

A LINEAR B INSCRIBED GALET FROM LIÈGE*
LIE Ga 1998 A GAUFRE OR ‘GALET’
(Local Liégian dialect for Fr. *Galette* or ‘Waffle’)

This inscribed *galet* was discovered on a late night promenade by TGP in a pastry dump outside a *pâtisserie* somewhere in the area between the Vertbois and the Hotel Ibis in Liège. The *galet* was found together with fragmentary *madeleines* and uninscribed *galets* in mixed stratigraphical confusion. The surface of the *galet* was fired crisp and uniformly yellow-brown; its inner biscuit whitish and fluffy with no inclusions. Accretion of powdered sugar was visible and tangible on the surface of the *galet*. Date of discovery 16.4.98. Date of object determined by thermoluminescence and by taste analysis *ca.* 15 days. Probable date of manufacture 1.4.98. The surface is impressed by a ‘labyrinthine’ waffle mold. The general design in its complexity is reminiscent of the graffito of a labyrinth on the *verso* of Pylos tablet Cn 1287¹ or any of the numerous plans of the fortification systems at Tiryns or Thebes (Iakovidis and Aravantinos) that were shown at the *Polemos* conference. This inscription takes its place alongside other similar discoveries of genuine Linear B inscribed objects at various places where Aegeanists have gathered in recent years.² Unfortunately, like those other finds, the inscribed *galet* suffered a tragic fate. One earlier tablet had popped out of the hands of the discoverer into the river in Heidelberg, another had its surface obliterated by a thin section taken by an overly eager petrologist. This find, as explained below, was literally devoured.

The drawing here presented was made with the assistance of Erik Hallager before consumption of the *galet* by TGP brought on by ravenous hunger caused by the local tradition of the ‘leisurely waiter’. The *galet* was extremely tasty and went well with *café Liégeois*. The inscribed *galet* seems to function as a kind of maze game³ whereby a man named *de-u-ka-ri-jo* (Deukalion)⁴ at lower left must perform an *Odyssey* along a tortuous road system unrivaled even by the Minoan ‘road and tower’ system of East Crete (Chryssoulaki). The player encounters famous threatening weapons, *polla astea*, tempting feasts, frustratingly escargot-paced waiters, crazed Liégian drivers, alluring women, Zakro-Master-style multi-sex monsters, incurable and unrepentant girls of the sort formerly cared for in the Vertbois, public restoration projects, and a ‘coffee break’ packed with Aegean prehistorians, one of whom seems to be taking the idea of warfare very, very seriously – all to reach his sweetheart *pu-ra 2* (Pyrrha) located, upper right and according to inscriptional clues, beyond the Hittite homeland. The reward for bringing them together will be the creation of genealogical charts stemming from this Greek ‘Adam-and-Eve’ pair of lovers. The historicity of these charts in turn

* I wish to thank Drs. Shelby Carter and James R. Cullington of Austin, Texas, for the skilled application of surgical techniques much more advanced than those of the Mycenaean period surveyed and explained by Robert ARNOTT in this volume. Their skills at saving and reconstructing my right leg made it possible for me to discover yet another surprising inscription in Linear B while strolling the streets of Liège after dark. The normal meaning of *galet* is ‘pebble.’ Robert LAFFINEUR alerted me to its special meaning in the dialect of French spoken in Liège.

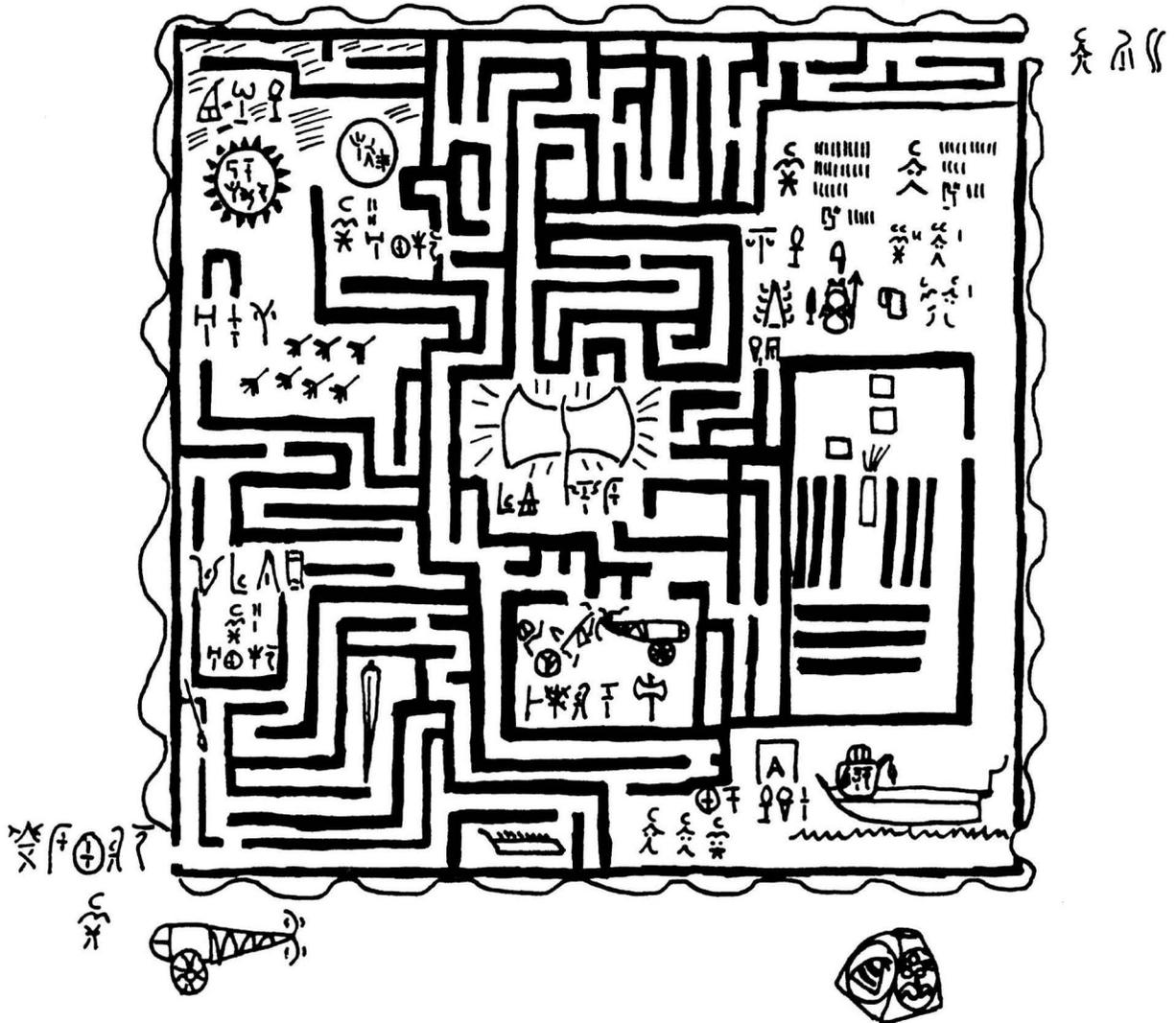
1 Cf. discussion in T.G. PALAIMA, “Mycenaean Scribal Aesthetics,” in R. LAFFINEUR and J. CROWLEY (eds), *EIKΩN. Aegean Bronze Age Iconography: Shaping a Methodology*, *Aegaeum* 8 (1992) 63-75, Pls XX-XXIII.

2 Cf. T.G. PALAIMA, “PH Up 1996,” in R. LAFFINEUR and P.P. BETANCOURT (eds), *TEXNH Aegeum* 16 (1997) 539-543; “A Linear B Tablet from Heidelberg,” in R. LAFFINEUR and W.D. NIEMEIER (eds), *Politeia: Polity and State in the Aegean Bronze Age*, *Aegaeum* 12 (1995) vol. II, 669-670; and in R. LAFFINEUR and L. BASCH (eds), *Thalassa L’Egée Préhistorique et la Mer*, *Aegaeum* 7 (1991) 4; T.G. PALAIMA, I. HAJNAL, A. KOLOSIMO, J.-P. OLIVIER, C.J. RUIJGH, “Linear B in the Bay of Naples,” in E. DE MIRO, L. GODART, A. SACCONI (eds), *Atti e memorie del secondo congresso internazionale di micenologia* (1996) 1645-1648.

3 For its function as a game, we might compare one of the thousands of proposed interpretations of the Phaistos disk.

4 This name appears on PY *o-ka* tablet An 654, thus establishing a suitable militaristic context for the appearance of Deukalion at the *Polemos* conference.

will be debated by scholars like Margalit Finkelberg and Aegeanists like O.T.P.K. Dickinson who adhere to the 'Troy-is-windy-even-in-1998' school of myth-history separatists. Truly an 'arrow to the heart' (Kopcke *in absentia*) of all romantics as we look toward Anatolia for solutions.



There is no reason to doubt the authenticity of this *galet*. First we have the incontrovertible fact of a continuous tradition of *da-pu 2-ri-to* (= labyrinth) representations from the Minoan protopalatial period to the present.⁵ Secondly, if the waffle-press which produced this *galet* were a modern Liégian forgery, it is impossible to imagine that its fabricator could have resisted inserting the most formidable danger and terror of navigating the sidewalks of Liège: *merde de chiens*. To begin, Deukalion mounts a chariot of a type familiar to us from the work of Crowel, Driessen and Vandenabeele-Olivier. He obviously is expecting a cloudy but rainless day, because he has not bothered to put up the parasol-top on his late-model convertible *i-qi-ja* (B. Hallager). Heading directly north he encounters a javelin (*pa-ta-jo*) of the type prevalent on land (Poursat) and sea (Wedde) in the late Aegean Bronze Age. Changing direction to avoid being wounded and dying of infection (Arnott), he will confront either a

5 The most recent example seen by the author appears on the '15-minute-service-challenge' cards in rooms of the Ibis Hotel.

type A sword (frightening even with a defective haft design: Peatfield) or a long boat at the very southern limits of its sailing range (Branigan). Whether the latter is being used for 'raid' or 'trade,' Deukalion does not linger to find out.

Heading northward again Deukalion comes to a locale designated by the ethnic *mi-ra-ti-ja* (Miletos) where he attempts to have lunch. Here we face our first interpretive problem. At Miletos we have inscribed: VIR 3 a-ka-i-jo. Because of the convenient multivalency of certain Linear B signs and the ingenious flexibility of its spelling rules, we can interpret this in three ways:

1. a-ka-i-jo = *Akhaioi* and a direct and explicit reference to the *Ahhijawa* whose troublesome meddling in Hittite affairs Niemeier and Korfmann have explicated at length by reciting soothing euphonic lists of lilting Hittite and Ahhijawan names (e.g., *Wilusa, Milluwanda, Tawagalawa*). This seems improbable because Ahhijawans, like Aegean prehistorians, usually gather in crowds of 50 and upwards.

2. a-ka-i-jo = *arkhaioi* and an explicit reference to the presence of certain distinguished individuals of senior or near senior age (e.g., the van Effenterres and Malcolm Wiener). This seems improbable because the use of single-gender ideograms to refer to creatures of both genders, or even those who have been neutered, occurs only in texts dealing with sheep and other livestock. Wiener's prompt, proud and frequent showing of photographs of his two beautiful daughters rules out the option of reference to neutered males. That and the ageless intellectual powers of the van Effenterres eliminate this as a possible interpretation.

3. a-ka-i-jo = *argaioi* a heretofore unattested derivative of the modern Greek word *arga* meaning 'slow.' This interpretation makes the most sense if taken as a reference to the fact that restaurants in Bronze Age Miletos, like those in modern Liège, have three waiters all of whom wait table in a manner that even the tolerant and generous would term *au pas lent*.

Winding his way further northward Deukalion comes to the site of *a-pa-sa*, undoubtedly = Ephesos, where he must take evasive action to dodge a squadron of arrows (Myc. SAG) each of which has inscribed on its tip (visible only in autopsy of the original with magnifying lens) the image of a fearsome and cartoon-like cigar-puffing mosquito in keeping with a long-established tradition of decorating war implements, from the Shaft Graves burials to the modern fighter plane (Laffineur).

At the very limits of the northwest edge of the labyrinth, Deukalion reaches a site identified as *wi-ru-za*. Allowing once again for multivalency and uncertainty in the spelling of foreign toponyms, this seems to be equivalent to *Wilusa* in the Hittite documents, a fact that might be confirmed by the heretofore unattested iconographical feature of parallel oblique lines which I have interpreted as representing winds blowing from SW to NE. As Dickinson reminded Bloedow "Troy is just as windy in the 8th century B.C. as it was in the twelfth." Just below the site of Troy, reportedly in the excavation of the ramparts, was discovered a Hittite seal with a Linear B inscription, the first trace other than loom weight decorations of Aegean 'writing' in the Troad. The inscription reads *po-to-re-mo-jo* 'of P(t)olemos.' The seal may well be a souvenir of the 7th International Aegean Conference which fell out of the pocket of one of the participants who is very active at this site (Korfmann). Just to the east of Troy we find a circular hearth with the phonetic ligature *re-wo-te* = *lewontes* = 'lions.' Just below the hearth is the inscription: VIR 4 a-ka-i-jo. Following our above line of argument, we interpret this as referring to a feast of lions à la those reconstructed by Nancy R. Thomas at Shaft-Grave period Mycenae in the "big house on the hill." This feast lasted many days because 4 slow-moving waiters had to carve and serve the barbecued lions to an assembled force of at least 100 *Ahhijawan* charioteers (Niemeier).

By snaking his way to the center, Deukalion confronts the supreme image of Minoan power and religion, a double-ax. Although the radiant strokes emanating from the ax are iconographically unparalleled in Minoan-Mycenaean art, we know from reading *Asterix* and other Belgian cartoon books that a tradition going back at least to Walt Disney and *Mickey*

Mouse uses such strokes to indicate the radiance of the object itself. TGP had little trouble in identifying the illuminated double-ax as the equivalent of his son Emmett's *Star Wars* light saber, the supreme weapon of those who believe in the power of the force. Confirming the authenticity of the *galei* beyond doubt is the inscription running beneath the double-ax: *ra-pi-ne-u*. This reference to the famed itinerant *wanax* of Aegeanist conferees, *rapineu* = Laffineur, found on other incontestably genuine inscriptions⁶ proves that this *galei* is part of an intact scribal tradition going back to at least LH IIIB.

Heading south from this obvious sanctuary area, Deukalion narrowly avoids, at the place of the double-ax (*da-pu 2-ri-to*), a head-on chariot collision that leaves one chariot in complete disrepair and the other with its horse attachment bent. We should perhaps imagine that such accidents were frequent in an age before stoplights and to judge by the tendencies of drivers in Liège to travel as quickly as possible. Thus undoubtedly the need for such stores of spare tires and chariot parts in the workshops of Mycenaean palaces and second-order centers. After calling the emergency number for the local police, Deukalion heads northeast, where he finds himself confronted first by an object that looks very much like the royal/divine helmet associated with Hittite gods and kings. However, Deukalion, like any good tourist-shopper, reads the attached label: *ko, wa*. This indicates to him that he has actually come across a church steeple ornament carved as part of a restoration project of the Commission (*ko*) Royale (*wa-na-ka-te-ro*) des Monuments, Sites et Fouilles headed by the suave and amiable Jacques Barlet. Stepping around this architectural curiosity, Deukalion meets face-to-face with a formidable armed warrior complete with figure-of-eight shield, spear, sword, helmet and body armor. Deukalion breathes a sigh of supreme relief when he recognizes beneath this armor not the Mycenae Warrior Goddess (Rehak) or Colin McDonald at a wild party (Driessen), but Alan Peatfield engaged in another demonstration of practical weapon technology. The ideogram to the east of the 'Peatfield warrior' is one familiar from the famous Heidelberg text: the coffee break. Above is recorded:

VIR 26	MUL 15
o 5	o 3
VIR biceph 2 MUL biceph 1	
VIR-MUL 1	

TGP was at a complete loss as to how to interpret this section until Massimo Perna with typical Neapolitan pragmatism suggested reading the conference program. A quick tabulation showed that in attendance at the 7th Aegean Colloquium were: 26 men and 15 women, with 5 men and 3 women 'missing' (cf. PERNA on *o-pe-ro*). In addition two pairs of men (La Rosa-Militello, Bennet-Davis), 1 pair of women (Demakopoulou-Divari-Valakou), and a single gender-hybrid pair (Driessen-Schoep) read joint papers. Mycenologists continue to be amazed at the creative virtuosity of Linear B scribes in 'coining' such ideograms as needs arise. The location of all this activity is specified by a word unit which TGP read *ha-za*. This yielded no sense at all. Perplexed, he consulted with Jean-Pierre Olivier who proposed an elegant solution: the sign with value *ha* is also known as *a 2*. Read in that way we determine that the site is in fact (*h*)*a 2-za* or Ha-two-ssas.

Just south of the coffee break is a large room which cannot possibly be identified as a megaron (not even slightly uncanonical megara like those at Midea [Walberg] or the Pylos SW Building = megaron of the *ra-wa-ke-ta* [Bennet-Davis]) to which the assembled conferees undoubtedly resorted to engage in a kind of ritual ceremony. The ritual featured (cf. the luminous rays of the central double-axe: once invented, twice used) the projection of images from a central light box upon a pair of screens, while select acolytes chanted ritual texts from a raised sacred podium. Avoiding entrapment in this alluring ritual which is known to have deep

6 *Supra* n. 2.

soporific effects upon even the most stalwart participants, Deukalion heads southward towards his final test. He finds himself at a harbor town where a ship has pulled in laden with the kinds of stirrup jars known from Knossos, Armenoi and now Midea – inscribed with the name *wi-na-jo* (Demakopoulou). The stirrup jar has hanging from its plug a sealing which provides an example of the multiple-sealing system discussed by Weingarten and Pini. On one of its faces appears the impression of the image of a boar's tusk helmet; on the other a sexually remarkable hybrid male/female figure. On the shoreline stand a man, a woman and a man-woman. This seems to be the kind of 'anything goes' port town with which Malcolm Wiener and other sailors became familiar during service in the navy. A curious rectangular element at the upper left with a pointed insignia inside (spear point? Linear B *e*?) defied interpretation, until Stella Chryssoulaki pointed out that the name of the community was written in Linear B characters just below: *ka-to za-ko-ro* = Kato Zakro. It then became obvious that the structure on the hill with its surcharged insignia was in fact 'House A.' This may be the earliest evidence for the Canaanite alphabet in the Aegean, although it hardly is sufficient to prove the theories of Martin Bernal.

Wrenching himself away from the sensual enticements of the easternmost Minoan port and from even the slightest involvement in theories on the origins of the Greek alphabet, Deukalion directs his chariot straight north and in a feat of daring athleticism leaps the last hurdle, turns right and at last finds himself in the arms of his dear Pyrrha. Let the human race now begin!

Thomas G. PALAIMA