncertain. The last sign group,]KU-KA-[has one uncertain parallel in Melos (MI 2.4).²³

The RI in line 1 is rendered in an unusual way, in that there is no indication of a stroke or an eye in the upper left part. Also the DE in line 1 is ren-

dered in an unusual, but very simple way. The sign has only been attested once before in Khania (KH 88.2), where it is very differently rendered. Also the SI in line 2 is rendered in an unusual way in that the “wings” are placed unusually low on the vertical central stroke. SI is a frequent sign in Khania, but there are no good parallels. The only one which may perhaps come close is found on KH 11.6. The sign ★118 is not very frequent in Linear A. Our sample is drawn in a rather simple way. There are two other examples from Khania which are, however, in details differently executed from the one we see here.

The remaining signs are rather simple, but the execution of the above mentioned signs seems to indicate that KH 98 represents a scribe not previously attested in Khania. The signs, however, represent a simplicity that indicates an economic and experienced scribe.

KH 99 (GSE 05-TC 066), (Fig. 4)

Context

This fragment of a Linear A tablet was found out of context in an LM IIIA layer with many fallen stones presumably from a collapsed building in an area not previously excavated (Fig. 1, Hole B4, removal of stones between wall 1-2). Fragments of Linear A administrative documents of the LM IB period have, however, been found out of context several times previously in the Greek-Swedish Excavations²⁴ so there is no reason why this fragment should not also be dated to the LM IB period. Quite a few pieces of LM I pottery were also noted in the excavated deposit.

Description

Fragment of the left central part of a large Linear A tablet. The clay is reddish-brown and finely gritted. Most of the obverse is polished/smoothed. The main part of the reverse is fractured. Only

²⁰ KH 92, 93 (1984), Hallager & Vlasaki 1986; KH 95 (1990), Hallager, Vlasaki & Markoulaki 1991, 37-9.

²¹ GORILA 5, 162.

²² GORILA 5, 141.

²³ GORILA 5, 57.

²⁴ KH 1, 2, 4; KH Wc 2118, and KH Wb 1025a.

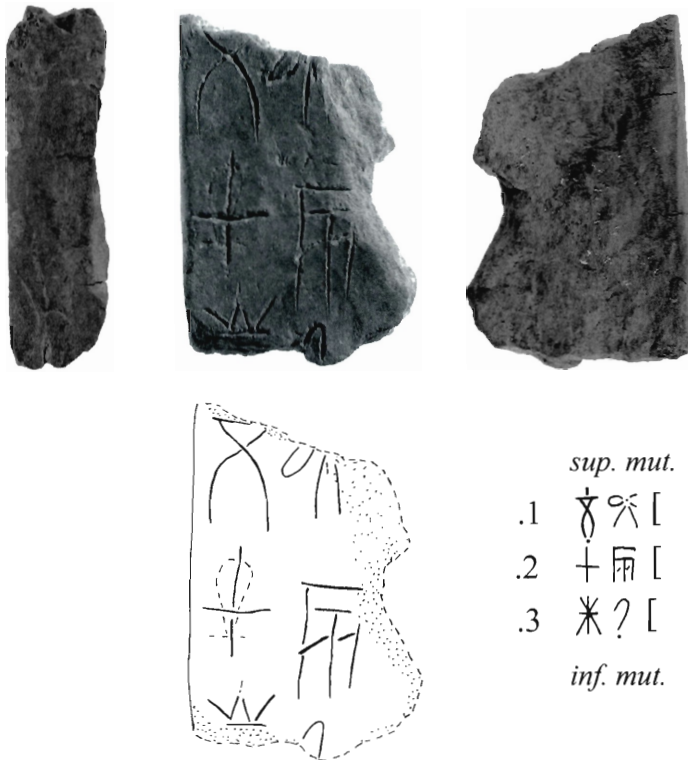


Fig. 4. **KH 99** at a scale of 1:1.

very slight traces of wear are noted on the fractures. The obverse has remains of three lines with Linear A signs. The signs were drawn with a well pointed stylus and the incisions are relatively deep. H 4.5; W 3.15; Th. 1,25-0,9.

The inscription

Except of the ideogram for wine (AB 131a) in line 2 the inscription cannot easily be read and understood. The curved crossing strokes in line 1 could derive from a variant of the sign AB 45 (DE), but in that case it would be unusually large. An alternative reading is A 352 found once on the roundel **KH Wc 2100** from Khania.²⁵ The second sign in line 1 is also incomplete, but the preserved remains seem to suggest the reading A 306 found frequently on the Khania inscriptions as an ideogram, probably the same ideogram as OVIS^f in Linear B. The first sign in line 2 is obviously AB 02 (RO), but considering that numerals would also be expected on the tablet the interpretation of the fractional sign 702 cannot be excluded. The first sign in line 3 most of all resembles the top of a KE as rendered in the Linear B script – much more so than a DE in

the Linear A script – while the preserved part of the second sign appears to be the fractional sign A 704 or A 705. Furthermore, it is clear that the tablet is a palimpsest since the RO is written on top of and almost completely erased AB 17 (ZA). With the above reservations we may thus tentatively suggest the following reading for **KH 99**:

<i>sup. mut.</i>	<i>sup. mut.</i>
.1 A 352 A 306[A 352 A 306[
.2 AB 02 AB 131a[RO VIN[
.3 AB 44 A 704	KE A 704
<i>inf. mut.</i>	<i>inf. mut.</i>

Comments

The above “solution” is suggested, because the first sign would simply be unreasonably large compared to the remainder had it been a DE. A 306 is preferred as an ideogram since it is in this way that it is almost always found in Khania.²⁶ For the first

²⁵ GORILA 3, 142.

²⁶ GORILA 5, 289.

sign in line 3, KE is preferred because the “ears” invariably sit higher up on the DE’s.

From the point of view of palaeography the tablet needs not, with the exception of the possible KE (recalling the Linear B sign), be exiting. If A 352 is correctly interpreted, it is executed quite differently from the one we find on **KH Wc 2100**, while A 306 seems to be drawn in the “Khania-tradition”. RO is too simple to comment upon, while the ideogram AB 131a is rendered much as we find it in **KH 11.2**. Too little is preserved to suggest whether or not the scribe has previously been attested in Khania.

Roundel

KH Wc 2123 (Khania Museum No. KH 2123), (Fig. 5)

Context

A new roundel was discovered out of context in a Geometric levelling deposit in 2003, during a rescue excavation conducted by the Ephorate in a side-street north of the Greek-Swedish Excavations and just south of the old military building (Fig. 1). (30-6-2003/Trial trench below the cobbled yard/Level 4/Between walls 6 and 7).

Description

Completely preserved roundel of rounded disk-shape. Clay brick red, finely gritted. Polished on sides and on edge for seal impressions. Very clear fingerprints on each side – actually nine pairs of fingerprints. Obverse inscribed with three signs in Linear A. Incisions light, stylus very fine. Attempt to erase signs before impressions. Several strokes closed by smoothing. Below the first sign, a cross is a very crudely executed, probably accidentally. Along the rim are nine impressions from the same seal, all impressed in the same direction. A small fine hole (from the stylus?) at least 0.4 deep is found in the part of the rim which is not impressed. Reading of roundel:²⁷ vertically. Inscription: right. Ø 6.48 × 6.63; Th. 1.50.

The inscription (palimpsest)

Of the erased signs the two last ones are clearly readable as AB 39-77 (PI-KA), a combination

which is not previously attested in the corpus of Linear A. The first, isolated sign is probably a new one in the repertoire of Linear A for which we suggest the reading A 373. It looks like a bird and may perhaps be considered as an ideogram. The suggested reading is thus:

[[A 373 , AB 39-77 (PI-KA)]]

The combination sign group + ideogram is known from other roundels although it is not very common.²⁸ The position of the two elements on **KH Wc 2123** is exceptional in that ideograms are usually found on the other side than the sign group or – if found on the same side – after the inscription.²⁹

The seal impression

Imperfectly preserved impressions from a deeply engraved seal with curved surface. Only little of the edge is preserved. Probably lentoid. Soft stone? Motif: female on a base line. She wears a long dress with flounced skirt in three “layers”. Upper part of her body is leaning forward, head backwards. The right arm is outstretched backwards while the left one is bent forwards with hand pointing towards her aniconic head, which seems to bear a high hat. It is a ceremonial adoration gesture well known from other seals. Behind her scanty remains of another female figure. It seems to be a cult scene, perhaps part of a ceremonial procession in a rhythmic movement, according to the Minoan invariable tactic to render only a part instead of the whole depiction, concerning scenes on documents of a very small size.³⁰ Est. Ø 1.55. Date: probably LM IB.

²⁷ See Hallager 1996 I, 89-91.

²⁸ Found 10 times on roundels from Gourmia, Haghia Triada, Knossos, Malia, and Pyrgos, cf. Hallager 1996 II.

²⁹ The only other inscribed roundel with an ideogram together with the sign group is **HT Wc 3024**, see e.g. Hallager 1996 II, 34.

³⁰ For parallels see CMS II.6, no. 13 and XII, no. 168. It is noteworthy that the female figures in the above examples both wear long hats. See also Niemeier 1989, 167-9, fig. I, 18-29 and esp. 18; Younger 1988, 135-6; Krzyszkowska 2005, 318 no. 611 and 255 nos. 490-3 (from Peloponnese); Wedde 1995, 494-6; German 1999.

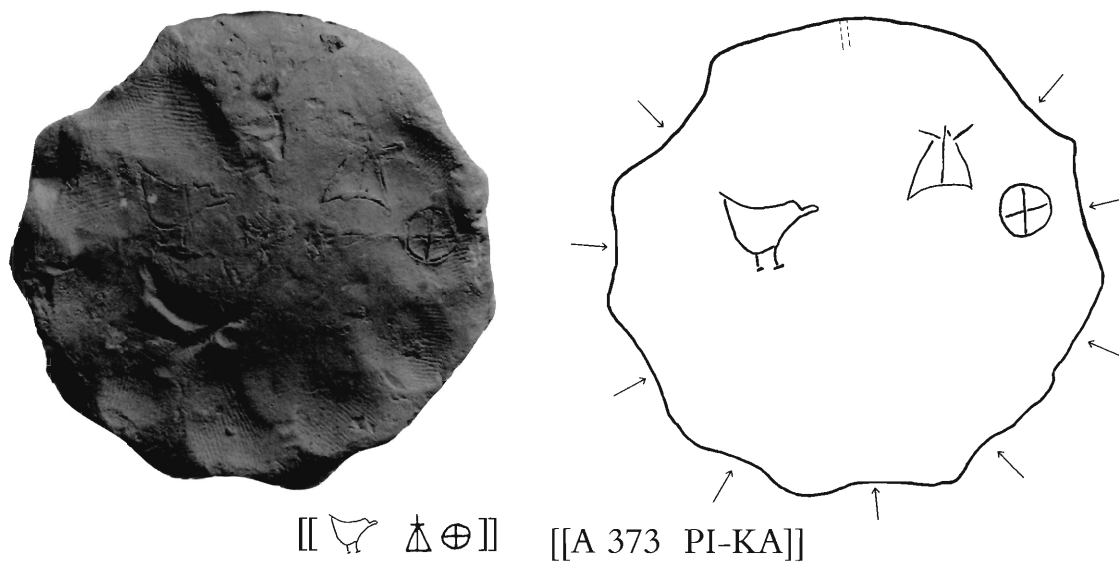


Fig. 5. The roundel KH Wc 2123 at a scale of 1:1 and the seal impression in the scale of 3:1. Composite drawing of all nine impressions.

Comments

The roundel is of a canonic type and it belongs to the second largest size-category, XI of which only

five have previously been identified (all from Khania). 82% of the rim was used for seal impressions. This fits with the general observation on

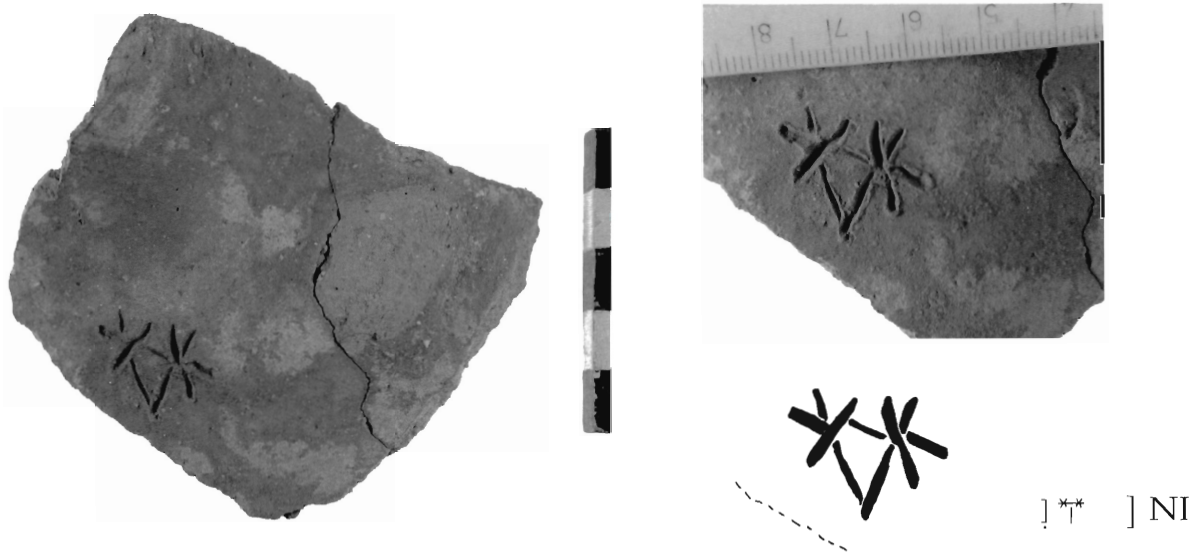


Fig. 6. **KH Zb 1**. The inscription on the right hand at a scale of 1:1.

roundels: the larger the roundel, the more intensive use of the rim.³¹

The roundel, unusually, has many fingerprints. This is caused by the fact that the person who stamped the roundel moved the fingers/roundel for each impression. This is unique, since on other roundels with many impressions the usual would be three or four and sometimes more impressions before the fingers were moved. Such a procedure often resulted in slightly oblique impressions along the rim, while on **KH Wc 2123** they are all set in the same direction. The reason why the impressions were done one by one - and apparently with some strength - is obviously that the clay was becoming dry when the roundel was impressed. When the seal impressions are compared one by one it is also seen that they are slightly distorted compared to each other.

Inscribed vase fragment

KH Zb 1 (GSE 01-P 0943) (Fig. 6)

Context

Two floors were discovered in Room H of House IV of the Neopalatial settlement. The upper one belonged to the LM IB destruction level while the lower one was probably constructed late in the MM III or early in the LM I period. Partly sealed below this floor was discovered a large, deep pit,

33-Pit H, a little bit of which was excavated in 1987,³² the excavation, however, was not completed until 2001. The pit was dug within the area 509.3-510.6/708.85-709.85, but it continues towards north and west. The bottom was reached everywhere in the excavated part and the pit was seen to slope very much from the edge at c. 8.63 towards a point in the north-western part at c. 509.5/709.7 where the bottom was reached at 7.63 - 1 metre further down. The content of the pit seems to be pure MM III (early). 282.400 kg of pottery were collected. Apart from the inscribed sherd, the pit contained a great number of one-handed cylindrical and rounded cups, decorated in a late style of polychrome. An outstanding example is a big part of a collared-neck jug. There is a characteristic variety of straight-sided speckled cups in the light-on-dark technique, with striking colours of paint, owing to the use of special marl.³³ The plain cups are of various types: ledge-rim cups, saucers and deep and big handleless or one-handed cups. The coarse ware has a rough look. There are still handmade big vases with roughly-cut bases, as well as basins with

³¹ Hallager 1996 I, 88-89, tables 6-7, figs. 32-3.

³² Then thought to be part of a levelling deposit, cf. Hallager & Tzedakis 1986, 16-7.

³³ Betancourt 1985, 109.

	KH 97	KH 98	KH 99	Wc 2123	Zb 1		KH 97	KH 98	KH 99	Wc 2123	Zb 1
+											
AB 02 RO											
≠											
AB 03 PA											
ī											
AB 06 NA											
⊥											
AB 08 A											
⊥											
AB 09 SE											
⊥											
AB 27 RE											
⊥											
AB 28 I											
* *											
AB 30 NI											
⊥											
AB 39 PI											
⊥											
AB 41 SI											
* *											
AB 44 KE											

Fig. 7. The Linear A signs reproduced in the same scale.

cross-hatched interiors (beehives?). Apart from a few stone tools the pit did not contain many small finds.

Description

Jug(?). Neck and shoulder fragment. Clay: red, semi-coarse, some silver mica. Scar from a vertical, strap/oval handle. Interior dull red colour on neck. Exterior mottled by fire. Beside the handle

close to the beginning of the neck one incised sign. Mpd 8.8; Th. of neck 0.5; Th. body 0.8-1.1.

The inscription

The reading of the preserved sign is easy: AB 30 (NI). It is uncertain whether the sign is isolated or whether there might have been others in front of the fracture. Most probably, it is used as the ideogram for figs.

Comments

The sign is written in an unusual way, in that it does not have a “stem”. A reasonably good parallel is found on **PH 16a**,³⁴ while the closest parallel, however, comes from the hieroglyphic tablet from Phaistos.³⁵ The sign may be read both as a Cretan Hieroglyph and as a Linear A sign. If our NI is an isolated sign it is probably Linear A since such signs have up till now never been found isolated on pottery among the Cretan Hieroglyphs,³⁶ while they do occur in the Linear A administration, as, for example, on the Kea cup, **KE Zb 3**,³⁷ but most frequently on pithoi: once at Petras³⁸ and several times at Knossos, mostly dealing with the ideogram for wine, but where the sign NI (FIG) is actually found on a now misplaced pithos.³⁹ Whether a Cretan Hieroglyph or Linear A, **KH Zb 1** is the oldest inscription yet discovered in Khania and the only one incised on pottery from this site till now.

Summary on the Linear A inscriptions

Five inscriptions in Linear A have been presented above: three fragmentary tablets, one complete roundel and one inscription on a jug. Tablets and roundels have previously been well attested at Khania (Fig. 1), and among the new ones **KH 97** is worthy of note for two reasons. Firstly, because it was discovered in an area of the settlement which had not previously revealed inscriptions and secondly, because it is only the second tablet which is inscribed on both sides. Furthermore, it may also be of importance to recall the indications that the tablet does not necessarily need to belong to the LM IB destruction, but could be of an earlier date in LM IA. Something quite new in Khania is inscriptions on pottery, so well attested elsewhere on the island. We cannot be absolutely certain whether the single sign represents a Cretan Hieroglyph or a Linear A sign although the latter seems most probable. In any circumstances it is the oldest inscription discovered in Khania so far.

If interpreted correctly, 22 different signs have been identified (Fig. 7). Only two (AB 08 (A) and AB 77 (KA)) were seen twice and they seem to be done by different scribes. The material is far too

small to speculate whether any of the inscriptions may perhaps have been done by already identified scribes. The signs, however, do reveal some interesting features. AB 44 (KE) is unique in the corpus of Linear A since it is executed in a manner similar to the Linear B counterparts. If our interpretation of A 352 on **KH 99** is correct it is important since it shows for the second time that this sign is used as a syllable in the Linear A script – perhaps a local west Cretan peculiarity? Lastly, it should be pointed out that in all probability a new sign (ideogram?) has been identified on the roundel **KH Wc 2123**. So, although few in numbers, few in signs and with no complete sign groups, the newly recovered Linear A inscriptions in Khania have added substantial new evidence concerning the use of Linear A both chronologically and epigraphically.

Linear B

KH Z 43⁴⁰ (Khania Museum No. Π 10344), (Fig. 8)

Context

The stirrup jar was found in Building 2 (now called the Linear B House, cf. Fig. 10) in a pit dug into the floors of Room B at the position 535.80/709.20/10.41-10.10. Room B must have been a kind of entrance hall to the building since a door from the outside courtyard let into the room. In this room at least three floors were noticed. The pit, in which the stirrup jar was found, was dug in connection with the construction of the latest floor of the LM IIIB:1 phase, (Trench 35, Floor 11, Fig. 9). Part of the stirrup jar was actually incorporated

³⁴ GORILA 1, 306

³⁵ CHICK # 122, 182.

³⁶ Cretan Hieroglyphs, when found incised on pottery, at least to present knowledge, always consist of sign groups – not isolated signs cf. CHICK, 294-318.

³⁷ GORILA 5, 71.

³⁸ Tsipopoulou & Hallager, forthcoming.

³⁹ For the Wine ideogramme: Bosekamp 1996, 103-8 and pl. 25b; Hallager 2002, 64 and fig. 3. For the FIG ideogramme: GORILA 4, 82 (**KN Zb <39>**).

⁴⁰ **KH Z 1-42** shall be published in *GSE IV* by E. Hallager, forthcoming.

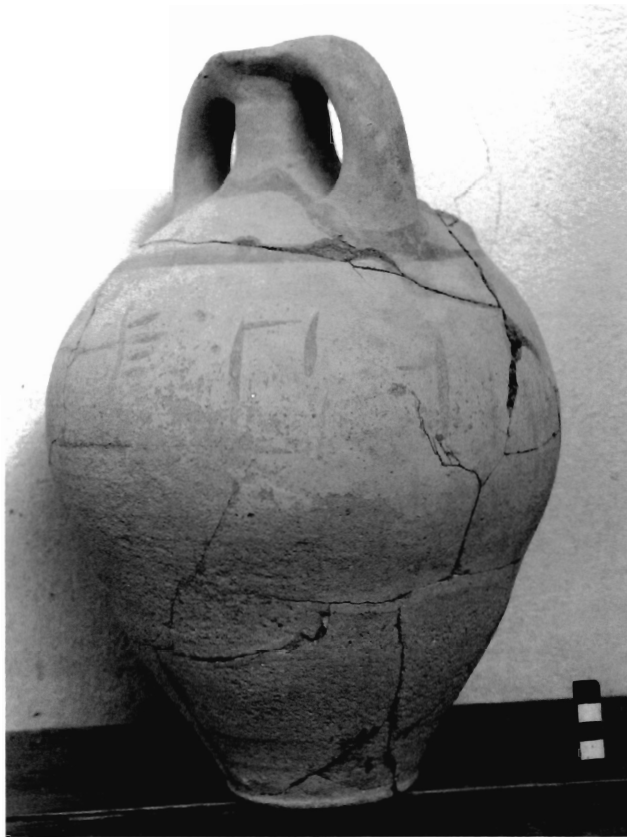


Fig. 8. The inscribed stirrup jar **KH Z 43**. The drawing of the inscription is at a scale c. 1:3.

in this floor and it thus seems safe to conclude that it was deposited during the later part of LM IIIB:1, which is approximately the same date as the Linear B tablets found in the same building, Room E.⁴¹ Several diagnostic pottery sherds were found in the pit which could all be dated to the LM IIIB:1 period.

Description

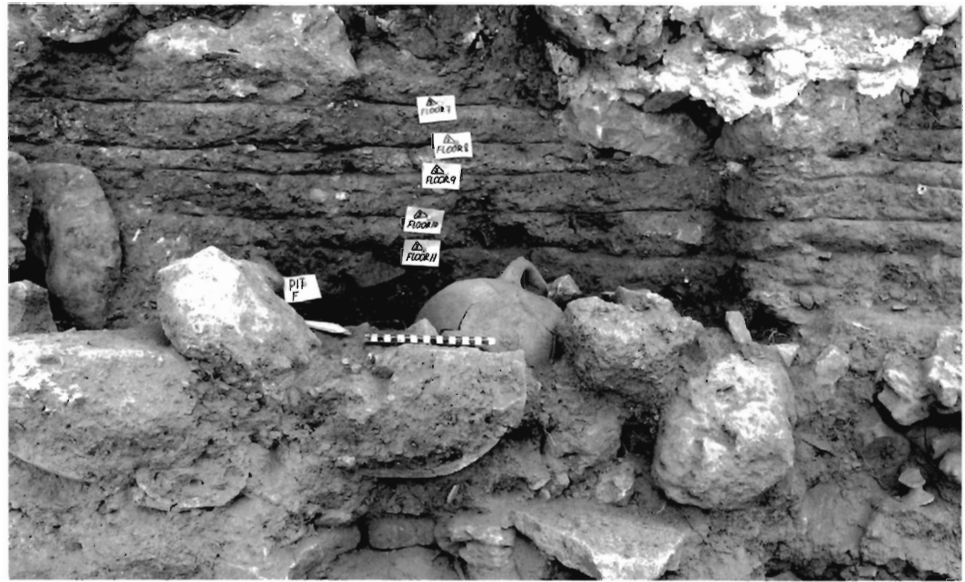
GSE 05-P 1848. Inscribed storage stirrup jar, completely preserved except for spout. Ovoid body, flat base, roll handles; cylindrical, short neck. Reddish brown, gritty clay (10 R 5/6); local,

according to visual inspection.⁴² Thin, buff slip (7.5 YR 7/4 to 10 YR 7/4). Reddish brown, partly thick paint (2.5 YR 5/6 to 10 R 4/6). The painted decoration is restricted only to bands: a wavy band encircles the base of the neck, the false spout, and the handles. A second band surrounds the above mentioned. Wavy band on disk and handles. H. 38.3; body Ø 25.0; disk Ø 6.8; handle width 3.2-3.5; base Ø 10.3.

⁴¹ Hallager, Vlasaki & Hallager 1992, 63-70.

⁴² We thank Birgitta P. Hallager for this information.

Fig. 9. The stirrup jar *in situ* during the excavation, the floors above Floor 11 belongs to a courtyard of the LM IIIB:2 period..



The inscription (Fig. 8)

The inscription is a body inscription which consists of a sign group with three signs and a word divider followed by a single, isolated sign. Slip and paint have peeled off at several places, making some of the signs incomplete, and on top of the isolated sign there is a fracture. The three-sign-group, however, is easily recognizable as *ze-ta-ro*. From the last sign we have three vertical strokes all in a very faint paint. It seems as if the painter did not bother to add new paint to the brush when this sign was made, and the upper, mutilated part of the sign is not at all clear. From many close-up photographs of this mutilated part it was possible to play with colours and contrasts on the Adobe PhotoShop programme and what is indicated with hatched lines in the drawing is what we believe actually remained of paint. If correctly seen there can be no doubt that the isolated sign represents a *wa* and with the undamaged part of the surface taken into consideration the only other possible signs, *du*, *pu* and perhaps *a₃*, are excluded. For the entire inscription we thus suggest the following reading:

ze-ta-ro , *wa* [-*na-ka-te-ro*]

ze is not previously attested among the published inscribed stirrup jars. It is rendered with a vertical bent stroke to the right at the lower part and with

five horizontal lines at the right part. It is missing the 'half-circle' to which the small horizontal strokes are usually attached⁴³ and there are more horizontal strokes than usually found in this sign in Linear B, but the sign is unmistakable. *ta* and *ro* are simple signs previously well attested among the inscribed stirrup jars. When more than one word is inscribed a word divider is usual, although it is omitted in a few examples.⁴⁴ *wa* is executed with the three 'legs' set rather narrow, while the upper two horizontal strokes – if correctly identified – are drawn unusually close to each other. The closest parallel to this is found on **EL Z 1**.

ze-ta-ro is not previously known in the corpus of Linear B, while an isolate *wa* is the generally accepted abbreviation for the adjective *wa-na-ka-te-ro*, royal.⁴⁵ **KH Z 43** is unique in that it consists of two 'words' only. Usually the inscribed stirrup jars consist of one word which is always a personal name, or of three words: personal name, place name, personal name (sometimes substituted with *wa* or *wa-na-ka-te-ro*). The general interpretation of these inscriptions is that they reflect the administrative system found in some of the Linear B

⁴³ This is occasionally also omitted by the scribes of the Linear B tablets, for example, in a few instances by hand 103 at Knossos, cf. Olivier 1967, table IV.

⁴⁴ For example, **TH Z 839** between first and second word.

⁴⁵ See, for example, Palmer 1963, 275 and Killen 1966, 107.

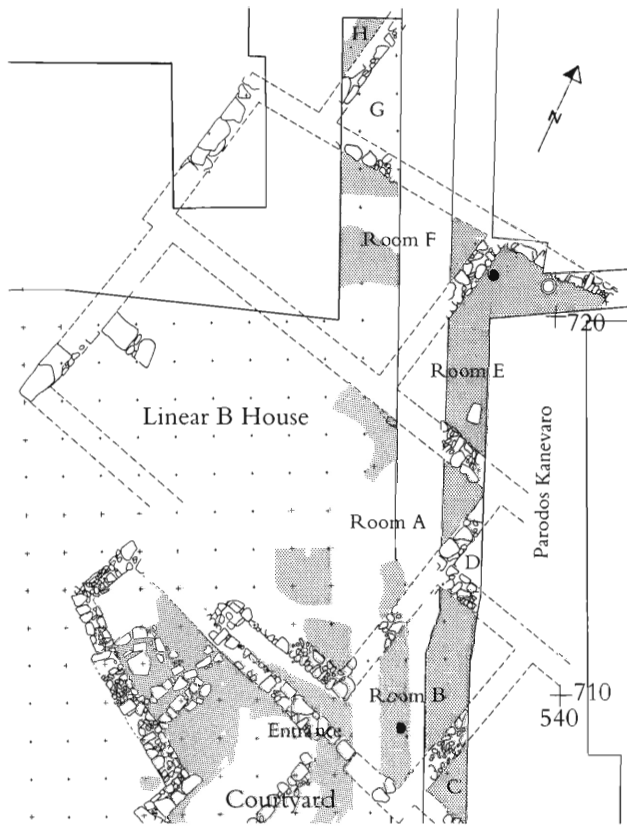


Fig. 10. Conjectural reconstruction of the Linear B House. The black dots mark the finds of Linear B inscriptions: in Room B the inscribed stirrup jar and in Room E the three Linear B tablets. Scale 1:200.

tablets from Knossos, in that the first personal name – usually in the nominative case – represents the producer, the place name, the place of production, while the third name – usually in the genitive case – represents the owner or ‘collector’.⁴⁶ In the case of the one word inscriptions the producer’s name is surmised. In other words, when a stirrup jar is inscribed the producer’s name is always written, while the place and owner’s name may be omitted. For this reason we believe *ze-ta-ro* on **KH Z 43** to be the producer, i.e. a personal name in the nominative case, while the owner, *wa [-na-ka-te-ro]*, was furthermore added.

Comments

If the above interpretation of the inscription is correct it does offer some interesting implications. The stratigraphic position of the stirrup jar does place it in a secure late LM IIIB:1 context in the

same building where the Linear B tablets were found (Fig. 10). The clay is a local product and the inscription indicates that the product or the producer (cf. royal craftsmen) was owned by the king. The wanax is also mentioned on other inscribed stirrup jars of LM IIIB date. Thus we find him on **TH Z 839** connected to the west Cretan place name shown by the ethnic designation *o-du-ru-wi-jo*, on **TI Z 29** where he is connected to a Cretan place name, perhaps the west Cretan *si-ra-ro*,⁴⁷ while on **EL Z 1** – a stirrup jar of non west Cretan clay – the wanax is connected to *da-*22-to*, which is probably located east of Rethymnon, in the area of Stavromenos/ Khamalevri.⁴⁸ Furthermore there exists an isolated *wa* incised on the top of the false neck of a stirrup jar of local west Cretan (b) clay.⁴⁹ These inscriptions do, together with **KH Wc 43**, bear witness to the fact that a wanax existed in Crete during the LM IIIB period, and the same inscribed stirrup jars, seem to indicate a clear connection between the wanax and western Crete. Whether it is the wanax known from the Linear B tablets at Knossos or a local ruler remains uncertain for the moment. Both possibilities should remain open.⁵⁰

Another question is: why was an almost intact transport stirrup jar with the inscription ‘royal’ deposited in the entrance hall of the Linear B House in connection with the construction of the latest floor of the room? Was it just something ‘handy’ to fill in, in connection with repairs to the room – or was it a deliberate act? In the latter case, it would be tempting to see it as a kind of foundation deposit, although its position in the room might seem bizarre.

⁴⁶ See, for example, Hallager 1987, 177-9.

⁴⁷ On the ISJ is only preserved *Jri-jo*, but Godart & Olivier 1975, 42-3, argues that it most likely derives from *si-ra-ro*, an ethnic designation of the plausible restoration of the inscription as *si-ra-Jri-jo*.

⁴⁸ Bennett 1985; Andreadaki-Vlasaki 1995.

⁴⁹ **KH Z 16**, cf. Hallager & Vlasaki 1976, 215-8.

⁵⁰ See, for example, Haskell 2005, 216.

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Abbreviations

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