



Review

Reviewed Work(s): *Corpus hieroglyphicarum inscriptionum Cretae* by J.-P. Olivier and L. Godart

Review by: Thomas G. Palaima

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an EN and early Sesklo feature in Thessaly, but rare in the Peloponnese.

The White ware has an ivory whiteness, and an analysis of one sherd showed that it is 90% kaolin, which, in view of the volcanic inclusions, must have been imported from Melos, no doubt with the obsidian. It is fine and thin-walled, contradicting earlier theories that the heavier Peloponnesian White ware, which is often not pure white, imitated contemporary marble bowls and was thought perhaps to have come from Nea Makri. The small number of pots and their high quality would reflect the value of the imported raw material. White ware becomes progressively scarcer, although it still occurs as late as the last phase, 12, which is an early phase of LN.

The brown-black slipped and burnished ware is peculiar in mainland Greece to Nea Makri, although there are parallels from the site of Ayios Petros in the Northern Sporades; because of its sudden appearance without local antecedents, the excavator looks eastward to Anatolia and the Near East for its origins. The excavator suggests that the white-filled incised decoration may have been the Nea Makri potters' answer to the White-on-Black painted pottery elsewhere, which, from the evidence of some apparently unsatisfactory attempts, they could not or would not reproduce. The very white filling of the simple incised patterns is also thought to be kaolin, analytical confirmation of which would be welcome for both its technological and cultural implications. White-filled incised decoration and white crusting in general are common enough and not necessarily indicative of the use of kaolin. The quality of the ware deteriorates in the later phases. Another local feature is the relative prevalence of asymmetrical shapes. Ovoid and elliptical pots occur elsewhere, but are not common.

The Late Neolithic begins in phase 9. Although the innovations in phase 3 at the beginning of the MN are less striking, the difference in phase 9 from the preceding phases, even phase 8, is so marked that "9 can be seen as not just transitional, but as the beginning of a new period" (152). New material is little, although significant, but there were considerable modifications to existing types. The common Orange Sandy ware now includes a fine variation with a hard slip of different color and better quality. Urnifinis continues, but acquires an overall burnished slip whose friability is due to the firing rather than its poor quality. A new feature is the great increase in coarse ware, both the thin-walled and heavy varieties. This is also characteristic of the LN in the Peloponnese. One example each of Matt-Painted, Black on Red, Rippled ware, and beaded decoration were found in undisturbed levels. The last two phases, 11 and 12, are very similar. Typical LN shapes occur: carinations, thickened closed bowl walls, beaded rims, and ribbon handles. Two painted Urnifinis sherds were found, but no Fine Gray ware. The incised and dot-fringed zigzag decoration on an asymmetrical deep closed bowl is compared to motifs from the Attica-Kephala culture and a White-on-Red sherd looks very similar to examples from the Agora.

The excavator concludes that the end of the third period of the settlement and its final abandonment coincide with the first appearance of the Attica-Kephala pattern-burnished ware and the beginning of LN II in the Cyclades.

It is always difficult to compare the chronologies of different sites because of their frequently different pottery records, but apart from ¹⁴C dating, which unfortunately it was not possible to carry out at Nea Makri, pottery must remain the best diagnostic tool available to us. In this case, the virtual absence of types characteristic of the late phase of the Late Neolithic (the excavator's LN I or my period III), such as Matt-Painted, Polychrome, or Fine Gray, to name a few, which are found at other sites in Attica and Euboea, perhaps implies that for practical purposes Nea Makri came to an end soon after the transition from Middle to Late Neolithic.

W.W. PHELPS

OMIROU 2
AYIA PARASKEVI
153 43 ATHENS
GREECE
PHELPS@HOL.GR

CORPUS HIEROGLYPHICARUM INSCRIPTIONUM CRETAE,
edited by J.-P. Olivier and L. Godart, with the collaboration of J.-C. Poursat. (*EtCret* 31.) Pp. 447, pls. 306, map 1, tables 2. De Boccard, Paris 1996.
ISBN 2-86958-082-7.

The *Corpus hieroglyphicarum inscriptionum Cretae (CHIC)* is the first systematic presentation of Cretan Hieroglyphic (hereafter CH) inscriptions, according to established criteria for corpus publications, since Sir Arthur Evans presented the material as then known three generations ago in *Scripta Minoa* 1 (Oxford 1909) (SM I). CHIC gives scholars standardized analytical sign repertoires (17) for CH script, based on a complete collection of meticulously edited texts. A total of 331 texts is presented: 266 from 32 known sites on Crete, 61 seals of general Cretan provenience, 1 seal from Kythera, and 2 roundels and 1 clay boulette from Samothrace. Most importantly, the editors, in producing what will now be the standard signary, have differentiated between signs on seals and signs on other, primarily clay archival, types of supports. They also correctly decoupled their standard numeration of the signs from presumed parallel signs in Linear A and Linear B. (They do offer a table of possible comparisons on p. 19.) Thus their view of the makeup of the script is not contaminated by fixed a priori assumptions. Scholars can now proceed to *independent* analyses of sign occurrences. These are a prerequisite for decipherment, or at least for understanding the administrative workings and phonological/ideographic syntax of a script.

Looking in awe at CHIC, it is easy to see why such a volume was a long time coming. The typological variety of texts and supports for the script is daunting, and called for shrewd analytical and classificatory schemes for the documents and for the basic sign repertoires of the script. Given the complexity of the data, all users of this volume are advised to read with the utmost care the editors' detailed discussions of the typological classification of inscriptions and signs in the system (9–17, 51–53) and the principles for presenting the texts in photographs, facsimile

drawings, transcriptions, transnumerations, and tabular transcriptions (for a few archival clay inscriptions) (60–63). Finding any particular inscription in *CHIC* or all inscriptions from a single site involves clever use of the concordances on pages 33–57. This slight inconvenience is a necessary evil imposed by the heterogeneity of the inscriptions.

The most serious problem about CH remains the relationship between the signs and the “texts” carved on seals and those on archival clay documents. Signs appearing on the latter are all clearly part of a phonetic/logographic textual syntax. Whether some of the symbols carved on seals should be excluded from the standard signary and considered “decorative” or “filler” motifs is far from certain, and has been the focus of considerable discussion (cf. T.G. Palaima ed., *Aegean Seals, Sealings and Administration [Aegeum 5]*, Liège 1990) 11–23). In *CHIC*, the editors classify certain symbols on seals as decorative motifs and exclude them from transcription (63) and from the table of sign forms (385–447) and the index of signs and sign groups (319–84). Syllabograms or logograms that the editors consider decorative motifs are presented in hieroglyphic font transcription in brackets {}. I will call these category-1 signs. Other “decorative motifs” that are not part of the *CHIC* CH signary are indicated as {} in the hieroglyphic font transcription and also excluded from the table and index. I will call these category-2 signs. This system will create difficulties for linguistic and structural analyses of the texts that rely purely on the indices. One will have to locate anew all occurrences of these excluded “signs” in order to form an opinion as to whether any of them should be added to the repertory of true CH signs. Here are a few examples.

A “cat’s head” symbol appears on Cretan “hieroglyphic” seals. Later, sign AB 80 is clearly a cat’s head on Linear A inscriptions like PH 7a.3, AR Zf 1, and IO Za 2d.1. It develops into a nonrepresentational form on Linear A inscriptions from Hagia Triada and Khania, and later is even more abstracted and linearized as a Linear B phonogram with the value *ma*. In his signary Evans (SMI, 209) included this symbol as Hieroglyphic sign no. 74, and a full-bodied representation of a cat as sign no. 75. Evans’s sign no. 74 occurs framing text #123 from Knossos as a running circular border motif, and it is repeated four times on one face of the four-sided prism #283. Do these have any “meaning”? On texts #196, #247, and #287, no. 74 occurs in sequence with *CHIC* syllabograms. On text #257, Evans’s no. 75 also occurs this way. None of these occurrences is indexed. Even more difficult to accept is how the transcription and indexing of sign *CHIC* 070 is treated on the same seal, #268. It occurs on all three faces. On faces α and β where it occurs with two other signs, it is considered category-1 and not indexed. On face γ , where it occurs with one other sign, it is considered an instance of *CHIC* 070—i.e., a real syllabogram. The criterion applied is that on the first two faces the sign occurs in each case with signs that elsewhere in the corpus form two-sign “word-units,” but on face γ it is, as it were, needed to make a two-sign “word-unit.” This is exceedingly arbitrary. If we were trying to figure out the Roman alphabet as used to render the still unknown language English, would we be justified in applying the same principle to the following three “word-units”: TIN, NOT, AT? That is, would it be prudent to transcribe them as {T}IN, NO{T}, and AT and then index the

sign T as only occurring in the sequence AT, because elsewhere in our corpus the two-sign words IN and NO occur? Other more trifling inconsistencies exist. On #188, #192, and #217, a symbol similar to LB 75 is omitted from hieroglyphic transcription. On #240, *CHIC* 001 is considered a decorative motif, and not transcribed or indexed (320), yet it occurs in the table of sign forms on page 386 (cf. #217, face α). On #154 what looks like a clear third sign is left out of account. On #166 this possible correlate for AB 50 is omitted. These are the kinds of minor faults I can find with *CHIC*. Look at it in awe.

THOMAS G. PALAIMA

PROGRAM IN AEGEAN SCRIPTS AND PREHISTORY
DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICS
UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78712-1181
PASPTGP@UTXVMS.CC.UTEXAS.EDU

LATE MINOAN III POTTERY: CHRONOLOGY AND TERMINOLOGY, edited by Erik Hallager and Birgitta P. Hallager. (Monographs of the Danish Institute at Athens 1.) Pp. 420, figs. 371, shape charts 10. Danish Institute at Athens/Aarhus University Press, Aarhus 1997. \$40. ISSN 1397-1433; ISBN 87-7288-731-1.

In the earlier 1960s, the study of mainland Greek and Cretan pottery dating from the period of Mycenaean cultural hegemony in the Aegean stood at a crossroads. Arne Furumark’s massive synthesis of Mycenaean ceramics had been published, to mixed reviews, two decades earlier in 1941. Due to the general hiatus in fieldwork caused by World War II, his elaborate classification of both shapes and painted decoration had yet to be adopted for the publication of any major Late Bronze Age site. On the mainland, Carl Blegen published the first volume of his findings at Pylos in 1966 and classified the Mycenaean pottery he had found there in the same kind of idiosyncratic fashion that he had employed on several previous occasions at sites such as Korakou, Zygouries, and the Argive Heraion. Although he inserted cross-references to Furumark here and there, Blegen made no significant effort to take advantage of the standardized terminological system that the Swede’s comprehensive survey of Mycenaean pottery had made possible. On Crete, Mervyn Popham likewise paid scant attention to Furumark in pioneering the serious study of Minoan ceramics produced after the collapse of Neopalatial civilization in the 15th century B.C.

It was the signal achievement of Elizabeth French to have successfully adapted Furumark’s system to the publication of often very fragmentary settlement pottery. In a series of groundbreaking articles published in *BSA* between 1964 and 1969, French combined Furumark’s morphological and decorative typologies with a novel form of quantitative approach to ceramic analysis. On the basis of a suite of settlement deposits from both inside and outside the citadel at Mycenae, she established definitions for the various phases and subphases of Mycenaean pottery that often