THE ROUNDELS

The roundel from Pyrgos, PYR Wc 4, which Paul Rehak and I found at the LM IB Country House in August, 1993 (Rehak and Younger 1995), is pentagonal in shape (H. 3.0, W. 2.7–2.9, Th. 1.2 cm) and of light reddish-brown to dark brown clay, badly cracked in the conflagration that destroyed the building. It is inscribed on both sides:

PYR Wc 4 (FIG. 001 top)

a.1-2: T I-[•]-I-SI (possibly T I+DU-I-SI)
b: logogram unknown, but perhaps the Linear A predecessor of Linear B *141 AURUM (Hallager 1996: 2-197).

Around the rim of the Pyrgos roundel are five seal impressions from two seals, CMS II, 6 no. 234, a lentoid carrying two lions attacking a bull (two impressions), and no. 235, a cushion seal with a cult scene (three impressions). All five impressions are countermarked with the numeral 1.

The best parallel to the pentagonal shape of the Pyrgos roundel is GO Wc 1, from Gournia House Cf, room 25 (H. 3.6, W. 3.3, Th. 1.4 cm; GORILA 2: 2); it was burnt dark grey to black, but not cracked, by a fire probably in LM IA (Hallager 1996, 2: 11; Weinberg 1990: 109–10, n. 30). GO Wc 1 is also inscribed on both sides:

GO Wc 1 (FIG. 001 bottom)

face a: A-SA-MA-I-SE (the SU is cursive but secure)
face b: BO Sm į

The rim was impressed five times by a single lentoid seal (CMS II, 6 no. 119) carrying a bovine. The five impressions therefore confirm the number 5 written on face b.

While the two roundels are approximately the same size and share the pentagonal shape, it is probably the amount of information and the five impressions on both roundels that determined the shape and size (Hallager 1996, 1: 112).

INTERPRETATION OF THE ROUNDELS

Hallager has deduced that roundels are receipts for commodities moving out of the administrative centre; the number of impressions correspond to the number of commodities being moved (Hallager 1996, 1: 117). The seals that impress the roundel rims should correspond to the personnel responsible for the delivery of the commodities and perhaps their return.

I would therefore interpret GO Wc 1 as specifying five bulls travelling from Gournia to some destination in the care of the person owning the lentoid that impressed the roundel—and I would expect that in—

The five bulls on GO Wc 1 are also an important commodity. Since transferring bulls from one pasture to another or from one owner to another would not have necessitated a roundel as receipt, I imagine them going where they could be put to a more important use or be sacrificed for a feast: five bulls could feed 500 people (Stocker and Davis 2004: 72).

### The Suffices to the Sign Groups of the Roundels

Both roundels list sign groups that end in -I-SE/SI. Since Linear A is highly suffixed and prefixed (Duhoux 1978), these endings might be suffices. There are a few parallels:

- That -I-SE/SI is probably a suffix seems to be demonstrated by the existence of at least oneuffixed form ("base word") U-TA-I-SE/SI from U-TI or U-TA, cf. JA-PA-RA-TA-SE and PA-RA) and by the existence of at least two suffixed examples ostensibly built upon the same base word (MA-KAI-SE / MA-KAI-TA; A-SA-SU-MA-AI-SE / JA-SU-MA-TU / WI-JA-SU-MA-TI-TI- / 319).

- There may be no semantic difference between -I-SE and -I-SI may be indicated by the two forms apparently built upon the same basic word U-TI or U-TA. The choice between the two forms may have depended on the height of the main vowel in the base word. Thus, the low vowel A in -SU-MA- and MA-KA- may have elicited -SE for vowel harmony, while the high vowel U in KA-PU may have similarly elicited -SI—the two forms U-TA-I-SE/SI may either derive from two different words (U-TA- elicting U-TA-I-SE, U-TI elicting U-TAI-SI) or a confusion over which vowel was the main vowel in the base word, U or A.

If there was no semantic difference between the two suffixes, we might deduce that the final vowel is "dead" chosen to harmonize with the main vowel of the base word. The written suffix could then be summarized thusly: base word + I-S, the phonetic suffix being /IS/.

The meaning of the suffix is difficult to deduce from so few examples, but it could convey a sense of destination, as if "to" or, as in the doublet MA-KAI-SE / MA-KAI-TA, an "upper" or "lower" place (vel sim.).

### MEANING OF THE ROUNDEL SIGN GROUPS

The sign group A-SA-SU-MA-AI-SE on GO Wc 1, may be both prefixed and suffixed, if the base word is SU-MA, as the affixed parallels JA-SU-MA-TU (SY Za 2a) and WI-JA-SU-MA-TI-TI- / 319 (HT Zd 157) might imply. From other studies, it is possible to see in JA-SU-MA-TU the prefixes A- and the suffix -TI. Prefix A is likely to mean "to" (Duhoux 1997) while prefix A- and suffix -TI probably indicated "from" (Valério 2007). A parallel formation, IA-DI-TE-TE-DU-PU MI-RE, has been reconstructed to mean "to [L] the DU-PU MI-RE of [A + TE] Dikte" or "to the Diktian DU-PU MI-RE" (Valério 2007: 8-11). If so, JA-SU-MA-TU could mean "to the one from SU-MA" or "to the Sumaian." If so, it is tempting to identify SU-MA as the Linear A place name for Syme (Σύμη), the Bronze Age sanctuary on the south slopes of Mt Dikte (Lebessis and Moldby 1987, 1990). Paul Faure (1967: 71) cites the earliest attestations of the place name in the Venetian period (1277 and 1577), but he lists it as a pre-Hellenic in form.

If so, the sign group A-SA-SU-MA-AI-SE on GO Wc 1 might be reconstructed as prefix A-SA + base word SU-MA + suffix I-SE—in fact, the three-line layout of the sign group on GO Wc 1 exactly demands this reconstruction.

That A-SA is a prefix is borne out by the way A-SA-SA-RA is written on Hieroglyphic seals and on some Libation Tables: with one exception (CMS II 6, no. 331), the sign group is separated A-SA and RA-NE/ME across two faces of all the multifacial Hieroglyphic seals that carry the sign group (CMS II 1, nos. 391, 391 and 394; CMS II 2, no. 217; CMS VI nos. 11 and 14; and CHIC: no. 151), across two panels on a single face of two Hieroglyphic seals (CMS VII no. 35, and CMS II 8, no. 129), and across adjacent sides of two Libation Tables inscribed with the Linear A Libation Formula (IO Za 12a, b [Karetsou, Godart, and Olivier 1985: 143]; and IO Za 2 [GORILA 1: 18-19]). Whatever A-SA might mean, it was clearly prefixed to an important word in the Libation Formula and could have itself carried important significance. If so, A-SA-SU-MA—might also have implied something important at Syme, i.e. the sanctuary.

### FINAL SPECIATION

What if the five bulls from Gournia and the five units of gold (?) from Pyrgos were indeed related? The Pyrgos roundel could be contemporary with the LM IA Gournia roundel, as the almost identical shape, size, text layout, and lexical information of the two documents suggest. I can imagine the five bulls sent to "the important place at Syme." They would have first walked down the fairly level Jezarpatra isthmus (14.6 km), then turned west along the shore, reaching Myrtos-Pyrgos (another 17.7 km) after a total of 30 km (at a slow 3 km/hr, 10 hours). Pyrgos would have made a welcome stop for a restful night-over for the two Gourniotes and their five bulls before continuing the next day, each bull laden with a unit of gold (?), and all now joined by a Pyrgiot. Although the final stage of the journey was only another 11.8 km, it would have taken much longer, surely a whole day, if not two, since from sea level at Pyrgos the party of three people and five bulls had to climb 1340 meters (800 meters to the site of the modern village of Kato Syme and another 540 up to the sanctuary).

Perhaps the suffix -I-SE/SI did mean "upper" and thus A-SA-SU-MA-I-SE means "to the upper important place at SU-MA."
It is a pleasure to write this rather fanciful study for Gerald Cadogan, whose wit, imagination, and creativity sustained us during our re-excavation of Myrtos–Pyrgos in the summer of 1994. All Linear A texts can be found at Younger 2000.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES


