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The Evidence for Lycian in the Linear A Syllabary[1]

Summary: The correspondence between the ideogram AB 21  for "sheep" in Linear A and the syllabic interpretation of this sign as /qi/ in Linear B script allow us to suggest that Linear A was used for an IE language in which the initial laryngeal was reflected as a guttural (*H_2wi- or *H_3wi- > kwi). The phonological change *$H_{2/3}$wi- > /kwi/ is attested only for Lycian, and this proves the interpretation of M. Finkelberg who has already read some Linear A texts as Lycian. The identification of the sign AB 21  with the IE word for "sheep" (*$H_{2/3}$wi-) presupposes changes in IE reconstruction: only a dynamic paradigm for the root form *H_3wi- can be reconstructed, and it seems plausible that Hitt. *hulana* goes back to the same root denoting "sheep": *$H_{2/3}$w-l̥H_1-neH_2 "sheep wool".

Key words: Aegean scripts, Linear A, Lycian, Indo-European word for "sheep".

Over half a century the continuous attempts to decipher Linear A have been dominated by two opposite hypotheses – Semitic and Indo-European[2]. Reliable evidence is dramatically scarce. The most interesting and convincing fact is still the proposal by G. Neumann (1957) to link the sign  readable both as a syllabic sign */ni/* and an ideogram for "fig tree" with νικύλεα, the gloss preserved among other Cretan glosses (῾Ερμῶναξ δ᾽ ἐν Γλώτταις Κρητικαῖς σύκων γένη ἀναγράφε ἀμάδεα καὶ νικύλεα – Athen. III, 76f). This word that belongs to the word list of fruit trees (not necessarily endemic in Crete) has got a variety of interpretations. Among others there has been mentioned a possibility to identify a suffix that does not disclaim attribution to the Indo-European vocabulary.

To me, the perspective outlined by Neumann is by far not exhaustive inasmuch as the application of his method makes the investigation into Linear A still opportune in more detail. After GORILA a new system of numeration for Linear A has been introduced, based on the identification of Linear A signs with Linear B. The system was proposed by L. Godart and J.-P. Olivier (Godart, Olivier 1976–1985) in the late 1970s. The new system succeeded the Raison-Pope system (Raison, Pope 1977; 1981) where the sign number was marked with an asterisk. The system marks signs with numbers preceded by letters AB. The present article discusses sign AB 21  . It is worth mentioning that Godart and Olivier themselves did not attempt to identify ideograms with linear syllabary. However, there is significant resemblance between ideogram A306 and ideogram B106. For the reason that syllabic and ideographic writing can hardly be contrasted within Linear A, GORILA uses AB21 to mark ideograms as well.

By now Linear B is well-studied, though phonetic interpretation of certain signs is still a matter of dispute. The genetic relation between Linear B and Linear A, already in the

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[1] First draft of this paper has been published in Russian: Возможные следы ликийского языка в линейном письме А // Индоевропейское языкознание и классическая филология-XIV (чтения памяти И. М. Тронского). Материалы международной конференции, проходившей 21–23 июня 2010 г. В двух частях / Отв. редактор Н. Н. Казанский. СПб.: Наука, 2010. Ч. 1. С. 399–415.

[2] The research on Linear A deciphering is still in progress, though it is still being conducted within the same approaches (cf. Bartoněk 2003: 26–27): Semitic (see Aartun 1992–1997) and Indo-European (see Brown 1992–1993: 25–54 and the works by M. Finkelberg 1990–1991; 1997). Recently Y. Duhoux has made an important claim that Linear A recorded a different language than that of Cretan hieroglyphs.

17th century BC monuments, is unlikely to cause any doubt. The chronology of Aegean scripts (Early, Middle, Late Minoan) can be presented (Heubeck 1979: 1) as follows (Table 1):

Table 1

<table>
<tr><td>Period</td><td>Dates</td><td colspan="3">Type of script</td></tr>
<tr><td>EM I–III</td><td>2600–2000</td><td colspan="3"></td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">MM Ia-b
IIa-b
IIIa
IIIb</td><td rowspan="4">2000–1850
1850–1700
1700–1650
1650–1550</td><td>Proto-Linear A</td><td rowspan="3">Hieroglyphics</td><td rowspan="6">The Phaistos disc</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Linear A</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="5">LM Ia
Ib
II
IIIa
IIIb</td><td rowspan="5">1550–1500
1500–1450
1450–1400
1400–1330
1330–1200</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">Linear B</td><td rowspan="4"></td></tr>
<tr><td>IIIc</td><td>1200–1100</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
</table>

The fact that Linear B has its origin in Linear A is wholly accepted in Mycenaean studies though following the discovery in the village of Kavkania on April 1, 1994 of a pebble interpreted as bearing genuine inscribed Linear B signs (Godart 1995; Rambach, Godart 1995)[3]and assigned to the 16th century BC, the chronology might be modified, provided not all Mycenologists accept the fact that the piece is undoubtedly genuine. Thus, one has to claim the existence of Linear A in the Aegean basin, a modification of which Greek have borrowed some time after their appearance in the Balkans and on the Aegean islands. By now Linear A is known to have been spread within the region from Peloponnese coast (Agios Stephanos and Cythera) (Duhoux 1985 : 29) to Miletus and Tel-Lachish (Israel) (Bartoněk 2003: 26–27). The recent excavations in Bulgaria (Fol, Schmitt 2000) and possible traces of the language of Linear A in Egyptian papyri[4] give evidence to belive that the center where most plates take their origin remains on Crete as well as on the islands of Melos and Thera.

At the time of borrowing the syllabic writing system, the Greek faced the difficult task of adapting linear script to their native language. Texts in Linear B, however, show striking similarity in the manner of writing and of document design. The single set of signs and uniform usage within a huge territory divided by mountains and seas make one figure out if there was a single center where linear script was adjusted to the Greek language and presumably even if their was a single individual (Kazansky 2005; 2008) who was able to adjust a syllabic writing system to the Greek of his time.

We do know something about this kind activities. For example, Y. Duhoux (Duhoux 1985 : 26) demonstrated that sign *dwo* can be interpreted as doubled sign *wo*, possible only in Greek (*wo*+*wo* = *dwo wo* > *dwo*). The comparison of Linear A and Linear B signs allows to perceive the direction of innovations when Linear B Script was created and adjusted to the Greek structure (in Table 2 the signs with no correspondence in Linear A are in bold type).

[3] Unfortunately, the book by X. Arapojanni, J. Rambach, L. Godart. Kavkania: Die Ergebnisse der Ausgrabung von 1994 (2002) devoted to this discovery was unavailable to me.

[4] It refers to a charm against an Asian disease in Wreschinski's medical papyrus (Kazanskiene, Kazansky 1986).

As the Table 2 shows, most innovations involve the quality of vowel /o/: excluding the three basic series (guttural, voiceless dental, and labial) as well as *ro* and *zo*, all other signs of the series are the invention of Mycenaean ingenious author.

Table 2

C \ V	I	E	A	o	U	Дифтонг
∅	28 i	38 e	08 a	61 o	10 u	43 ai 85 au
k-	67 ki	44 ke	77 ka	70 ko	81 ku	
t-	37 ti	04 te	59 ta 66 ta_2	05 to	69 tu	
d-	07 di	45 de	01 da	**14 do**	51 du	
p-	39 pi	**72 pe**	03 pa	11 po	50 pu 29 pu_2	
m-	73 mi	13 me	80 ma	**15 mo**	23 mu	
n-	30 ni	24 ne	06 na	**52 no**	55 nu	
r- l (?)-	53 ri	27 re	60 ra	02 ro	26 ru 35/34 lu	**33 ra_3**
w-	40 wi	**75 we**	54 wa	**42 wo**	—	
j-		46 je	57 ja	**36 jo**	65 ju	
s-	41 si	09 se	31 sa	**12 so**	58 su	
h-			25 ha			
kw-	21 qi	78 qe	16 qa	**32 qo**	—	
tw- dw-		87 twe **71 dwe**		**91 two** **90 dwo,**		
nw-			**48 nwa**			

sw- (?)	**64 swi**		82 swa,		—	
z- <* ky-	—	74 ze	17  za	20  zo	—	
pt- <* py-		**62** **pte**				
ry-			**76** **ra$_2$**	**68**  **ro$_2$**		

Provided only few series in Linear A have vowel *-o-* (the proportion is 6 to 16, with the signs used in basic series *o*, *po*, *to*, *ko*, *zo* and *ro* only), it is plausible to suggest that special signs had to be introduced for this vowel to coop with the Greek phonetic system at the time of Linear B invention. Some Indo-European languages are known for the absence of *o*-vowel in their phonological system. Cuneiform Hittite, cuneiform Luvian, hieroglyphic Luvian and Palaic are among them. A similar system may be reconstructed for Linear A.

Greek distinguished three series of obstruents. In practice the writing system indicates only place and manner of articulation. Thus, Cyprus syllabary distinguishes only labial, dental, and guttural consonants. Taking this fact into account a mirror-image sign denoting *da* syllable in Linear B is used to express Cyprus *ta* in syllabary (Egetmeyer 2010: 50–51). Therefore, it is already within the framework of Greek that the syllabic graphic system was simplified. In particular, labiovelars, as well as gutturals and labials, were not opposed as voiced/unvoiced and aspirated/non-aspirated consonants are not distinguished. Meanwhile, voiced and voiceless dental consonants are distinguished in Linear A and Linear B. Thus, Linear B borrowed the oppositions within dental consonants that were not obligatory to express the peculiarity of Ancient Greek, at least Cyprus syllabary did well without this kind of distinction. Trying to reconstruct the procedure of adapting Linear writing system to record Ancient Greek one realizes the scribe's awareness of vowel height and backness as well as the invention of special signs for /*o*/-vowel and the adoption of two series of dental consonants to express voiced/voiceless quality relevant in Greek.

While introducing new signs the scribe continued to use series of compound signs to express initial obstruent consonant followed by semivowel. Texts in Linear B show that compound signs could be easily substituted by a sequence of two simple signs. The etymological analysis of compound signs reveals that initially sign 62 *pte* was read as **pye*, yet it changed its phonological interpretation in the result of **py* > *pt* later in Mycenaean Greek (Schwyzer 1939; Meier-Brügger 1992 : 47). It is long since *z*-initial series is interpreted as reflecting the authentic cluster of an obstruent + non-syllabic vowel *i̯*. Thus, this fact speaks in favour of the plausibility of a supposition that initially Linear B was invented on the basis of linguistically justified system that included *kw*-, *dw*-, *tw*- series with ***pw*-series irrelevant in Greek. In the series with non-syllabic *-i̯-*, the semivowel was preserved after liquids, may be traced after gutturals, and had no chance to remain unchanged after dentals, for a spirant had already developed in this position. Traces of former series of signs, dating back to the Proto-Greek phonological system, are revealed in isolated signs which do not express phonological distinctions any more.

As far as recent discoveries show, Linear B bears traces of distinction between liquid /*l*/ and /*r*/. The matter concerns signs 35 and 34 that at the congress at Austin (May 2000) the committee ruled to consider a single sign phonetically standing for /*lu*/. It is remarkable that this sign is similar to the /*lu*/ sign in the Cyprus syllabary. This fact

allows to suggest the distinction of two liquid series for Linear A as well. Typically enough, Linear B /*ro*/ sign is identical with the one denoting *lo* in the Cyprus syllabary, making the correspondence of /*ra*/ sign to Cyprus *la* equally possible. Thus, in Linear B the number of signs was either reduced or the *l*-series was eliminated in the course of time.

It is not unlikely that the low frequency of /*o*/-vowel signs could reflect real usage in the language recorded by means of Linear A. For 2000 BC we know languages that lacked *o*-vowel, i.e. Anatolian languages. Without falling into discussion on the usage of sign *ú* in Hittite (Friedrich 1940: § 6; Melchert 1994), I claim that there is anyway little doubt that phoneme *o* was much less frequent in Anatolian languages.

Therefore, applying the already established syllabary to native Ancient Greek, the speaker was confronted with the necessity to somehow distinguish pronunciation skills of a foreign language from the signs which could record ones of their own. More than once have scholars attempted to reconstruct the peculiarities of the language of Linear A on the basis of the data of Linear B. In particular, it was suggested that "Minoan language had open syllables only barring clusters or co-occurrence of two or three consonants" (although it is specified that "Signs of CCV-type might rarely occur") (Kondratov, Shevoroshkin 1970: 56). It should be highlighted that, in syllabic writing systems, signs denoting open syllable normally prevail which should not be regarded as evidence in favour of a particular language behind the text in syllabic script. Phonological interpretation of Linear A becomes even more complicated as the correspondence between identical signs in Linear A and B could have been merely approximate. Thus, although labiovelar phonemes are reconstructed for Mycenaean Greek, hardly is it justified to infer this interpretation on other recorded languages considering the independent labiovelar series in Linear B a direct evidence for labiovelar phonemes in Linear A. The correspondence could have been approximate enough, e.g. signs of labiovelar series were not necessarily used to record labiovelars in the language of Linear A; rather, these signs might have been read as a cluster of two phonemes /*k*+*w*/ followed by a vowel.

In accordance with these considerations sign, 21 attested both in Linear A and B becomes particularly important. Ideographically it denotes a sheep, whereas its syllabic interpretation in Linear B is /$k^w i$/.

KN Wc 2063 KN Wc 2102 Za 9. 2 PH Wc 44

Most frequently this sign is accompanied by an indication of animal's sex (Godart, Olivier 1976–1985) and naturally the meaning "sheep" is more frequent.

HT 84. 1 HT 7b.1 HT 112a. 1 HT 28a. 1 ZA 14. 1

KH 88. 1 ARKH 2. 4

The same sign 21 together with an indication "male" is attested in a number of texts

 

PH 31a. 2 ZA 22. 2

The phonetic interpretation of the ideogram for "sheep" is somewhat unexpected. We know that the ideogram for "cow" could stand for phonetic *mu* as well (Kazanskiene, Kazansky 1986$_b$). We also know that The acrophonic principle was present widely enough in Linear A script as proved by G. Neumann for the ideogram "fig tree". Obviously, sheep did not make a sound resembling *kwi* in the Mycenaean time. Nevertheless it does seem plausible that a Mycenaean scribe could implement a set of signs which were irrelevant in Greek to record relevant labiovelar phonemes. One may suggest that we are dealing with a reflection of an Indo-European word for "sheep".

If the interpretation proposed be correct, Linear A was invented for an Indo-European language where the reflexes of laryngeals coincided with guttural phonemes. This is exactly the situation in Lycian[5], a language close to Luwian and, which due to the research by E. Laroche (Laroche 1958), is considered the direct descendant of Luwian. Therefore, if the interpretation proposed be correct, the change of laryngeals into gutturals should be dated 2000 BC already, which means that Proto-Indo-European labiovelars did not exist in the earliest Lycian. In this case it could be assumed that Linear A possessed a number of signs that etymologically denoted the cluster "laryngeal + vowel". In the case of sign AB 21, the correspondence with the ideogram for "sheep" is not a mere coincidence (considering that a Proto-Indo-European word for "sheep" is reconstructed as *H_2wi- or *H_3wi-) (Mallory, Adams 1997).

As is known, Hittite *hawi-*, where the laryngeal is well attested, corresponds to Lycian χawa- (Melchert 2004: 81), the latter with a change in declension type under the influence of *wawa-*, a word denoting "cow". If this hypothesis be of value (for we know that in the Greek of early 2000 BC laryngeals were already vocalized[6]), laryngeals were either still preserved or changed into gutturals in the language of Linear A.

It should be mentioned, though, that Proto-Indo-European word reconstruction has a number of problems. The first one concerns the type of declension. Acrostatic paradigm is usually the one to be reconstructed out of all possible types of ablaut-accent paradigms (LIN: 335); it is, however, not the case for Linear A sign interpretation.

Cuneiform Hittite *ha-a-ú-is* with *scriptio plene* presumably indicating a stressed root, could evidence in favor of the acrostatic type. For Greek οἶς P. Chantraine[7] supported a static paradigm[8] that he considered older if to compare with Old Indian data. However,

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[5] The latest review belongs to R. Woodard (Woodard 2004). The best dictionary was published by C. Melchert (Melchert 2004).

[6] For plausibility of this fact cf. Mycenaean o-wi-da (a male name), o-wi-de-ta-i, discussed in detail in Leukart 1994: 221, and a proper name o-wi-ro, attested in Homer (cf. Οἰλεύς). Moreover, Mycenaean dictionary (Aura Jorro 1993: 57–59) refers to the place name o-wi-to-no /owi-tn-/ and a derived adjective o-wi-ti-ni-jo /owi-tn-ios/.

[7] P. Chantraine (Chantraine 1948: 219) noticed that the flexion of this word poses a number of difficulties because oblique cases οἷς (< ὄις), οἰός and οἷος reveal two sets of forms, depending on three or two syllable interpretation of the base.

[8] P. Chantraine argues whether οἷιες (ι 425) reflects the older οἷεες, i. e., *H_3wei-es according to accepted reconstruction (Chantraine 1953: 70). Homeric Dative forms οἷεσι, οἷεσσι, ὄεσσι might indicate to *H_3wiesi with stress unified on the initial or ultimate syllable. However, in his book on Homeric dialect, P. Chantraine strongly insists on a static accent paradigm. Whatever

Old Indian *áviḥ ávyaḥ* is isolated, so Burrow argued that this word had changed its initially dynamic paradigm into static one (Баррoу 1976: 168). It is worth mentioning that the coincidence of zero-grade and *o*-grade root in Greek would yield identical result. Obviously, the initial laryngeal was to fall in other languages. In Lithuanian, a more archaic 2nd paradigm exists alongside with accent paradigm 4 conventional in modern literary language (DLKŽ). Alternative accent paradigms of Greek and the Lithuanian dialects indicate that similar alternative wordforms were not impossible in the proto-language. Since in most languages the word for "sheep" acquired additional suffixation already in archaic times (Old-Slav. *овча*, *овца*, Skr. *avikā́*), it seems that the reconstruction of a dynamic paradigm alongside with the static one cannot be rejected.

The second problem of interpretation concerns the initial laryngeal. At present there is no uniform opinion on whether to reconstruct initial *H_2- or *H_3-. Nevertheless, reconstruction of initial *H_2- is more popular. However, it is assumed that «Evidenz für *H_2- bleibt insgesamt schwach» (LIN 336 n. 1). On the contrary, the dictionary by M. de Vaan reconstructs *H_3- (de Vaan 2008: 438). The author analyzes the arguments in favor of excluding the null-grade root reconstruction. The arguments in favor of *H_2- were presented by S. Kimball in 1987 (Kimball 1987: 185–192). She proposed to use Lycian data in order to distinguish the reflection of *H_2- and *H_3- in Anatolian languages, thus claiming that the two laryngeals had different pronunciation because only one of them manifests guttural reflection in Lycian. Kimball's conclusion is fully supported by C. Melchert (Melchert 1994: 72), yet rejected in Kloekhorst 2008: 337–338. The word in question definitely requires to reconstruct initial *H_3-. Such reconstruction is not impossible though not generally accepted. Moreover, Hittite allows us to consider the word for sheep's wool (Rus. во́лна) Hitt. ḫulana < *$H_{2/3}$w-i̯H_1-neH_2 as derived from the root denoting "sheep". Typically enough, the quality of the laryngeal is not quite clear in this case as well (Melchert 1994: 65).

Thus, keeping the two arguable issues in mind, i.e., the reconstruction of dynamic accent paradigm and the reconstruction of initial laryngeal, let us specify the strong points of the proposed interpretation:

1) Both Proto-Indo-European and Linear A had a word of common gender for "sheep, ram". Linear A and Linear B ideogram for "sheep" shows that the writing system had a specific device to distinguish male and female animals: OVIS^{m} or OVIS^{f}. In Homeric texts, adjectives perform the same function, the word itself, however, being understood as *genus commune*.

2) There is not enough evidence to reconstruct the typologically rare labiovelar series for the language to which Greek owes its writing system. Provided that a whole range of signs was used to record Cw-clusters, there is sufficient evidence to interpret sign AB 21 in Linear A as */kwi/*, which was used to denote *qi* in Mycenaean Greek.

3) We know a language where a laryngeal is reflected as a guttural. The language in question is Lycian which finds its extra support in Herodot's evidence for the Lycians, the aboriginal population of Crete, cf. Hdt. I, 173: οἱ δὲ Λύκιοι ἐκ Κρήτης τὠρχαῖον γεγόνασι. Herodotus explain that τὴν γὰρ Κρήτην εἶχον τὸ παλαιὸν πᾶσαν βάρβαροι. It is only in Lycian that a laryngeal amazingly coincided with a guttural consonant. Thus,

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identical is the accentuation of Homeric Genitive to that of Old Indian *avyaḥ*, Homeric form with a different stress has to be considered as well. Otherwise, in a usual case such variation would be evidence of a barytone form which, in its turn, might have been subject to the influence of Aeolic dialect and its typical barytonic accentuation.

the hypothetic correlation of Linear A with Lycian (yet not with other Anatolian languages that possess a special Cuneiform ḫ-initial sign for laryngeals) is not unwise.

Further comparison of texts in Linear A with Lycian evidence poses a number of difficulties mainly due to utter difference of genres worsened by a gap of at least thousand years (to speak about Lycian A).

In theory it is equally possible that Linear A word for "sheep" is a borrowing. It is attested that the Greeks were aware of Milesian sheep already around 1000 BC. Moreover, importing animals for breeding was common practice. In this context, a foreign word might have been borrowed as well. Later, both Greek and Anatolian words for "small cattle" were derived from verb "go": Hitt. iyant-, Gr. τὰ πρόβατα.

If the proposed identification of the language behind Linear A is true, the dialectal differentiation of the Anatolian languages should be specified. Preserved in alphabetic texts, not only did Lycian directly succeed to Luvian, as has been suggested by E. Laroche, but also should be viewed as a language of Anatolian origin developing on Crete. It is therefore obvious that the region where Lycian was spread must have exceeded the territory of Crete. Consequently, Greek substratum should be traced on a broader territory.

M. Finkelberg (Finkelberg 1990–1991) has already made a claim that Linear A texts conceal the Lycian language. If the proposed interpretation be true, there is a piece of direct evidence that the inventor of Linear A was a speaker of Lycian.

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