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THE ROUNDELS OF PHAISTOS*

All the roundels from Phaistos were found during the excavations conducted by D. Levi in 1955¹. About 6600 tablets, sealings, nodules and roundels came from the ruins of the third phase of the First Palace, the majority from under the floor of Room 25, which opens to the west of the central courtyard and leads to the storehouses. South-west of Room 25 two further sets of documents were found in Rooms LI–LV and in Room 11. This archive has thrown light on the functioning of the Minoan bureaucracy, which may be further clarified by the publication of the archive of sealings from Monastiraki².

Amongst these documents twelve roundels were found, nine of which, PH Wc 37–44 and Wc(?) 46, (the reason for the question mark after Wc is explained on page 105), were published by G. Pugliese Carratelli³ and re-published by L. Godart and J.-P. Olivier⁴,

* I am most grateful to E. Fiandra, E. Hallager and J. Weingarten for advice and suggestions and to J. C. Iacono A.I.L. for the translation of the text into English. Abbreviations:

Hallager, Identical Seals = E. Hallager, "Identical Seals on Roundels and Other Documents", in: *Sceaux Minoens et Mycéniens. Chronologie, fonction et interprétation, Actes du IVe Symposium International sur les Sceaux Minoens et Mycéniens*, forthcoming.

Levi, L'archivio = D. Levi, "L'archivio di cretule di Festòs", *ASAtene* 35–36 (n.s. 19–20), 1957–58, 7–192.

¹ D. Levi, *Festòs e la civiltà minoica*, Rome 1976, and *L'archivio*.

² For Monastiraki see Kirsten in: F. Matz, *Forschungen auf Kreta*, Berlin 1951, 51 ss. and A. Kanta, "Monastiraki Amariou", in: *Πεπραγμένα τοῦ Ζ' Διεθνoῦς Κρητολογικοῦ Συνεδρίου*, Rethymno 1991, forthcoming. In particular on the sealings from Monastiraki see I. Pini, *CMS V 1*, Berlin 1975, 227–234 and L. Godart, *Le pouvoir de l'écrit*, Paris 1990, 141–149.

³ G. Pugliese Carratelli, "Nuove epigrafi minoiche da Festòs", *ASAtene* 35–36 (n.s. 19–20), 1957–58, 363–388.

⁴ L. Godart and J.-P. Olivier, *Recueil des inscriptions en linéaire A (= GORILA) vol. 2*, Paris 1979, 93–96.

while three uninscribed ones (PH Wc 49–51) were published together with the sealings first by E. Fiandra⁵, then by I. Pini⁶. Only recently has E. Hallager⁷ identified the real nature of these documents. E. Fiandra places two of these three documents in class R, which “rappresenta cretule che non sono servite a sigillare; hanno la forma di piccoli parallelepipedi con impronte di sigilli sulle facce”⁸, and the third document in class S together with roundels PH Wc 37–41, defining this class of sealings as “etichette o ricevute di forma lenticolare con due bolli perpendicolari all’orlo e brevi scritte in lineare A sulle facce”⁹.

⁵ E. Fiandra, “A che cosa servivano le cretule di Festòs?”, in: Πεπραγμένα τοῦ Β Διεθνoῦς Κρητολογικοῦ Συνεδρίου, Athens 1968, vol. I, 383–395.

⁶ I. Pini, CMS II 5, Berlin 1970, 1–289.

⁷ Hallager, Identical Seals, passim.

⁸ Fiandra, op. cit. (supra n. 5) 390.

⁹ Loc. cit. I think it could be useful thirty years after the thorough analysis by E. Fiandra, and in the light of the surveys at the Museum of Heraklion by E. Hallager and the author of this article together with A. Tzigunaki, to re-arrange the two classes of sealings R and S which mostly contain documents other than sealings.

Discovery Site	Document	Class R by Fiandra Inventory no.	Seal no.
Room LI	<i>nodulus</i>	678	282 of Levi
Room 25	<i>nodulus</i>	780θ	124 of Levi
Room 25	<i>nodulus</i>	789θ	167 of Levi
Room 25	sealing	801	51 of Levi
Room 25	<i>nodulus</i>	784κγ	93 of Levi
Room 25	roundel (PH Wc 50)	820	12 of Levi
Room 25	roundel (PH Wc 51)	927	186 of Levi
Room 25	<i>nodulus</i>	975	64 of Pini (CMS V 1)
Discovery Site	Document	Class S by Fiandra Inventory no.	Seal no.
Room LI	sealing	675	277 of Levi
Room 25	roundel (PH Wc 49)	692α	240 of Levi
Room LI	roundel (PH Wc 37)	1487	272 of Levi
Room LI	roundel (PH Wc 38)	1488	274 of Levi
Room LI	roundel (PH Wc 39)	1489	279 of Levi
Room LI	roundel (PH Wc 40)	1490	271 of Levi
Room 25	roundel (PH Wc 41)	1530	64 of Levi

As shown in the list above, class R contains five *noduli*, two roundels and a sealing, while class S is made up of six roundels and a sealing.

Shapes, Dimensions, Origin and Dating

Roundels from Phaistos present various shapes, some of which are not to be found elsewhere. In particular, PH Wc 37 and 39, each bearing two seal impressions, show a rather deformed edge, and their shape, also recorded at Haghia Triada, reminds us of the clay labels with hieroglyphic script. Roundels PH Wc 38, 40, 41 and 49 have a slightly deformed edge and appear therefore in a roughly circular shape. PH Wc 50 and 51 are of a quadrangular shape, which is also well recorded at Haghia Triada, but the most characteristic shapes at Phaistos are PH Wc(?) 42, 43, 44, and 46. In detail, PH Wc(?) 42, 43 and 46 take the shape of clay pastilles of a rather flat circular form, with a thin edge unsuitable for a seal impression. PH Wc(?) 44 is *sui generis*, being cupola-shaped, with one side flat and the other slightly convex showing three deep fingerprints, probably of thumb, index and middle fingers.

If we consider the shapes of these four documents, we doubt if they ought to be classified as roundels. What could be the significance of a 'roundel' with no seal impression, or of a document like PH Wc(?) 44, which does not even appear in the shape of a roundel?

One wonders whether, for instance, a document like PH Wc(?) 42, which bears only the ideogram for wine with no indication of quantity either in figures or by means of seal impressions, could have the same function as a roundel like HT Wc 3024, which, apart from an ideogram and a short inscription with numerals, bears also seal impressions.

Roundels from Phaistos date back to MM II B¹⁰ (1700 B.C.), the time of the destruction of the First Palace: those from Haghia Triada to LM I B. The two groups of documents are thus separated by about two and a half centuries and it may be tempting to explain the differences in shape by lapse of time. But the roundel in its classical shape is already present at Phaistos in the layers of MM II B (see PH Wc 37–41). All the Phaistos roundels of anomalous shape originate from Room 25, and all those of classical shape from Room LI – except for PH Wc 41, the discovery site of which is still disputed.

¹⁰ The dating of the documents found in Rooms 25 and LI is still a matter of dispute. Levi, *L'archivio* 385–401, and E. Fiandra, *op. cit.* (supra n. 5) 385, note 2, date the two rooms from MM II A and MM II B respectively. For a more detailed discussion regarding the dating of the documents from Phaistos see F. Vandenaebale, "La chronologie des documents en linéaire A", *BCH* 109, 1985, 12–15.

G. Pugliese Carratelli¹¹ regards it as originating from Room LI, and L. Godart and J.-P. Olivier¹² accept his opinion, but E. Fiandra¹³ who excavated Room 25 with Levi attributes it to Room 25. In the contemporary inventory, PH Wc(?) 43 and 42 (certainly originating from Room 25) and PH Wc 41 were catalogued together under number 1096 a, b and c. Finally, the seal of PH Wc 41 also impressed a sealing (HM 858) from Room 25¹⁴. On balance, therefore, it seems that PH Wc 41 and the other 'roundels' of anomalous shape and contents all came from Room 25; but the difference of age between these and those from Room LI is probably not great nor significant.

PH Wc(?) 44 is so different from all other roundels and any inscribed documents that I would not regard it as a roundel. It differs not only morphologically, but also in the way in which it was shaped. A clay ball was grasped with three fingers and pressed against a flat surface so as to obtain a flat side where a sign was to be incised. I disagree with E. Hallager¹⁵, who thinks that the impressions were of administrative purpose, nor would I say that they bear any relation to the procedure recorded in the Middle East, where sometimes officers who did not possess a seal would impress their thumbprint to acknowledge a transaction¹⁶. I believe that this document ought to be considered as *sui generis*, though for convenience it will be catalogued among the roundels.

Similarly, PH Wc(?) 42, 43 and 46 with no edge to bear impressions are not roundels *stricto sensu*. Without a seal impression, they cannot record the second part of the transaction between the seal owner and the officer in charge of the storehouse, i.e. the validation of the document by the seal owner through the seal impression. It follows that PH Wc(?) 42, 43, 44 and 46 had a function different

¹¹ Pugliese Carratelli, op. cit. (supra n. 3) 376.

¹² GORILA 2, LVII.

¹³ Op. cit. (supra n. 5) table P'E'Z'.

¹⁴ Hallager, Identical Seals. When correcting the proofs I was informed by E. Hallager that, at the Scuola Archeologica Italiana, there exists an index-card of roundel PH Wc 41 stating that the roundel originated from Room 25 as I hypothesized.

¹⁵ E. Hallager, "On the Track of Minoan Bureaucrats and their 'Clients'", in: Εύλαπινη. Τόμος Τιμητικός για τὸν Καθηγητὴ Νικόλαο Πλάτωνα, Heraklion 1987, 349–350 plate I, d–f.

¹⁶ I. Vincentelli, "Clay Sealings from Jebel Barkal in Sudan: Survival of an Ancient System", in: Archives before Writing. Proceedings of the International Colloquium Oriolo Romano, October 23–25 1991, Rome 1994, 363–374 and fig. 8.

from that of the actual roundels. Dated to MM II B, they were not in use any more in LM I B. It is for this reason that we have placed a question mark after the symbol **Wc** for the pseudo-roundels 42, 43, 44 and 46.

Finally, **PH Wc 45** and **47**, included in GORILA¹⁷ among the roundels, were rightly excluded from the catalogue by E. Hallager. In fact, **PH Wc 45**¹⁸ is definitely a sealing, since it shows on the reverse the impression of a sealed object, and **PH Wc 47**¹⁹ is the bottom of a vase with a sign incised.

As for the dimensions, **PH Wc 38** is the biggest roundel from Phaistos (cm. 3.70 x 3.80 x 1.00), **PH Wc(?) 42** being the smallest (cm. 1.70 x 1.70 x 0.40), while **PH Wc 50** is the smallest of the acknowledged roundels.

Among the sealings from Phaistos were about fifteen clay pastilles of various dimensions, some with an unpolished edge with numerous small cracks, and others with a properly polished edge. The first kind might have been used as lids for small vases or as tokens for calculating, as already suggested by Levi²⁰ (see Pl. 7); the others were certainly roundels ready to be impressed. Of these, five well-preserved specimens of between 1.5–4.0 cm. in diameter are illustrated in Pl. 8.

The Inscriptions

Among the twelve roundels found at Phaistos nine are inscribed and three are uninscribed. In total there are five different groups of signs and seven isolated signs with either an acrophonic or an ideographic value (**AB 54** appears three times, **AB 02** twice and signs **AB 21** and **A 320** once each, see Table 1).

The five groups of signs are *hapax legomena* and sign **A 320** only appears on tablets and roundels from Phaistos. As for the group of signs appearing on **PH Wc(?) 46**, we follow L. Godart and J.-P. Olivier who abstain “de toute transcription là où elle se serait révélée

¹⁷ GORILA 2, 96.

¹⁸ Hallager, Identical Seals.

¹⁹ P. Militello, “Per una classificazione degli archivi nel mondo egeo”, *Sileno* 17, 1991, 329.

²⁰ Levi, *L'archivio* 56.

fallacieuse"²¹, while for the sign on PH Wc(?) 44 we suggest the 'reading' AB 21.

Table 1

	OBVERSE	REVERSE
PH Wc 37	AB 77 - A 314 - 41	A 320
PH Wc 38	A 314 - AB 59 - 80	
PH Wc 39	AB 57 - 07	AB 02
PH Wc 40	A 320 - 320 - AB 80	AB 02
PH Wc 41	AB 131a 1 A 707	
PH Wc(?) 42	AB 131a	
PH Wc(?) 43	AB 131a	
PH Wc(?) 44	AB 21	
PH Wc(?) 46	∨ Γ	

No signs are incised on seal impressions from Phaistos, while the opposite is the case at Haghia Triada.

The Seal Impressions

Table 2

Document	Seal	Seal Shape	No. of impressions	No. of impressions damaged or obliterated
PH Wc 37	272	elliptical	2	of which 1 obliterated
PH Wc 38	274	elliptical	1	
PH Wc 39	279	elliptical	2	of which 1 obliterated
PH Wc 40	271	elliptical	2	
PH Wc 41	64	circular	2	of which 1 damaged
PH Wc(?) 42	no seal			
PH Wc(?) 43	no seal			
PH Wc(?) 44	no seal			
PH Wc(?) 46	no seal			
PH Wc 49	240	elliptical	3	of which 2 damaged
PH Wc 50	12	elliptical	4	
PH Wc 51	186	rectangular	3	
TOTAL	8 types		19 impressions	

²¹ GORILA 2, LX.

Each individual behind these seals has impressed one roundel at the most. Contrary to what happens at Haghia Triada, none of our eight individuals, who dealt with the administration using roundels, had a high position (see also, for example, the owner of seal no. 31 of Haghia Triada). What is most striking is that six seals out of eight only appear on roundels, and in the two other cases the seal owner has impressed a sealing as well as a roundel²². The owner of seal no. 64 of Levi has impressed both roundel **PH Wc 41** and sealing **HM 858**, while the owner of seal no. 240 has impressed both uninscribed roundel **PH Wc 49** (**HM 692a**) and sealing **HM 692b**. This confirms the tendency, also recorded at Haghia Triada, towards some sort of “specialization” of the officers in charge of administrative matters, who used roundels. This tendency is more evident in Phaistos than elsewhere²³.

Also at Phaistos there exist cases of the obliteration of seal impressions. Roundels **PH Wc 37** and **39** have been impressed with two seal impressions each, but in both cases the individual who carried out the transaction made a mistake in stamping two impressions rather than the single one necessary. Once he realized the mistake, he tried to erase the extra impression by using his finger to rub off the clay which was, by then, almost dry²⁴. In neither case did the operation completely spoil the seal motif, which remains perfectly recognizable.

Multiple sealing does not appear on the roundels from Phaistos, while in many cases two individuals have impressed their seals on sealings.

The Scribes

The scarcity of signs at our disposal for the roundels from Phaistos does not permit us to analyze the scribes' hands. Out of nine inscribed roundels, four have only one sign incised. It is possible to observe that the scribe of roundel **PH Wc 38** is not the same as that of **PH Wc 40**. Sign **AB 80** appears on both documents but in completely different forms; the appearance of the roundels is also different: despite bearing two impressions each, they are visibly dissimilar in shape.

²² Hallager, *Identical Seals*.

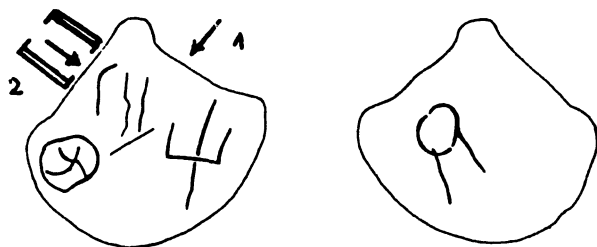
²³ M. Perna, “The Roundels of Haghia Triada”, *Kadmos* 33, 1994, 12.

²⁴ Hallager, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 15), 350, pl. I, g–j. In the article only **PH Wc 39** is mentioned.

Catalogue

N.B. Seal impressions will be numbered anti-clockwise (from right to left). The drawings of the roundels were provided by L. Godart (scale 1:1). The photographs were taken by the author.

PH Wc 37 (HM 1487)



Discovery site: Room LI.

Description

Dimensions: cm. 3.10 x 3.00 x 0.80.

Opistograph, completely preserved roundel of a reddish brown colour (Cod. Munsell HUE 2.5 YR 4.5/6 red). Fine, well-baked clay. Very evident fingerprints on the whole roundel surface but not on the seal impressions. Presence of small whitish veins of limestone on the obverse and the reverse.

The obverse is flat but rises near the seal impressions. It bears an inscription consisting of three deeply incised signs in Linear A. The second sign of the inscription appears damaged through contact with the fingers. Two different fingerprints are clearly noticeable, left when the edge was impressed twice.

The reverse is slightly concave on the left and convex on the right. Very evident fingerprints.

One sign is deeply incised.

The edge is somewhat deformed by two seal impressions type 272 of Levi.

Seal impression no. 2 has been obliterated by smoothing the clay when it was already partly dry, as can be inferred from the fact that the motif is still visible. Evident smears in the clay are noticeable on the obliterated impression. The two impressions are stamped in the same direction. Impression no. 1 is rather deeply stamped.

The Inscription

recto: .1 AB 77 - A 314 - AB 41
verso: .1 A 320

Sign AB 77 appears in a particular variant, with two undulating lines criss-crossing inside a circle.

The second sign of the inscription is hypothetically interpreted in GORILA as A 314²⁵.

Sign 41 is of a common form.

The Seal Impression

Dimensions: cm. 1.6 x 1.3.

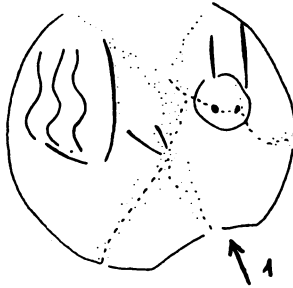
Elliptical seal.

The two seal impressions belong to seal no. 272 of Levi (Fig. 1, Pl. 9), who describes the motif as “variante di quadrifoglio, con due fiori di giglio alternati a due calici striati negli spazi tra le quattro foglie”²⁶.



Fig. 1. Drawing of the impression of seal no. 272 of Levi from the archives of CMS, scale 2:1.

PH Wc 38 (HM 1488)



Discovery site: Room LI.

Description

Dimensions: cm. 3.70 x 3.80 x 1.00.

Incompletely preserved roundel, and reconstructed from four fragments. Fine, well-baked clay of a dark grey colour (Cod. Munsell HUE 5YR 4.5/1 grey/dark grey). Evident fingerprints on the obverse, the reverse and the edge.

The obverse, fragmentary and slightly convex, bears an inscription consisting of three signs in Linear A, deeply incised.

²⁵ GORILA 2, 94.

²⁶ Levi, L'archivio 133.

The reverse, fragmentary and uninscribed, appears slightly convex.

The edge is fragmentary, and thickened near the only seal impression. The impression is damaged by a crack in the clay.

The Inscription

recto: .1 A 314 - AB 59 - 80

Sign A 314 appears in the variant with three undulating parallel strokes originating from a horizontal stroke perpendicular to them.

The second sign of the inscription is damaged and is hypothetically interpreted in GORILA as AB 59²⁷.

Sign AB 80 is incised in a rather stylized form: a circle with two small dots inside and two vertical strokes moving upwards from the circumference.

The Seal Impression

Dimensions: cm. 1.4 x 1.0. Elliptical intaglio.

The shallow impression belongs to seal no. 274 of Levi (Fig. 2, Pl. 11).

This type only appears on this roundel and does not appear on sealings. Levi describes it as: “Motivo forse derivato dalla ‘stella di Davide’, con un triangolo circondato da elementi a zig-zag lungo gli orli e contenente nell’interno tre ramoscelli partenti da una massa centrale, apparentemente a triangolo pieno; dei dischetti sono inseriti a metà di ogni lato del triangolo esterno.”²⁸



Fig. 2. Drawing of the impression of seal no. 274 of Levi from the archives of CMS, scale 2:1.

PH Wc 39 (HM 1489)

Discovery site: Room LI.

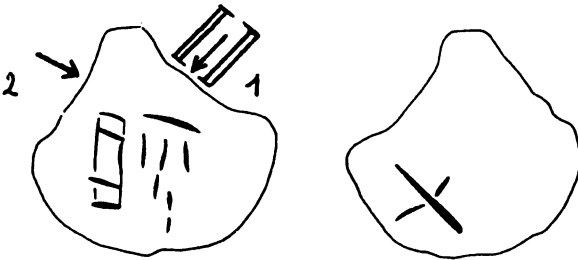
Description

Dimensions: cm. 3.00 x 3.00 x 0.90.

Opistograph, completely preserved roundel. Fine, well-baked clay of a reddish brown colour (Cod. Munsell HUE 5YR 4/3.5 reddish brown). Fingerprints are faint on the obverse and more evident on the reverse.

²⁷ GORILA 2, 94.

²⁸ Levi, L'archivio 133.



The obverse is rather concave and irregular. Two signs in Linear A are very deeply incised with a rather thick stylus. Signs were incised after the seal impressions, since the scribe perforated the clay at the edge, while inscribing the first sign on a protuberance of clay on the obverse caused by the depth of seal impression no. 2.

The reverse has a convex and rather irregular surface. One sign in Linear A is very deeply incised off-centre.

The edge is rather thick because of the two seal impressions which deform it, thus producing the characteristic shape of a clay label in hieroglyphic. The two impressions belong to seal no. 279 of Levi. Impression no. 1 was smoothed over when the clay was rather dry, thus obtaining a polished surface, although the motif is easily recognisable. The two seal impressions are stamped in the same direction.

The Inscription

recto: .1 AB 57 - 07
verso: .1 AB 02

The signs of the inscription are of a common form.

The Seal Impression

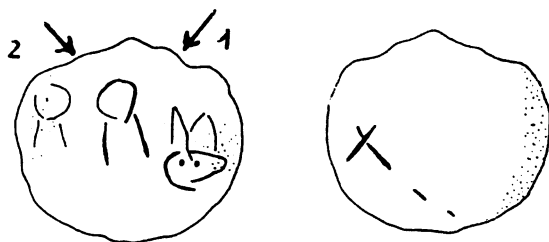
Dimensions: cm. 1.80 x 1.10.

Impression no. 2 of seal no. 279 of Levi (Fig. 3, Pl. 12), damaged in part by the emergence of a yellowish granule, reproduces the motif almost entirely. The seal represents a shell (triton) with a spray next to it. Elliptical seal. Only example recorded.



Fig. 3. Drawing of the impression of seal no. 279 of Levi from the archives of CMS, scale 2:1.

PH Wc 40 (HM 1490)



Discovery site: Room LI.

Description

Dimensions: cm. 2.90 x 2.70 x 0.90.

Opistograph, almost completely preserved roundel. Part of the surface of the obverse is missing. Badly baked clay of a reddish brown colour (Cod. Munsell HUE 2.5 YR 4/5 reddish brown-red).

The obverse is slightly convex and irregular given the loss of some surface clay fragments. This damaged the first of the three signs of the inscription without compromising legibility. Some whitish granules emerge near the first and second sign of the inscription.

The three signs in Linear A are deeply incised. Barely visible fingerprints.

The reverse, inscribed, bears only one sign, deeply incised off-centre, as on PH Wc 39. The surface is slightly damaged given the loss of a fragment of surface clay.

The edge is slightly thickened only near the two seal impressions. The two impressions, which belong to seal no. 271 of Levi, are shallow and do not permit us precisely to recognize the motif. Impression no. 1 is the better preserved.

The Inscription

recto: .1 A 320 - A320 - AB 80

verso: .1 AB 03

Sign A 320 only appears at Phaistos on roundels PH Wc 37 and 40 and on tablet PH 16a always in the same form.

Sign AB 80 appears in a less stylized form than on PH Wc 38. Sign AB 03 shows the vertical stroke divided into three small strokes of decreasing dimensions.

The Seal Impression

Dimensions: cm. 1.20 x 0.60.

Levi describes the impression of seal no. 271 as “motivo ornamentale, con un elemento a gancio partente da un angolo . . .”²⁹, but it is absolutely impossible to identify anything. Unique example. Elliptical intaglio.

²⁹ Levi, L'archivio 132.

PH Wc 41 (HM 1530)



Discovery site: Room 25.

Description

Dimensions: cm. 2.00 x 2.10 x 1.00.

Incompletely preserved roundel. Part of the edge and the reverse is missing. Coarse, badly baked clay of a light brown colour (Co. Munsell HUE 5YR 6/4 light reddish brown). Very evident fingerprints on the obverse, the reverse, the edge and on the seal impressions.

The obverse has a very concave surface. It bears, clearly and rather deeply incised, only the ideogram for wine followed by a unit plus a fraction.

The reverse, uninscribed, is concave and bears two series of fingerprints which criss-cross, thus showing the way in which the roundel was rotated between the fingers while receiving the two seal impressions.

A fragment of clay is missing from the edge since, during the accidental baking of the document, a clay fragment broke off as a consequence of the burning of a piece of straw or other vegetable matter trapped within the clay. This can be inferred from the groove it left in the clay. This break has cut off half a seal impression (no. 2), already damaged by contact with the finger while the clay was still wet. Fingerprints are also evident on seal impression no. 1, probably as a consequence of the small dimension of the roundel, which made it rather difficult to hold while being stamped. Pugliese Carratelli reports only one seal impression³⁰. The two impressions are stamped in a direction oblique to the major axis of the edge.

The Inscription

recto: .1 AB 131a 1 A 707

Sign AB 131a appears here in a peculiar variant with one of the two horizontal strokes replaced by a curved one. A paleographically closer example is roundel PH Wc(?) 43.

The Seal Impression

Dimensions: cm. 1.15 x 1.15.

³⁰ Pugliese Carratelli, op. cit. (supra n. 3), 376.

The two seal impressions belong to seal type 64 of Levi (Fig. 4, Pl. 13), who describes it as “croce con disco centrale e dischetti . . . fra le quattro braccia e con le estremità di queste terminanti a rametti di due angoli ciascuno”³¹. Round intaglio.

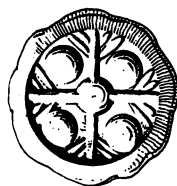


Fig. 4. Drawing of the impression of seal type 64 of Levi from the archives of CMS, scale 2:1.

PH Wc(?) 42 (HM 1531)



Discovery site: Room 25

Description (Pl. 3)

Dimensions: cm. 1.70 x 1.70 x 0.40.

Almost completely preserved roundel of a light brown colour (Cod. Munsell HUE 5YR 6/4 light reddish brown). Well-baked clay with minute whitish inclusions.

The obverse has a slightly concave surface, with barely visible fingerprints. A slight erosion of the surface clay touches the only incised sign without affecting its design. The sign was drawn by means of a particularly sharp stylus.

The reverse, uninscribed and slightly convex, shows light fingerprints.

The edge is extremely thin and bears no seal impressions.

The Inscription

recto: .1 AB 131a

Sign AB 131 appears in a form very similar to that on PH Wc(?) 43.

PH Wc(?) 43 (HM 1532)

Discovery site: Room 25

Description

Dimensions: cm. [1.40] x 1.90 x 0.80.

³¹ Levi, op. cit. (supra n. 20), 76.



Unpreserved roundel, the bottom part being missing. Fine, well-baked clay of a light brown colour (Cod. Munsell HUE 5YR 6/4 light reddish brown), with fingerprints on the obverse and the reverse.

The obverse shows a polished and flat surface. One sign is fairly deeply incised.

The reverse, uninscribed, has a very convex surface.

The edge, rather thin, does not bear seal impressions. A slight depression of the edge is due to the fact that the roundel was held between two fingers while being inscribed.

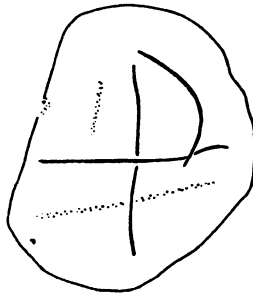
No seal impressions.

The Inscription

recto .1 AB 131a

Sign AB 131a appears in a version similar to that on roundel PH Wc(?) 42.

PH Wc(?) 44 (HM 1533)



Discovery site: Room 25.

Description (Pls. 1, 2)

Dimensions: cm. 2.80 x 3.80 x 2.10.

Completely preserved roundel of a peculiar shape. Fine, well-baked clay of a dark brown colour (Cod. Munsell HUE 5YR 5/5 reddish brown-yellowish red).

The obverse is flat but for a protuberance of clay at the top.

Only one sign (AB 21) appears, deeply incised by means of a stylus with a broken point, as one can infer from the double groove left in the clay.

One horizontal stroke, perpendicular to the vertical bar of AB 21, appears more shallow, as it was incised when the clay was already drying.

A small vertical bar, with no apparent meaning, is incised left of the sign.

The reverse has a particular appearance. It shows three fingerprints (thumb, index and middle fingers) deeply impressed in the clay. The thumb impression also shows the nail-mark.

The edge shows some minuscule cracks in the clay. No seal impressions appear.

The Inscription

recto: .1 AB 21

Very stylised sign.

PH Wc(?) 46 (HM 1536)



Discovery site: Room 25.

Description

Dimensions: cm. [2.30] x 3.50 x 0.70.

Incompletely preserved roundel with a very flat shape obtained by compressing a clay pastille between the two hands, as appears from the palm-line imprints in the shape of a capital "M".

The obverse is flat with evident fingerprints.

Two signs appear here, shallowly incised.

The reverse, uninscribed and slightly convex, shows very evident palm-line imprints.

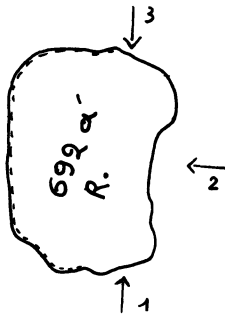
The edge is otherwise rather thin.

No seal impressions.

The Inscription

Of the two signs only the first probably belongs to Linear A. We suggest that it should be identified as AB 122, here appearing in a rather stylised variant, with three dots to replace the three small leaves which appear in its normal version. The second sign cannot be identified as Linear A.

PH Wc 49 (HM 692α)



Discovery site: Room 25.

Description (Pl. 4)

Dimensions: cm. 2.87 x 2.20 x 1.14.

Uninscribed roundel, one-third of which is missing.

Coarse, well-baked clay of a light brown colour (Cod. Munsell HUE 7.5 YR 5.5/4 light brown/brown). Fingerprints appear also on the obverse, but are more evident on the reverse and the edge.

The obverse has an undulating surface which is also irregular given the presence of brownish granules.

The reverse is seriously damaged, since most of the surface clay has come off.

The edge, again not entirely preserved, shows a well-preserved, deeply stamped impression type 240 of Levi (Pl. 15). At the two sides of the impression two more impressions of the same type appear.

The Seal Impression

Dimensions: cm. 1.40 x 1.00.

Impression no. 1 reproduces the entire motif.

The motif shows a lion biting an animal which is difficult to identify. The legs of this animal are extremely stylised; its body is flat and elongated while the neck, head and, above all,

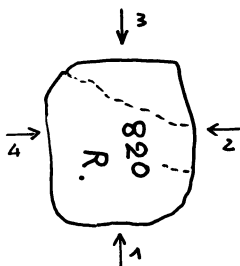


Fig. 5. Drawing of the impression of seal 240 of Levi from the archives of CMS, scale 2:1.

the feathered tail are more realistically drawn. This figure, anyway, is relegated to the side, the lion dominating the motif almost entirely. The lion's tail is pointing up and between the legs there is a grass motif. Impression no. 2 only shows part of the lion's head, impression no. 3 the back part of the body with the tail. The three impressions are stamped in the same direction.

As well as on roundel 692 α , seal impression no. 240 also appears on sealing 692 β which belongs to class M of Fiandra and was also discovered in Room 25³².

PH Wc 50 (HM 820)



Discovery site: Room 25.

Description (Pl. 5)

Dimensions: cm. 2.12 x 1.98 x 1.10.

Uninscribed, incompletely preserved roundel of a light beige colour (Cod. Munsell HUE 5YR 3/5 reddish brown/yellowish red). Document of a quadrangular shape, consisting of two fragments. Barely visible fingerprints on the two sides and on the edge.

The obverse has a concave, rather irregular surface, given that the document is broken in two.

The reverse is incomplete; the surface is irregular and slightly convex.

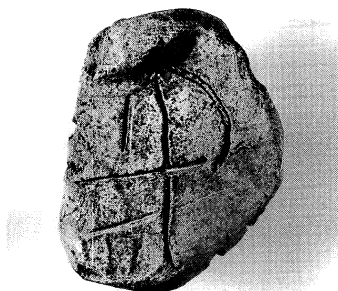
The edge, which is, again, incomplete, shows four seal impressions type 12 of Levi (Fig. 6, Pl. 16).

The Seal Impression

Dimensions: cm. 1.50 x 1.00. Elliptical intaglio.

The motif shows two groups of concentric circles next to each other. The four impressions are shallowly stamped. Impression no. 1 is damaged, impression no. 4 is off-centre and carelessly impressed.

³² Fiandra, op. cit. (supra n. 5), 389 and fig. PNE'.

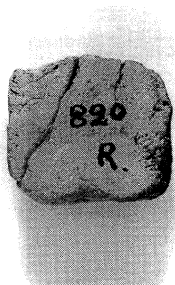


Pls. 1 and 2 The pseudo-roundel PH Wc(?) 44, obverse and reverse (scale 1:1)



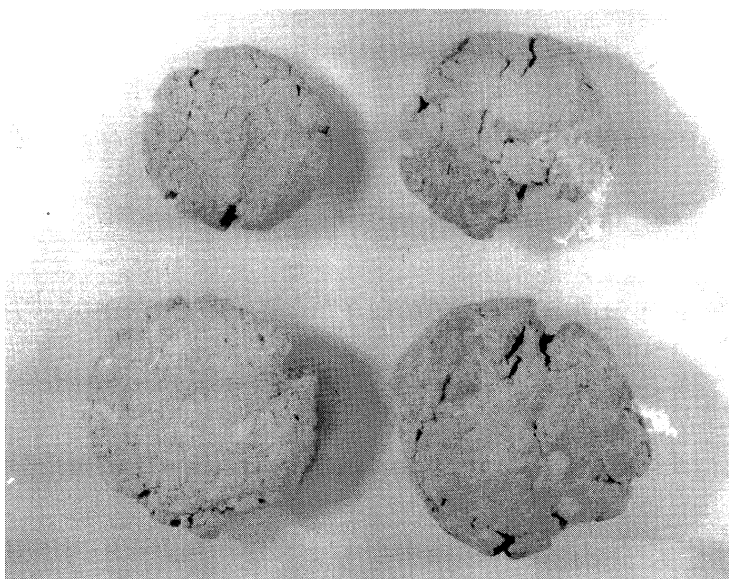
Pl. 3 The pseudo-roundel PH Wc(?) 42 (scale 1:1)

Pl. 4 The unscripted roundel PH Wc 49 (scale 1:1)

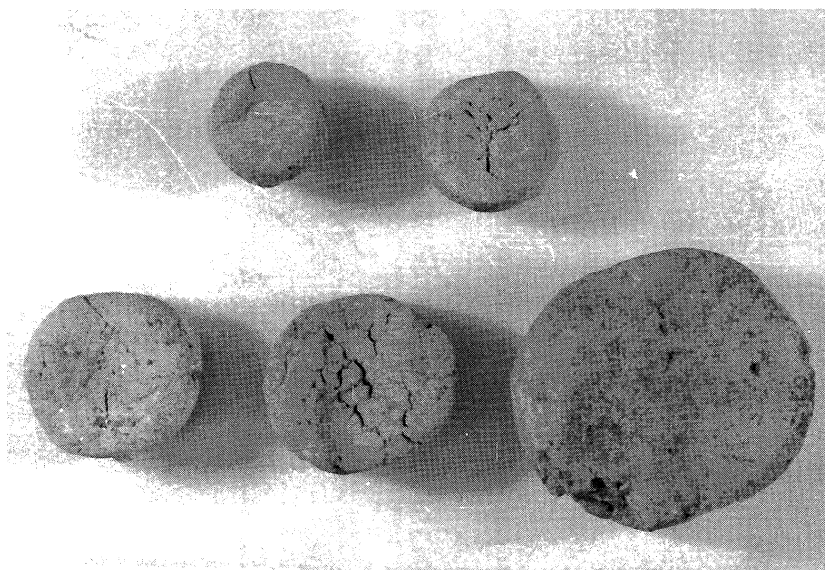


Pl. 5 The unscripted roundel PH Wc 50 (scale 1:1)

Pl. 6 The unscripted roundel PH Wc 51 (scale 1:1)



Pl. 7 Clay pastilles of uncertain function (scale 1:1)



Pl. 8 Five clay roundels, still unimpressed (scale 1:1)



Pl. 9 The impression of seal 272 of Levi (scale 2:1)



Pl. 10 The obliterated impression of seal 272 of Levi (scale 2:1)



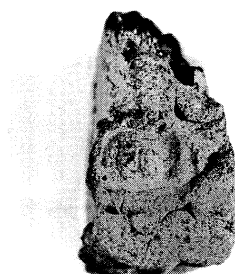
Pl. 11 The impression of seal 274 of Levi (scale 2:1)



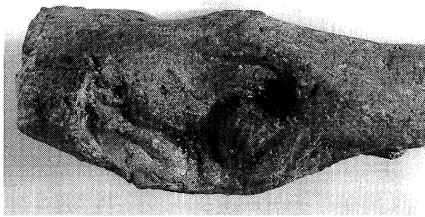
Pl. 12 The impression of seal 279 of Levi (scale 2:1)



Pl. 13 The impression of seal 64 of Levi (scale 2:1)



Pl. 14 The damaged impression of seal 64 of Levi (scale 2:1)



Pl. 15 The impression of seal 240 of Levi (scale 2:1)



Pl. 16 The impression of seal 12 of Levi (scale 2:1)



Pl. 17 The impression of seal 186 of Levi (scale 2:1)

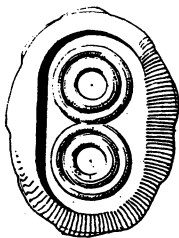
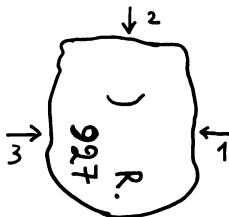


Fig. 6. Drawing of the impression of type 12 of Levi from the archives of CMS, scale 2:1.

PH Wc 51 (HM 927)



Discovery site: Room 25.

Description (Pl. 6)

Dimensions: cm. 2.28 x 1.93 x 0.75.

Uninscribed, completely preserved roundel of an irregularly quadrangular shape. Fine, well-baked clay of a rose beige colour (Cod. Munsell HUE 5YR 5.5/4 light reddish brown/reddish brown).

Presence of fingerprints on the two sides and on the edge, but not on the seal impressions.

The obverse is rather concave and shows a nail-mark near impression no. 2. This was left by the individual who impressed the roundel. A bar has been made completely accidentally.

The reverse has a concave, rather regular surface.

The edge, preserved and slightly thickened, bears three impressions type 186 of Levi (Pl. 17), all impressed in the same direction.

The Seal Impression

Dimensions: cm. 1.30 x 1.70.

The three impressions originate from a seal having the shape of a rectangle with rounded angles. These impressions only appear on this document and reproduce the entire seal motif. Levi describes it as "oinochoe ovale slanciata con becco rialzato e pieduccio svasato, sopra la bocca vi è una

massa incerta”³³. The “unknown quantity” seems to be a grass motif. The same type of vase also appears on some prismatic seals of the Giamalakis Collection³⁴, as well as on a circular seal from Kastelli Pediada near Knossos³⁵, which belongs to a group of seals recalling the manufacture of ceramics.

Seal impressions no. 1 and no. 2 show two small whitish granules which do not alter the motif.

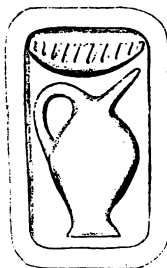


Fig. 7. Drawing of the impression of seal 186 of Levi from the archives of CMS, scale 2:1.

³³ Levi, *L'archivio* 104.

³⁴ A. Xenaki-Sakellariou, *Les cachets minoens de la Collection Giamalakis*, Études Crétoises X, Paris 1958, table XVII.

³⁵ P. P. Betancourt, *The History of Minoan Pottery*, 70 fig. 46.