

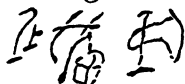
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## REMARKS ON THE LINEAR A INSCRIPTIONS FROM ZAKRO

The following notes were provoked by the recent publication of the Linear A texts which Professor Platon excavated at Zakro in 1963: N. Platon and W.C. Brice, Ἐνεπίγραφοι πινακίδες καὶ πίθοι γραμμικοῦ συστήματος Α ἐκ Ζάκρου = *Inscribed tablets and pithos of Linear A system from Zakro*, 1975. I have not been able to refer to the originals, but I have examined the photographs and drawings to see if they enable any fresh statements to be made about the Linear A script. As Mr. Brice observes (p. 45 of the joint publication), the structure of the Zakro tablets is remarkably similar to that of the inscriptions which have long been known from Ayia Triada. I shall be concerned here with the differences rather than with the similarities.

### Zakro 1a

This text presents a list of personal names or occupation-words: the numerals given are all integers, not fractions, and the group L62-78-68 in line 2 has the same stem which occurs in the personal name *qa-ti-ja* in Linear B KN As 1519.4. But greater interest is aroused by the preceding group in line 2:



That the last sign represents a rather perfunctorily drawn single axe does not admit of much doubt. Since this is the first known occurrence of a single axe in Linear A texts, its appearance calls for some discussion. The presence of the single axe is well established in the Cretan Pictographic script (Evans' sign no. 12), being found in the following combination on the clay labels P.83a and P.86b:



If Grumach was right in identifying the small cross at the left (common in Pictographic inscriptions) as an ideogram-marker,<sup>1</sup> the writer of these

<sup>1</sup> Minoica, Berlin 1958, 171

labels has clearly designated the single axe as an ideogram. It seems highly probable that the ideographic function survives in our tablet: otherwise, we would have to regard the Zakro single axe as providing a phonetic complement to the MAN ideogram; but the existence of such a phonetic complement is so far unattested in Linear A or Linear B.

Thus the most likely explanation of the sign-group in line 2 is that it records the presence of three men, expressed by an ideogram which is qualified (in ways which are still obscure) by no fewer than three other signs annexed to it: first a minuscule writing of L64, which acts as an adjunct on the Ayia Triada tablets and also on the L series of Linear B tablets at Knossos; second a ligature of the ideogram with L29 (common in ligatured signs in Linear A and ligatured with the Linear B ideogram \*108 on PY Un 853.5); third, the sign representing a single axe. The occurrence of the MAN ideogram in a list with names spelt syllabically is attested at Ayia Triada as well.<sup>2</sup> The juxtaposition of the MAN ideogram with another sign (parallel to its association with the single axe on the present tablet) is found at HT 102.2-3.

So far as the words of 1a are concerned, the name in line 3 is interesting in that it contains an ending L23-77, which is not hitherto known in the Linear A script; other words (probably also names) containing the same ending occur at Zakro 10a.2-3 and 12a.4. In lines 2 and 3 of 1a we have the two names L62-78-68 and L98-56. It can hardly be coincidental that the stems of both these words recur on the Knossos Linear B tablets: *qa-ti-ja* (already mentioned) and *ku-pi-ri-jo* (Fh 347.1) respectively. The alternation between nouns with bare stem and nouns with stem + *ja* presents a difficult problem. If it were the case that the Linear A texts regularly offered the bare stem, while Linear B had the stem suffixed with *-ja*, the latter could be seen as the 'Hellenized' form of the first. But in fact, as the present text shows very well, the alternation is found within Linear A itself and so provides some support for those who believe that 'Greek-like elements' can be discerned in the Linear A inscriptions.<sup>3</sup> The Zakro texts give a new example of a word (in all probability a name) ending in *-ja*: L32-39-32 at 8a.2.

#### Zakro 8a

At the end of what appears to be a list of names comes the following group:



<sup>2</sup> HT 89; cf. E. Peruzzi, *Le iscrizioni minoiche*, Florence 1960, 64


<sup>3</sup> Cf. G. Nagy GRBS 4, 1963, 197


The function of this group seems to be similar to that of the MAN ideogram, together with its associated signs, on Zakro 1a: namely, the ideogram is qualified by juxtaposition with the sign L29. As for the large sign, this again acts as an ideogram on the fragmentary Linear B tablet PY Ua 1252. The whole group probably signifies not a personal name but a word expressing status or occupation.

### Zakro 9

As on HT 6, the FIG ideogram (line 1) is inserted in a list of words spelt phonetically. The presence of fractions in this text (and in HT 6) shows that some at least of the words specify commodities which can be supplied in fractional amounts. But the word L52-74-54, which would represent *a-ta-re* in the Linear B script, may be the name of a receptacle. In Linear B it appears in the form *a-ta-ra* in a list of vessels (MY Ue 611.2). The latter has been connected, not very plausibly, with the Greek word *ἄντρον*. In view of the new evidence from Zakro, Mycenaean *a-ta-ra* should probably be regarded as a loan-word, which takes its place among the many other loans denoting vessels. However that may be, the ending L54 seems to be a typical mark of the 'Minoan' language (or of one of the Minoan languages): compare line 2 of the present inscription, Zakro 8a.5—6, 10b.1, 12a.4—5, and HT 1a.4.

### Zakro 10a

It is gratifying to find at last, in line 2 of this inscription, the unequivocal occurrence of a Linear A sign  (now assigned the number L80<sup>4</sup>), of exactly the same form as the sign which has the syllabic value *o* in Linear B. Grumach rightly maintained that this sign appears on the Troullos Ladle; even though he was wrong to see in this an incipient Linear B sign set in a Linear A context.<sup>4</sup> I would like to suggest that yet another example of this sign is found among the new Zakro texts, that is to say in the small pithos inscription (Platon-Brice, pp. 86—87).

The third sign of that inscription takes the form:  This is so close to the attenuated and angular versions of the Linear B sign \*61<sup>5</sup> that its occurrence ought probably to be acknowledged here as well.

<sup>4</sup> Gnomon 33, 1961, 737

<sup>5</sup> E.g. at KN Od 681.a and PY Cn 600.5