

Mycenaean sites and Mycenaean pottery from Ialysos, 25 January; Hector Catling, "Knossos, 1978," dealt with the salvage excavation of tombs of Dark Age to Christian date near Herakleion.

#### FORUM

To the Editors:

In the Forum (May 1979) Jose L. Melena discussed vase inscription KH Z 1 which, according to his interpretation, provides another example of the use of the dummy a in rendering some final syllabograms, particularly the sequence -ks. As attractive as it is to find further corroboration of a particular Mycenaean scribal practice by a fresh reading of a text, I think that one must still have reservations about the reading of ka-ru-ka proposed by Melena.

First it should be noted that in Corpus delle iscrizioni vascolari in Lineare B, p. 179 (hereafter Corp. vasc.) A. Sacconi transcribes the fragment: ka-ru-ka, indicating doubt about the values of the second and the third signs and about the length of the word on the fragment. Reading ka-ru-ka, therefore, involves the assumption, which the Corpus editor was unwilling to make, that the third sign, only partially preserved on the fragment, completes a word. It also requires the demonstration that the second and third signs can be read with certainty. Judging from the vestiges of the third sign (hereafter consult drawings, photographs, and tables of signs in Corp. vasc.) it can only be ka or u. In the vase inscriptions u usually has the straight staff that characterizes it in the tablets. Exceptional, curved staffs are found on TI Z 30, TH Z 839, 853; but the sole example from KH (Z 9) has a straight staff. Since one can note the trace of a curve at the bottom of the preserved stroke on KH Z 1, this would tend to make u unlikely unless exceptional in form. ka, although not at all certain, is more likely. Here one faces the difficulty that the internal strokes of the first ka form an oblique cross: "x", whereas the preserved portion of the internal strokes of the third sign is fairly horizontal. This would imply an upright cross: "+", at variance with the oblique cross in the first ka but similar to the cross-strokes used to form u. However, KH Z 6 provides a parallel for ka with an upright cross at KH.

The second sign, although wholly preserved, is more problematical. Melena adduced parallels on TI Z 39 and TH Z 866 in support of an identification as ru. But all the positively identified examples of ru on vase inscriptions, including TH Z 866, have an upturn at the ends of the curved strokes forming the "horns" of the sign. Secondly, the curved "horns" are made distinct from the vertical stem: on TH Z 839 made in a continuous stroke and detached from the stem; on TH Z 840, 841, 845, 856 with flat curves and approaching the stem at nearly right angles; on TH Z 866, 867, 868, 879 with extreme curves and intersecting the stem below its apex. Both these features are missing on KH Z 1. Thirdly, TI Z 39 is not positively identifiable (ru) and the orientation presented in Corp. vasc. makes it quite dissimilar to the second sign of KH Z 1.

For the second sign of KH Z 1 one should not be so quick to dismiss Hallager's şa. In the "cup-down" curves on KH Z 1 can readily be seen a hastier version of the intersecting curves and oblique strokes used for sa (cf. Corp. vasc. 196, 197). Still the version of sa which predominates on the tablets at Knossos (consult J.-P. Olivier, Les Scribes de Cnossos, tables p. 321 ff.) and alone is represented on the vases (OR Z 1) has a characteristic overlap of the curves and the stem which is not found on the KH sign -- although one can observe a bulge on the staff at the usual point of overlap (Corp. vasc. Tav. LXI).

Whatever readings one prefers for the second and third signs must be qualified, and the possibility that the word is incomplete must be admitted. Consequently, KH Z 1 had best not be used as a further instance of a Mycenaean scribal practice.

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Yours, &c.  
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May 29, 1979

#### WORK IN PROGRESS

Dr. Gisela Walberg (Uppsala University, Sweden): Middle Minoan provincial pottery; Bernard Sergent (Ecole des Hautes Etudes, Paris) "La trifonctionnalité indo-européenne en Grèce ancienne" (doctoral dissertation).

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

##### ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS ISSUE

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