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TWO INSCRIBED SEALINGS FROM ZAKRO*

Sealings marked with Linear A signs have long been known from Ayia Triada and, more recently, from Chania.¹ No comparable counter-marking practice existed at Zakro but, nonetheless, detailed restudy of the Zakro sealings has brought to light two such inscribed nodules.²

It is not strictly true to state that *no* countermarked sealings were previously found at Zakro. A slight hint of some system of counter-marking was contained in Doro Levi's note on Zakro sealing nr 16: he pointed out that the median line running through each of the impressions of this seal was not on the seal itself but added on the clay nodule.³ This is, in fact, not the only case of a mark being added after an impression had been made, but the occurrences are rare and the marks admittedly trivial.⁴

* I am most grateful to Professor Dr. J. A. Sakellarakis, Director of the Heraklion Museum, for allowing me to study the Zakro sealings in such detail.

¹ Ayia Triada nodules = F. Halbherr, "Resti dell'età micena: scoperti ad Haghia Triada presso Phaestos", *MonAnt* 13, 1903, 6-74; D. Levi, "Le Cretule di Haghia Triada", *ASAtene* 8-9, 1929, 7-156; Chania sealings = I. A. Papapostolou, *Ta Sphragismata tou Chaniou*, Athens 1977.



² Absence of countermarked nodules at Zakro was confirmed as recently as M. Pope, "Cretulae and the Linear A Accounting System", *BSA* 55, 1960, 202; and, again, M. Pope, *Aegean Writing and Linear A*, Lund 1964, *Studies in Mediterranean Archaeology* 8, 8 n. 10. Naturally, no inscribed nodules are published from Zakro in the definitive L. Godard & J.-P. Olivier, *Recueil des Inscriptions en Linéaire A II: Nodules, scellés et rondelles édités avant 1970*, Paris 1979, *Études Crétoises* 21,2.

³ D. Levi, "Le Cretule di Zakro", *ASAtene* 8-9, 1929, 160.

⁴ D. G. Hogarth, "The Zakro Sealings", *JHS* 22, 1902, 79 cites five examples of seal nr 16; but there are, in fact, sixteen, all on a pale orange powdery clay otherwise unknown at Zakro. All examples have the median line running through the impression; four have a second line scored on an otherwise empty face of the nodule (cf. Ayia Triada nr 37 and nr 93, Levi op.cit. (supra n. 1), both of which are scored across the impression). One of the four examples of Zakro nr 4 is scored across the dome of a dome-shaped nodule (the only dome-shaped nodules at Zakro are those with seal nr 4; the shape, however, is not uncommon at Ayia Triada (see J. Weingarten, *The Zakro Master and His Place in Prehistory*, (dissertation, University of Oxford 1981) Appen-

Levi also published Zakro nr 160 — a bull trotting to the right — but inexplicably failed to note the Linear sign L 22 (+) inscribed on the nodule.⁵ The nodule is cone-shaped, with the seal-impression on its base and the sign on its side. This is the only example of a conical nodule at Zakro; the shape is common, however, at Ayia Triada where many are impressed and inscribed exactly in the manner of Zakro nr 160.⁶

The second Linear A sign is found on a nodule of unexceptional shape: a flat lump of clay is pinched into a more-or-less triangular profile which provides two surfaces for seal-impressions (though one is often left empty), while the third surface is pressed over the object sealed. Zakro nr 41 — a crudely-drawn sphinx — is impressed on one surface with the sign on an otherwise empty face (Pl. I).

The sign might be incomplete at the top but is intact at the bottom. Nothing exactly comparable seems to exist. A comparison may be made with a variant of L 98 as it appears on a nodule from Ayia Triada⁷ , if one accepts that the upper portion has been lost. I doubt, however, if there would have been space on our nodule for the complete sign. Another candidate is yet one more variant of L 56 or, more specifically, L 56b ⁸, sustaining only slight damage at the top while dropping, as it occasionally does, its bottom line.⁹

The unexpected presence of two inscribed nodules at Zakro does little to dispel the idea that countermarking is not a local administrative practice. Rather, they may encourage the view that some sealings are possibly actual imports, a suggestion enhanced by the inscribed cone-shaped nodule, *unicum* among the 548 extant Zakro sealings.

dix I, Table 7)). Finally, one of the 37 examples of nr 97 at Zakro is twice scored across the impression, perhaps intentionally.

⁵ L 22 appears 83 times on nodules at Ayia Triada (see Pope op.cit. (supra n. 2) 208) and just four times at Chania (CM 1013–1016).

⁶ Cone-shaped nodules at Ayia Triada, see Weingarten op.cit. (supra n. 4); inscribed or impressed cones are also found earlier at Mallia in Quartier Mu (L. Godard & J.-P. Olivier, *Écriture Hiéroglyphique Crétoise* (Paris 1978, *Études Crétoises* 23) 82–89).

⁷ L 98F in J. Raison & M. Pope, *Index du Linéaire A* (Athens 1971, *Incunabula Graeca* 41); on a nodule from Ayia Triada, Levi op.cit. (supra n. 1) fig. 3, 15 centre = Godard & Olivier op.cit. (supra n. 2) Wa 1600.

⁸ L 56b in Raison & Pope op.cit. (supra n. 7), cf.: HT 27a.1, 32.1, 89.1 — thus, on tablets, not nodules.

⁹ L 56 apparently maintains its bottom line on Zakro tablets, see N. Platon & W. C. Brice, *Inscribed Tablets and Pithos of Linear A System from Zakro*, Athens 1975, 178.



Pl. I. Sign incised on clay nodule from Zakro

