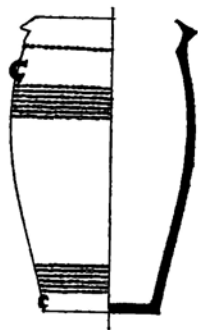


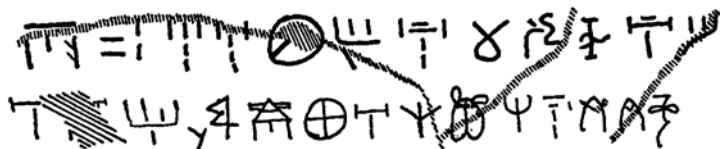
A PITHOS FROM EPANÔ ZAKRO *

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During his campaign of 1965 in Zakro, Dr. N. Platon found in room © of the so-called "ferme minoenne" at Epanô Zakro a number of large *pithoi*,¹ (Pl. I) one of which was inscribed with two lines of signs, to be identified as Linear A-signs, 25 in number. The *pithos* is of an average size, about 150 cm. high and with a maximum width of about 85 cm. It is decorated with "chain motives" in relief, in three series (the first of a single row, the second one of 7 rows and the third of 6 rows). As to the signs, placed between two of the upper handles (see Pl. II), one should note that the size of them differs: the signs of line 1 are about 2,5 cm. in height, the signs of line 2 about 2 cm. The inscription runs as follows:



* My thanks are due to Dr. St. Alexiou, director of the Heraklion Museum, who made it possible for me to have a look at the reconstructed pithos and to verify the shape of the signs of its inscription, as depicted in BCH 90(1966), p. 927 (esp. those who are not clearly visible). I am indebted to Mr. W. C. Sollman for his mathematical assistance.

¹ G. Daux, *Chronique des fouilles* 1965, BCH 90(1966), pp. 925-928.

The first sign of the inscription, most probably determinating the contents of the pithos, as already correctly stated in the Museum's guide,¹ is the VINUM-ideogram. According to the numerals behind this ideogram, the *pithos* was meant to contain twenty-two units of wine.

Considering the *pithos* as a cylinderlike object we can, following the formula πR^2h , in which "h" represents the maximum wine level and "R" the *average inner radius* of the *pithos*, estimate its contents at 556 litres $\pm 11\%$ (which means that the unit to be reckoned with contains 25,2 litres $\pm 11\%$ ([25,2 \pm 2,8] litres).

In my opinion one should not explicitly exclude, as Palmer does,² that in due course the Minoan and Mycenaean liquid measure systems will prove to have been equal, in which case the analogy between the Canaanite and Mycenaean systems³ will be extended to the Minoan system, too. In this case one could possibly think of a relation with the *bat* or *ʿefâ*, a liquid measure found in the N. W. Semitic area.⁴ In their "Documents" Ventris and Chadwick estimated the Mycenaean dry measure unit at 12 litres: more recent investigations by Miss Mabel Lang showed that this should be decreased by at least 20%:⁵ a similar situation might perhaps be assumed for the liquid measures. In that case the main liquid unit would decrease to an amount of 28,8 litres, or even less.

The figure of [25,2 \pm 2,8] litres is also interesting for other reasons: it may be an indication that the ratios of liquids stated on the tablets might be calculated on a monthly base i.e. of a basic ratio of [25,2 \pm 2,8] litres per man per month, though variations for women, children e.a. may occur. Further evidence, however, will be needed for a more definite conclusion on this matter.

¹ St. Alexiou, *Guide du Musée Archéologique d'Héraclion*, Athènes 1969, p. 82.

² L. R. Palmer, *Mycenaeans and Minoans*, London 1965², p. 130.

³ M. Ventris and J. Chadwick, *Documents in Mycenaean Greek*, Cambridge 1956, p. 60.

⁴ Ventris/Chadwick, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

⁵ J. Chadwick, *The Decipherment of Linear B*, Cambridge 1970², p. 153.



PLATE I

Epanô Zakro, the "ferme minoenne": the *pithoi* of room Θ *in situ*.
(Previously published in BCH 90(1966), p. 927)



PLATE II

Epanô Zakro. Fragment of the inscribed *pithos*. The inscription can be distinguished between the two handles.
(Previously published in BCH 90(1966), p. 927)