

Darren Hopkins

Two proposed corrections to the recent corpus of Aegean scripts: SY Hf 01 and PK Zb 25

<https://doi.org/10.1515/kadmos-2018-0002>

Abstract: This article concerns two Aegean inscriptions published within the last few decades, one in Cretan Hieroglyphic (SY Hf 01) and one in Linear A (PK Zb 25), both of which in their respective publications posed problematic interpretations for the editors of these texts.

Keywords: Cretan Hieroglyphic, Linear A, Crete, Syme Sanctuary, Palaikastro

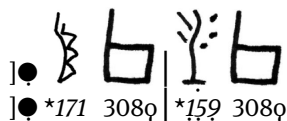
The Cretan Hieroglyphic inscription SY Hf 01 was published by Jean-Pierre Olivier in 1995¹, discovered in 1993 in the excavation of Building U, Room 18 of the Syme Sanctuary, Crete, discovered ‘in the destruction debris rather than on the floor’, and dated to no later than the MM IIB period². It is comprised of the end fragment of a ‘lame à deux faces’, a clay inscription support attested in the Cretan Hieroglyphic archives from Quartier Mu, Malia (MM IIB), the Palace of Malia ‘Dépôt hiéroglyphique’ (MM IIIB), and the Proto-Linear A archive from Phaistos (MM IIB). The extant inscription, written sinistroversely, was transcribed by Olivier as:

1 Jean-Pierre Olivier, An Inscription in the Hieroglyphic Script from the Syme Sanctuary, Crete (SY Hf 01). I. The Inscription, *Kadmos* 34 (1995) 63–69.

2 Angeliki Lebessi & Polymnia Muhly, An Inscription in the Hieroglyphic Script from the Syme Sanctuary, Crete (SY Hf 01). II. The Find Context and Historical Significance of SY Hf 01, *Kadmos* 34 (1995) 73.

Article note: The following abbreviations have been used: *CHIC* = J.-P. Olivier, L. Godart, & Jean-Claude Poursat, *Corpus Hieroglyphicarum Inscriptionum Cretae. Études crétoises* 31 (Paris, 1996), *CMS* = *Corpus der minoischen und mykenischen Siegel* (Berlin, 1964–2001, Mainz, 2002–), *GORILA* = L. Godart & J.-P. Olivier, *Recueil des inscriptions en linéaire A 1–5. Études crétoises* 21 (Paris, 1976–1985). All of the illustrations have been traced from the photographs and drawings provided in *CHIC*, *CMS* and *GORILA* unless otherwise stated.

***Corresponding author: Darren Hopkins**, 1/10 Dudley Street, Randwick, New South Wales, 2031 Australia. E-mail: dazhopkins@hotmail.com.




Olivier notes of the inscription that ‘Two of the four signs are different and two are identical. Their identification has not been easy and I shall not ask for blind acceptance’. Despite his reticence the only really problematic sign in his transcription is *159, a hapax sign occurring in MA Hh #118.a (along with *171), a plant sign described by Fernand Chapouthier as an ‘arbre d’espèce malaisée à définir’³. As Olivier admits, ‘The second sign of the two differing signs could, with a little imagination, recall the sign *159 that precedes *171 on the bar from Malia. I confess, however, that this association is more a matter of proximity than of formal similarity, and I am prepared to accept a new logogram here’:

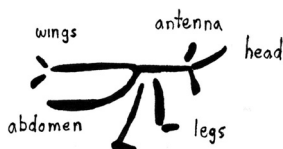


MA Hh #118.a



SY Hf 01

In contrast to the proposed logogram *159, which is indeed problematic, this symbol more closely resembles a highly linearized or stylized variant of the syl-labogram 020 (), Arthur Evans’ ‘bee’ sign (*Scripta Minoa* I: 212–13, n86):



Graphically this sign can be compared in general to the equally linearized versions of 020 in the Cretan Hieroglyphic corpus, notably KN Ha #018.y and KN He #039.a:



#018.y



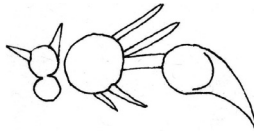
#039.a

³ Fernand Chapouthier, *Les écritures minoennes au palais de Mallia. Études crétoises* 2 (Paris, 1930) 39.

In comparing the features of the ‘bee’, the three-pronged head and antenna may be compared with similar features occurring on some of the Cretan Hieroglyphic syllabograms on the seal stones CR(?) S #303.α/CMS XII n109.a, CR(?) S #262.γ/CMS XII n117.c, and in the best preserved of the three ‘bees’ on the LM I seal CMS II 8 n149:



#303.α/XII n109.a



#262.γ/XII n117.c



II 8 n149

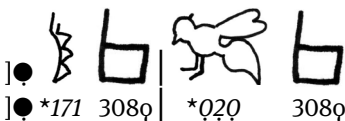
The wings have been reduced to a single linear line with two short splayed lines at the end to represent their duality: a unique feature of this syllabogram. The legs (very much like the legs depicted on the later Linear A *vīr* logogram AB 100/102) can be compared with those depicted on the possible variant syllabogram in MA Hh #117.a (partly fragmentary):



#117.a

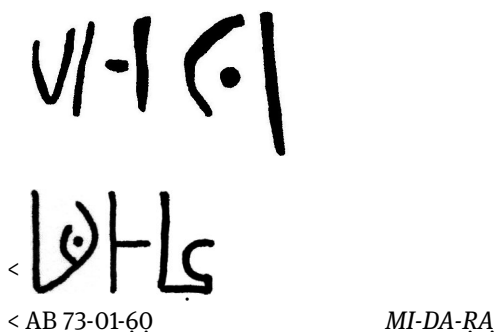
The abdomen, though thin and linear in comparison to the majority of that feature depicted on the other syllabograms, is still recognizable in the slight widening out of the line to depict a protrusion, and might be compared with a similar, but shorter, feature on KN Ha #018.γ.

If the proposed logogram *159 is to be read instead as the syllabogram 020 this variant would be the only attested case of the use of this syllabogram in the position of a logogram, although in this inscription it may have been used acrophonically as an abbreviation for a more complete word. This proposed new reading of 020 instead of *159 would give the amended transcription:



]● *171 308q | *Q20 308q
]● *171 308q | *Q20 308q

The Linear A inscription PK Zb 25 was published by Ilse Schoep and Jan Driessen in 2003⁴, discovered by chance in 2000 during the excavation of Palaikastro ‘at the gate to the new excavations at Roussolakkos’, and is thus undated. The three Linear A syllabograms ‘are deeply incised with a relatively thick tool’ into a fragmentary clay handle ‘of coarse red clay, tempered with large inclusions of schist and quartz’, possibly from an ‘amphora’. Handle inscriptions are a rarity in Linear A and are more common to the Cretan Hieroglyphic script. The inscription, written sinistroversely ‘on its upper side’, was transcribed by the editors as:



The commentary to this inscription notes that ‘The first two signs pose no problems of identification and can be identified as AB 73 and AB 01 ... The third sign consists of a vertical trait with to its right an oblique trait forming an angle. It may tentatively be read as AB 60/RA, although its tracé presents some idiosyncrasies. Not only is there no horizontal lower bar linking vertical and oblique traits but the righthand part of AB 60/RA usually presents a curved line, which is not the case here. It is possible that constraint in available space determined the odd shape of the sign’.

This inscription has been transcribed upside down. Either the editors have misinterpreted the correct orientation of the handle fragment, or the handle was inscribed by leaning over the top of the vessel in order to make the inscription (with the inscription to be read from the top of the vessel, not from the side)⁵. The correct orientation of the inscription should be:

⁴ Ilse Schoep & Jan Driessen, An Inscribed Handle from Palaikastro (PK Zb 25), *Minos* 37–38 (2002–2003) 77–80.

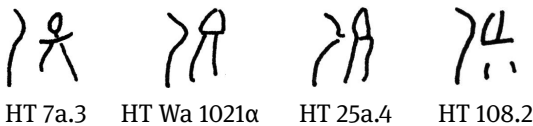
⁵ A similar case of a Linear A sign being inscribed in such a way occurs on an inscribed vessel handle from Ayia Irini (Keos): Inv. K. 2765 (LM IB/LH II), John L. Caskey, *Inscriptions and potters’ marks from Ayia Irini in Keos*, *Kadmos* 9 (1970) Fig. 3 n14, Plate II, 113. ‘The lower end of a vertical handle with a fringe of deep incisions where it was attached to the wall of the pot. Graffito, on



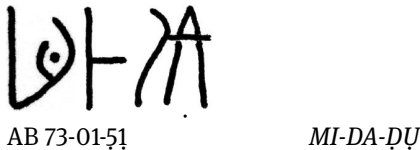
The inscription is to be read in standard dextroverse orientation. The first two syllabograms proposed by the original editors remain the same. AB 73/MI (𐀓) may be compared to some of the more simplistic signs occurring in the Linear A corpus where the central element is rendered with a simple dot, a short stroke, a short curve, or nothing:



AB 01/DA (𐀓) is a standardized *tracé* with a horizontal lateral line. The third sign, interpreted by the original editors as an idiosyncratic version of AB 60/RA (𐀓), can, by contrast, be compared to the syllabogram AB 51/DU (𐀓), but with a missing horizontal stroke connecting the left and right elements of the sign, and can be compared with other signs in the Linear A corpus where the two elements of the syllabogram are rendered as separate without a connecting line:



This proposed new reading of PK Zb 25 would give the amended transcription:



outer side just above the incisions: tree or plant motif, L 92 [= AB 04/TE], with 3 branches and a short extra stroke on the left side, inverted.'

6 Katerina Kopaka, Une nouvelle inscription en linéaire A de Zakros, *Kadmos* 28.1 (1989) 7–13.

MI-DA-ḐU is a hapax, although the two initial syllabograms occur in other Linear A words such as HT 41a.4 AB 73-01-30 *MI-DA-NI* and ARKH Zf 9 AB 73-01-80-76 *MI-DA-MA-RA*₂.