

THREE RE-DISCOVERED LINEAR A INSCRIPTIONS FROM KNOSSOS

It was recently suggested by Anton Boskamp that two inscriptions on stone that had previously been described as complex mason's marks were in actual fact Linear A inscriptions¹. These inscriptions are to be found on the Stone Block at the North West corner of the Palace of Knossos and in the Isopata Tomb². Previously, only two other monumental Linear A inscriptions on stone were known, one from Malia, MA Ze 11 (*GORILA* IV, p. 140), and one from the Kephala Tholos Tomb of Knossos, KN Ze 16 (*GORILA* IV, p. 138). There is also one monumental Cretan Hieroglyphic inscription on stone from Malia³. Boskamp's suggestion that the two re-discovered Linear A inscriptions on stone from Knossos (KN Ze 44 and 45) were actually Linear A inscriptions rather than complex mason's marks has been borne out by subsequent re-examination. However the reading to be discussed here does not entirely agree with that suggested by Boskamp. Nonetheless, his re-classification of these as Linear A inscriptions is correct.

The readings offered by the present author are given below: (all signs are designated by their AB numbers as presented in *GORILA* V [1985])

<i>KN Ze 44</i>	Knossos Stone Block	28-?-54-57
<i>KN Ze 45</i>	Isopata Tomb	77-41-08-04

* I would like to thank Kalliope Nikolidaki for her assistance in the preparation of this article.

¹ A. Boskamp, «An Early Inscription on Stone at Knossos», *Kadmos* 29:1, 1990, pp. 11-15. These inscriptions should be classified as KN Ze 44 and KN Ze 45, following the *GORILA* classification.

² See A. Evans, *Palace of Minos* I, 1921, p. 131 for KN Ze 44 and A. Evans, *Pre-historic Tombs of Knossos*, 1906, pp. 164-172 and fig. 146 for KN Ze 45.

³ F. Chapouthier, «Inscription Hieroglyphique Minoenne Gravée sur un Bloc de Calcaire», *BCH* 62, 1938, pp. 104-109.

No convincing comparison can be given to the second sign of the Knossos Stone Block inscription and it is preferable to leave it untranscribed at present. It will also be instructive to consider the phonetic rendering of these inscriptions (according to Linear B sound values⁴), along with the other monumental Linear A inscriptions on stone:

<i>KN Ze 44</i>	28-?-54-57	I-?-WA-JA
<i>KN Ze 45</i>	77-41-08-04	KA-SI-A-TE
<i>KN Ze 16</i>	08-39	A-PI
<i>MA Ze 11</i>	78-41-04	QE-SI-TE

Although there is some overlap between the repertoire of signs used in the Linear scripts of Crete and those used as mason's marks, however the exact relationship between them is far from clear, as is the purpose of the mason's marks themselves⁵. But it is clear that the distinction between a complex mason's mark and a Linear A inscription must be made when inscribed signs can be seen not just as mason's marks juxtaposed on the same block, but rather as a coherent inscription which can be compared to other Linear A inscriptions. This is the case with both of the re-discovered Knossos inscriptions.

The Knossos Stone Block inscription (KN Ze 44) 28-?-54-57 which reads as I-?-WA-JA can also be compared to other Linear A inscriptions on stone i.e. the inscribed libation tablets from neo-palatial peak sanctuaries and administrative sites⁶. These are given below:

<i>KN Ze 44</i>	28- ? -54-57	I- ? -WA-JA
<i>IO Za 2a.1, 3 and 7</i>	08-59-28-A301-54-57	A-TA-I-A301-WA-JA
<i>KO Za 1a</i>	08-59-28-A301-54-57	A-TA-I-A301-WA-JA

⁴ AB signs are here transcribed according to Linear B sound values, with the caveat that although the transference of Linear B sound values to Linear A is probably justified, this can not however be demonstrated for more than 12 signs. See J.-P. Olivier, *Le Monde Grec*, 1975, pp. 441-449; and L. Godart, *Hommages à Henri van Effenterre*, 1984, pp. 121-128.

⁵ See S. Hood, *Function of the Minoan Palaces*, 1987, p. 204; and I am grateful for personal communications on this subject ahead of the forthcoming publication of the *Corpus of Mason's Marks from Knossos*.

⁶ For a discussion of «Palace and Peak» see A. A. D. Peatfield, *Function of the Minoan Palaces*, 1987, pp. 89-93; and see Karetsou-Godart and Olivier, «Inscriptions en Lineaire A du Sanctuaire de Sommet Minoan Iouktas», *Kadmos* 24, 1985, pp. 89-147 for the most detailed study of these inscribed stone libation tables.

<i>PK Za 12a</i>	08-59-28-A301-54-57	A-TA-I-A301-WA-JA
<i>SY Za 1, 2a, and 3</i>	08-59-28-A301-54-57	A-TA-I-A301-WA-JA
<i>TL Za 1A</i>	08-59-28-A301-54-57	A-TA-I-A301-WA-JA
<i>PK Za 11a</i>	08-59-28-A301-54-38	A-TA-I-A301-WA-E
<i>IO Za 4</i>]A301-54[]A301-WA[

Can the inscription on the Knossos Stone Block (KN Ze 44) be connected with the numerous examples of the sign group on the stone libation tables which is usually written as 08-59-28-A301-54-57 A-TA-I-A301-WA-JA? Again there is a textual similarity between inscriptions written on stone, although the Stone Block is a First Palace monumental inscription while the stone libation tables are Second Palace religious inscriptions written on objects that bear the repeated Minoan Libation Formula, of which this sign-group is one component. Such a textual comparison would suggest that 08-59- is a prefix not found on the Knossos inscription before 28-?-54-57.

Such a comparison would also raise the question whether the as yet unidentified second sign on the Knossos Stone Block can be equated with the Linear A sign A301. This sign occurs as a syllabic sign 28 times in the Linear A corpus (*GORILA V*, p. 282), but it is not a sign employed by the Linear B script, and no suggestion as to its syllabic sound value can yet be made. The possibility of the second sign on the Knossos Stone Block being a First Palace monumental precursor of the later examples on stone libation tables is borne out by a comparison of like to like i.e. those examples engraved on the same medium. The main difference between the Knossos Stone Block sign and the later examples is the former's lack of the leftward pointing «leg» which forms part of the sign A301, which is usually executed in the shape of a sinistroverse capital R i.e. Я. Allowing for the missing «leg», the Knossos example is not dissimilar to A301 as it appears in the neopalatial period. As there is a likely textual connection between the Knossos Stone Block inscription and the inscribed stone libation tables, then the second sign is probably a badly weathered rough First Palace execution of sign A301.

The Isopata Tomb inscription (KN Ze 45) 77-41-08-04 which reads as KA-SI-A-TE can be compared to that from Malia (MA Ze 11) 78-41-04 which reads as QE-SI-TE, and with which it shares two signs in common. The signs in common, the appearance on the same medium i.e. palatial stone blocks, and the phonetic similarity when transliterated according to Linear B sound values, all suggest a possible connection between the two inscriptions.

In conclusion, it can be seen that the observation by Boskamp that these two inscriptions on stone (KN Ze 44 and 45) are Linear A and not complex mason's marks has been borne out by subsequent study. They are a welcome addition to the Linear A corpus.

KN Zd 46

This painted sign on a fragment of fresco from Knossos was published by Evans, and re-published and discussed by Cameron⁷. However this painted sign was not included in the *GORILA* corpus. The painted sign will be re-considered here, where its suggested inclusion in the Linear A corpus requires the numeration KN Zd 46. The Zd class of inscriptions are those «sur supports architecturaux en stuc» (*GORILA* IV, pp. 129-135) and consist of three such inscriptions from Haghia Triada, which are probably mathematical progressions. The other class of painted inscriptions are the Zc class «peintes sur vases d'argile» (*GORILA* IV, pp. 118-127). There are at present 4 Zc painted inscriptions consisting of 2 complete cups from Knossos (KN Zc 6 and 7), a sherd from Palaikastro (Pk Zc 13), and a sherd from Phaistos (PH Zc 49 to be published in *Parola del Passato*).

Cameron identified the painted sign at Knossos as Linear A, due to the fact that this sign AB 50, common to both Linear scripts, faces to the left here but usually faces to the right. He rightly observed that Linear A signs sometimes change direction, but Linear B signs generally do not. This observation combined with Evans' opinion that it dates from the «finest style of painted plaster technique», suggests an LMI date. It is proposed to accept this sign as part of a Linear A inscription and to include it as an addition to the *GORILA* corpus as

 KNOSSOS KN Zd 46]AB 50[

⁷ For the fresco fragment KN Zd 46 see A. Evans, *Palace of Minos* I, 1921, p. 637; M. Cameron, «Four Fragments of Wall Paintings with Linear A Inscriptions», *Kadmos* 4, 1965, pp. 12-15; and T. G. Palaima, «On the painted linear sign from a wall at Knossos», *Kadmos* 20, 1981, pp. 79-82. Palaima however prefers to consider it as an early (LMII ?) Linear B inscriptions on plaster. Such a use for Linear B has no parallels, but Linear A was written upon a far greater range of materials including wall plaster.

In the Linear A corpus, the sign AB 50 is found only on clay tablets, but the more flowing style of the fresco example can be contrasted to the more schematic and linear renderings of this sign from Haghia Triada (*GORILA* V, p. xxxvi). The more fluid execution of this sign can be paralleled by the style in which the painted cups from Knossos are inscribed (KN Zc 6 and 7). It has been stated by both Pope and Hooker that painted signs demonstrate that the Minoans employed a cursive script for writing on materials other than clay⁸. The depiction of this sign is also paralleled by painted Linear B signs on stirrup jars⁹. AB 50 is found three times painted on Mycenaean stirrup jars i.e. MY Z 713a, KH Z 4 and KH Z 10. It is clear that the similarity between the sign in Linear A from Knossos (KN Zd 46), and the painted examples of the same sign in Linear B are due to the medium used in which to execute them i.e. painted with a more cursive style than is otherwise found on clay tablets¹⁰. It is of note that the signs which are closest to the Knossos example are those painted on stirrup jars from Khania in West Crete. It is clear, leaving aside questions of chronology, that the signs painted in the same medium show a similarity within the island of Crete. There are generally more similarities between signs in Linear A and B from Crete, than between the Linear B from Crete and the Linear B from the mainland. There was a «Cretan scribal tradition», within which falls this fresco fragment from Knossos painted with sign AB 50¹¹.

Having seen that this sign from Knossos,]AB 50[, is an example of a Linear sign painted in a flowing manner, it should be included in the Linear A corpus. That it was not included in the *GORILA* corpus can only be because the editors did not believe that it constituted an inscription. There are no traces to either left or right to suggest another sign, but this is no grounds on which to exclude

⁸ For a discussion of the theory that a cursive script was used for writing on perishable materials, see M. Pope, «The Cretulae and the Linear A accounting system», *BSA* 55, 1960, pp. 200-210 and J. T. Hooker, *The Origins of Linear B*, 1979, pp. 34-35.

⁹ For the Painted Stirrup Jars see A. Sacconi, *Corpus delle iscrizioni vascolari in Lineare B*, 1974.

¹⁰ See E. Hallager, «The Inscribed Stirrup jars: Implications for Late Minoan IIIB Crete», *AJA* 91, 1987, pp. 171-190, especially p. 180 «To paint Linear B».

¹¹ The question of «Cretan Scribal Tradition» was discussed by E. Hallager at the 7th Cretological Congress (Rethymno September 1991) in his paper on the Linear B tablets from Khania.

it from the Linear A corpus¹². As no other signs are discernable, then a reconstruction of this inscription can not be offered. Of the 20 occurrences of AB 50 in the Linear A corpus (*GORILA* V, p. 215), this sign stands in initial position 8 times, in final position 7 times, in a medial position 4 times, and once stands on its own on HT 34.7 as an ideogram followed by a fractional sign in a list of commodities. The sign]AB 50[on the Knossos fresco fragment is either to be interpreted as an ideogram or most likely it represents the initial or final syllabic sign of an LMI Linear A inscription from Knossos. AB 50 *pu* is found in Linear B as an abbreviation describing textiles at both Pylos and Knossos. The sign is used at Knossos on textile tablets (KN L 471 -474) and is probably an abbreviation for *pu-ka-ta-ri-ja*.

A possible administrative meaning for the Linear A fresco fragment is likely when the other Linear A inscriptions painted on fresco are considered. For the 3 fresco inscriptions from Haghia Triada (HT Zd 155-157) are mathematical progressions presumably used in the administration of the Minoan villa. Such a context for the Knossos fresco fragment is also likely. In conclusion it can be observed that the meaning of]AB 50[is unclear, but KN Zd 46 is a valid Linear A inscription and should thus be included in the Linear A corpus.

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¹² Another single Linear A sign which is however included in the *GORILA* corpus is that from Kea, KE Zb 3, where AB 67 is inscribed on a handled cup, which is also the shape of sign AB 67 itself. The similarity between the sign and the object on which it is inscribed is striking in its simplicity. Sign AB 67 is to be read as KI or as an elaborate potter's mark depicting the object itself. Could perhaps KI and KI-RU, which is found on the base of a vessel from Milos (MI Zb 10), both stand as abbreviations for the vessels on which they are written, and could both indicate a pre-Hellenic origin for the word *Kylix*?