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SOMMARIO

Stephanie Aulsebrook

Repair, Recycle or Modify? The Response to Damage and/or Obsolescence in Mycenaean Metal Vessels during the Prepalatial and Palatial Periods and its Implications for Understanding Metal Recycling

7

Anna Maria D'Onofrio

Working Tools, Toilet Implements and Personal Adornments in Weapon Burials at Early Iron Age Athens and Lefkandi

27

Anna P. Judson

The Mystery of the Mycenaean 'Labyrinth': the Value of Linear B *pu*₂ and Related Signs

53

Carl Knappett, Maurizio Del Freo, Julien Zurbach

A Fragmentary Libation Table with Inscription in Linear A from Petsopha, Palaikastro (Pk Za 27)

73

Yannis Galanakis, Emily Catherine Egan

A Lost Mycenaean Fresco Fragment Re-examined

83

Uroš Matić, Filip Franković

Out of Date, out of Fashion: the Changing of Dress of Aegean Figures in the Theban Tombs of the Egyptian 18th Dynasty in the Light of Aegean Bronze Age Costume

105

Eleni Papadopoulou

LM III Mortuary Practices in West Crete: the Cemeteries of Maroulas and Armenoi near Rethymnon

131

A FRAGMENTARY LIBATION TABLE WITH INSCRIPTION IN LINEAR A FROM PETSOPHAS, PALAIKASTRO (PK Za 27)

Carl Knappett, Maurizio Del Freo, Julien Zurbach

Summary

This article is the first publication of a fragmentary libation table with inscription in Linear A showing an example of the so-called ‘libation formula’. The signs, the text and the formula of the inscription are presented and discussed.

I. THE OBJECT

This fragment of a stone libation table inscribed with Linear A (Fig. 1) is a surface find from the Petsophas peak sanctuary. It was found in the course of the 2012 survey season,¹ and reported to our Ephoria representative before being recovered and brought to the apotheke.² Previously, eleven libation tables have been found and published from Petsophas (Davis 2014, 17-28). J.L. Myres found four of these (**PK Za 9-12**) during the excavations of the early 20th century, although their inscriptions were not detected until some time later (Davis 2014, *ibid.*). A further five (**PK Za 14-18**) were discovered by C. Davaras when he excavated the site in the 1970s. Two more examples were actually found lower down the north slope, one in 1904 outside a small cave (**PK Za 8**), and the other in the 1962-3 excavation seasons of M.R. Popham and L.H. Sackett (**PK Za 20**) (Davis 2014, *ibid.*). The new fragment is of serpentine like the other libation tables from Petsophas (Davis 2014, 346-360).

In terms of typology, this must be of the rectangular kind (type A) defined by P. Muhly (1981; see also Davis 2014, 68-75).³ B. Davis suggests that of the eleven previously known examples from Petsophas, eight are rectangular and three of the round type. Of the rectangular examples, he is further able to identify two as having a stepped base (type A.V in Muhly’s scheme) and three with a pedestal base (type A.VIII) (Davis 2014, 72, tab. 12). The extent of preservation of this piece – just a part of the rim – makes it difficult to reconstruct the form of the base, whether stepped or with pedestal. The typology as well as the comparison with the other libation tables from Petsophas strongly suggest that the object is Neopalatial in date.

II. THE INSCRIPTION

1. Description

The inscription **PK Za 27**⁴ comprises eight signs, incised on the upper face of the libation table. The signs are separated by a word divider into two groups of five and three signs respectively. Just before the five-signs sequence there

1 The first year of a five year project run under the auspices of the British School at Athens and the Greek Ministry of Culture and Sports.

2 It was found by two eagle-eyed University of Toronto students, Paula Gheorgiade and Christine Spencer.

3 The new fragment from Petsophas measures 9.1x4.2 cm. It can be estimated that the libation table was originally 11.5x11.5 cm.

4 The other Linear A inscriptions from Palaikastro and Petsophas, 21 in total, have the following numbers: **PK 1, Za 4, Za 8, Za 9, Za 10, Za 11, Za 12, Zc 13, Za 14, Za 15, Za 16, Za 17, Za 18, Zb 19, Za 20, Zb 21, Wy 22, Zb 23, Zb 24, Zb 25** and **Zb 26** (numbers 2-3 and 5-7 are *vacantes*). On **PK 1**, see *GORILA* I; on **Za 4 – 18** and **Zc 13**, *GORILA* IV; on **Zb 19**, MacGillivray *et al.* 1987, 153, fig. 8; on **Za 20**, Driessen 1994, 149-152, fig. 2, pl. 2; on **Zb 21**, MacGillivray *et al.* 1991, 146-147, fig. 22 (see also Davis 2008, 55-56, fig. 1); on **Wy 22**, Schoep 1998, 266-267, fig. 21, pl. 50; on **Zb 23**, Schoep 1998, 267, fig. 21, pl. 50b; on **Zb 24**, Schoep 1998, 267-268, fig. 21, pl. 50c; on **Zb 25**, Schoep, Driessen 2002-2003, 77-80, fig. 1, pl. XVI. The *editio princeps* of **Zb 26** is currently being prepared by I. Schoep (see Del Freo 2008, 205).

is another word divider. The three-sign sequence is followed by a small, somewhat curved incision just before the lacuna. Such a small incision could be either a word divider or a part of a missing fourth sign. The first sequence begins on the small side of the fragment (side *a*) and continues on the longer side (side *b*). The signs are inscribed from left to right and look towards the interior of the libation table.⁵

The inscription measures 9.7 cm in length (side *a* + side *b*), the entirely preserved signs having a height of 0.8-0.9 cm. The incision of the signs is quite accurate and shows moderate care for the outline as well as the alignment of signs. The state of conservation is good, as there are only some superficial cuts and abrasions. The only exception is the first three signs of the first sequence (side *a*) whose lower part is lost.

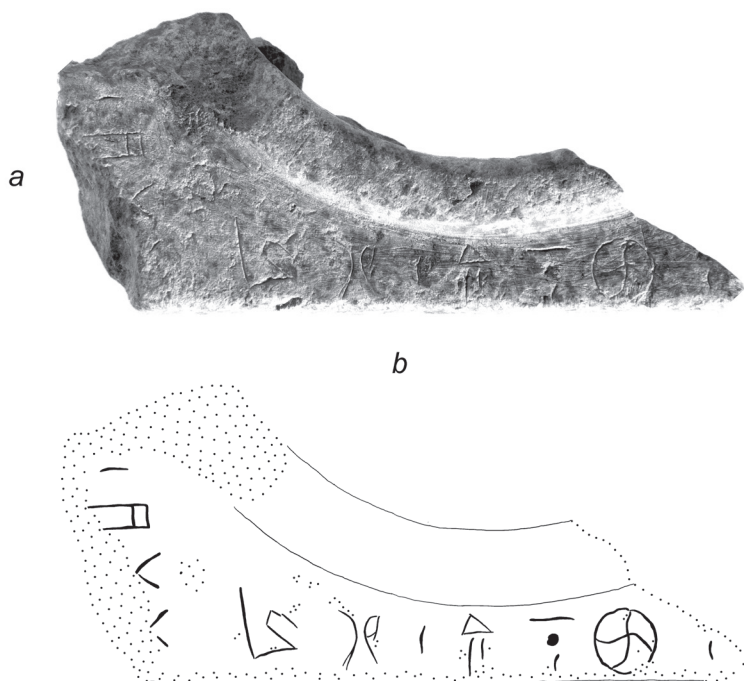


Fig. 1. **PK Za 27**, photograph and facsimile, 1:1.

2. Signs and palaeography

The first sign, even in its fragmentary state, is easily identifiable as **AB 57**. The outline takes the standard form and does not present any peculiar features. The fact that the two horizontal upper lines are very near each other suggests that the two lines missing from the bottom would have been in a similar position, following a common scheme (Fig. 2).⁶

⁵ The other inscriptions incised on shoulders of rectangular libation tables are: **IO Za 9** (*GORILA* V), **11** (Karetsou, Godart, Olivier 1985), **15** (Karetsou 1987), **PK Za 8, 14, 16, 17** (*GORILA* IV), **PS Za 2** (*GORILA* IV), **SY Za 2** (*GORILA* V) and **VRy Za 1** (*GORILA* IV). All these inscriptions are left-to-right like **PK Za 27**, with the exception of **IO Za 9**, which is 'diverging' (in part left-to-right, in part right-to-left: on the notion of 'diverging' inscriptions, see Karetsou, Godart, Olivier 1985, 127), **IO Za 11**, which is *boustrophedon*, and **VRy Za 1**, which is right-to-left. In almost all cases, the signs look towards the interior, except on **IO Za 11** and **SY Za 2** (sides *a* and *d*), where they are facing outwards. Special cases are the signs of **PS Za 2** (signs of line 1 oriented towards the exterior; signs of line 2 oriented towards the interior), the signs of side *b* of **SY Za 2** (put into a column) and the first sign of side *b* of **VRy Za 1** (oriented towards the exterior and rotated by 180° with respect to the other signs).

⁶ Especially in documents which are not archival. Signs of figs. 2-9 from texts other than **PK Za 27** are from *GORILA*.



Fig. 2. Variants of sign AB 57 with small lines in two distinct groups.

Only two oblique lines are preserved from the second and third signs. They are clearly converging at their lower end forming an acute angle and therefore *a priori* compatible with at least four different signs: AB 31, AB 46, A 339 and A 347.⁷ Given the context of the sequence, however, the first possibility seems more likely (see below). As a consequence, one may think that the vertical line, as well as the possible little loop, of sign AB 31 are lost in the lacuna (Fig. 3).⁸

From the third sign we only have two converging oblique lines as in the preceding case. If they were isolated, they would not allow any identification; however, given their place in the sequence, we may suppose that the sign AB 31 is to be restored here (see below).



Fig. 3. Variants of sign AB 31.

The fourth sign corresponds to the left-to-right oriented version of AB 60. This version is the only one attested so far at Palaikastro and Petsophas.⁹ The sign has a usual outline, leaning somewhat towards the left. The only peculiar aspect of this sign is the somewhat 'polygonal' execution of the curve in the form of a hook (Fig. 4).



Fig. 4. Variants (right-to-left and left-to-right) of sign AB 60.

The fifth and final sign of the first sequence is composed of two arch-like lines that mirror one another. The first one divides into two parts at its lower end. The second one continues at its higher end, forming a small circle at its right by means of two small segments. Even if the small circle does not cut the main line, and even if there is no trace of the typical short horizontal segments cutting the lower part of the right main line, the sign is identifiable as a variant of AB 13, whose relatively complex outline may be executed in different forms (Fig. 5).¹⁰

⁷ In theory, the two converging lines are compatible with some uncommon variants of AB 04 (HT Wa 1123), AB 23 (ZA 21a.2) and AB 39 (AP Za 2.1.2, KN Zf 13 and 31).

⁸ For the two alternative forms of AB 31, see *GORILA* V, xxxiv. At Palaikastro, see PK Za 4 and 11 (AB 31 with loop) and Za 8, 14, 16 (AB 31 without loop).

⁹ See PK 1.6, Za 4, Za 11c, Za 12b.

¹⁰ The small oblique incision in the lower right of the circle is accidental and is not part of the sign.



Fig. 5. Variants of sign AB 13.

The sixth sign (the first of the second sequence) is composed of a triangle positioned above two vertical parallel lines. This is the sign whose identification is the most difficult. The outline suggests either AB 45 or AB 10. Neither of these identifications, however, is satisfactory. The sign AB 45 is attested in many variants (Fig. 6): with oblique lateral lines, with oblique ‘ears’, with two ‘legs’ (parallel, diverging or crisscross), with three ‘legs’ (more or less parallel), with or without additional lines inside the triangle, but never without lateral appendices.



Fig. 6. Variants of sign AB 45.

AB 10 as well is attested in many variants (Fig. 7): in most cases it is composed by one curve and two smaller lines, one vertical and one horizontal touching or crossing each other. There are cases, however, where the main curve can be divided into two smaller segments, whereas the small vertical line can assume the form of a ‘hook’ or ‘loop’. In some cases, the horizontal segment is absent, in others, it is double. In the inscriptions on stone from Iouktas the upper part of the sign is a large point, from which two diverging lines emerge. This part of the sign, however, never has the form of a triangle.¹¹

From the preceding analysis it is clear that the identifications with AB 45 or AB 10 are unsatisfactory. It must be stressed, however, that while the two appendices of AB 45 are absent,¹² all the components of AB 10 are present. Despite the eccentricity of the outline, moreover, the ‘polygonal’ execution of the curve may recall that already observed with AB 60. We thus favour the reading AB 10, which *inter alia* is more coherent with the context (see below).

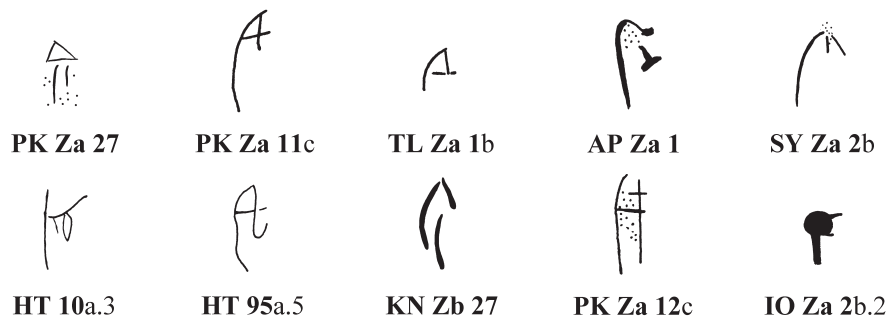


Fig. 7. Variants of sign AB 10.

¹¹ The nearest variant is found on HT 95a.5.

¹² The absence of these two lines is not comparable to the absence of the two orthogonal segments at the lower end of the circle of AB 13.

The seventh sign presents, from top to bottom, one horizontal line, a point and a slightly curving line.¹³ This is sign AB 06. Among the many attested variants, that of **Za 27** is documented in the inscriptions on clay, particularly at Haghia Triada (*e.g.* **HT 6b.6**). Among other variants (Fig. 8), in the inscriptions on stone the most common one is composed of one or two horizontal small lines above a series of points in column, from two to five. But examples of signs composed of horizontal lines on one or more vertical lines are not uncommon. At Petsophas both types are found (see **PK Za 8** and **10**, and **Za 11** and **12** respectively). The sign on **Za 27** is therefore of mixed type and has no exact parallel in other inscriptions on stone, with the exception of **KN Za 10b**, where one horizontal line is lying over two points and one vertical line.



Fig. 8. Variants of sign AB 06.

The eighth sign is composed of a circle with a cross with wavy lines inside. The sign is slightly damaged at the lower end. The outline corresponds to one variant of sign AB 77 (Fig. 9), particularly well attested in inscriptions on stone (**IO Za 6**, **16b**, **KO Za 1c**, **SY Za 2b**, **3**).¹⁴ It is the first example of this variant at Petsophas, where up to now only the more common variant with 'orthogonal' cross was attested (**PK Za 8b** and **11c**).¹⁵



Fig. 9. Variants of sign AB 77.

On the right of AB 77 and just before the lacuna a slightly curving line is incised. As already mentioned, it is difficult to tell if this is a word-divider or a part of a sign. Its position, however, is slightly lower than the dividers which precede the first and the second sequences of signs; its dimensions seem also a little bit more modest, so that one would lean towards the second possibility. In that case one could think of a second AB 06 (see below).

On the whole, from the point of view of palaeography, the signs show a standard outline, with the exception of AB 13 and AB 10. In general, in **Za 27** the *ductus* and the care for the precise incision and the alignment of signs do not show any major difference from the other inscriptions from Petsophas.

3. Transcription

Taking into account the preceding observations and considering (1) that in the entire Linear A *corpus* the only five-sign group corresponding to the sequence AB 57-?-?-60-? is AB 57-31-31-60-13 (JA-SA-SA-RA-ME),¹⁶ (2) that the only attested group compatible with the sequence AB ?-06-77-[is AB 10-06-77-06-41 (U-NA-KA-NA-SI) and

13 The small point at the lower left of the curve is accidental and is not part of the sign.

14 On **IO Za 6**, see *GORILA V*; on **IO Za 16**, Karetsou, Godart, Olivier 2002-2003, 444, fig. 2, pl. XX; on **KO Za 1**, *GORILA IV*; on **SY Za 2**, *GORILA V*; on **SY Za 3**, Muhly, Olivier 2008, 205-206, fig. 5. The cross with wavy lines does occur occasionally also in texts written on other material: for instance **HT Wa 1325**, **KE 1.1**, etc.

15 Variant attested also on **TL Za 1b**.

16 Transliterations based on the phonetic values of similar Linear B signs are purely conventional.

(3) that the two groups are often attested one after the other in the formulary inscriptions on libation tables (see below),¹⁷ our inscription may be transcribed as follows.¹⁸

.a] 1 1 Y Y

b. $\leq \rho \mid \hat{\pi} \mid \bar{i} \oplus - [$

.b Traces at right compatible with $\overline{\mathfrak{t}}$.

.a |• 

b. $\mathbb{C} \cong \mathbb{R} \oplus \mathbb{R} \oplus \mathbb{R}$

.a-b], AB 57-31-31-60-13 , 10-06-77-[

Given the observations on the small vertical segment between AB 77 and the lacuna, one should not exclude the reading AB *10-06-77-06*].

4. The sign-groups

a. The sequence AB 57-31-31-60-13 (JA-SA-SA-RA-ME) is attested on the stone cup **IO Za 6**, on the libation tables **IO Za 12**, **IO Za 16** and **PS Za 2**, on the ritual ladle **TL Za 1** and on the silver pin **PL Zf 1**. Moreover, a form with a different ‘ending’ AB 57-31-31-60-80-06 (JA-SA-SA-RA-MA-NA) is attested on the libation table **KN Za 10**.¹⁹

We find sequences belonging to this formula on five libration tables: AB 57-31-31-60[(**IO Za 2**), AB 57-31-31[(**IO Za 9** and **PK Za 14**), AB 57-31[(**PK Za 8**) and]AB 60-13[(**PK Za 12**) (see Karetsou, Godart, Olivier 1985, 132). In the first and the last cases it is possible to estimate the number of lost signs: that is why these sequences can be restored as AB 57-31-31-60[-13 and AB 57-31-31-]60-13[respectively. This is not possible in the other three cases, where the only acceptable restorations are AB 57-31-31[-60- and AB 57-31[-31-60- respectively. Two more fragmentary sequences compatible with the longer formula are AB 57-[(**SY Za 1**) and AB 57-31[(**MA Zb 8**), which can be restored as 57-[31-31-60- and 57-31[-31-60- respectively (see Karetsou, Godart, Olivier 1985, 132).

17 On the libation tables two formula sequences have been identified (see Karetsou, Godart, Olivier 1985, 134): one ‘main formula’ AB 08-59-28-A 301-54-57 ... 10-06-77-06-41, 28-39-06-80, 41-26-04 (A-TA-I-301-WA-JA ... U-NA-KA-NA-SI, I-PI-NA-MA, SI-RU-TE), where U-NA-KA-NA-SI is often preceded by A/JA-SA-SA-RA-ME (see below n. 22), and one ‘secondary formula’ AB 59-06-28-A 301-10-37-55 ... 57-31-31-60-13 (TA-NA-I-301-U-TI-NU ... JA-SA-SA-RA-ME). In **IO Za 2** both formula sequences are present in the same text, but their fragmentary state of conservation prevents us from saying if JA-SA-SA-RA-ME was indeed present at the same time in both. As has been observed, however, JA-SA-SA-RA-ME and I-DA(-) are never attested in the same formula and **IO Za 2** shows the sequence AB 28-01-[- (I-DA-[- (see Karetsou, Godart, Olivier 1985, 134). Recently, on the other hand, Consani (1998, 211) has raised some doubts on the fact that JA-SA-SA-RA-ME would belong to the ‘secondary formula’. On the ‘libation formula’ see also most recently Karnava 2016.

18 On the possible reading AB 45-06-77-[-] (DE-NA-KA-[-]), it must be observed that the sequence 45-06 is presently not attested in the Linear A *corpus*, and that an ‘alternation’ between AB 10-06-77-06-41 (U-NA-KA-NA-SI) and AB 45-06-77-[-] (DE-NA-KA-[-]) in the libation tables ‘main formula’ appears improbable. In the Linear A *corpus* there are in fact no cases of alternation between AB 10 and AB 45, the only ‘exception’ being AB 08-59-28-A 301-45-77 (A-ṬA-I-301-DE-KA) (**ZA Zb 3.2**) and AB 57-59-28-A 301-10-57 (JA-TA-I-301-U-JA) (**AP Za 1**), a form that alternates with the first sequence of the ‘main formula’ on libation tables, *i.e.* AB 08-59-28-A 301-54-57 (A-TA-I-301-WA-JA) (**IO Za 2**, **IO Za 3**, **IO Za [4]**, **IO Za 7**, **KO Za 1**, **PK Za 12**, **SY Za 1**, **SY Za 2**, **SY Za 3**, **SY Za 4**, **SY Za [8]**, **TL Za 1**) and AB 08-59-28-A 301-54-38 (A-TA-I-301-WA-E) (**PK Za 11**). In any case, -DE-KA / -U-JA does not seem to be a case of alternation like DE-NA-KA- / U-NA-KA-. Alternatively DE-NA-KA-[-] could be one of the sequences which occasionally follow A/JA-SA-SA-RA-ME *vel similia*: see on **KN Za 10** AB 01-54-[-]·51-54-05 (DA-WA-[-]·DU-WA-ṬQ), on **IO Za 12** AB 28-37[-] (I-TI) and on **PL Zf 1** (which however is a pin, not a libation table) AB 59-55-30-67-06 (TA-NU-NI-KI-NA). But this hypothesis also appears difficult.

19 On **KN Za 10**, **PS Za 2**, **TL Za 1** and **PL Zf 1**, see *GORILA* IV; on **IO Za 6**, *GORILA* V; on **IO Za 12**, Karetsou, Godart, Olivier 1985, 143, fig. 22, pl. VI; on **IO Za 16**, Karetsou, Godart, Olivier 2002-2003, 443-444, fig. 2, pl. XX.

The sequence AB 57-31-31-60-13 (JA-SA-SA-RA-ME) alternates, as is widely known, with the sequence AB 08-31-31-60-13 (A-SA-SA-RA-ME). This last one is attested on the clay ‘altar’ fragment **IO Zb 10** and on the libation tables **PK Za 11** (?) and **PR Za 1**. On the conical cup fragment **PK Za 4** one finds incised the isolated sequence AB 08-31-31-60[. It is impossible to tell if this sequence is complete or not.²⁰

It is probable, finally, that the sequence AB 53-78-37-08-31-31-60-A 325 (RĪ-QE-TI-A-SA-SA-RA-325), painted on the clay idol **POR Zg 1**, is composed of AB 53-78-37 + AB 08-31-31-60-A 325 (RĪ-QE-TI + A-SA-SA-RA-325), and that the second sequence is an alternative form of AB 08-31-31-60-13 (A-SA-SA-RA-ME) with a different ‘ending’ (see Dimopoulou, Olivier, Rethemiotakis 1993).

Thanks to the discovery of the **Za 27** inscription from Petsophas, the entire file for AB 08/57-31-31-60- (A/JA-SA-SA-RA-) now includes one more element and can be synthesized as follows (Tab. 1):

Sequence	Conventional transcription	Texts
57-31-31-60-13	JA-SA-SA-RA-ME	IO Za [2]b-c.1, Za 6 , Za 12a-b , Za 16a-b MA Zb [8] (?) PK Za [12]b, Za 27a-b PL Zf 1 PS Za 2.2 SY Za [1] (?) TL Za 1
57-31-31-60-80-06	JA-SA-SA-RA-MA-NA	KN Za 10a-b
57-31-31-60-...	JA-SA-SA-RA-...	IO Za 9 PK Za 8b, Za 14b
08-31-31-60-13	A-SA-SA-RA-ME	IO Zb 10 PK Za 11b-c PR Za 1c
08-31-31-60[	A-SA-SA-RA[	PK Za 4
08-31-31-60-325	A-SA-SA-RA-325	POR Zg 1

Table 1. Texts with AB 08/57-31-31-60-.

The sequence AB 08/57-31-31-60- is now attested six times in the Iouktas inscriptions, six times at Palai-kastro / Petsophas, and once respectively at Knossos, Kato Symi (?), Malia (?), Platanos, Poros Herakleiou, Prassa, Psykhro and Troullos (Arkhanes).

b. The fragmentary sequence AB 10-06-77-[(U-NA-KA-I) or AB 10-06-77-06[(U-NA-KA-NA[) – if we admit that the small segment on the right of AB 77 corresponds to the vertical line of a second AB 06 (see above) – can be restored as AB 10-06-77-[06-41] (U-NA-KA-[NA-SI]) or AB 10-06-77-06[-41] (U-NA-KA-NA[-SI]). The sequence AB 10-06-77-06-41 (U-NA-KA-NA-SI), like the alternative ones AB 10-06-26-77-06-37 (U-NA-RU-KA-NA-TI) and AB 10-06-26-77-06-57-41 (U-NA-RU-KA-NA-JA-SI), is frequently attested on libation tables,²¹ often just after AB 08/57-31-31-60-13 (A/JA-SA-SA-RA-ME) (*vel sim.*).²²

20 On the basis of the completely preserved sequences at least one syllabogram should be missing. On **IO Zb 10**, see *GORILA* V; on **PK Za 4** and **11** and on **PR Za 1**, *GORILA* IV.

21 **AP Za** 2[.1], **KO Za** 1c, **IO Za** 2c-d[.1], **IO Za** [9], **PK Za** 8b, **PK Za** [20], **SY Za** 2b, **TL Za** 1b (AB 10-06-77-06-41 U-NA-KA-NA-SI), **PK Za** 11c (AB 10-06-26-77-06-37 U-NA-RU-KA-NA-TI), **PK Za** 12c (AB 10-06-26-77-06-57-41 U-NA-RU-KA-NA-JA-SI), possible reading for AB 10-06-26-77[]57-41 U-NA-RU-KA[]JA-SI. It is likely that the second or third sequence (or still another one) was originally incised on **IO Za** 16b (AB 10-06-26-77[] U-NA-RU-KA[]; see Karetsou, Godart, Olivier 2002-2003, 446), while the first or second sequence was probably incised on **PK Za** 10 ([41] SI; see *GORILA* IV, 173).

22 In **IO Za** 2, **IO Za** 16, **PK Za** 8, **PK Za** 11 and **TL Za** 1. In **PK Za** 12 the sequence AB 10-06-26-77[]57-41 (U-NA-RU-KA[]JA-SI) is preceded by AB]08[]-24 (probably AB]08[-70-08]-24]A[-KA-A]-NE; see *GORILA* IV, 173), but this is on its turn preceded by AB]60-13[(probably AB 08-31-31-]60-13[A-SA-SA-]RA-ME]). Conversely, in **KO Za** 1 and **SY Za** 2 the sequence AB 10-06-77-06-41 U-NA-KA-NA-SI is preceded by AB 28-01-08 I-DA-A and AB 57-58-80-69 JA-SU-MA-TU respectively. In **IO Za** 9 it is difficult to tell if AB 57-31-31-]60-13 JA-SA-SA[-RA-ME preceded or not AB 10-06-77-]06-41 U-NA-KA[-NA-SI, as the two sequences are ‘diverging’ (see above).

CONCLUSION

The inscription **PK Za 27** is incised on the shoulder of a Neopalatial serpentine libation table of rectangular type, similar to other examples discovered at Petsophas and on other Cretan sites. Its graphic and formulary characters are typical of this class of inscriptions. Even if it is fragmentary and some signs do show peculiar forms, the reading] , AB 57-31-31-60-13 , 10-06-77-[(perhaps 10-06-77-06[) has a solid basis and clearly fits the so-called 'libation formula'. At Petsophas itself, for the shape of the object, the disposition of signs and the possible formulary sequence, **PK Za 27** is closely related to **PK Za 8**, **Za 14** and **Za 16**.

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Abbreviations

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