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A MYCENAEAN DIPINTO AND GRAFFITO

This note concerns two unpublished Mycenaean objects with signs upon them. Although they have no special textual significance, since the dipinto consists of only one enigmatic symbol and the graffito cannot be read as a syllabic sequence, they still merit brief publication for their unusual provenience and character.

1. Painted potmark on the base of a sherd from Glypha (Fig. 1, pl. I)

Glypha is one of several unexcavated prehistoric mounds on the shores of the Euripos. It lies opposite Chalkis on the Boiotian coast. Physically it resembles its nearer neighbors, the mounds at Dramesi, Salganeus, Amarynthos and Leukandi.¹ It is a hill in the form of an elongated cone with a flat shelving top, which dominates a marshy inlet where the modern railroad spur line from Athens crosses open water on an embankment and passes along the western side of the mound. The hill has no recognized name on maps, but the area is known to some local inhabitants as Glypha Drosias, "brackish water in the district of Drosia". Drosia is the new, banal name of the village formerly less elegantly known as Chalia, up-channel from Chalkis on the mainland near the impressive prehistoric site of Salganeus, where good wine and beaches are powerful summer attractions.

Glypha has several features of interest which seem to have brought excavators or looters in the past, although no official record of their activities has been located. A series of overgrown trenches along the crown of the hill facing Chalkis look technically

¹ Glypha and Amarynthos will be published as part of an extensive surface survey of Euboian sites carried out by T. Jacobson, M. Popham, and H. Sackett under the auspices of the American and British Schools in Athens. Leukandi has already had two seasons of excavation and preliminary reports by Mr. Popham and Mr. Sackett (cf. BSA Annual Report 1964-65 p. 11; ILN 5 June 1965, 30). Dramesi was ruined in the winter of 1965 by a water reservoir dug to below the rich Early Helladic levels; almost nothing remains of the tholos tomb on which Professor Blegen once reported (C. W. Blegen, "Hyria", *Hesperia Supplement VIII* p. 39). Salganeus is threatened by seaside bungalows. Glypha is still isolated by bad roads. Mr. Popham guided a small party of archaeologists there on 22 April 1965; I am indebted to Dr. Sp. Iakovidis for his observations on the site.

well-executed and not in the haphazard style of the average Boiotian tomb robber who has been far more vigorous in exploring this part of Greece than the archaeologist. The trenches have exposed sections of clearly visible fortification walls around the hill toward the sea. There are also remains of substantial house foundations above and below the walls, and pits which may represent collapsed wells. There are graded terraces with stone retaining walls, and masses of prehistoric sherds strewn over the eroded slopes everywhere down to the sea edge. Possibly a sanctioned exploration of Glypha was carried out at one time by Mr. Papadakis, former Ephor of the district, and never reported or published.

The pottery represents an unbroken historical sequence from Early Helladic to Late Helladic III C. As at most sites along this coast, the Minyan wares are particularly fine and there is an impressive amount of obsidian. Much of the surface pottery seems to belong to the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries B. C., Late Helladic III A 2 and B. Its quantity suggests dense habitation, quite a flourishing seaside community. The recent excavations by the British School at Leukandi across the straits could provide stratigraphic control for any future work at Glypha.

Among the sherds seen on the site in April 1965 was the foot of a large vase, perhaps from a tall stemmed krater or a piriform three-handled jar, solid and well-made, 0.083 by 0.052 m (Pl. I). The clay was red with streaky brown-black glaze on the concave molding of the outer edge of the foot. On the unglazed underside, which had lost part of its surface, was a sign or pot-mark in matt red paint. The preservation made it uncertain whether the sign was nearly complete, a flexible version of *pi* (39), *si* (41) or *ke* (44). If faint adjacent traces are taken into account, it could be a complex pot-mark rather than a syllabic sign, a mark of a type much better represented on Cypriote Mycenaean wares than on vases excavated in Greece². In either case the sign was painted

² Professor Emmett Bennett is inclined to regard the symbol as a pot-mark rather than a syllabic sign in view of the faint extensions to the left. The question of the origin of painted Cypriote Mycenaean wares, which often include such pot-marks in contrast to excavated mainland vases, has recently been restudied by H. Catling and A. Millett, "Composition Patterns of Mycenaean Pictorial Pottery", BSA 60 (1965) p. 212. They conclude that most such pottery was manufactured on the mainland although found in Cyprus, which will be contested by some scholars; they do not comment on the striking inequity in the distribution of pot-marks and its probable commercial significance. If the sign is a syllabic one, the curved brush-forms combined with abraded surface make it ambiguous.

on the pot after it was fired, when it was upside down and empty, and is probably either a commercial abbreviation or the trademark of a vase atelier or middleman for export pottery. As a pot-mark, it is not quite like anything so far recorded, but of course identical pot-marks are extremely rare. The closest parallel is perhaps a sign on a small krater from Enkomi, Cyprus Museum A 1649, assigned to the Late Helladic III A period³.

Whether it is a syllabic sign or a pot-mark, mainland or Cypriote in origin, the Glypha dipinto represents a rare category of mainland find which should serve to attract more professional interest to the site in the future.

2. Graffito on a steatite jewelry mold from Mycenae⁴ (Fig. 2, pl. II)

A dark red steatite mold for casting blue glass relief beads, in the collections of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, was recently observed to be faintly inscribed with Linear B signs on one of its two carved faces. The mold will be more fully published elsewhere for the technical information it offers about the Mycenaean jeweler's craft. Comparatively few such molds survive from Greece, and this one has an unusual variety of designs on it, including one unique hollow for casting a winged bee.

The mold was anciently broken off around the edges on two sides but two edges are preserved which are top and bottom in relation to the syllabic signs; the casting hollows run mostly across this axis. The preserved dimensions are 0.74 m broad, 0.75 m tall, 0.018 m thick. There are seven or eight designs on the inscribed face. Some seem to cut off parts of the signs as though superimposed on them. The most conspicuous signs are at the top right, and the middle right edge. At the top, in the quadrant above the bracket-design and interrupted by two small pendants and two circles, are remains of perhaps three or four signs. Only that at the left is well-preserved, a double axe, or *a* (08). Figure 2 shows

³ CVA Cyprus I pl. 16 no. 3, fig. 3 no. 4. More divergent is F. Stubbings, *Mycenaean Pottery from the Levant* p. 47 no. 18, on an LH III krater from Kourion (BM C 391). Stubbings (p. 51) doubts the relevance of Mycenae examples quoted by C. Schaeffer, *Missions en Chypre* p. 76; none of the published inscribed pottery from Mycenae has similar dipinti (E. Bennett, *MT II*, p. 76ff.).

⁴ MFA 66.194 through the Mary L. Smith Fund. Figure 2 was drawn by Miss Suzanne Chapman.

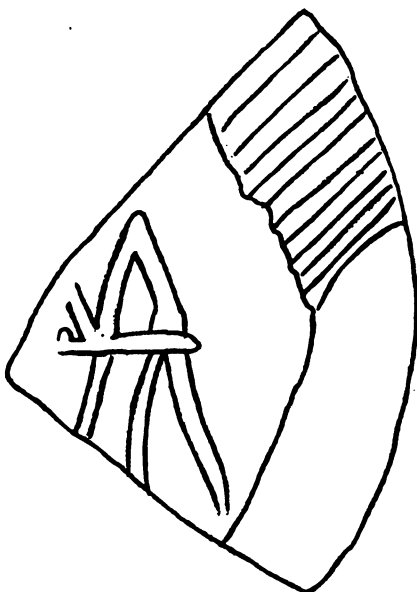
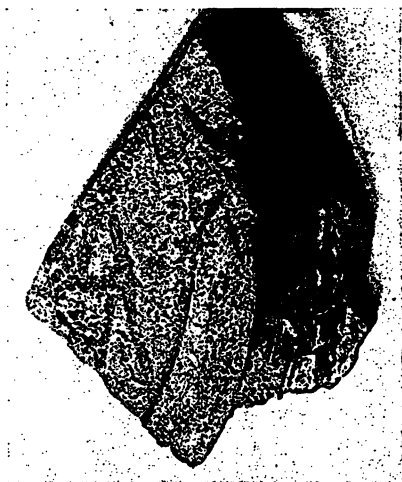
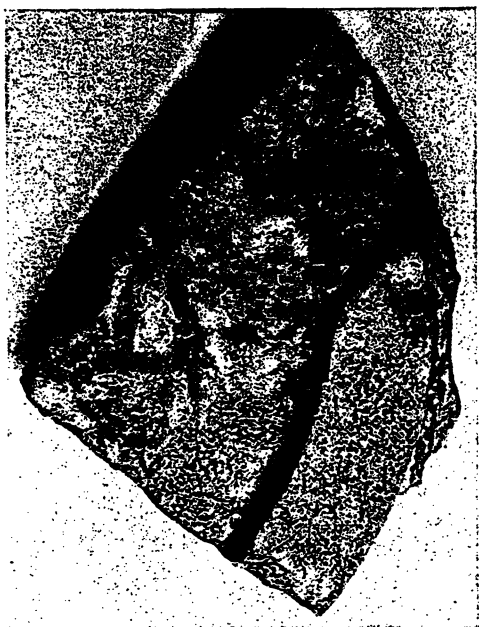


Fig. 1. Glypha Drosias, Mycenaean dipinto

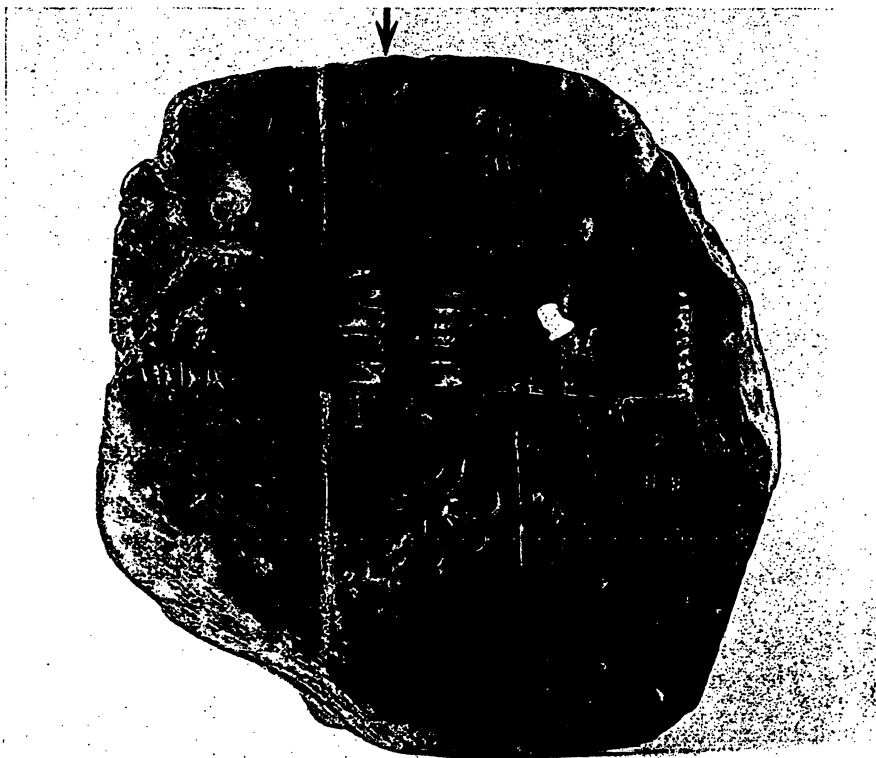


Fig. 2. MFA steatite mold, Mycenae, graffito

what is left of the others; they are faint and disrupted but seem more than accidental scratches.

In the right edge quadrant next to the rosette design there seem to be traces of two signs: a pictorial version of the double axe with two fully-drawn blades, and another truncated sign (Fig. 2).

It is curious to find two different versions of the double axe symbol on the same stone. The upper one is a tailed variant of the normal syllabic sign for *a*; the lower, with blades, is more like the ideogram 232 for axe as weapon. If the traces to the right of each of these signs prove in the judgment of most scholars to be accidental after all, then the axe forms must be used in a rare fashion as independent ideograms. This use is unusual, confined apparently to one tablet at Pylos (Un 1320) and two late seals from Crete⁵. If they are, on the other hand, the beginnings of words or phrases, as on a painted sherd from Tiryns⁶, there seems to be little hope of recovering the complete inscription because of the soft abraded surface of the steatite. In either case, the signs were never meant to appear on any part of the finished jeweler's product. They are not related to individual designs and are too shallow for casting.

Perhaps we should regard them as marks of identification, either for the craftsman who made the mold and worked with it, or as a means to distinguish one mold from others in the workshop. However, the other three surviving glass-casting molds from Mycenae are not reported to be marked in this way⁷. Perhaps the mold was once carved only on the other face and inscribed on this one,

⁵ These parallels were called to my attention by Dr. Grumach. In PY Un 1320 the *a* apparently stands for an item which can be collected in numbers of three or more, and there is a sketch of a pig's head on the reverse: M. Lang, *AJA* 62 (1958) p. 185, pl. 48. The two seals show bulls and horned sheep in a circled pattern with a variant tailed of the double axe in the field between their backs: Siteia, A. Evans, *PM* IV fig. 544b, and Metropolitan Museum of Art 23.160.27, V. Kenna, *AJA* 68 (1964) pl. 2, 23; pl. 4, 16.

⁶ J. Chadwick, *MT* III p. 73 no. 6

⁷ H. Schliemann, Mycenae and Tiryns figs. 162, 163; Chr. Tsountas, "Μήτρον καὶ Ζῆφν ἐκ Μυκηνῶν" *Ephemeris Archaeologike* 1897, p. 97ff. For other examples of molds and comments on them, see R. Higgins, *Greek and Roman Jewelry* p. 42; A. Wace, *BSA* 25 (1921-23) p. 398; A. Evans, *PM* I, fig. 349; S. Hood, *Archaeology* 8 (1955) p. 246 fig. 3; *BSA* 51 (1956) pl. 12e; A. Furtwängler and G. Loeschke, *Mykenische Vasen* fig. 20; G. Richter, *Catalogue of the Greek Collection, Metropolitan Museum of Art*, pl. 8i, pl. 9; T. Haevernick, "Mykenisches Glas", *JRGZM* 7 (1960) pl. 7.

and was later also filled with designs on the inscribed face which cut into and destroyed the signs; this would also be an unusual case, without close parallels.

The provenience is reliable; the mold certainly comes from Mycenae. It came into a European collection many years ago through a traveller who presumably picked it up somewhere on the acropolis. It serves to emphasize the central role of Mycenae in the commercial manufacture and trade of blue glass ornaments in the great period of mass-produced jewelry on the Greek mainland in the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries B. C. With four known molds, Mycenae ranks ahead of any other mainland town; only Knossos competes. One thinks immediately of the group of five Linear B tablets found in the recent excavations of the Citadel House on the acropolis at Mycenae, which record the activities of two or more *ku-wa-no-wo-ko-i*, *kuwanoworgoi* or workers in *kyanos* (blue glass-paste)⁸. This inscribed mold may be objective confirmation of their workshop and technical media, and preserves for us the kind of pleasant ornamental costume pieces they were turning out.

⁸ Oi 701—705, J. Chadwick et al., MT III, p. 57ff. The word is complete on Oi 703, restored on the others.