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NOTES ON THE CRETAN HIEROGLYPHIC SCRIPT

III. THE INSCRIPTIONS FROM MALLIA QUARTIER MU

1. The second 'archive' from Mallia

In the first contribution to this series (Kadmos 29, 1990, 1–10), the uniformity and territorial range of the hieroglyphic script of Crete were reviewed in the light of the first two published collections, of Evans (1909) and Chapouthier (1930). The next step, forecast on page 5 of the above-quoted article, is to incorporate the evidence of the second publication of the hieroglyphic inscriptions from Mallia.¹

While the inscriptions published by Chapouthier came from the later palace of Mallia, and are generally considered to have been written, like the hieroglyphic 'archives' of Knossos, in the MM III period, the second collection that came to light at Mallia is of earlier date, and was preserved through the accidental conflagration which marked the end of the 'First Palace' in MM II. It has been assembled over several years from a detached part of the site, some two hundred metres to the north-west of the main Palace, in the area around the 'Seals Workshop', and known as the Quartier Mu. The 'Seals Workshop' was uncovered in 1956, and the main excavations of the Quartier Mu, which have resulted in the discovery of the second collection of hieroglyphic inscriptions from Mallia, have been conducted since 1965 under the direction of Jean-Claude Poursat.

¹ Louis Godart et Jean-Pierre Olivier, *Écriture hiéroglyphique crétoise*, in *Fouilles exécutées à Mallia I*, Ecole française d'Athènes, *Études crétoises* 23, 1978.

I am grateful to my colleague Jean-Pierre Olivier for copies of two recent statements of his perceptive thoughts about the Cretan hieroglyphs:

a. The possible methods in deciphering the pictographic Cretan script, in *Problems in Decipherment*, *Bibl. des Cahiers de l'Inst. de Linguistique de Louvain*, 49, 1989, 39–58.

b. *Les Écritures crétoises*, in René Treuil et al., *Les civilisations égéennes du Néolithique et de l'Âge du Bronze*, Nouvelle Clio, Paris 1989, 237–252.

It appears that, with the exception of the twelve labels ('médaillons'), which were uncovered close together in a relatively small area, these inscriptions were found scattered haphazardly over the site, and had probably fallen from a collapsed upper storey. In the case of the tablets particularly, therefore, it would be wrong to consider them as a closed archive.

As for the contents of this collection, it differs from Chapouthier's earlier corpus in that it includes two inscriptions on clay cones, a medium not hitherto noticed, and a large number (273) of 'marks' or simple signs, mostly on pottery, but in one instance on metal (a bronze saw — Fig. 1, No. 44) and in thirteen cases on spherical clay weights ('pesons'). The vast majority of these simple signs were incised, but one clay weight was impressed with a seal, 25 of the vessels carried relief impressions on their base, and three were stamped with an eye-shaped design, usually near the rim.

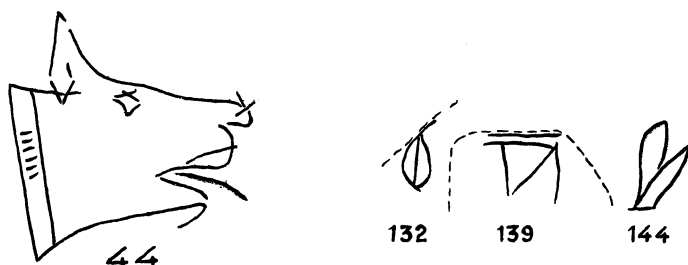


Fig. 1

The range of the hieroglyphic inscriptions from the Quartier Mu may be compared with that of those recorded earlier, in this expanded version of the composite list.

It should be remarked that the Mallia publication of 1978 lists seven tablets and no bars, but one of these tablets (No. 2) is in fact a broken four-sided bar (though only two of its four sides are inscribed), and it is so recorded in the above table.

The simple signs, though numerous, are for the most part very elementary or fragmentary, and since they doubtless served a function different from that of the fuller inscriptions, may be left for consideration elsewhere. The finely fashioned wolf's (or dog's) head with lolling tongue (Evans No. 70) on the bronze saw (No. 44), however, may be specially noticed, as may the 'grain' (No. 132) and 'wine' (No. 139)

	<i>SM I</i>	<i>Mallia</i> (1930)	<i>Mallia</i> (1978)
Seals	(55)	(3)	3
Sealings ('boules')	29	2	11
Cones	—	—	2
Roundel ('pastille')	—	1 (?)	—
Labels ('medaillons')	18	7	12
Bars (four-sided)	29	6	1
Bars (three-sided)	1	—	—
Tablets (high)	—	6	—
Tablets (long)	1 (+2)	6	6
Vases	—	2	9
Simple sign on metal	—	—	1
Simple signs on weights	—	—	13
Simple signs on vessels	—	—	259

ideograms on two vessels, as well as the 48 or so examples of the 'gloved hand', Evans No. 9 (Fig. 1). The last sign also occurs five or six times on the signs on pottery recovered by Chevalier in the soundings to the south-west of the Palace.²

2. Remarks on the tablets

Jean-Pierre Olivier has observed (footnote 1, item 6, page 240) that the numerical sign for 'one hundred' in both the Quartier Mu tablets and the hieroglyphic 'archive' at Knossos is a stroke slightly askew from the vertical, whereas the equivalent sign on the tablets recovered by Chapouthier from the main Palace of Mallia is a small circle, as in Linear A. With this exception, there is no evidence of any striking change in the conventions of the script between the two stages at Mallia.

The inscriptions on the seven 'tablets' (strictly speaking, six tablets and one bar) from the Quartier Mu are short and simple, but nevertheless present some useful clear points of comparison with the other collections, especially since three of the seven (Nos. 3, 6 and 7) are complete, and another (No. 2, the bar) sufficiently so to make it possible to understand the structure of its inscription (Fig. 2).

² H. Chevallier et al., *Fouilles exécutées à Mallia. Sondages au Sud-Ouest du Palais* (1968), *Ecole française d'Athènes, Etudes crétoises*, 20, Paris, 1975.

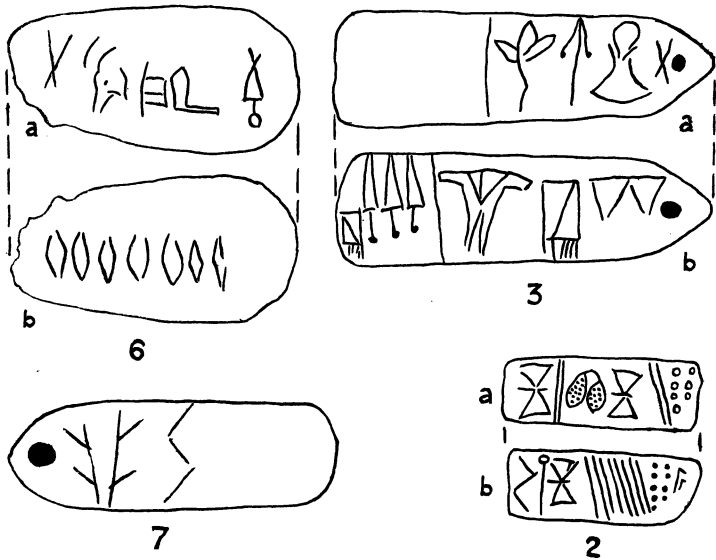


Fig. 2

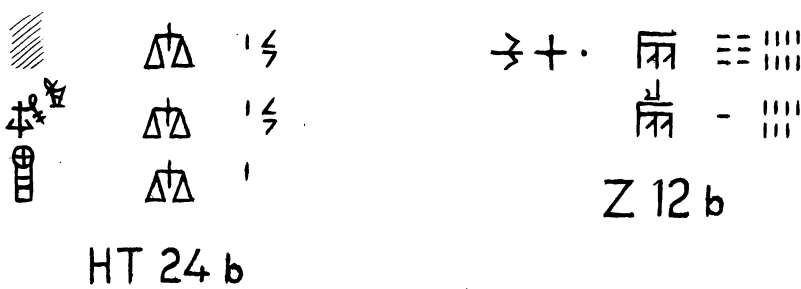


Fig. 3

No. 2 opens with an indication of the key symbol of the ensuing list, the double-axe. There follows a list of items, of which two are preserved, each comprising the double-axe associated with qualifying signs and associated numerals. This is a very basic arrangement, which in Linear A lists was usually simplified by stating the ‘key-sign’ once only in the heading, and understanding it as applying to each item in the subsequent list; but the habit of repetition line by line of the key sign, where necessary with qualifications, survives in HT 24 b and Z 12 b (Fig. 3).

No. 3 and No. 6 are best considered together. Both itemise the ideogram 4, Evans No. 15, which stands in a similar context on P 106 a from Knossos, with a total of 450 (Fig. 4). The group associated with this ideogram on No. 6 from the Quartier Mu consists of the goat's head (Evans No. 65)³ in association with the familiar combination of 'gate and leg'.⁴



P 106 a

Fig. 4

On tablet No. 3, the opening group on side a includes the familiar group 'trowel and arrow' in combination with the 'saffron' (Evans No. 88). Side b includes the 'palace' sign (Evans No. 41), which is repeated in miniature form alongside the thrice-repeated ideogram, presumably signifying a total of '3'.

Tablet No. 7, also complete, carries just two signs, on one side only, and in respect of its brevity may be compared with the inscribed 'labels' ('medaillons').

3. Remarks on the 'New Signs' (Fig. 5)

On page 55 of the 1978 publication are drawn seventeen 'signes nouveaux' from the 'archives'. These are listed on page 47, deliberately without numbers, in order, as explained in the annexed Footnote 1, not to complicate any future more carefully considered system of reference. This very sensible precaution will be respected in what follows.

¶ Evidently not a sign but a mark of separation (on No. 2).

¶ The former, on a tablet (No. 3), described as a 'stool' ('tabouret'), looks like an animal pelt; the latter, on a cone (No. 21), recorded as a 'beetle' ('scarabée'), may be provisionally classified as an insect shape alongside Evans No. 85.

³ The 1978 publication refers to Evans's sign-list by using the letter P; but this is confusing, as Evans in SM I uses the P system to indicate the inscriptions, not the signs. So here Evans's signs are referred to as 'Evans No.-'.

⁴ The 1978 edition reads the rare sign 'bent arm' (Evans No. 8) rather than 'bent leg' (Evans No. 11), but the latter seems more likely, especially in comparison with the same sign on the seal-impression No. 30, where the 'foot' is similarly atrophied.

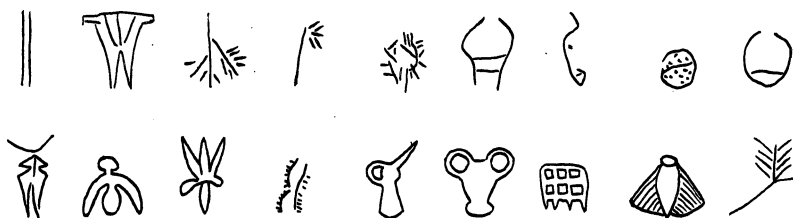


Fig. 5. 'New signs'

♂♂ The first on a seal (No. 22), the second on a sealing, No. 34 (Fig. 6), are manifestly forms of the same sign, since they occupy the same position in identical groups (as remarked in the text). Again perhaps best classified under Evans's No. 85; compare the Linear A sign especially on the silver pin from Mavro Spelio and on the 'libation table' IO Za 2 from Mount Juktas.⁵

✱✱✱ Evidently vegetation signs of the same general nature as Evans Nos. 99–102.

☞ Both on labels (Nos. 14 and 15) and possibly bucrania in full face (Evans 63) or profile (Evans 62).

☉☉ Again on labels (Nos. 15 and 16). Perhaps comparable with Evans 93 ('silphium fruit') and Evans 54 ('sieve').

✱ On sealing No. 28. Compare Evans No. 9 ('hand').

⚡ Not clear on either of two impressions on sealing No. 31. Described as a 'centipede' ('mille-pattes'). Could it be an 'eye' (Evans No. 5)?

☞☞☞ Together on sealing No. 32. The two vessels may be provisionally classified along with Evans Nos. 47 and 50, and the 'grille rectangulaire à six cases' looks on Plate XV as if it could reasonably be seen as a form of the 'gate' sign (Evans No. 44).

Finally, in reference to the writer's equation in *Kadmos* 29, 1990, 4 (Fig. 2) of Chapouthier's H 2 with Evans's No. 8 , the clear appearance of H 2 on No. 36, a pot from Quartier Mu (Fig. 6), makes it wiser to reverse this view, and to retain H 2 for the present as a 'new sign'.

⁵ For the pin from Mavro Spelio see *Kadmos* 11, 1972, 113–124; for the libation table from Mount Juktas see *Kadmos* 27, 1988, 128–9 and Pl. I opposite p. 144.

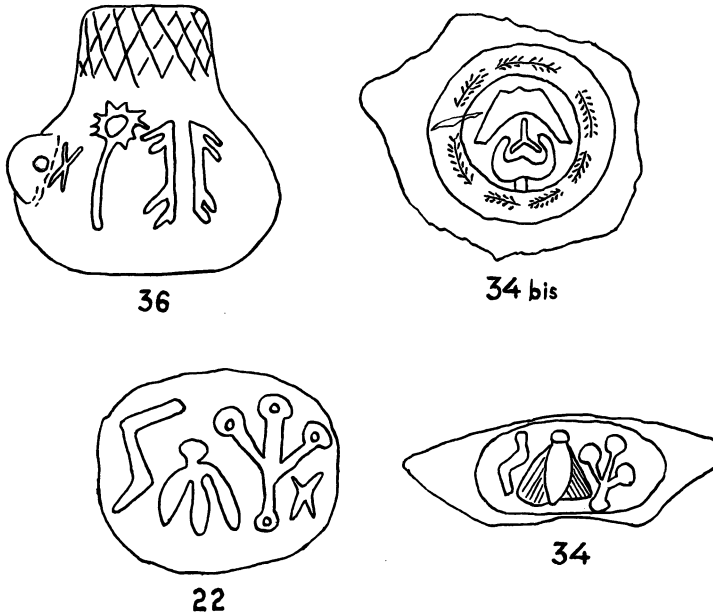


Fig. 6

4. Conclusion

The inscriptions from the Quartier Mu differ from those, of later date, from the Palace, in respect of the simpler and briefer arrangement of the inscriptions on the tablets. The basic principles of presentation of the accounts were the same in both collections, however, as also in the 'archive' at Knossos. We remark too the use already in MM II in the Quartier Mu of the familiar paired combinations of 'gate-leg', 'trowel-arrow' and 'template-trident'⁶ which are common in later seals and inscriptions. Moreover, the signary appears to be essentially the same as that of the later inscriptions, though four 'insect' and 'animal pelt' shapes of unfamiliar form still remain to be classified.

⁶ This last pair on the appended sealing No. 34 bis (Fig. 6). It is published as containing two signs only, Evans Nos. 19 and 30, though it appears to include a third, the 'sepia', Evans No. 60.

IV. THE CLAY BAR FROM KNOSSOS, P 116 (Fig. 1)

In the second contribution to this series, on the clay bar from Mallia, H 20 (Kadmos 29, 1990, 5–10), a case was made for recognizing, in some of the cursive hieroglyphic inscriptions from both Mallia and Knossos, a kind of commodity list similar to one common in the Linear A account tablets from Hagia Trada. The similarity involved not only the identity of the commodity signs, but also the conventional order in which they were listed.

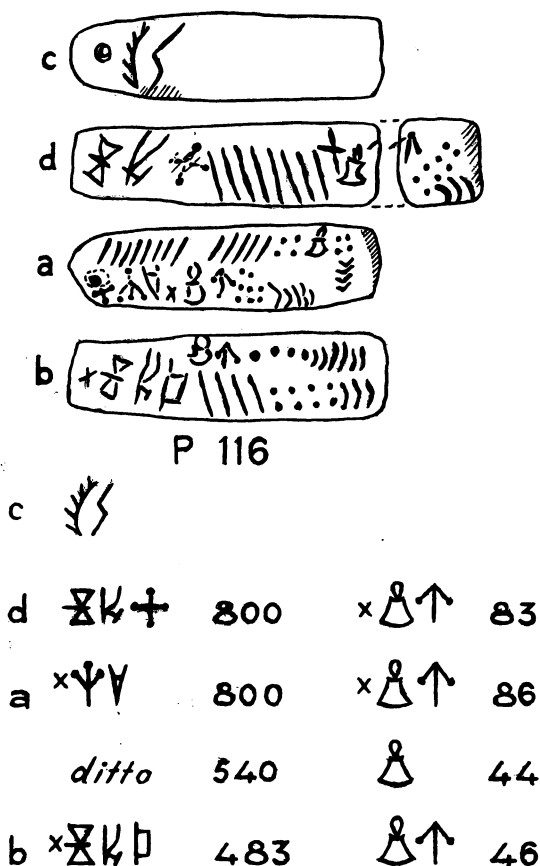


Fig. 1

This study involves one of the most common of the recurring pairs of hieroglyphic signs, the 'trowel' (or alternatively 'scraper') and 'arrow' (Evans Nos. 18 and 13) $\Delta\uparrow$. This combination is found very frequently on the seals, where it was interpreted by Piero Meriggi as the equivalent of 'Son' in personal name-formations (Das Wort 'Kind' in den kretischen Hieroglyphen, *Kadmos* 12, 1973, 114–133).

However, Meriggi also remarked (above, p. 116) that the same two-sign combination is found in association with numerals in several cursive hieroglyphic accounts from Knossos (including P 116), and he explained this usage as possibly parallel with that of the '*ko-wo/ko-wa*' lists in Linear B, namely as counts of children. Further, he speculated (above, p. 117) that the hieroglyphic 'word' might have signified not only 'son' or 'child', but also 'young animal' (Lat. *pullus*, It. *piccolo*).

Now the bar P 116 is one of only two from Knossos which is preserved complete or nearly so (the other is P 100), and its structure can be analyzed as in Figure 1. Here the only significant difference from Evans's readings (SM I, p. 177) is that his "three dashes" at the left end of side d are read, on the strength of the photographs in SM I Plate X, as the double-axe sign, No. 36. Beginning with side c, which seems to be a simple 'title', the bar lists three sign-groups with numerals, each followed by the two-sign group $\Delta\uparrow$ with further numerals, amounting to approximately one-tenth of the main number. On side a, the main number is inserted above the associated sign-group, and is followed by a second number and the usual annexed number, but in this case prefaced by only the first sign Δ of the usual pair $\Delta\uparrow$. This abbreviation appears to have been enforced by shortage of writing space.

The same sign-pair with the numeral '6' follows the sign-group $\Delta\uparrow$ with numeral '11' on P 104 c (Fig. 2). This quotation falls into line with the usage on P 116, but P 104 is so fragmentary that nothing further can be learned from it in this regard.

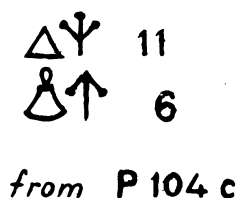
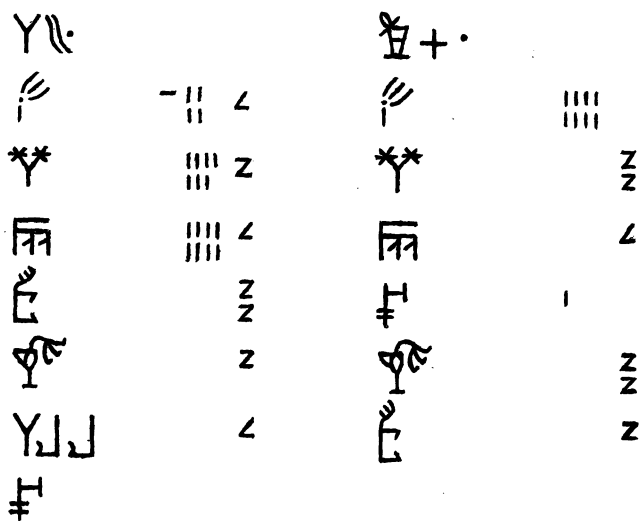


Fig. 2

A sign-pair common in the Linear A account-tablets from Hagia Triada is L 103-22 $\Psi+$, where it appears to fulfil a similar function to $\Delta\uparrow$ on P 116, that is to introduce a secondary or appended list or total. On HT 88, 94 and 117 it heads a secondary list of sign-groups with single units; and on HT 30 it prefaces a second list of commodities, parallel to one prefaced by $\Upsilon\downarrow$, with totals generally less (Fig. 3).

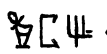















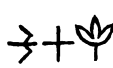
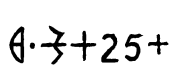



HT 30

Fig. 3






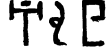




On HT 123 there are four headings, each aligned with three items, Ψ , Φ , and $\Psi+$. The numbers associated with each entry are shown in the transcription in Figure 4. Doubtful fractions are indicated by a + sign, because in this context they are not important: it is, however, clear that, reading horizontally from left to right, each entry is approximately one-quarter of the preceding; and, reading vertically downwards, the third and fourth entries are roughly one-half of the first and second.

Reverting to P 116 (Fig. 1), we notice the same approximate proportions in the vertical dimension; while, as already remarked, reading horizontally, the second entry (following $\Delta\uparrow$ or Δ) is approximately one-tenth of the first.

		31		8+		2+
		31+		8+		?
		16		4+		$\frac{3}{4}$
		15		4+		$\frac{3}{4}$
		93+				6+



HT 123a

Fig. 4



			
	15		10
	6		4
	4		1
	10		
	30		15

HT 118

Fig. 5

In the Hagia Triada tablet no. 118 we again have a subsidiary list, in each case introduced by  only, rather than the usual + formula. Reading vertically, the 'appended' ratios are precisely two-thirds, two-thirds, a quarter, and (in the total) one-half (Fig. 5).

The following conclusions are suggested:

1. The sign-pair   on the Knossos account-bar P 116 may be best interpreted as 'subsidiary' or 'appended' (amount), and this meaning

would fall into line with the significance proposed by Meriggi for the same sign-pair on the seals, as 'son' or 'offspring'.

2. Δ may stand alone as an abbreviation for $\Delta\uparrow$.
3. The sign-pair $\nabla+$ in the Linear A accounts also seems to be used regularly to introduce a secondary or annexed account; and often, as in P 116, with numerals standing approximately in a round ratio with those of the main account or accounts.
4. In Linear A likewise, ∇ may be used on its own as an abbreviation for $\nabla+$.

From a study of the structure of one account-list we are led again to a significant point of comparison between the cursive hieroglyphic accounts and those in Linear A. These comparisons involve the established conventions and habits of mind among the communities of scribes; and these considerations, it is suggested, are much more significant than comparisons of sign-shape which may be speculative and arbitrary.

It remains to add that the Linear B group $\nabla\uparrow+$ (conventionally interpreted as *o-pe-ro*), and its abbreviated forms ∇ and \uparrow , regularly introduce subsidiary totals on the 'sheep', 'wool' and 'wheel' tablets from Knossos.