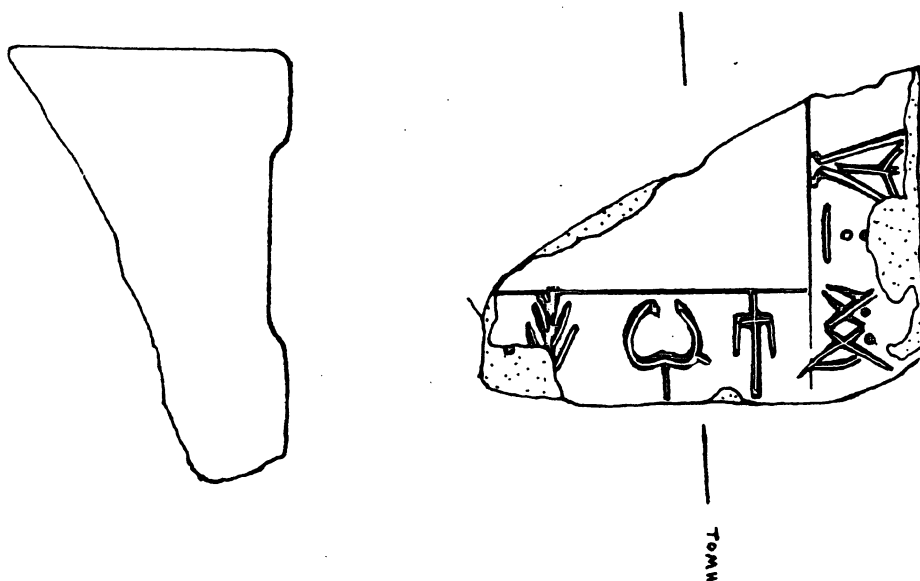





COSTIS DAVARAS—WILLIAM C. BRICE

A FRAGMENT OF A LIBATION TABLE INSCRIBED IN LINEAR A FROM VRYSINAS

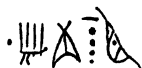
The second phase of the excavation of the peak sanctuary of Vrysinas near Rethymnon took place in 1973, and an account of it has been published in AAA 7, 1974, 210—213. During these investigations there was found in an unstratified context a corner of a stone libation table, inscribed around its top margin with signs of the Linear Script A, of which six survive, as illustrated in Plate I and Figure 1. The piece measures 7.8 cm. on its longer edge, and is 7 cm. high.



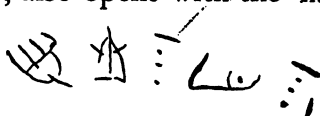
The sign nearest the corner on the shorter of the two surviving edges, L 95, the 'cat's head', is cut in a very rectilinear style, rather as on the pithos from Phaestos, ILA II 12, ; though the pointed ears recall more the sign on the clay bar from Malia, ILA IV 10c, . The other two signs in this group, L 26 and L 56, are similar in form to their equivalents on the fragment of a libation bowl from Apodoulou,

ILA I 13a = Ap 2a, where the 'drops' on L 26 diminish in size from top to bottom, and where too L 56 might be a linear version of the 'bee' sign on the Phaestos Disc, Evans No. 34, .

This association of three signs, if read from right to left, can be matched precisely with three signs of the group on the piece of a libation bowl from Apodoulou mentioned above, ILA I 13a, read from left to right:




A comparable group on the fragmentary libation table from Palai-kastro, ILA I 6 = Pc 10, also opens with the 'hand' sign L 100:



It is significant therefore that traces of vertical strokes near the broken edge of the Vrysinas piece to the right of L 56 have been confirmed through autopsy as part of another sign, not improbably L 100.

These comparisons may be taken as a first indication that the Vrysinas inscription should be read from right to left, as in the case of the inscribed silver pin from Platanos recently published in *Kadmos* 15, 1976, 18—27.

As for the three signs on the longer edge, these would read, from right to left, —]L 98—55—92, preceded by a scar and followed by a clear mark of punctuation. L 98, the 'flying bird', is remarkable for being cut vertically instead of, as usual, approximately in the horizontal plane. The only other clear case of a 'vertical' L 98 is on the libation table from Mount Jouktas referred to by the excavator, Mrs. A. Karetsou, in the *Ergon* of the Archaeological Society of Athens for 1975, 177ff. All three signs are finely cut, with their symmetry well preserved, and the 'tree' sign, L 92, is regularly tapered towards its apex. There are two three-sign groups on the Hagia Triada tablets of which the first two signs are identical with those of this Vrysinas group:

 HT 115 63

 HT 87 4

;but these resemblances may be only coincidental.

We would like to thank warmly Mr. Joannis Papapostolou and Mr. Joannis Tzedakis for their ready help in studying the piece in the Chania Museum. It remains to add that it is carved from greenish serpentine with white spots, and that it was found in association with uninscribed fragments of other libation tables.