

A RECONSTRUCTION
OF THE ARCHIVES COMPLEX AT PYLOS:
A PRELIMINARY REPORT¹

INTRODUCTION

It is very fortunate that the findspots of the Linear B tablets from Pylos were so meticulously recorded by their excavators, and transferred into a grid-coordinate system by E. L. Bennett, Jr.² These tablet coordinates are presently

¹ This project began as a senior thesis at the University of Texas at Austin, where I was able to make full use of the resources of the Program in Aegean Scripts and Prehistory. I would like to thank Professor Palaima for advising this project and for all of his assistance, comments and suggestions. I would also like to thank E. L. Bennett, Jr. for his help in understanding and adjusting the archives grid. I am also grateful to J. L. Melena for providing me with a copy of his revised fragment coordinates, as well as for reading and commenting on an earlier version of this report. Of course all conclusions and errors herein are my own. Frequently cited references are abbreviated as follows:

- Blegen 1952: Blegen, Carl. *Notebook*, 1952, ms. University of Cincinnati;
- «Contiguities»: Palaima, Thomas G. «'Contiguities' in the Linear B Tablets from Pylos,» in Ernesto De Miro, Louis Godart, Anna Sacconi, eds. *Atti e Memorie del Secondo Congresso Internazionale di Micenologia*. Rome: Gruppo Editoriale Internazionale, 1996. pp. 379-396;
- «Ins and Outs»: Palaima, Thomas G. and James C. Wright. «Ins and Outs of the Archives Rooms at Pylos: Form and Function in a Palace,» *AJA* 89, 1985, pp. 251-262;
- Mycenaean McDonald 1939: McDonald, William, *Notebook*, 1939, ms. University of Cincinnati;
- Mycenaean Studies*: Bennett, Emmett L., Jr., ed. *Mycenaean Studies: Proceedings of the 3rd International Colloquium for Mycenaean Studies*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1964;
- PoN I: Blegen, Carl. *The Palace of Nestor at Pylos in Western Messenia I: The Buildings and their Citadels*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966;
- PTT 2: Bennett, Emmett L., Jr. *The Pylos Tablets Transcribed. Part II: Hands, Concordances, Indices*. Rome: Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 1976;
- SoP: Palaima, Thomas G. *The Scribes of Pylos*. Rome: Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 1988.

² These findspots, including the orientation of the tablets, were illustrated in McDonald 1939, and Blegen 1952. The findspots were discussed in E. L. Bennett, Jr., «The findspots of the Pylos Tablets,» *Mycenaean Studies*, pp. 241-252. The grid and coordinates are found in PTT 2, and a revised map of the Archives Complex, with a more accurate floorplan, can be found in SoP, p. 184, as well as in «Ins and Outs». The latter map is the one which was recommended to me by Emmett Bennett for use in this project.

being revised and updated by J. L. Melena.³ The focus of the current project, a reconstruction of the Archives Complex (referred to hereafter as AC) is based on their efforts. This entails determining as best as possible: 1) the original position of the tablets in these rooms before they were scattered in the destruction, 2) the architectural layout of the AC, and 3) the manner in which this suite was used by scribes and administrators. The purpose of this report is to present some of the preliminary findings and future direction of this project.

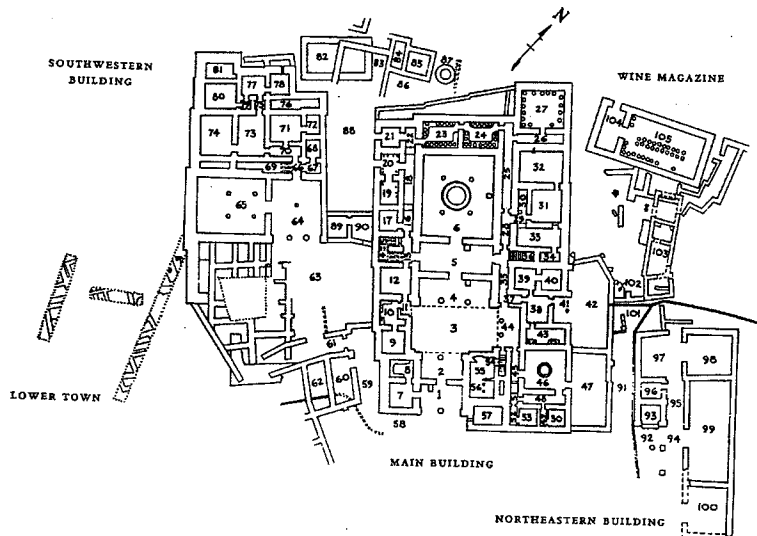


Figure 1: Key Plan of Palace of Nestor
(drawn by J. Travlos and adapted by W. B. Dinsmoor, Jr.).

The mapping of these findspots is being accomplished by the use of a mapping-software package, *MapInfo Professional*.⁴ As mentioned above, the foundation for this project is the coordinate system devised by Bennett. This system, composed of one-meter grid-squares, allows for the placement of each fragment within a ten-centimeter square, which is sufficiently exact for present purposes. The coordinate for any fragment is given as a four-digit number, with the first two numbers designating the grid-square in which the fragment is located. One must then imagine a similar grid of ten-centimeter squares within

³ I am grateful to Prof. Melena for providing me with a copy of his revised coordinates, which are used in this report. They are forthcoming in *Palace of Nestor IV*.

⁴ *MapInfo Professional*. Vers. 5.0. MapInfo Corporation, 1998. PC-Win95/98. This software can link a map of the AC to a database or spreadsheet of the Pylos tablets. This allows for quick mapping of tablet fragments according to any criteria included in the source database.

this one-meter square. The second two numbers then indicate the ten-centimeter square in this grid. For example, a fragment assigned to point 4964 would be found in grid-square 49. We superimpose a similarly oriented grid within square 49, and then locate the tablet in grid-square 64 of this new, miniature grid. This system transfers easily to an X-Y coordinate system. The first and third digits of

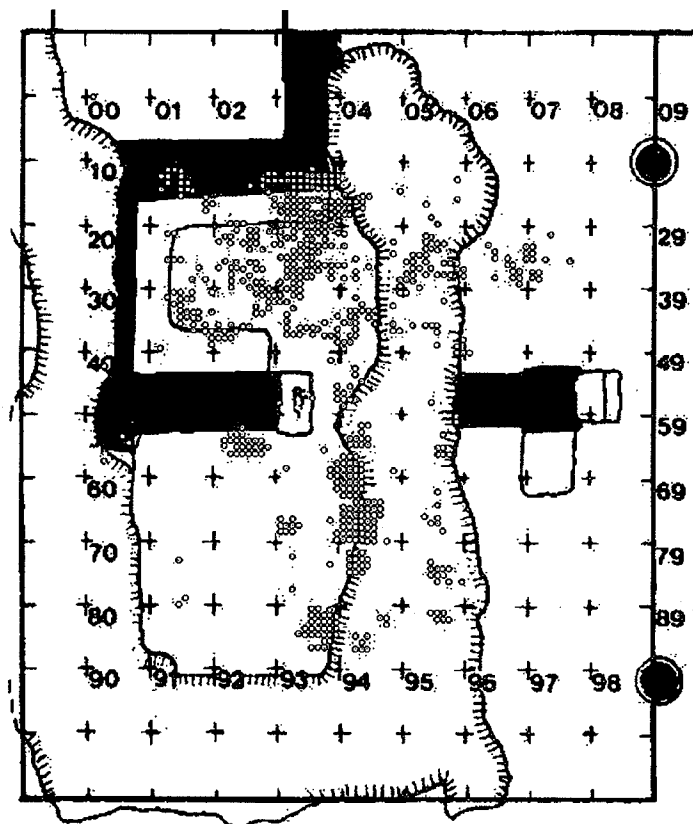


Figure 2: Mapping of all fragments on original grid.

the original designation comprise the x-coordinate, and the second and fourth digits comprise the y-coordinate. Any distinction more specific than this (including relative depth of tablet fragments) requires recourse to the excavation notebooks. Returning to our example, point 4964 would be, in the X-Y coordinate system, point (46,94). When all of the fragments are plotted at once, it becomes apparent that the grid had been superimposed incorrectly over the map of the AC (FIG. 2). An examination of a few fragment groupings will make this clear.

FRAGMENTS 211ff. FROM THE 1939 EXCAVATIONS (FIGURE 3)

In his 1939 excavation notebook, William McDonald illustrated a group of fragments, to which he assigned the numbers 211ff. These had fallen on the floor

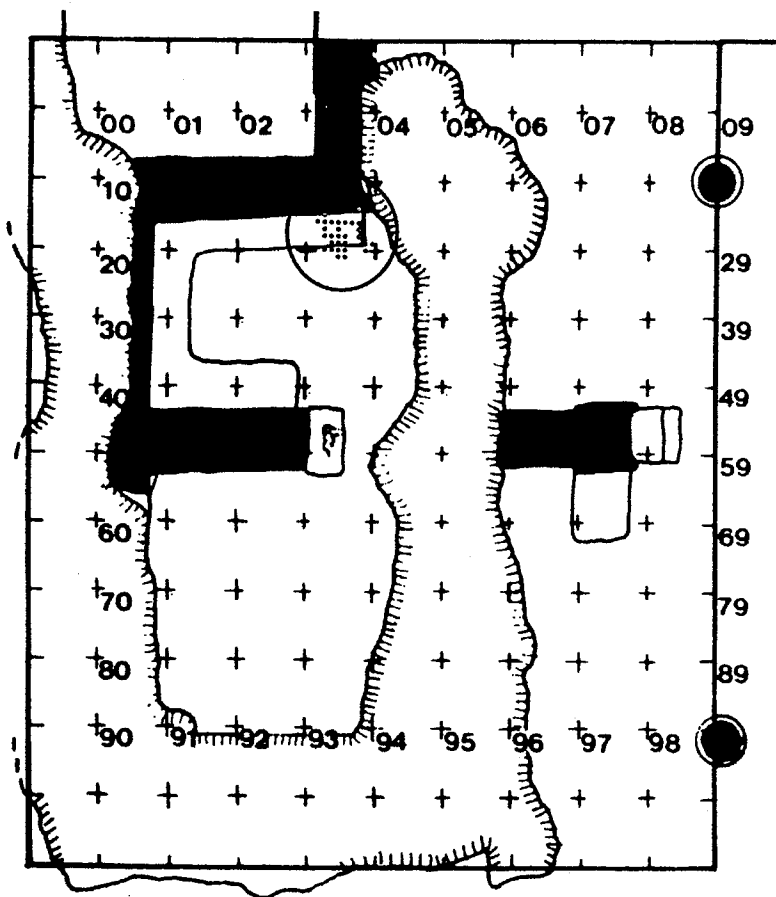


Figure 3: Fragments 211-253.

of Room 8 and were lying next to the NW section of the clay bench. This series is also illustrated in a photograph in *Palace of Nestor*.⁵ Listed below is a sample of these fragments and the coordinates to which they are assigned:

⁵ McDonald 1939, p. 84.

Eo 211 – 8.1342	Aq 218 – 8.1395
Ep 212 – 8.1392	Un 219 – 8.1394
Eq 213 – 8.1393	Ma 221 – 8.1384
Ab 217 – 8.1395	Ma 222 – 8.1385

These fragments, when plotted on the grid as it appears in *PTT 2*, would appear to sit on the northwest bench, rather than on the floor beside it. Additionally, when plotted, they are on the northernmost end of the bench, whereas in the photograph in *Palace of Nestor*,⁶ they appear to be on the floor closer to the center of the bench. This suggests that the grid is positioned slightly to the northwest of where it should be.

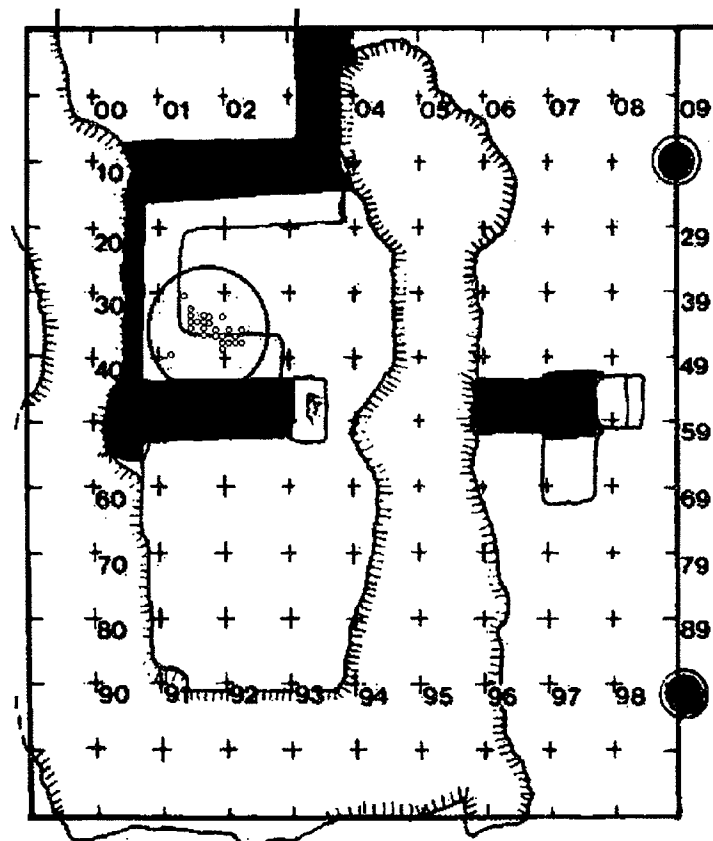


Figure 4: Fragments 1-36.

⁶ *PoNI*, part 2, fig. 79.

FRAGMENTS 1-36 FROM THE 1939 EXCAVATIONS (FIGURE 4)

Fragments 1-36 from the 1939 excavation, as illustrated by McDonald, were shown to lie on the south corner of the bench.⁷ When plotted, several fragments in this group appear to be on the floor (circled in FIG. 4). Again, they seem to plot northwest of where they should be. The following fragments belong to this group:

An 18 - 8.3147	Ae 27 - 8.3137
Sa 22 - 8.3145	Pa 889 - 8.3144

FRAGMENTS 579FF. FROM THE 1939 EXCAVATIONS

As a final example from Room 8, fragments 579ff., according to McDonald's excavation notebook, were found in the corner between the end of the southeast extension of the bench and the door into Room 7. Listed below are some of these fragments and their coordinates:

Ab 194 - 8.3353	Ab 586 - 8.3362
Ab 578 - 8.3353	Ab 1112 - 8.3363
Ab 581 - 8.3363	

These coordinates place these fragments in the center of grid-square 33. Again, this is to the northwest of where they ought to be plotted according to the illustrations in the notebook. All of the problems listed above would be corrected by shifting the grid to the southeast.

FRAGMENTS FROM ROOM 7 (FIGURE 5)

The same problem is evident in the tablets of Room 7 (circled in FIG. 5). The tablet groups that line the outside edge of the Chasm, when plotted, appear as if they were *in* it. In *PTT 2*, Bennett added an X to the coordinates of the fragments that were found in the Chasm. None of the tablets circled in FIG. 5 are marked in this way in *PTT 2*. Furthermore, in his excavation notebook, Blegen notes that "most of tablets seem to be lying on [the] floor."⁸ The Chasm material, however, is described as being in an "area full of loose stones and earth going down through floor level."⁹ It seems safe to say that these tablets do not belong in the Chasm and accordingly their coordinates should be shifted to the southeast as well.

When I presented these issues to Emmett Bennett, he reexamined some of his earliest drawings of the AC grid, and found that he had originally aligned the grid so that the corner shared by grid-squares 00, 01, 10, and 11 was precisely in the western corner of the bench in Room 8. As is evident in FIG. 2, when this plan was published in *PTT 2*, this corner (and the rest of the grid) was shifted

⁷ McDonald 1939, p. 78.

⁸ Blegen 1952, p. 36.

⁹ Blegen 1952, p. 53.

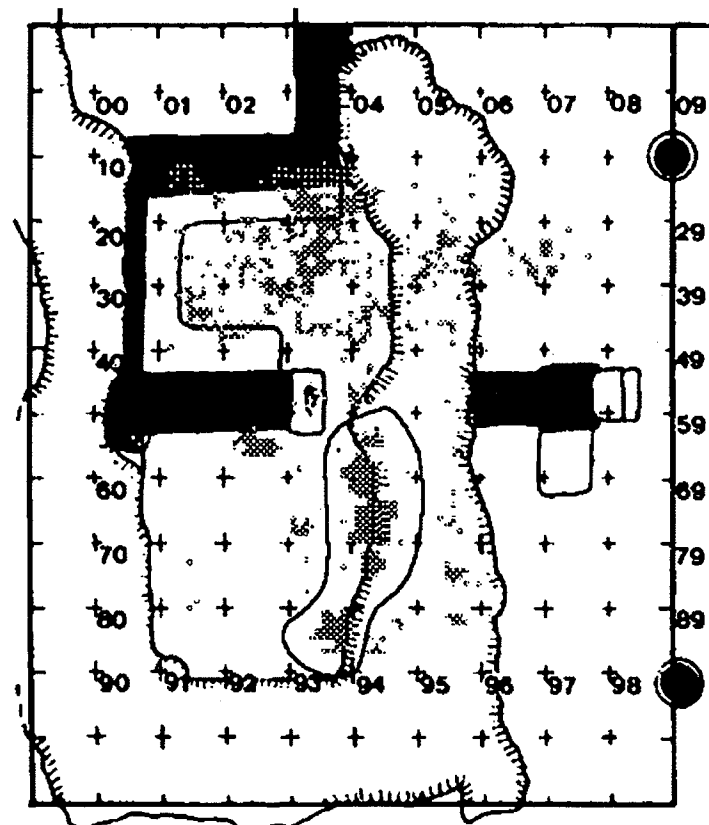


Figure 5: Fragments along Chasm.

approximately 0.5 m to the north-northwest. The original grid position has been restored in the current plan (FIGS. 6 and 7). This allows for the proper plotting of the tablets without having to alter all of the coordinates assigned to them. The locations of the tablets relative to each other are correct. For the most part, a simple shift of the grid is all that is in order. It also should be noted that because the relative position of the tablets has remained the same, earlier conclusions drawn from tablet findspots should not be adversely affected.

CLAY-TABLET ARCHIVES

Our inquiry should begin with an investigation of the common features of clay-tablet archives from various regions and time periods, so that we know what

we should expect to find at Pylos.¹⁰ It appears that regardless of chronological separation, there are some features of clay-tablet archives that are present in any period and in any region.¹¹ We will take a look at these features, but at the same

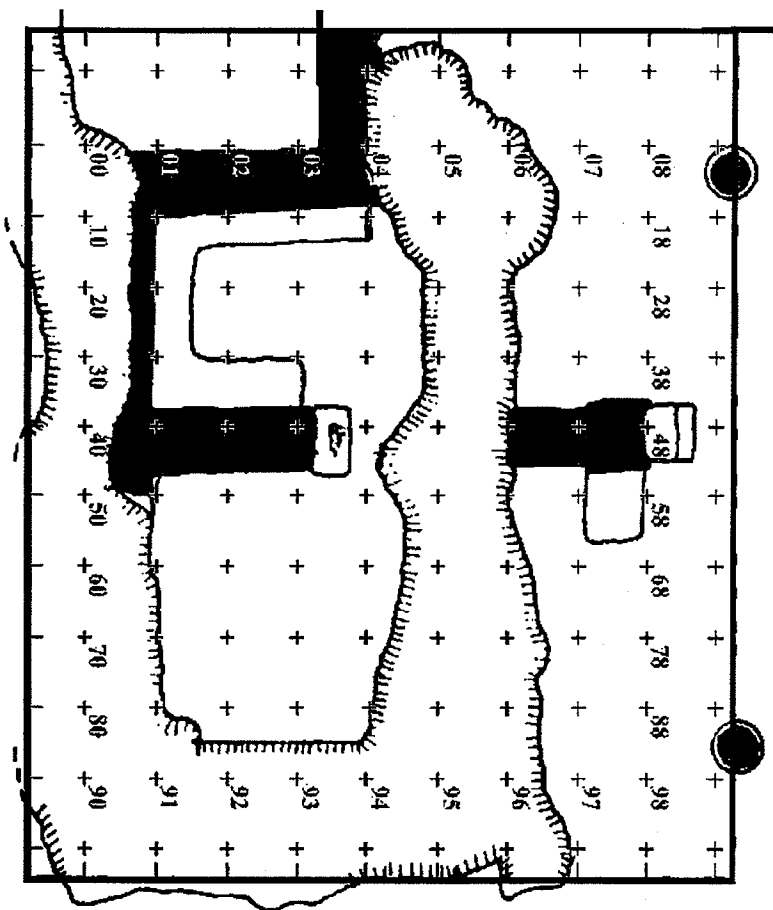


Figure 6: Revised grid.

¹⁰ The use of the term 'archives' in reference to Rooms 7 and 8 is conventional. It would be more accurate to refer to these as "central tablet rooms."

¹¹ A nice introduction to features of cuneiform archives, as well as the Linear B archives, can be found in K. Veenhof, «Cuneiform Archives: An Introduction,» in *Cuneiform Archives and Libraries*. Leiden: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te Istanbul, 1986, pp. 1-36.

time acknowledge some fundamental differences between the archives at Pylos and those of the Near-Eastern palaces, particularly at Ebla and Mari. Unfortunately for our purposes, the most chronologically similar tablets, the economic tablets from Hittite palace at Boghazköi, are not available for comparison, for these documents were probably written on wooden tablets.¹²

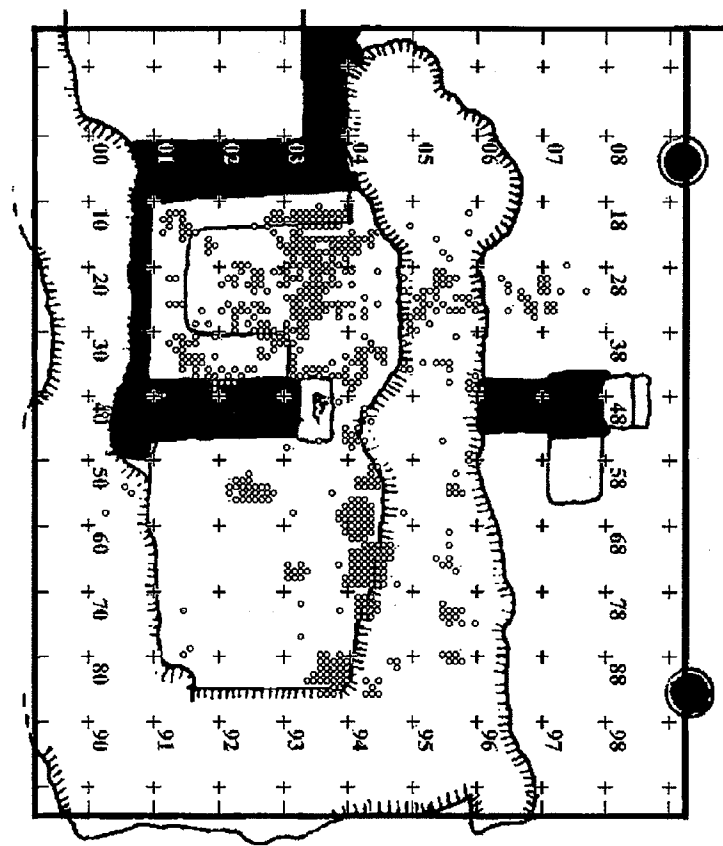


Figure 7: Mapping of all fragments on revised grid.

¹² These tablets are discussed in the Hittite texts, and are called 'wooden writing boards,' whose contexts are described as 'accounts' or 'receipts.' Discussed by A. Uchitel, «The Archives of Mycenaean Greece and the Ancient Near East,» in *Society and Economy in the Eastern Mediterranean (c. 1500-1000 B.C.)*. Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 1988, pp. 21-22.

The differences between our archives at Pylos and those of the Near East must always be kept in mind when comparing them. Firstly, the archives of the Near-Eastern palaces contain inscriptions related to many various topics, including personal correspondence, texts dealing with economy, trade, law, religion and ritual, to name a few. The archives at Pylos, on the other hand, are concerned almost exclusively with economic matters.¹³ This means that in palaces such as those at Mari and Ebla, where there are several different archives rooms in several different locations throughout the palaces, we should base our comparisons, when possible, solely on the archives containing the economic tablets. Second, the archives of the Near East are much, much larger. The number of tablets and fragments found in archives room L.2769 at Ebla, for example, exceeds 14,000.¹⁴ Finally, many (but not all) of the tablets of the Near East were intentionally fired. At Mari, there was an oven near the archives complex for baking the tablets.¹⁵ Because particular Near-Eastern tablets were fired for preservation, the tablet stores of these palaces contain material from a much longer span of time and also are larger than the Pylos archives. The Pylos material is all from within an administrative year. There is no indication of longer-term storage. These are the primary differences to keep in mind as we look at the common features of clay-tablet archives.

First among our similarities, besides the existence of clay tablets, is the presence of the ubiquitous clay bench. There are clay benches in the archives at Lagash,¹⁶ in the vestibule of the archives at Ebla,¹⁷ and in the archives at Nimrud,¹⁸ to name just a few. Veenhof notes that earlier administrative records could become the fill of these mudbrick benches.¹⁹ He also notes that the clay bench is "well known from Mesopotamia proper as one of the typical features of 'tablet rooms'".²⁰ This fact allows us to be confident that Rooms 7 and 8 at Pylos are the Archives Complex.

Within the archives, Near-Eastern parallels suggest that we might expect baskets for transport, wooden shelving, and a water source for the working of clay.²¹ Mallowan reported the existence of a well of small diameter in one of the archive rooms at Nimrud.²² We do not have a well at Pylos, but the large pithos in the corner of Room 7 surely could have served as a source of water for the purpose of working clay. The backs of the labels of the Wa series bear the traces

¹³ On Linear B archives and tablets in areas outside of the archives, see *SoP*, p. 180.

¹⁴ Pettinato, *Archives of Ebla*, p. 34.

¹⁵ E. Posner, *Archives in the Ancient World*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972, p. 34.

¹⁶ M. Weitemeyer, «Archive and Library Technique in Ancient Mesopotamia,» *Libri* 6, 1956, pp. 217-238, fig. 2.

¹⁷ Pettinato, *Archives of Ebla*, fig. III.

¹⁸ M. E. L. Mallowan, «The Excavations at Nimrud (Kalhu), 1952,» *Iraq* 15, 1953, fig. 1.

¹⁹ Veenhof, «Cuneiform Archives,» p. 8.

²⁰ Veenhof, «Cuneiform Archives,» p. 6.

²¹ Veenhof, «Cuneiform Archives,» p. 12-13.

²² "So narrow was the mouth that only a boy could work the well." M. E. L. Mallowan, *Nimrud and its Remains*. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1966, vol. 1, p. 271.

of wicker baskets. No traces of wooden shelving have survived. But, based on the find-spots of the tablets, as well as evidence of wooden shelving in other parts of the palace (e.g., Room 20, NE workshop), we can safely assume that shelving was installed in the Archives Complex at Pylos.²³

The other major feature that we should expect is a complex consisting of more than one room. Generally, one room would be for filing and another would be for writing or consulting.²⁴ The archives mentioned earlier, at Ebla, Lagash, and Nimrud, all have this arrangement. We are therefore justified in thinking of Rooms 7 and 8 as forming an architectural unit designed to serve as a central location for processing information on clay records, i.e., an Archives Complex.

Also significant in defining an architectural unit as an archive is its location. Veenhof notes that "we find them near the entrance of a palace for registering what is entering or leaving."²⁵ That is exactly where we find our Archives Complex, and this is surely indicative of its purpose and the status of the documents contained therein. While considering the location of the archives at Pylos, it is interesting to note the discovery at Mari of the weapons of the guard of the archives found nearby.²⁶

Recently, the archives at Ebla were examined much in the way that we are examining the archives at Pylos, albeit on a smaller scale.²⁷ The original locations of the tablets in room L.2769 were studied and proved that that the tablets were organized in series, but were sometimes organized horizontally and sometimes vertically. On one wall, international correspondence was arranged on two shelves of one shelving unit, one below the other. These were next to the shelving unit containing incantation texts, which were shelved beneath "unilingual texts of Mesopotamian origin" and above mythological texts.²⁸ On another wall, comprising three shelving units, each three shelves high, only textile allotments, the largest group of administrative tablets at Ebla, were shelved.²⁹ Metalworking tablets, however, were shelved horizontally, i.e., they were arranged on one shelf, running through all three shelving units. It will be interesting to see how our archives compare to this picture.

With an accurate plan of the AC and an idea of what we should expect, we can now turn our attention to the tablets and their findspots. Here we will briefly examine some of the findings from Room 7 and then we will turn our attention to Room 8.

²³ For shelving in Room 20, see *SoP*, p.139.

²⁴ Veenhof, «Cuneiform Archives,» p. 6.

²⁵ Veenhof, «Cuneiform Archives,» p. 8.

²⁶ Posner, *Archives in the Ancient World*, p. 35.

²⁷ A. Archi, «The Archives of Ebla,» in *Cuneiform Archives and Libraries*, pp. 72-86.

²⁸ Archi, p. 84.

²⁹ Archi, p. 86.

ROOM 7

We begin our inquiry with Room 7, where fewer tablets and fragments were found. Most of the tablets in this room are found along the NE wall (between rooms 7 and 1). There is also a group near the middle of the wall between rooms 7 and 8, where the majority of the labels are found as well. Finally, there is a small group of tablets near the center of the room, and a few fragments in the S corner. Along with the tablets were found a large pithos with a lid in the S corner, and a pile of burned animal bones and diminutive kylikes in the west corner.

TABLETS ALONG THE NE WALL

The tablets along this wall consist primarily of the Ad, Ea, Sa, and Ta series tablets.³⁰ Because these tablets line up with the doorway into Room 8, one recent interpretation has been that they fell from a shelf in Room 8 at the time of the destruction, and this is a long spill route.³¹ A detailed look at find-spots indicates that most of the tablets along this wall are neatly grouped according to series. It would seem therefore that these tablets were already in Room 7 when the palace was destroyed, and did not move far from their point of origin. If they had fallen from Room 8, we would expect a less organized spill, or at least a more diffuse spread of tablets within series. In «Ins and Outs», in the proposed reconstruction of the wall that was removed by the Chasm, we can see that there is a depth of at least 0.5 m. available for a shelf or table to stick out along the northeast wall, without interfering with the doorway into Room 7. If we look briefly at Room 8, we see that the northwest bench is less than 0.5 m. in width. Therefore, our proposed shelving/tables are at least spatially justified. Additionally we may look to the proposed reconstruction of the manner in which the Sh series was filed, according to Palaima.³² According to the reconstruction of this series in the order in which they would have been placed for transporting to the AC, these tablets would have needed a transport basket no greater than 11 in. long. This kind of basket would fit easily onto the proposed shelving system.

TABLET SERIES IN ROOM 7

Because this is only a preliminary report, we will only take a brief look at a few series in the room. These series, however, should aid in developing an idea of the role of Room 7 in the AC. These series will be the Aa, Sh, Wa, Jn, An, Es, Cc, and Cn series.

Aa SERIES, HAND 1

Tablets of the Aa series were written in two sets, one by Hand 1 and the other by Hand 4. The tablets of these series are noticeably split between Rooms 7 and

³⁰ Also here are tablets of the following series: Aa, Ab, Ae, Cc, Cn, En, Ep, Fg, Un.

³¹ «Ins and Outs», p. 260.

³² «Contiguities», fig. 5.

8. This split corresponds primarily to the scribal hands as well as whether locations mentioned in the tablets belong to one or the other of the two major 'provinces.' The tablets on the bench in Room 8 are by Hand 4, and are concerned with the so-called 'Further Province,' or *pe-ra3-ko-ra-i-ja*. The remaining tablets are by Hand 1 and are concerned with the 'Hither Province,' or *de-we-ro-a3-ko-ra-i-ja*.³³

At present we are concerned with the set by Hand 1. The area of greatest concentration of these tablets is in grid-square 64. If it is correct to assume that these tablets were shelved along the northeast wall, then they would have spilled out from this wall in the destruction. This would align them neatly with the doorway to Room 8, giving the appearance that they spilled into Room 7 from Room 8. The split within the Aa series should be mentioned. It is not extraordinary that one scribe should concern himself with the Hither Province and another with the Further Province (although this does not occur in the Ab or Ad series), but their physical separation may be revealing. The Aa tablets by Hand 4 were found along with a transport label, Wa 114.³⁴ It appears that perhaps the Aa tablets by Hand 1 were queued up along this wall, waiting to be shelved with their complementary set in Room 8.

Sh SERIES, SCRIBE OF CLASS CII

The Sh series deals with *163 ARM. The transport label Wa 732 is associated with this series. They were found entirely in Room 7 in grid-square 52, next to the pile of labels (Wa series). Palaima has discussed these tablets and their find-spots in detail.³⁵ He demonstrates that these tablets were composed in the NE workshop (see FIG. 1), and were kept as receipts or proof of work done. In this series, then, we have evidence of tablets being inscribed outside of the AC and then being transferred into Room 7. Again, the transport label suggests that these tablets are awaiting transfer into Room 8.

Wa SERIES, VARIOUS HANDS

Nine of the labels that comprise the Wa series are found at point 5214. These are by many different scribal hands. Due to their fragmentary nature, and the fact that only Wa 732 from this set is found with the series it describes (the Sh

³³ For a thorough treatment of the A-series tablets at Pylos, see E. Bennett, «Correspondances entre les textes des tablettes pyliennes des séries Aa, Ab et Ad.» in *Études Mycéniennes*. Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1956, pp. 121-136.

³⁴ These labels have been discussed in detail by T. G. Palaima. See *SoP*, in sections on hands responsible for the labels. See also J. Chadwick, «The Mycenaean Filing System.» *BICS* 2, 1958, pp. 1-5. Palaima and Wright discuss these labels as being transport labels and not filing labels in «Ins and Outs», pp. 260-261. This is suggested by the fact that only 7 of the 19 labels discovered were found in Room 8. If these were permanent filing labels, we would expect to have found many more in Room 8.

³⁵ See «Contiguities».

series), it is extremely difficult to match these labels with the series to which they belong. As such, it is difficult to propose what they are doing here. Perhaps transport baskets were stacked here, and the old labels were not removed from the baskets and pulped until the baskets were needed again. We could then imagine a stack of nested baskets which, when consumed by fire, would leave only transport labels neatly stacked together. Some of these labels have been connected by vocabulary with several series in Room 8,³⁶ and this would support the idea that labels no longer needed remained on the empty baskets. Perhaps the Sh series had just arrived in Room 7 and was being placed in one of the stacked-up transport baskets.

Jn SERIES, HAND 2 AND HAND 21

The Jn series has recently received thorough treatment by Joanna Smith.³⁷ Here will be briefly summarized the information she provides regarding the Jn tablets found in Room 7. She proposes that Jn 725 and Jn 693 by Hand 2 (located at 5403, 5422, 5423, 5424, 5490, and 6401), were being rewritten in canonical form by Hand 2 onto Jn 605, 692, 845, and 937 (located mostly in the Chasm, with the exception of a fragment from Jn 605 at 4433, Jn 692 at 5492, and a fragment of Jn 937 at 6460). Additionally, the two tablets by Hand 21, Jn 658 (found at 6361 and 8347) and Jn 706 (found at 5404, 5413, 6389, 7395, and 7396), were also reworked by Hand 2 onto Jn 725. These Jn tablets, which are works in progress by Hand 2 in Room 7, suggest that Hand 2 carried out his work here. Hand 2, based on the high volume of tablets ascribed to him and the close paleographical similarities of his script to that of Hand 1, is believed to have worked closely with Hand 1.³⁸ It has been established that Hand 1 is the scribe responsible for the shelving of these tablets, and could therefore be considered the 'archivist,' and, as we shall see below, perhaps he used Room 7 as his workspace.³⁹ If this is the case, perhaps Hand 2 was the assistant archivist and shared a workspace with Hand 1.

An FRAGMENTS

A few scattered fragments from An series tablets were found in Room 7. Important for our purposes are the four page-shaped tablets found at the bottom of grid-square 63: An 654, 656, 661, and 657. These tablets, along with An 519 (found in grid-square 34), form the so-called *o-ka* set.⁴⁰ This set is written by

³⁶ See Chadwick, «The Mycenaean Filing System» (*supra* n. 34).

³⁷ J. Smith, «The Pylos Jn series», *Minos* 27-28, 1993, pp. 167-259.

³⁸ See *SoP*, pp. 66-69.

³⁹ See the discussion of Hand 1 in *SoP*, pp. 50-58. It is also noted in this discussion that he writes more texts and more final texts than any other scribe does. He is also the only scribe responsible for more than one label, and his marks and corrections can be seen on tablets of other scribes.

⁴⁰ There have been several articles on this set. For a bibliography and introduction, see J. T. Hooker, *Linear B: An Introduction*. Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 1980, pp. 123-126.

Hand 1. Because the *o-ka* set is sitting neatly in the center of Room 7, we may imagine that Room 7 is the archivist's 'office,' and he was working on this set, which may have been sitting on his desk, or whatever working surface would have been used at the time, in the center of the room.⁴¹ This set does appear to be completed, however, with each tablet filled, leaving only one line at the bottom, and it is possible that they fell neatly from another area of the room. Perhaps they were recently finished, drying, or awaiting further revision. As we will see shortly, there are other tablet sets in this room that appear to be in the process of revision, further suggesting that this was the archivist's office.

Es SERIES, HAND 1

The Es series deals with what appears to be religious offerings of *120 GRA. All tablets except one are by Hand 1. Es 650 is by Hand 11. There is no label associated with this series. These tablets are interesting for us in that they help to demonstrate the flow of tablets into the Archives Complex. The curious omission of Poseidon, the chief male deity at Pylos, on the offering tablet Tn 316 has been noted.⁴² This tablet was found in grid-square 23, in Room 8. Palaima has noted, however, that Poseidon is present throughout the Es series as well as the Un series (e.g., Un 718), and therefore we may have an indicator of archival procedure in the Es series.⁴³ According to our model, the offerings described on Tn 316 took place, were recorded, and the tablet was stored in Room 8. The offerings to Poseidon then took place at their prescribed time of year, which was shortly before the destruction of the palace. Accordingly, we find these tablets in Room 7, not yet filed with the other religious text(s).

Cc SERIES, HAND 2, AND Cn SERIES, VARIOUS HANDS (LARGELY HAND 1)

Only two tablets in the Cc series are in Room 7. The remaining four are in Room 99 (see FIG. 1). These are leaf-shaped tablets that have single entries relating to domestic animals. None are in Room 8. The two tablets in Room 7 are rather fragmentary and widely scattered. Cc 660 was found in grid-squares 63 and 83, and Cc 665 was found in 54 and 71. The Cn tablets record the same information as the Cc tablets, but they are page-shaped tablets with many entries

⁴¹ Very little seems to be known about Mycenaean furniture. For a summary treatment, see G. Richter, *The Furniture of the Greeks, Etruscans and Roman*. London: Phaidon Press, 1966, pp. 5-11. See also H.S. Baker, *Furniture in the Ancient World; Origins and Evolution, 3100-475 B.C.* New York: Macmillan, 1966, pp. 246-254. See also F. Vandenabeele and J.-P. Olivier, *Les idéogrammes archéologiques du linéaire B*. Paris 1979.

⁴² L. Baumbach, «An Examination of the Evidence for a State of Emergency at Pylos c. 1200 B.C.», in A. Heubeck and G. Neumann eds., *Res Mycenaee*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983, pp. 28-40.

⁴³ T. G. Palaima, «The Last Days of the Pylos Polity», in R. Laffineur and W.-D. Niemeier, eds., *Politeia: Society and State in the Aegean Bronze Age*. Liège, *Aegaeum* 12, 1995, pp. 623-633.

per tablet. Most of these are found in Room 8. None of the entries on the Cc tablets is duplicated in the surviving Cn tablets. However, because there are so few Cc tablets (none of which are found in Room 8), and the ones surviving are in such poor condition, it may be assumed that these entries were always transcribed onto Cn tablets. There is no indication by the surviving remains that these leaf-shaped tablets would have been kept as receipts, such as the tablets in the Sh series. Perhaps the surviving fragments in Room 7 had already been scrapped, but this is presumably a workroom and we should expect tablet fragments to get kicked into corners and under tables. Naturally, broken scraps were likely to be a common sight on the floor of a clay-tablet archives.

PHYSICAL REMAINS IN ROOM 7

Apart from the tablets in Room 7, some of the other objects and materials found were a pithos and lid in the southern corner of the room, as well as animal bones and diminutive kylikes in the western corner. There are no material remains found along the southeast or southwest wall. These walls were also removed when the Chasm was created. Blegen suggested, believing this to be the office of the tax collector, that the pithos was "filled by numerous tithes paid in kind by those subject to internal revenue tax."⁴⁴ Unfortunately, no scientific analysis has yet been performed on the pithos, and therefore we cannot say for sure what the pithos contained. If this is the office of the archivist, a supply of water ought to have been kept on hand to assist in erasing and correcting, and even pulping, the unbaked tablets on which the archivist worked. We could then propose that the pithos contained water for such purposes. In physical tablet-making experiments, it was noted that an abundant water supply was necessary.⁴⁵ This is not to say that tablets were being manufactured here regularly; no blank tablets were discovered here.⁴⁶ However, the needs of a manufacturer of tablets and the needs of one who works with the tablets must be similar. This water supply may also explain somewhat the shoddy floor in this room. One would not stucco an attractive floor in a room in which water would be continually spilled.

The final physical remains we will consider here are the animal bones and kylikes in the western corner of the room. Blegen described these as a "considerable heap of burned animal bones... and close beside them near the northwest wall were found 11 diminutive kylikes, probably votive offerings."⁴⁷ He further described the cups as "clumsy and awkward for practical use. One may wonder if these cups were not made as votives or possibly as playthings for

⁴⁴ *PoNI*, p. 92.

⁴⁵ See K.-E. Sjöquist, *Knossos: Keepers and Kneaders*. Göteborg: Åström, 1991, p. 20.

⁴⁶ Very many have been found in the Near Eastern archives. See T. Jones, *Paths to the Ancient Past; Applications of the Historical Method to Ancient History*, New York 1967, p. 143. For tablet manufacture at Pylos outside of the Archives Complex, see *SoP*, pp. 144-145, 186.

⁴⁷ *PoNI*, p. 93.

children."⁴⁸ Unfortunately, no work has been done on the bones found in this location.⁴⁹ While the reason for this collection must remain unclear, a few observations can be made.

The kylikes are of a very peculiar shape. They are found in moderate quantities in the pantry rooms 20 and 60. There were sherds of two cups found in Room 24 of the oil magazines, and sherds were also found in the drains. The only room besides Room 7 in which they were found in contexts was the Throne Room (Room 6), where they were found on a "table of offerings." The function of these diminutive kylikes is uncertain. The largest of these cups has a volume of 0.035 liters (2.35 tablespoons). The smallest has a capacity of 0.009 liters, or 1.8 teaspoons. The diameter of the widest of these cups is 0.073 m. (2.9 in.), and the smallest is 0.045 m. (1.8 in.). The handles also are an odd feature. They are curved up approximately 1.3 inches above the rim, making access to the cup a bit awkward for the thirsty user. They would seem to be more useful, for any function, if these handles were not present. If these kylikes were functional at all, they would not be practical for providing liquid refreshment.

SUMMARY OF ROOM 7

Based on the material remains in Room 7, it appears that this is a room in which there was considerable activity. Excluding the tablets that seem to have spilled into Room 7 from Room 8, approximately 204 of the 736 tablets from the AC were in this room immediately before the destruction. Hand 2 was transcribing the Jn tablets by Hand 21. Hand 1 was completing the Aa series and reviewing several series that were there to be moved to Room 8. He was also working on the *o-ka* set at his 'desk' in the center of the room. The Cc fragments were scattered after their information was transcribed onto a Cn tablet. The Sh series was awaiting transfer to Room 8 with a transport label attached. There was a pithos in the corner, which may have contained water for pulping tablets, or moistening dried tablets for erasures and corrections. The labels in grid-square 52 suggest that there were transport baskets stored, at least temporarily, in Room 7, and that tablets commonly were transferred between Rooms 7 and 8. The bones and kylikes in the corner suggest repeated activity of some sort, even if we cannot define the activity with certainty. The uneven clay floor implies that there was continuous activity wearing it down, perhaps the sloshing of water while working on tablets. Recalling Near-Eastern models, in which there is generally a room for storage and a scribal office, we can envision this rather clearly being the scribal office.⁵⁰ Unfortunately, because of the fantastically thorough job

⁴⁸ *PoNI*, p. 366.

⁴⁹ For a discussion of all the animal bones found at Pylos, see G. Nobis, «Archäozoologische Untersuchungen von Tierresten aus dem 'Palast des Nestor' bei Pylos in Messenien,» *Zeitschrift für Archäologie* 27, 1993, pp. 153-173. Unfortunately for our purposes, Nobis treats these bones as a whole, not focusing on their find-spots.

⁵⁰ See K. Veenhof, «Cuneiform Archives: An Introduction,» in *Cuneiform Archives and Libraries*. Leiden: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te Istanbul, 1986, pp. 1-36.

performed by the creators of the Chasm, we cannot guess, estimate, or assume the existence of doorways or windows along the southeast or southwest walls of the room. All of the tablet groups and physical remains in the room are compactly organized and are in the same stratum.

This cursory description of Room 7 will have to suffice for now. The information provided is indicative of the direction of this project and provides a reasonable status report on the progress of research in this part of the AC. The work that still needs to be done will be addressed at the end of this report. We should now turn our attention to the situation in Room 8.

ROOM 8

Room 8 is where the bulk of the tablets were found. 532 of the 736 tablets from the Archives Complex were housed in here. As mentioned earlier, the room has a clay bench running around three of its walls. This is the only surviving furniture in the room. No traces of any other furniture survive. Along with the tablets were found seven bronze hinges in the southwestern end of the room, and eleven sealings and sealing fragments.⁵¹ There were some potsherds found in the room, but they were in a debris layer covering the floor, and therefore probably fell into Room 8 when the wall collapsed between Room 8 and Room 9 (which is a pantry).

THE TABLETS IN ROOM 8

The reconstruction of the original locations of the material in Room 8 is much trickier. There are far more tablet-fragments, and they are very intermixed and not nearly as closely clustered as the Room 7 fragments.⁵² As this project is still in the earliest stages of examining the Room 8 material, the reconstruction will not be discussed in detail at this time. Even without a reconstruction, however, some conclusions can perhaps be drawn from tablet series on the basis of similar spill-routes. One example will illustrate the potential for this line of inquiry.

Ae SERIES, HANDS 42, SCRIBE OF CLASS CIII, 13, AND HAND 1

The Ae series is probably somewhat mixed, based on the number of hands responsible for tablets assigned to it. Other than the tablet by Hand 1, the sets of tablets within this series that are by different hands are not differentiated from one another by their find-spots in the Archives Complex. Three tablets from this series were found outside of the Archives Complex, two very fragmentary texts

⁵¹ These sealings were treated in T. G. Palaima, «Sealings as Links in an Administrative Chain,» in *Administration in Ancient Societies*. Rome: Pubblicazioni degli Archivi di Stato, 1996, pp. 37-66.

⁵² Bennett has provided a precedent for the reconstruction of Room 8 with his article, «The Burning of King Nestor's Books,» *Yale Scientific Magazine* 32:4, 1958, pp. 28-43. In this article he describes his own physical experiments in which he constructed a 1/2-scale model of the AC for the purpose of examining the nature of the tablet spill-routes.

in Room 5 or 6 by Hand 13, and one near Rooms 55 and 57 by a scribe of Class Civ. It is clear here that a series may be subdivided into sets. The Ae series is defined by the presence of the ideograms *100 VIR and *101 MUL. This is a rather broad definition, and therefore it is not surprising that we should find tablets in this series that are not necessarily related to each other. The sets as distinguished by hand and stylus group in *SoP* more accurately define the groupings of this series with which we should be concerned. This series, when mapped, appears to have something of an odd scatter. It can be demonstrated, however, that this is a legitimate spill-route, even though it is not entirely clear in which direction the spill moved.

Eight of the tablets by Hand 42 in the Ae series record VIR 1, in which each VIR appears to be in charge of an unspecified number of animals. In these texts, two names are prominent: *du-ni-jo* and *ta-ra-ma-ta*. One or the other of these names occurs on six of the ten tablets by Hand 42. These are the most common names in the Ae series. The only other tablets on which these two names occur with any frequency are the Ea tablets which, as stated before, are concerned with landholdings. Perhaps not coincidentally their spill-route lines up in many respects with the spill route of the Ae tablets. Given this similarity of names and spills, we may propose that these two tablet-series were shelved together. Perhaps this is a set in the Ea series that records the land on which the Ae-series shepherds performed their duties. There are several words within the Ea series that recall the care of animals: *su-qa-ta*, *qa-qa-ta*, and *qa-u-ko-ro*. In the case of these two series, we would have an example of tablets being organized by some overarching principle that transcends the series designation. However, it is unclear whether these are organized by location, by personnel, or by some other feature.

At the time of the destruction the Ea series was located partly in Room 7 and partly in Room 8. These two sets of Ea tablets are not distinguished from one another by scribe or by content. For example, we find the name *ke-re-te-u* on Ea 304 and Ea 305 in Room 8 and on Ea 809 in Room 7. The name *ta-ra-ma-ta* is found on Ea 336 in Room 8 and on Ea 778 in Room 7. The formulaic vocabulary of the series (*ke-ke-me-na*, *o-na-to*, *ko-to-na*) is found throughout the series on both sets. We therefore assume that these are two sets of a single, unified series that entered the Archives Complex at a different time. It was also pointed out to me by Tom Palaima that the only two tablets in this series that contain a compiled list of entries, Ea 59 and Ea 481, are found in Room 8, which is where we expect to find completed tablets. We therefore assume that the Ea set from Room 8 and the Ea set in Room 7 are two sets of a single, unified series that entered the Archives Complex at a different time.

CONCLUSIONS

The above examples have hopefully demonstrated the direction of the present inquiry. The function of these two rooms, and how they relate to one another, is becoming clearer. The findspots of the tablets in Room 7 seem to allow for a

reconstruction of the appearance of the room just before the destruction, including the perishable materials. The scribal and archival procedures at Pylos are also taking shape. There is still much work to be done however. Not addressed in this report was the architecture of the AC and what information the tablets can provide in that respect. Much of the layout of Room 8 still remains to be determined. This will hopefully shed light on the overarching filing system. Up to this point, most of this study has treated the tablets as archaeological remains. Now the tablets must be treated as texts in a search for textual connections and interrelations. Also, all of the non-tablet remains must be incorporated into the reconstruction. Finally, tablet series (such as the An series) which seem to be comprised of several sets of tablets that are not restricted by series assignment need to be treated more intensively in order to glean further potential tablet arrangements. With such an approach, the three objectives outlined in the beginning of this report should be attainable.

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