

Peter van Soesbergen: *Minoan Linear A*, Vol. I, 2: **APPENDIX 1**¹
Linear A *a-pi* (KN Ze 16) : Hurrian *abi*

Assignment of disyllabic words in Minoan Linear A to a specific idiom is only feasible, if their meaning is relevant in their context. The inscription *a-pi* (KN Ze 16) on a door-jamb in a tholos tomb at Kephala, ca. 1,5 km north of the Grand Palace of Minos at Knossos, is such an inscription. It is useful to consider a Hurrian interpretation of the inscription *a-pi* and to examine whether it might provide relevant and useful information to visitors of the tomb and relatives of the deceased.

E. Laroche interpreted Hurrian *abi* as ‘trou, fosse’ and more precisely as ‘trou creusé en terre pour communiquer avec les puissances infernales; avec ou sans déterminatif.’² Sub ‘hourrite’ he mentions the form ^d*a-(a)-bi-ni-ta* KUB XXVII 1 III 8 = 3 IV 17. It contains the divine marker ^d, the suffix of the definite article *-ni*, and that of the directive form *-da* (written *-ta*). N.B. double writing of consonants in medial position in the cuneiform syllabary indicates that a consonant is voiceless (so *-t-t-* or *-d-d-* is [t]; *-p-p-* or *-b-b-* is [p]), whereas single writing in medial position shows that a consonant is voiced (so *-t-* or *-d-* is [d]; *-p-* or *-b-* is [b]). He also mentions the form *ab-n* in the alphabetic cuneiform script of Ugarit with the suffix of the definite article *-n* (*Ugar. V* 533). Sub ‘flexion hittite (kiz.)’ he mentions a list of forms with Hittite inflexion. He assumes that Hurrian *abi* is a loan word from Akkadian *apu/abu* and refers to *CAD A* II 201, but he also mentions that a direct borrowing from Sumerian *ab* ‘trou’ is feasible as well, and adds: “La même notion s’exprime en Hittite par *hateššar* ‘trou, fente.’ ”³ Compare also A. Kammenhuber: “Entspricht heth. *hateššar* ‘(in die Erde gegrabenes) Loch.’ ”³ The problem with cultural loan words or Wanderwörter is that the direction of borrowing probably depends on the question whether and when an idiom was in a *superstratum* position. Whatever the origin may be, the Linear A inscription *a-pi* is an exact equivalent to the Hurrian form *abi*.

¹ Since the publication of *Minoan Linear A*, Vol. I, in 2016, some new identifications have been incorporated into the slightly revised printing of 2017, if that was possible without altering the pages corresponding with the indices, but the purpose of the *Appendices* is to add new identifications and interpretations whose insertion would change the order of the original text too much. - Copyright Appendices © 2017 Dr. Peter G. van Soesbergen.

² E. Laroche, *Glossaire de la langue hourrite, Première partie (A-L)*, *RHA* 34 (1976), Paris 1978 and E. Laroche, *Glossaire de la langue hourrite, deuxième partie (M-Z, Index)*, *RHA* 35 (1977), Paris 1979 (reprint Paris 1980), 34.

³ A. Kammenhuber, *Orakelpraxis, Träume und Vorzeichenschau bei den Hethitern*, *Texte der Hethiter* 7, Heidelberg 1976, 124.

J. Friedrich, A. Kammenhuber *e.a.* ⁴, I. Wegner ⁵ and M.-C. Trémouille ⁶ describe *abi* as ‘(in die Erde gegrabene, verschließbare) Opfergrube’ and ‘hurritisches Lehnwort im Junghethitischen’. J. Fincke interprets *abi* as ‘Opfergrube’ ⁷ and J. Puhvel as a ‘necromantic sacrificial pit for summoning up infernal deities or revenants, sometimes personified’ ⁸. T. Richter sums up a long list of references showing that there is vast agreement among scholars about the meaning of the term that clearly points to the sacrificial rituals for the dead and communication with the infernal deities. ⁹

Such a specific term responds exactly to the context and ritual function of a tholos tomb where the relatives of the deceased gathered to keep in touch with their beloved and to propitiate the deities of the underworld through sacrificial ceremonies performed in the entrance hall and/or the circular tomb chamber. Since a tholos tomb can probably be identified as a royal tomb, the sacrificial ceremonies were probably performed by a priest or the priest-king and not only attended by the direct relatives of the royal deceased, but also by the finest selection from the community, members of the aristocracy.

W.C. Brice wrote that R. W. Hutchinson has suggested that the two signs of the inscription are the mark of a Minoan inspector, inscribed after the tomb was robbed, to record the state of the blocked entrance. ¹⁰ However, if my interpretation of *a-pi* is accepted, the most probable scenario is that the inscription dates from the time of the burial of the first royal(s) buried in the tomb (or soon after) and the first sacrificial ceremonies. For the reader’s convenience the text of the Linear A inscription (KN Ze 16) on the door-jamb in the tholos tomb at Kephala, published in *Minoan Linear A*, Vol. II: *Corpus of transliterated Linear A texts*, Part II, Amsterdam 2016, 211-212, is presented here as well.

⁴ J. Friedrich, A. Kammenhuber *et alii*, *Hethitisches Wörterbuch*, zweite, völlig neu bearbeitete Auflage auf der Grundlage der edierten hethitische Texte, Band I, Lfg. 3, Heidelberg 1978, 181.

⁵ I. Wegner, *Hurritische Opferlisten aus hethitischen Festbeschreibungen, Teil III: Das Glossar* (Corpus der hurritischen Sprachdenkmäler, I. Abteilung: Die Texte aus Boğazköy, Band I/3-3), Rome 2004, 86.

⁶ M.-C. Trémouille, *Texte verschiedenen Inhalts* (Corpus der hurritischen Sprachdenkmäler, I. Abteilung: Die Texte aus Boğazköy, Band I/8), Rome 2005, 329.

⁷ J. Fincke, *Die Orts- und Gewässernamen der Nuzi-Texte*, Beihefte zum Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients. Reihe B (Geisteswissenschaften), Nr. 7. Répertoire géographique des textes cunéiformes, Wiesbaden 1993, 29.

⁸ J. Puhvel, *Words beginning with A. Words beginning with E and I* (Trends in linguistics. Documentation 1), Berlin – New York 1984, 99 ff.

⁹ T. Richter, *Bibliographisches Glossar des Hurritischen*, Wiesbaden 2012, 37-38.

¹⁰ W.C. Brice, *Inscriptions in the Minoan script of class A*, Oxford 1961, 24, sub V 15, and Pl. XXXI / XXXIa: V 15.

INSCRIPTION ON ARCHITECTURAL SUPPORT IN STONE FROM KNOSSOS (Ze) (THOLOS TOMB AT KEPHALA)

KN Ze 16. Found in 1938. Transition Late Minoan Ib / II ?
Inscription incised in the southern door-jamb of the
entrance into the circular chamber of a tholos tomb at
Kephala (ca. 1,5 Km. north of the Palace of Minos).

a-pi ,

R.W. Hutchinson, 'Linking Cretan tombs with the "Treasures of Mycenae" ', *The Illustrated London News* 2.3.1940, 284-285.

R.W. Hutchinson, 'A Tholos Tomb on the Kephala', *BSA* 51 (1956), 74-80, fig. 1, pl. 9c-d, 10a-b (photograph of the inscription 10b).

E.P. Blegen, 'News from Athens', *AJA* XLIII (1939), 128-129, fig. 6.

G. Pugliese Carratelli, 'Le iscrizioni preelleniche di Haghia Triada in Creta e della Grecia peninsulare', *Monumenti Antichi* 40 (1945), 595, fig. 238: Cn 16.

M.P. Nilsson, 'Η Μετανάστασις τῶν Ἑλλήνων εἰς τὴν Κρήτην', *Kritika Khronika* 3 (1949), 10-11 = *Opuscula Selecta*, Lund III 1960, 430, with postscriptum 487-488.

B. Hrozný, 'Les inscriptions crétoises', Prague 1949, 280-284, pl. IX.

M.S.F. Hood, *Archaeological survey of the Knossos area*, British School at Athens, London no date, 24 pp., 3 fig. and 1 folding map: E, point 17.

W.C. Brice, *ILA*, 1961, 24 sub V 15, and Pl. XXXI/XXXIa: V 15: Inscription on a door-jamb in a Tholos Tomb at Kepala, near Knossos, of MM III-LM Ia date. The tomb was robbed in antiquity, and Mr. Hutchinson has suggested that these two signs are the mark of a Minoan inspector, inscribed after the robbery to record the state of the blocked entrance.

M. Pope, 'The date of Linear B', *Kretika Chronika* 15-16 (1962), 310-319.

E. Vermeule, *Greece in the Bronze Age*, Chicago-London 1964, 40-41, fig. 6w.

E. Grumach, 'Theben und das Alter von Linear B', *Kadmos* 4 (1965), 48. 57.

E. Grumach, 'Übersehene Zeichen der kretische Linearschrift A', *Jahrbuch für kleinasiatische Forschung* 2 (1965), 237-250.

O. Pelon, *Tholoi, tumuli et cercles funéraires*, Paris 1976.

P.G. van Soesbergen, *The archaeological context of Minoan Linear A*, Research-report on the archaeological context of Linear A finds from 34 archaeological sites in Crete: 11. *Kephala (near Knossos)*, The Netherlands Organisation for the advancement of pure research, The Hague 1976.

M.R. Popham - M. Pope - J. Raison, 'An inscribed pithoid jar from Knossos', *Kadmos* 15 (1976), 106-107. In the appendix Pope and Raison mention the LM II dating of the tomb of Kephala by Popham.

M.R. Popham, *BSA* LXXII (1977), 186.

J. Raison - M. Pope (1980), 227, and (1994), 230-231: KN Z 16: Inscription mural incisée sur une pierre de taille en calcaire. De la tholos du lieu-dit Képhala, 1 km 500 au nord du 'Palais de Minos' (Survey E, point 17); porte inférieure de la tombe, jambage sud, troisième assise, face nord du bloc d'angle, à droite en entrant dans la chambre circulaire.

GORILA 4 (1982), XXXIV-XXXV and 137-138: KN Ze 16: Tombe à tholos.

J.G. Younger (2000), 64: KN Ze 16.

It may be useful to mention here some statements from the Chapter on the *Kephala Tholos Tomb* in my research-report on *The archaeological context of Minoan Linear A*, The Netherlands Organisation for the advancement of pure research, The Hague 1976:

“R.W. Hutchinson, *BSA 51 (1956)*, 74, has suggested in his excavation report that the Kephala (in the middle of a mountain range from Zafer Papoura in the south to Isopata in the north) was lying along a sort of Minoan *Via Appia* from Knossos to the naval base at Amnisos on the mouth of the Kairatos river.

On 6 December 1938 the whole roof of the entrance-hall of the tholos was uncovered. It was intact apart from one block where the grave robbers had entered before. They had apparently broken into the chamber, for the lower part of the blocking wall between the fore hall and the chamber consisted of solid masonry, whereas the upper part was composed of loose stones with an opening at the top, where a Minoan inscription was visible, incised in the southern door-jamb of the entrance into the chamber (see *ibidem* 74 and plates 9 c-d, 10b).

The upper layers of the tholos-chamber contained some LM IIIC pottery and a big mass of human bones including smashed skulls, all in bad condition and spread in all directions. The roof of the tholos had apparently already collapsed in an early stage. The complete absence of stratification was probably due to interference by robbers or squatters in the ruins.

Hutchinson (*ibidem* 77) remarks that the inscription (KN Ze 16) can be dated to MM IIIB or LM IA on epigraphic grounds, but to LM II as well.

An additional problem is that we cannot tell for sure, whether the inscription dates from the time of construction of the tomb or may have been incised later. This means that dating the tomb, if possible, cannot help us dating the inscription, and *vice versa* dating the inscription on epigraphic criteria cannot help us dating the tomb. If the inscription is of LM II date, it would be one of the youngest Linear A inscriptions.”¹¹

¹¹ At the time that the research-report on *The archaeological context of Minoan Linear A* was written (1976), the possible meaning of the Linear A inscription *a-pi* on a door-jamb in the tholos tomb at Kephala was unknown, but if my Hurrian interpretation of *a-pi* is accepted, the most probable scenario is that the inscription dates from the time of the burial of the first royal or royals buried in the tomb (or soon after) and the first sacrificial ceremonies.