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A MINOAN ROYAL SEAL ISSUED AT MALIA*

In his *Scripta Minoa I*, Sir Arthur Evans published a four-sided bead-seal from Sitia as P.29. This same seal is incorporated in the recent *Corpus Hieroglyphicarum Inscriptionum Cretae* (= CHIC) by Jean-Pierre Olivier and Louis Godart as no. 310 (Fig. 1). In these two publications, the sequence of the sides varies. Where Evans takes the side with the seated figure as his side *a*, Olivier–Godart consider the side with the seal sign as the first one. As more seals, like no. 193 from Zyro and no. 271 from Malia, can be shown to start with the seal sign, the latter option seems preferable and is followed here. If we stick to the sequence as presented by Evans, which is incompatible with the one presented by Olivier–Godart, the second side is his side *d*, the third his side *a* and the fourth his side *b*.

On the four sides of this seal from Sitia there can be distinguished 14 individual signs in sum, 12 of which have been recognized as such



Fig. 1 Four-sided bead-seal from Sitia (no. 310)

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by Evans, whereas Olivier–Godart reduce the total number of signs to 10, the remaining elements being taken for decorative motifs. Of these 14 signs in sum, the circle on Evans' side *a* takes a special position for its three times repetition between and after the other signs on this side. If we leave this problematic sign aside for a moment, the legend on the seal can be transliterated as follows (with Evans' numbers, marked by E, when a CHIC number is failing): 1. 056-034-057-*, 2. 042-038-E91, 3. 001-050-016, 4. E85/044/046.

Among these sequences of signs, we can discover two recurrent formulas. In the first place, the sequence 056-034-057 of side 1 recurs as much as 8 times in other inscriptions: no. 173 from Malia, no. 238 from Mochlos, no. 244 of unknown provenance, no. 248 from Palaikastro, no. 260 of unknown provenance, no. 281 from Malia, again, no. 295 of unknown provenance, and no. 296 also of unknown provenance. This formula also appears in a shortened variant without the last sign on seal no. 271 from Malia and on clay bar no. 61 also from Malia. Secondly, the sequence 044-046 of side 4, also known as "trowel-adze", recurs as much as 6 times in other inscriptions: no. 255 of unknown provenance, no. 257 of unknown provenance, no. 269 from Lasithi, no. 275 from Mirabello, no. 302 of unknown provenance, and no. 314 from Neapolis. From this last mentioned recurrence it may safely be deduced that the vertical bar which divides the two signs is just a repetition of the dividing line which sets "trowel-adze" apart from E85 "spider" for symmetrical reasons.

If we turn to the meaning these signs possibly convey, it deserves our attention that according to Evans the formula "trowel-adze" on side 4 probably represents an official title, whereas the seated figure at the beginning of side 3 "recalls the ideographs of persons on Egyptian scarabs" so that "the spear or javelin sign (...) and the head of a horned animal, apparently a goat, may indicate the personal name" (Evans 1909: 155). As I have argued elsewhere, E85 "spider" on side 4 is a typically Cretan deformation of the "bee" sign (020) when depicted from the top (021). Now, the "bee" sign constitutes a direct loan from Egyptian hieroglyphic (Gardiner 1957: L 2), where it expresses the royal title *bi'ty* "bee-keeper", a designation of the king of Lower Egypt. The following sequence 044-046 "trowel-adze" actually presents us with a bigraph, reading *pi-ti* "king", with the "trowel" sign representing the value *pi* as in the frequent standard formula "trowel-arrow" *pi-ni* "son (of)", which has an offshoot in Cypro-Minoan nos. 51–28 *pi-ni* of the same meaning, and "adze"

corresponding to Linear A L 88 *tī*. The general plausibility of this reconstruction is enhanced by the fact that the “bee” depicted from the top or its deformation the “spider”, as demonstrated by William C. Brice, ultimately develops into Linear A L 56 *pi* – a value acrophonically derived from *bi'ty* “king” (Woudhuizen 1997: 100; 105 ff.; Woudhuizen 2002; for the Linear A signs, see Meijer 1982: 38–47). In this manner, then, it can be shown that Evans was right in his suggestion that our side 4 represents an official title.

If we assume that Cretan hieroglyphic, notwithstanding some loans from Egyptian, is basically related to Luwian hieroglyphic from Anatolia, Evans' remark concerning side 3 becomes prophetic, indeed. The seated figure at the start (001) recalls the person pointing at himself, depicted either from the waist up or in full length (Laroche 1960: *1–2), designating the meaning *AMU* “I”. Note that the seated position of the person on our seal is somehow dictated by the lack of space, which prohibits the scribe to depict a person in full length. Next, the spear or javelin (050) is known from the eight-sided seal from Neapolis (no. 314) as a marker of the personal names, rendered in Luwian hieroglyphic by a vertical stroke (Laroche 1960: *383, 1; cf. Best–Woudhuizen 1989: 125). This is followed by what Evans in my opinion rightly determines as a goat's head (016), corresponding to Luwian hieroglyphic *101 *TARKU* – an element frequently used in Luwian onomastics. Accordingly, we arrive at the interpretation of side 3 as *AMU* *TARKU* “I (am) Tarkus”. An identical sequence can be found in a later Luwian hieroglyphic inscription from Karkamis (A2-3, phrase 1), reading: *AMU* *ka-tu-wa-sa* “I (am) Katuwas”. In line with this interpretation, the at first sight enigmatic three circles in between and following the signs of this particular side, while no doubt originating from the Egyptian solar symbol in the form of a solar disc or pupil of the eye (Gardiner 1957: N 5), recall the Luwian hieroglyphic indication of the sun-god in the form of three eyes on top of each other (Laroche 1960: *191) which in a participle formation *TIWATA-mi*- “blessed by the sun-god” forms a common element of the introductory phrase of later Luwian hieroglyphic inscriptions (Kululu 2, phrase 1; Çineköy, phrase 1; Karatepe, phrase 1). Hence, we should amplify “I (am) Tarkus, (person) blessed by the sun-god”.

Continuing along our line of thought that Cretan hieroglyphic is basically related to Luwian hieroglyphic, we easily recognize the first two elements of the standard formula at the start of side 1 (056 and 034) as *SASA* “seal” (Laroche 1960: *327) and *UTNA* “land” (Laroche 1960: *228). This is followed by a stylized rendering of a striding

man holding a staff (depicted upside down here), corresponding to the Egyptian indication *sr* of an official of lower rank (Gardiner 1957: A 21). In sum, the formula expresses the notion “seal (with respect to) the land (and) official(s)”. The true nature of the “double spiral” above the sign for “land”, which is not registered as a separate sign by either Evans or Olivier–Godart and in fact concerns a hapax legomenon, remains unclear. Possibly, like the three circles of side 3, it designates a solar symbol, as argued by Jan Best (forthcoming).

The second side is characterized by two signs with easily recognizable counterparts in Linear A. Thus the “double axe” (042) corresponds to L 52 *a* and the “gate” (038) to L 32 *ya*. The final sign on this side, consisting of four intersecting circles (E91), may well be considered a graphic variant of the cross with a circle on each extremity (070). If so, it likely corresponds to Linear A L 22 *lū*, in which case we arrive at the reading *a-ya-lū* for the entire sequence (for the distinction of the long vowel *ū*, see Best 2000: 27 f.). As demonstrated by Jan Best in our Alverna meetings, the latter sequence is paralleled in graphic variant with L 69 *lu* for a Linear A inscription on a golden ring from Mavro Spelio, reading *a-ya-lu* (Godart–Olivier 1982: 152–3 KN Zf 13). Now, *ayalu* is, for its association with Semitic *ajalu* “stag”, explained by Best as the Semitic designation of the Cretan town Malia, otherwise indicated in Cretan hieroglyphic by a deer with prominent antlers or, as a pars pro toto, by the antlers themselves (Best 1996–7: 116; 122). The counterparts of the latter signs in Luwian hieroglyphic (Laroche 1960: *102–3) express the original value *KARUWAR* or *KURUNT*, developing into *RUWANT* or *rú* at a later time. This development, however, can be positively shown to have already occurred in the Late Bronze Age thanks to the seals of *Halparuntias*, written with the deer in full for the expression of the value *rú* (Herbordt 1998: 313; 317, fig. 4, 3–4). In short, we appear to be confronted here with a Luwian designation of the town of Malia by the stag as an emblem or its phonetic rendering *rú* as an abbreviation¹ – to my eyes a clear indication that we are dealing with the hieroglyphic counterpart of Linear B *ru-ki-to* “Lyktos” (Ventris–Chadwick 1973: glossary, s.v.). The latter town name occurs in the itinerary of Aegean place names from Amenhotep III’s (1390–1352 BC) temple tomb at Kom el-Hetan (Thebes) between

¹ Note in this connection, along with Best (1996–7: 123–4), also Linear B *e-ra-po ri-me-ne* “at Deer Harbour” (PY An 657), which is compared by van Effenterre (1990–1: 89) with Cretan *Elaphō Limna*.

Amnisos and Sitia – i.e. exactly where we would expect the mention of Malia. All in all, the seal under consideration, although discovered at Sitia, appears to originate from Malia.

In sum, then, we arrive at the following transliteration and interpretation of seal no. 310 from Sitia: 1. *SASA UTNA magistratus* “seal (with respect to) the land (and) official(s)”, 2. *a-ya-lū* “(of) Ayalu (= Malia)”, 3. *AMU TARKU* (3x solar disc) “I (am) Tarkus, (person) blessed by the sun-god”, 4. *bi'ty/pi-tī* “king”. This interpretation closely adheres to the one I proposed for the three-sided prism-seal no. 271 from Malia, likewise presenting 1. the seal-land formula (be it without mention of the official(s)), followed by 2. the town's name *sā-hur-wa* “Scheria (= Hagia Triada)”, and 3. the title *la+PĀRANA* “labarnas” and personal name *TARKU-MUWA* “Tarkumuwas” of the owner – the latter two categories being combined here on one side of the seal and almost entirely encircled in a cartouche-like manner to stress their relationship (Best–Woudhuizen 1989: 115–8). A notable difference, however, between these two inscriptions is formed by the composition of the script. In the case of seal no. 271, this is entirely made up of signs with a counterpart in Luwian hieroglyphic, whereas in the case of no. 310, next to signs with a counterpart in Luwian hieroglyphic (4x), those with a counterpart in Egyptian hieroglyphic (3x) and Linear A (4x) occur. The latter category especially is, in my view, indicative of a more advanced stage in the development of the Cretan hieroglyphic script, and hence of a later date. As I have assigned seal no. 271 from Malia to the general period of c. 1900–1600 BC, our seal no. 310 from Sitia may well belong to the overall period of c. 1650–1450 BC, i.e. to about the same period as seal no. 193 from Zyro, which also shows evidence of intrusion of Linear A influence in the form of the “sepia” sign (Woudhuizen forthc.).

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