

CHAPTER 3

Archaeology and Text: Decipherment, Translation, and Interpretation

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This is necessarily a selective discussion of the history of the subdiscipline of Mycenaeanology (the study of records from Crete and the southern and central Greek mainland [figure 3.1] during the period ca. 1450–1200 BC that are written in the so-called Linear B script and represent the Greek language) and its relationship to anthropological and archaeological work in what is known as Aegean prehistory (the study of the cultures of the Aegean basin pre-1200 BC). My primary objective throughout is to explain with a few well-chosen examples the prevailing methodological *Zeitgeist* of each main period in the development of Mycenaeanology and what sorts of information Mycenaeanological scholars were interested in and capable of providing to and using from scholars in related fields. This leads to a critical assessment of the current state of Mycenaeanology as a subdiscipline (of linguistics, epigraphy, and prehistory) now linked with archaeological and anthropological research.

Stage One: The First Fifty Years

Archaeology and Texts Inextricably Connected from the Beginning

The study of Minoan and Mycenaean writing is slightly older than the discovery and definition of Minoan archaeology. The recognition of a distinctive “Minoan,” as opposed to a “Mycenaean,” prehistoric archaeology resulted from the excavations of Sir Arthur Evans at Knossos (figures 3.2, 3.3) beginning on March 23, 1900 (A. Evans 1900a). The discovery of three distinctive classes of writing (as defined by Evans himself in A. Evans 1909) at Knossos and at other major Cretan sites during the first two decades of the twentieth century, and not at any of the Mycenaean mainland centers, reinforced the



FIGURE 3.1. Map of the Aegean area. After McDonald and Thomas 1990:514.

impression gained from the rest of the material record that Cretan palatial civilization well into the second half of the second millennium BC was not only separate from the Mycenaean but more advanced and dominant.

The first Linear B tablet finds from a controlled excavation were uncovered by Evans and Duncan Mackenzie at Knossos beginning on March 30, 1900, the eighth day of excavation (figures 3.4, 3.5). Evans described the first piece uncovered as “part of an elongated clay tablet with a chisel-like end, engraved with what appeared to be signs and numbers” (A. Evans 1900a:18, 55–58; MacGillivray 2000:177–178, 181–185). He had earlier seen a “graf-fito fragment” of a clay tablet from brief local excavations by Minos Kalokairinos at the site of Knossos in 1878 (A. Evans 1900a:18 n. 1), and he had already formulated ideas about the cultural context and evolution of what he



FIGURE 3.2. Sir Arthur Evans at Knossos. *Courtesy of the Evans Archive, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.*

then called “Mycenaean” writing from his studies (most fully in A. Evans 1894 and 1897) of stone seals and other objects. The stone seals were inscribed with discrete pictorial forms that Evans recognized as characters in what he called the Cretan Hieroglyphic writing system. He acquired many of these on the antiquities market. He also observed a few examples of writing of a different kind, in linear characters inscribed on objects like a bronze axe and a libation table (Myres 1941:334–335).

We should keep in mind that Evans was first and foremost a student of Cretan writing. His interests in early writing systems led him to become an excavator (Myres 1941). Mycenologists, strictly defined as scholars who work with the primary documents (as epigraphers or pinacologists)¹ or texts (as linguists) of Aegean scripts, in fact view the monumental publication of



FIGURE 3.3. Left to right: Sir Arthur Evans with David Theodore Fyfe (architect) and Duncan Mackenzie. *Courtesy of the Evans Archive, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.*

(FACING PAGE): FIGURE 3.4. Plan of the “Palace of Minos” after the first season of excavation. *After Evans 1899–1900: Plate XIII.*

the results of the excavations at Knossos (A. Evans 1900b, 1901–02, 1902–03, 1904, 1921–35)² as a major distraction. It kept Evans from finishing the field-defining work he had begun on Cretan writing systems during the late 1890s (and in A. Evans 1909; see also Palaima 2000b). He worked on the publication of the Linear B material from Knossos until his death in 1941 and left a substantial manuscript to the charge of Sir John L. Myres (A. Evans 1952; Palaima, Pope, and Reilly 2000:10).

Linear B: The Slow Pace of Publication

Serious work toward decipherment was hampered by the slow pace of publication. Only in 1935, with the appearance of the fourth and final volume of *The Palace of Minos* (A. Evans 1921–35), was any sizable number of photographs and drawings made available to scholars interested in Linear B writing, and even then this was a small and unsystematic selection. In 1936,

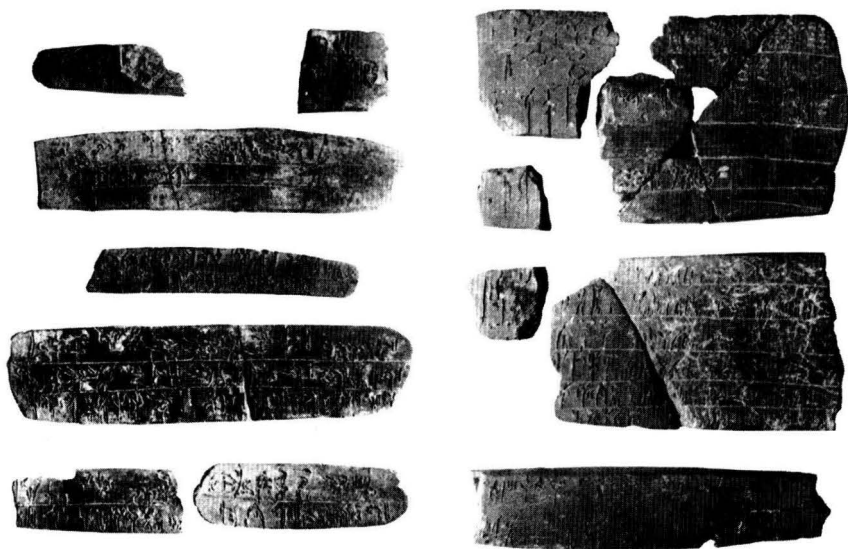


FIGURE 3.5. The first published photograph of Linear B tablets from Knossos. *After Evans 1899–1900: Plate I.*

besides Evans, there were three scholars seriously interested in Linear B (see Palaima, Pope, and Reilly 2000:11–14):

- Alice Elizabeth Kober (Palaima n.d.a), a thirty-year-old professor of Classics at Brooklyn College (figures 3.6, 3.7). Kober had as yet published nothing in the field, was trained in Classical philology—not archaeology or linguistics—and had no knowledge of any ancient languages beyond Latin and Greek. Moreover, she taught traditional courses in Latin and Greek authors and what we would now call topics courses in classical civilization. Yet upon her graduation from Hunter College in 1928, Kober had declared that she would decipher the “Minoan” scripts. In the decade from 1935 to 1945 she would master, by participating in various summer linguistic institutes and making frequent trips to Yale University during her own busy school terms at Brooklyn College, the principal ancient languages and scripts of Anatolia and the Near East, all with a view to knowing them well enough to see if their linguistic patterns matched those she was discovering through meticulous and comprehensive analysis of the data for the Minoan linear scripts.



FIGURE 3.6. Alice Elizabeth Kober, approximately age 35, as a professor at Brooklyn College. Courtesy of the Program in Aegean Scripts and Prehistory Archives, University of Texas at Austin.

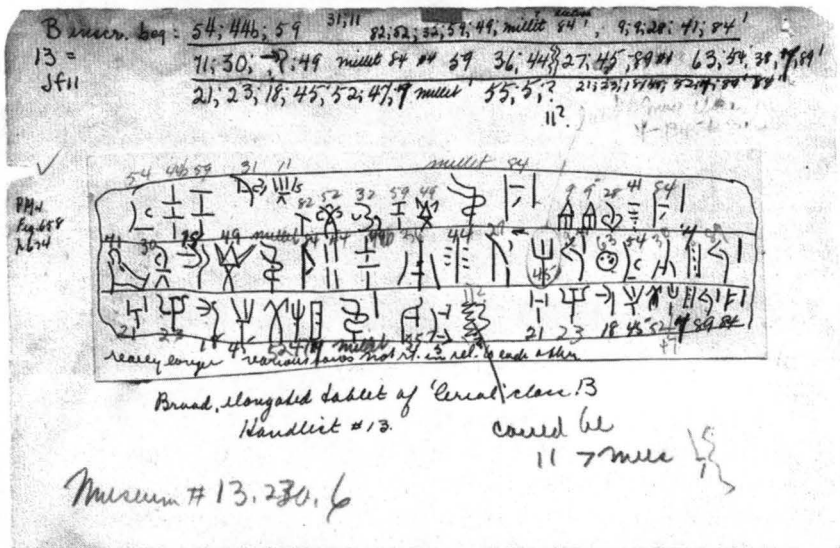


FIGURE 3.7. Alice Kober's drawing and notes of Knossos Linear B tablet Fp 13, now known to be a record of offerings of oil to religious sanctuaries, "all the gods," "priestesses of the winds," and a likely Minoan deity *pi-pi-tu-na*. Length 7.7 cm × height 5.0 cm. After Palaima, Pope, and Reilly 2000: Fig. 7.



FIGURE 3.8. Linear A tablet HT 117 from Hagia Triada in south central Crete. Length $6.7 \times$ height $10.9 \times$ thickness 0.8 cm. A deep scoring crosses the tablet just above the third to the last line of the text. Small dots separate the three words in the opening header. Then come ten entries, each with a single phonetically written word followed by the vertical stroke for “1.” This first “section” ends with the entry of the two-sign Minoan word for “total” and the horizontal stroke for “10.” *Courtesy of the Program in Aegean Scripts and Prehistory Archives, University of Texas at Austin.*

- Johannes Sundwall (Palaima n.d.a), Professor der alten Geschichte an der Academie zu Åbo (Finland). Sundwall was at this point the one systematic scholar of relatively long standing in analyzing the structure of the texts and patterns of sign occurrence mainly on the Linear A tablets from Hagia Triada (figure 3.8). He worked carefully at analyzing accounting procedures and units of measurement in the Minoan scripts (for example, Sundwall 1920, 1932a, 1932b, 1936) and knew enough later to recognize that Kober was the most knowledgeable figure at work in the field (Ventris 1988:86).
- Michael Ventris (Palaima, Pope, and Reilly 2000:6–15), a fourteen-year-old schoolboy at Stowe School. Ventris (figure 3.9) had been interested in ancient scripts at least since the age of eight. The Institute of Classical Studies at the University of London has among its Ventrisiana a book he purchased on Egyptian hieroglyphs at this age. In 1936 Ventris happened to meet Sir Arthur Evans during an excursion for boys from Stowe School to Burlington House to see an exhibition of materials from fifty years of excavations sponsored by the British School of Archaeology in Athens.

Remarkably, the efforts of Kober, Ventris, Sir John Myres, and Emmett L. Bennett, Jr. (the latter also shown in figure 3.9), although hampered by the disruptions caused by the Second World War, made it possible for Ventris to

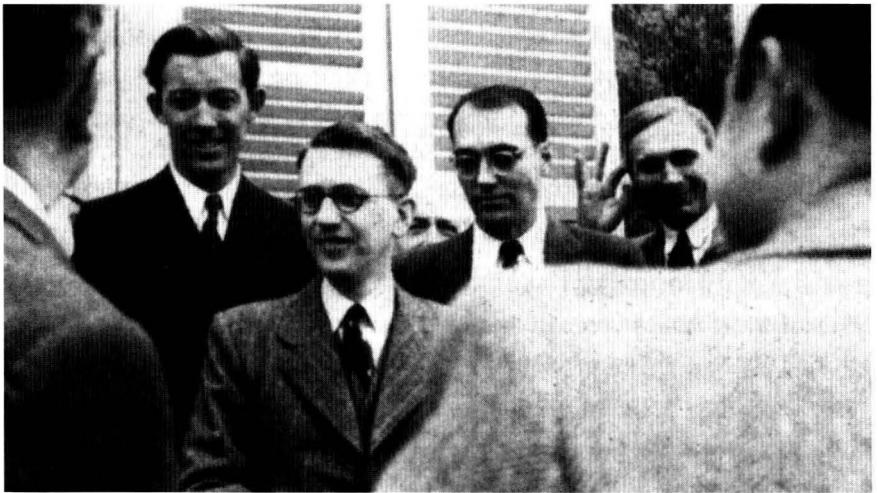


FIGURE 3.9. Photograph of Michael Ventris, John Chadwick, and Emmett L. Bennett, Jr. (first three facing, left to right) in April 1956. After Palaima, Pope, and Reilly 2000:3, Fig. 1.

decipher Linear B. Ventris produced his decipherment in just over fifteen years of sporadic part-time work. From 1949 to 1952, his circumstances made it possible for him to devote stretches of several months at a time to rather intensive work on the linear scripts (Robinson 2002).

The lamentable situation concerning text publication prevailed even after the discovery of Linear B tablets at the site of Pylos in 1939. In 1947 when Alice Kober began collaborating with Sir John Myres on the publication of Evans's unfinished study (A. Evans 1952, working on the unfinished manuscript left by Sir Arthur Evans at his death in 1941), the sum total of published data available to scholars was:

- About 45 published photographs, 103 drawings, and 120 transcriptions (by Johannes Sundwall) of Knossos tablets
- Seven photographs of Pylos tablets (see Blegen and Kourouniotis 1939; Blegen 1939; Chadwick 1999:31 overlooks the three tablets presented in the latter)
- A few painted stirrup jar inscriptions from Thebes and Eleusis
- Some dubitanda that could not be properly evaluated given the unexamined state of most genuine texts and the writing system as a whole

The Major Addition: Linear B at Pylos

In March 1939 Carl W. Blegen of the University of Cincinnati began excavation in Messenia in southwestern Greece at what he hoped would prove to be a mainland “palatial complex” (Blegen and Kourouniotis 1939) (figures 3.10, 3.11). Just as at Knossos, on one of the first days of work, the team of excavators found tablets. They had laid out their very first exploratory trench to avoid damaging olive trees on the site at Ano Englianos. By good fortune it was placed directly over what would eventually be identified as the tablet storage room (Room 8) of the central Archives Complex of what Blegen called the Palace of Nestor (Blegen and Kourouniotis 1939:562–570, Figs. 6–10; Palaima n.d.b). By equal good fortune, Blegen set William A. McDonald to record precisely the position within the trench of every fragment of the clay tablets. Some 636 tablets in all were excavated and photographed during that first season.

As noted already, photographs of a mere seven tablets were published in the preliminary excavation report and the *Illustrated London News*. These created a sensation because they convinced some—and reinforced Blegen's own strongly argued position—that the mainland Greek Mycenaean civilization was much more independently vigorous than Evans's theories of pan-Minoan cultural hegemony suggested (McDonald and Thomas 1990:233–

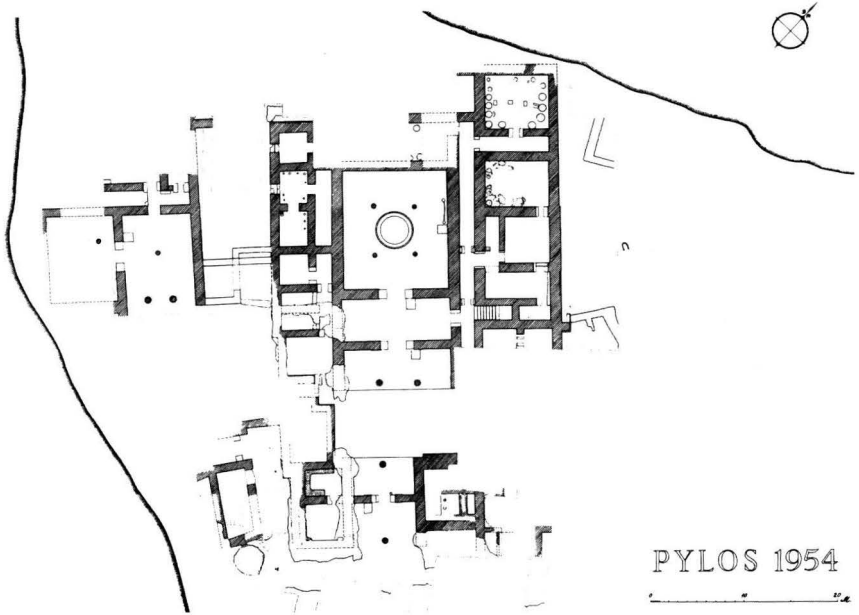


FIGURE 3.10. Plan of the “Palace of Nestor” at Pylos after the fourth season of excavation (1954), revealing the central *megaron* complex and Southwest Building. After Blegen 1955: Plate 24.



FIGURE 3.11. Pylos tablet Ta 641. Length $25.2 \times$ height $3.6 \times$ thickness 1.5 cm. This leaf-shaped tablet shows the advances in systematized formatting, the increase in lexical information, and the developed calligraphic appearance of the script from the Minoan Linear A period (cf. figure 3.8). The first entry describes two tripods of Cretan workmanship “of Aigeus type.” The first entry in the second line is of three vases known as *k^we-to* (historical Greek “pithos”?). Then follow entries for four-, three-, and no-eared (that is, handled) *di-pa* (historical Greek *depas*). The tablet belongs to a set compiled as an inventory of special vessels, fire equipment, sacrificial implements, and furniture connected with a ritual banquet. Courtesy of the Program in Aegean Scripts and Prehistory Archives, University of Texas at Austin. With permission of the University of Cincinnati.

241, 247–291). Again, however, publication of the material was delayed, in this case by the outbreak of the Second World War and the widespread disruption of normal life that continued well after the cessation of hostilities. For example, the Knossos tablets in the Herakleion Museum in Crete were never accessible to Alice Kober or any other scholars during the 1940s. For their work on Evans's unfinished monograph (A. Evans 1952), Kober and Myres studied photographs taken by Evans years before, the small selection of tablets in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, and photographs and drawings of dubious quality in scattered publications (Palaima n.d.a).

In 1939, Blegen entrusted to Emmett L. Bennett, Jr., then a first-year graduate student at the University of Cincinnati, the work of publishing the Linear B tablets uncovered at Pylos. During the Second World War, Bennett was called to work on the early stages of decoding Japanese documents. Bennett, in his post-war Ph.D. dissertation (Bennett 1947), working from photographs made of the tablets before the war, completed the first scientific paleographical analysis of a body of Linear B documents. He investigated the core signary of the script and the workings of the scribal system.

The Final Years of Stage One

During the period 1947–50, Ventris at first made an attempt at assisting Sir John Myres and Alice Elizabeth Kober intermittently on their revision and expansion of the manuscript Sir Arthur Evans had left behind (see A. Evans 1952). Ventris eventually withdrew, it seems mainly for personal reasons. But by this point he had begun his own “group working” approach to Linear A and Linear B, and he was circulating letters to scholars worldwide whom he himself had tracked down through their interests in the scripts (Palaima 1993). In so working he was adapting a theory of problem solving that had just come into vogue in his chosen professional field of architecture (Palaima 1993; Palaima, Pope, and Reilly 2000:6–15). Ventris had published an unfocused and methodologically flawed article in the *American Journal of Archaeology* for 1940—the *British Journal of Hellenic Studies* had turned it down—which proposed that the language behind the Minoan scripts was Etruscan-related Pelasgian (Ventris 1940). The paucity of data available made possible his continued belief in this “solution” until literally months before the decipherment (Bennett 1989). In December 1949, Ventris sent out to over twenty scholars letters containing twenty-one questions about Linear B (and Linear A) and proposed that he would compile the answers and circulate them to members of this working group. In the hand-penciled postscript of his letter to Emmett L. Bennett, Jr., Ventris comments on “what little we have to show for the first 50 years’ work” (Palaima, Pope, and Reilly 2000:30, item 10). Bennett’s replies to this questionnaire were minimal. Kober absolutely

refused to answer it, calling it “a step in the wrong direction and a complete waste of time” (Ventris 1988:37–38, 67; Palaima, Pope, and Reilly 2000:6–15).

Between 1945 and 1950, the main work that accelerated progress in our understanding of Linear B was done by Alice Elizabeth Kober and Emmett L. Bennett, Jr. As already mentioned, Bennett, in his dissertation on the Pylos tablets (Bennett 1947), completed the first scientific paleographical analysis of Linear B, fulfilling a prerequisite in working with data from an undeciphered script by establishing what the core character repertory of the script was. His study of the Minoan fractional system (Bennett 1950) showed how pure analysis of the tablets could lead to unquestionable results. Ventris later cited this article as one that encouraged him to continue his own work.

Kober, however, was in the forefront of advances. In four methodologically spare and clean articles (Kober 1945, 1946, 1948, 1949; Palaima n.d.a), she presented the evidence for inflection in the Linear B tablets (sign alternations at word endings occurring as the so-called “Kober’s triplets”) and also laid out what could be known and what remained unknown with regard to Minoan scripts. Kober (1948) effectively defined the proper program of research toward the decipherment of the Minoan scripts and the principles that should be followed in conducting this research.

Stage Two: The Last Fifty Years

The First Two Years of Stage Two: Decipherment, 1950–52

On May 16, 1950, Alice Elizabeth Kober died of the critical illness that had progressively impaired her health and limited her activities during the last two years of her life. Michael Ventris and Emmett L. Bennett, Jr. became the prime movers in the attack on Linear B on opposite sides of the Atlantic. On the epigraphical side, Bennett helped Myres with correct readings of the Knossos tablets, traveling to the Herakleion Museum in 1950 to study them firsthand (Melena and Palaima 2001). His publication of the Pylos tablets in the next year greatly expanded the repertory of inscriptions available to researchers and set a high standard for accuracy of presentation (Bennett 1951). The texts were edited in normalized transcription, which meant that most problems with interpretation of individual scribal variants had been examined and resolved. Thus for the first time those working on decipherment had direct access to secure texts of the lengthier and syntactically more revealing Pylos documents.

In March–April 1952, Michael Ventris gained full use of the Myres-Kober-Bennett-edited Knossos tablets (A. Evans 1952) and an early version

of Bennett's index of Minoan words (Bennett 1953), which accurately laid out the occurrences of signs and sign-groups in the Knossos and Pylos tablets. Within three months, using these increased data and improved means of analyzing them, Ventris abandoned the "Etruscan solution" (Ventris 1940) and deciphered Linear B as Greek.

Old Archaeology, Homeric Studies, Near Eastern Studies, and the Mycenaean Greek Texts, 1952–73

The Ventris decipherment had to be presented to an understandably skeptical scholarly world. Michael Ventris and his postdecipherment collaborator John Chadwick (who also appears in figure 3.9) did this in a superb joint article (Ventris and Chadwick 1953) and then in the first edition of the "bible of Linear B" (Ventris and Chadwick 1956; Ventris and Chadwick, second edition, 1973). Ventris and Chadwick (1956) used 300 selected sample texts to illustrate the problems, results, and resources of the new field of Mycenaean. Their 1953 publication presented the writing system and its Cretan forerunners (Cretan Hieroglyphic and Linear A), its regional paleographical variants, the status of the Greek language between 1400–1200 BC, and its dialectal affinities. It then discussed the individual texts by subject categories relating to almost all aspects of Mycenaean civilization and material culture: social organization, religion, political structure, agriculture and land tenure, industry and trade, geographical names, categories of personnel, livestock and agricultural produce, landownership and land use, proportional tribute and ritual offerings, textiles, vessels and furniture, metals, and military equipment.

A paradoxically healthy development was the appearance of L. Palmer's (1963) study, which offered, let us say, many alternative perspectives on interpretations to those proposed in Ventris and Chadwick (1956) while maintaining similar categories of presentation. In reality, if Ventris and Chadwick said "black," Palmer was apt to say "white"—and in some cases say it in a way that tested the ground rules of polite scholarly discourse. Such polarities of interpretation meant that, on most crucial issues, those interested in the Mycenaean textual evidence could consult at least two well-reasoned points of view by well-trained scholars and then navigate a course between, toward, or beyond one or the other.

It should be noted that Chadwick was a lexicographer who had pursued a private interest in deciphering the linear scripts based on his war experience in the Naval Intelligence Division (Chadwick 1999:29–34). Ventris was an architect with public school Greek—and absolutely no experience at decoding during the war—and a basic polymathic understanding of the contents of ancient records from societies roughly contemporary with the

Minoan and Mycenaean. Palmer was an Indo-European linguist. None of them had serious archaeological or anthropological interests.

The linguistic sophistication required for the first phase of interpretation of the Linear B texts reinforced the separation between material archaeology and textual scholarship. The continental school was devoted almost entirely to linguistics, a trend starting and seen clearly in the papers of the first international Mycenological colloquium (Lejeune 1956).

The interpretation of the Linear B texts in this first postdecipherment stage was influenced by four fields of scholarship:

1. *Homeric studies.* Although those who approach Bronze Age studies with training primarily as classical philologists, historians, or archaeologists often think of the Homericist side of scholarly inquiry as the baby that got thrown out with the old archaeological bathwater, it is a truth of the history of scholarship that the first phases of interpretation in Mycenaean archaeology and in Linear B studies, from Schliemann and Ventris onward, were determined, and in Schliemann's case even inspired, by Homeric scholarship (McDonald and Thomas 1990:3–110; Nilsson 1932). Most of the textually oriented interpreters of the newly readable Linear B texts had no appreciable background in the study of material culture. This trend continues among most contemporary continental European Mycenologists with the notable exception of the collaborative work that produced a number of important studies (for example, Hiller and Panagl 1976; Treuil et al. 1989) and individual exceptions like José Melena and Jan Driessen. What such scholars assimilated in the way of archaeological information only reinforced their predisposition to view the Mycenaean period by comparison or contrast with the features of the Homeric age.

The discovery that key Mycenaean texts referred to the production of chariots, spear points, armor, swords, and even to strategic military assignments was consistent with notions derived from the original interpretation of the excavated materials from the shaft graves at Mycenae: that Mycenaean culture was dominated by a warrior elite and that warrior-kings (each called a *wanaks*) in each region stood at the top of steep social, political, and economic organizational pyramids (L. Palmer 1963:83–95; Palaima 1995a; Wright 1995b).

In the religious sphere, many of the main deities of the historical—and Homeric—pantheon could be identified, and commensal ceremonial texts, like the Pylos Un series in which Poseidon is a main focus, suggested an easy parallelism with Homer, for example, the Pylos Un tablets and Book 3 of Homer's *Odyssey* (Ventris and Chadwick 1973: 125–129, 275–312, 410–412, 456–485). Thus the Mycenaean texts were

used effectively to give a sound track to the silent movie of Aegean palatial cult and ritual that had been forming through the study of iconography, architecture, and artifacts from the time of Evans (1901) until Nilsson (1941–50).

In the social sphere, in stunning contrast to the non-Homeric prosopography of the historical period (Ventris and Chadwick 1973:103–105 with no update from 1956; Page 1959:196–202), scholars could identify many individuals in the Linear B tablets who bore Homeric names, Achilles and Hector among them. Sociopolitical terminology like *laos* (collective male fighting force or Volk), *basileus*—in the Mycenaean form *g^wasileus* (king), and *wanaks* (exalted king) could also be made to harmonize with a Homericist view. This evidence suggested that some form of heroic oral poetic tradition existed during the late Bronze Age (Page 1959:187–188).

Likewise, details of material culture lent themselves to interpreting this period and the Mycenaean textual evidence through a Homericist filter, for example, the use of the rare word *phasganon* to describe swords in Linear B, and in Homer the use of the term *pharweha* to describe cloth, and the inventory of precious furniture, vessels, and fire implements in the Pylos Ta series. Gray's (1959) paper was an immediate "proto-literate" successor to the monumental *Homer and the monuments* (Lorimer 1950).

The clearest examples of this tendency to "Homerize" are publications such as Webster (1958) and Wace and Stubbings (1962). Both exploit the Linear B data and have among their objectives comparing the image of society in the Homeric poems to the image formed from the Mycenaean texts (see also Page 1959:118–296). Webster's (1958) introductory remarks encapsulate how the Homeric poems were mined as sources postdecipherment, and especially predecipherment, during the time when they were the only written texts that archaeologists had to assist in the interpretation of Aegean Bronze Age cultures. In this regard there had been little advance in methodology in nearly 2500 years—from the period when Thucydides in Book 1.3–1.12 (see Strassler 1996:4–11) looked upon the ruins of Mycenae and analyzed the artifacts in "Carian" graves on the island of Delos and compared them with Homeric and other oral traditions relating to the late Bronze Age.

Michael Ventris's decipherment of Linear B in 1952 proved that Greek was spoken in the Mycenaean world (Ventris 1952). This fact had long been suspected by archaeologists and, to quote two outstanding examples, Nilsson (1932) had maintained that much of Greek mythology was Mycenaean in origin, and Lorimer (1950) claimed that Homer's

knowledge of perishable Mycenaean objects came from a poetic tradition that went back to the time of the shaft graves of Mycenae. On the linguistic side, Bowra (1934) had shown the probability that words common to the Homeric poems and Arcado-Cypriote came from Mycenaean Greek (Webster 1958:1).

Because Beattie (1962) was a lifelong disbeliever in the Ventris decipherment, his contribution to "Aegean languages of the heroic age" (Wace and Stubbings 1962:311–324) omitted all mention of the results of nearly a decade of work on the correctly deciphered texts and their significance for understanding the language picture of Greece in the late Bronze Age. On the purely archaeological side, such specialized volumes as Hope Simpson and Lazenby (1970) directly tested the correlation between sites listed in Book 2 of the *Iliad* and sites identifiable through excavation and survey within the regions mentioned in the catalogue in the *Iliad*.

2. *Near Eastern, Mesopotamian, and cross-cultural documentary evidence.* Notebooks of Michael Ventris still preserved in the Institute of Classical Studies at the University of London show that during the 1940s, well before he deciphered the Linear B script, he immersed himself deeply in the published interpretations of cuneiform and Egyptian records. He kept detailed lists of the kinds of economic, political, and social information, and transactional terminology such records contained. Although Ventris was doing this work to have a means of controlling his own speculations about the patterns of information possibly exhibited in the undeciphered Linear A and Linear B tablets, it gave him the ability, postdecipherment, immediately to use such documentation for cross-cultural comparisons in interpreting the Linear B tablets. Ventris and Chadwick (1956) contains numerous references to tablet records from Nuzi, Alalakh, Lagash, Ur, and Ugarit (as well as to Egyptian and Hittite record-based information). Ventris and Chadwick (1973), published seventeen years after Ventris's tragic death in 1956, contains little in the way of additional Near Eastern comparanda, thus offering further proof, if we needed it, that this element of the original edition was decidedly Ventris's contribution.

While Ventris's contribution did not represent sophisticated cross-cultural anthropology or archaeology, it did establish as an important research technique in Mycenology the comparative study of records from other cultures and historical periods. In this respect an early trendsetting article was Killen (1964). It used medieval sheep and wool records as comparanda for the meticulous management of breeding and production flocks in the Knossos Linear B tablets. Most recently, Killen

has even used a manual of sheep husbandry in the Great Plains of the USA published in 1931 to corroborate an interpretation of the use of a Mycenaean technical term (*o-pa*) within livestock and other economic contexts in the Linear B tablets (see Killen 1999a:332 n. 34). Killen (1999a) advances our understanding of this term beyond the parameters that Melena (1983) was able to establish by closely studying parallel terminology in Mesopotamian texts.

3. *Greek prehistoric archaeology.* In a mutually reinforcing way, discoveries in the field, which had heretofore been interpreted through a Homericist filter, were now also Mycenologized, and meanwhile Mycenologists were using discoveries from the field to interpret Linear B texts. The most conspicuous example of this may be the site of Pylos. The material remains from the architectural complex known as the Palace of Nestor were viewed and interpreted as a Homeric palace (Blegen 1962; Blegen and Rawson 1966:419–424; Blegen and Rawson 1967:31–32). Nonetheless, the excavators and their associates showed admirable restraint. For example, the few scattered finds of La, Ae, and Xa tablet fragments from Room 6 of the central megaron (figure 3.10) make reference to women and cloth working. Their unusual find spots might be viewed by analogy with the “Homeric” use of upper floors of the palace of a *basileus* like Odysseus as a location for women to work cloth. The collected tablet fragments could have been interpreted from this perspective and the upper floors above the megaron assigned this function. Blegen and Rawson (1966:81) refrain from doing so.

Their restraint has now been proved correct. In 1999, José Melena, in continuing his masterfully precise work in directing the definitive *corpus* edition of the Pylos tablets, has hypothesized *per vocem*, while visiting the Program in Aegean Scripts and Prehistory at the University of Texas at Austin, that these fragments have, in fact, nothing to do with work on the upper floor but were random old and discarded scraps of Linear B tablets worked into the materials used to construct walls on the upper floor. This conclusion finds support in research on the small finds from the Palace of Nestor (Hofstra 2000), where it has been pointed out that the loom weights or spindle whorls that one would find, if the upper area were devoted to cloth manufacture, are conspicuously absent from the destruction debris. Otherwise, the material artifactual evidence was mined fully to explain the detailed terminology used in describing manufactured objects in the tablets, whether armor, chariots, furniture, or vessels. The seminal work here is Gray (1959), which examined Mycenaean ideograms (signs for objects) and their archaeological correlates.

Whole tablet sets could also be interpreted by assuming that their material environments were understood, often in Homeric terms. Thus, for example, the tablets of the Pylos Ta series that list vessels, tripods, fire equipment, tables, thrones, "footstools," sacrificial knives, and what have now finally been correctly identified as "stunning axes" were interpreted by Ventris (1955) as an inventory for a kind of Homeric reception room, while Leonard Palmer interpreted them by analogy to the rich burial gifts found in the shaft graves and imagined for the Mycenaean *tholoi* (Palmer 1960).

A major advance late in this stage was the development of multidisciplinary scientific intensive surveys of specific regions within the Aegean basin. McDonald and Rapp (1972) aimed at reconstructing the Bronze Age regional environment of Messenia, the district of the Greek mainland controlled by the Mycenaean palatial center at Pylos, and they were careful to include contributions by scholars specializing in documentary evidence of the Mycenaean (Chadwick 1972), Greco-Roman, and post-Classical periods. Chadwick (1972) took what was known about administrative geography (see also Chadwick 1963) and exploitation of natural resources from the Linear B tablets and related it to what archaeology, survey, and scientific studies could reconstruct about the actual natural landscape and settlement patterns of late Bronze Age Messenia.

Another positive development was the attention paid to the Mycenaean textual evidence in what for a generation was the most widely used general handbook of the Greek Bronze Age in the English language (Vermeule 1972:232–266). Vermeule took care to use the Linear B data to reconstruct the "society and history of the Mycenaean world."

4. *Indo-European studies.* Despite the comparativist inclinations and abilities of Michael Ventris and other second-generation scholars like Killen and Melena, the Linear B tablets were viewed primarily through the same Indo-Europeanist filter through which Bronze Age Greek archaeological discoveries had been viewed since the discovery of the shaft graves at Mycenae. Thus, basic institutions and basic patterns of social and political organization were reconstructed according to what was considered to be an invariable Indo-European model as laid out in the works of Dumézil (1958) and Benveniste (1969). As with the use of any interpretive templates, subtleties and cautionary nuances of the original formulators of such theories were overlooked. The identifiable Indo-European features of Mycenaean culture were emphasized, while the components that were adapted from the merging of the Greek speakers with preceding population groups (in general terms, Minoans and the

so-called Aegean substrate, by which was meant the inhabitants of the Cycladic islands and “Helladic” mainland) were left underexplored. Such tendencies were naturally reinforced by the influence of Homeric studies.

For a good example of this process and its effects, see the concise reappraisals of the Indo-European nature of the Mycenaean *wanaks* (Linear B texts and Indo-European theory, Homeric studies, and evidence of iconography, archaeology, and anthropology) in Palaima (1995a) and the multidisciplinary general reexamination of Aegean rulership in Rehak (1995; see also Renfrew 1998 and Shelmerdine 1999).

This second period of the second stage was also marked by the publication of specialized monographs necessary to work with the information in the Linear B texts. From this time come our only complete onomastic study (Landau 1958), our first lexicon (Morpurgo 1963, written in Latin!), our only full-scale “historical” prosopography (Lindgren 1973), our only full grammar (Vilborg 1960: called at the time “tentative” and now at last just about to be replaced by a definitive grammar), our only full study of how the Mycenaean evidence affects our understanding of the history of Greek phonology (Lejeune 1972), and our only systematic overviews of Mycenaean religious references (Gérard-Rousseau 1968) and economic terminology (Ruijgh 1967; Duhoux 1976, which was finished in 1972).

During this period, too, Mycenologists took advantage of the relative paucity of tablets from their sites and the relatively careful documentation of the archaeological contexts of the inscribed records to begin to develop archival, paleographical, pinacological, and sphragistic approaches to Mycenaean administration to a level of sophistication unparalleled in the study of most ancient Near Eastern and Mesopotamian cultures (Bennett 1959; Palmer and Boardman 1963; Gill 1966; Olivier 1967; see the overview in Palaima n.d.b).

New Archaeology, Hyperspecialization, and the Mycenaean Greek Texts, 1974–2000

The final stage in the hundred-year history of study of Aegean scripts is marked by many positive developments and two serious negative developments. Among the positive developments is an integrative approach to studying the tablets in relation to their archaeological contexts (Shelmerdine and Palaima 1984a, 1984b; Bennet 1985, 1988; Driessen 2000; Olivier 1997; Palaima 1995b, 1999, 2000c, n.d.b; R. Palmer 1994; Pini 1997; Piteros, Olivier, and Melena 1990; Varias 1993) as now understood through more sophisticated anthropological and archaeological methods of interpretation.

Moreover, cross-disciplinarity has become *de rigueur*. This does not mean that many Mycenologists have been trained at the feet of leading anthropological archaeologists, or vice versa that many anthropologists have developed the epigraphical and linguistic skills to work with the Linear B tablets at the level of sophistication now required by nearly fifty years of accumulated linguistic study and textual interpretation. In fact, I can think of only one true “switch-hitter”: John Bennet, now at Oxford University. But there has been some satisfying interdisciplinary awareness, discussion, and collaboration across the great divide identified by Renfrew (1980).

Many of the latest students of Mycenaean texts have been trained within programs that at least include or tolerate emphasis on archaeology or even ancient history and philology rather than linguistics *per se*, and have therefore been disposed to collaborate more closely with practitioners of New Archaeology or at least to try to answer questions posed by more sophisticated theoretical approaches to archaeological evidence. The work of Jan Driessen is exemplary in this regard (most notably Driessen 1997, 2000; Driessen and MacDonald 1997). The seminal work of Cynthia Shelmerdine relating Mycenaean toponyms to archaeological topography (Shelmerdine 1973, 1981; see also Chadwick 1972) and her recent textually informed overview of the Mycenaean palatial period (Shelmerdine 1997), plus the work of R. Palmer (1989, 1992, 1994, 1999), demonstrate the gains to be made by studying the tablets in conjunction with the material record and comparanda from well-documented cultures of the ancient Near East, although neither scholar has been required to use sophisticated anthropological theory to achieve those gains. Palaima (2000c) brings together the evidence of intensive interdisciplinary and diachronic scientific field survey work, dialect studies and lexicography, toponymy, and economic history to propose a more probable interpretation of a significant place name in the Pylos corpus. In so doing, there are ancillary gains because the discussion casts light on regional resource management and exploitation in the Mycenaean palatial period, the mixing and layering of speakers of different languages (Indo-European and non-Indo-European), and even the paucity of references to the legal sphere in the Linear B texts.

Moving in the opposite direction, Paul Halstead has exploited the Linear B evidence in his discussions of Mycenaean systems of agricultural and pastoral resource management, taxation, and production (for example, Halstead 1992, 1995, 1999a, 1999b) and thereby given purely textual scholars new tools and perspectives for approaching their data. R. Palmer (1992) and Halstead (1995) well exemplify the need to question critical assumptions made in interpreting Linear B documents in the first generation of scholarship. For instance, the values of the two fundamental ideograms for grains

may yet have to be reversed. The scholarly jury is still out, but a wide array of evidence has now been brought to bear on original interpretations that were based on assumptions rather than full reasoned argument.

In turn, leading figures such as Colin Renfrew (1987, 1998) have gone back to other fundamental questions and major assumptions about interpreting Mycenaean culture largely from an Indo-Europeanist, Homericist, and historical Hellenist—one almost wants to say a “Thucydidean”—perspective. Renfrew (1980) is credited with triggering the entire debate about how and why to bring New World anthropologically oriented methods of research to bear on Old World archaeological questions. Fortunately for us, he was interested *inter alia* in Aegean prehistory. Thus such questions as the arrival of Greek speakers in the Balkan peninsula, the nature of trade and cultural contacts between east and west, and most recently the composition of the language features of the pre-Greek Aegean have come in for restudy. This is an extremely healthy trend. Non-Mycenological archaeologists and anthropologists have forced Mycenologists to rethink evidence and to reformulate questions.

At the same time, at least from my perspective, interpreters of Linear B tablets have acted—and I hope will continue to act—as sober police officers curbing the tendencies of anthropological and archaeological theorists to speed ahead of the limits of available textual data or even to overlook the implications of closely nuanced interpretations of the details in the texts (see Killen 1999b; Palaima n.d.d responding to Wright 1994). In some ways, to paraphrase Oscar Wilde, this amounts to the importance of being, if not earnest, at least stodgy. But, as I have already noted, there are now a number of more senior Mycenologists (for example, Killen, Melena, Driessen, Hiller, Shelmerdine, Bennet, and R. Palmer) whose primary approach to the interpretation of the documents has always been grounded in at least attempting to understand the material culture of Mycenaean and related societies, and to pay attention to questions raised by archaeological theory, methods, and interpretations. That anthropologists and archaeologists can do their own “policing” is proved by Cherry and Davis (1999).

The collaboration between Mycenologists and archaeologists has brought about a questioning of old assumptions concerning topics as important and fundamental as the nature of Mycenaean kingship (Palaima 1995a; Rehak 1995), the function of Mycenaean palaces (Galaty and Parkinson 1999), the dating of destruction(s) at the Palace of Minos at Knossos (Driessen 1997, 2000), the formation and operation of Mycenaean palatial territories (Bennet 1990, 1998a, Bintliff 1977), the nature of Mycenaean trade (Duhoux 1988; Palaima 1991; Olivier 1996–97), the operation of specialized Mycenaean industries (R. Palmer 1994; Shelmerdine 1985), the nature and location of

religious rituals (Hägg 1997), the whole apparatus and organization of economic administration (including the important nonliterate sphragistic component), and the methods used to identify cultural components within the Greek mainland and Cretan archaeological record (the old Minoan vs. Mycenaean dichotomy in areas such as religion and political organization and even in the history of the site of Knossos and its relationship to other sites in the Minoan neo-palatial and Mycenaean palatial period).

There are ramifications in a number of other area and related fields; these include:

- Indo-European questions relating to language and ethnic identity, religion, and political and social institutions (Renfrew 1998; Burkert 1997; Palaima 1995a)
- Archaeology and texts, regional geography, and reassessment of the function of the Mycenaean palatial complex (Bintliff 1977; Shelmerdine and Palaima 1984a, 1984b; Bennet 1988, 1990, 1998a, 1998b; Galaty and Parkinson 1999; Palaima 2000a)
- Sphragistics (the comparative study of clay sealing devices as used within administrative and economic systems in ancient Aegean, Near Eastern, Mesopotamian, and Egyptian civilizations, especially cross-cultural and systems-oriented analyses with broad implications for economic matters and social and political organization) (see Weingarten 1986, 1988; Palaima 1987, 1990, 2000; R. Palmer 1994; Ferioli et al. 1994; Ferioli, Fiandra, and Fissore 1996; Hallager 1996; Pini 1997; and Perna 1998)
- Mycenaean “dialects” and their implications for the structure of Mycenaean society (archaeologically invisible with implications for the relationship between the palatial centers and outlying communities and districts) and also for major archaeological questions like the “Dorian invasion” (Risch 1966, 1979; Chadwick 1976a; Duhoux 1994–95; Varias 1994–95; Thompson 1996–97; Palaima 2002)
- Palatially organized commensal banqueting ceremonies and their significance for reinforcing social unity and stratification (comparative study of sphragistics, technical terminology, relevant Linear B tablet series, palatial architecture and iconography, the artifactual record, regional geography, and anthropological and cross-cultural parallels) (see Melena 1983; Piteros, Olivier, and Melena 1990; Killen 1992, 1994, 1998, 1999a; Davis and Bennet 1999; Palaima n.d.c; Sacconi 1999; and Speciale 1999)

- Reappraisal of a key ritual document with the assistance of anthropological discussion about prestige ritual artifacts and through an understanding of the history of scholarship surrounding earlier interpretive approaches (Palaima 1999; Sacconi 1987; Wright 1995a).
- Scribal administration and archival studies (understanding the environments and procedures and purposes of the inscribed documentation and relating them to reconstructions of social, political, and economic prehistory) (see Palaima 1988, 1995b, n.d.b; Pluta 1996–97; Bennet 1985; Driessen 2000; and Driessen and MacDonald 1997)
- The exploitation of Mycenaean textual information for an understanding of the spread of cult locales that have been so far virtually unidentifiable, even through intensive regional interdisciplinary archaeological survey, and for addressing problems relating to religious continuity from the prehistoric to the historical period (Hiller 1981; Palaima n.d.d)

A major positive development has been the integration of textual scholars into conferences primarily focused on iconography or archaeology. The current workshop is a good example, as are the many Aegaeum conferences cited as the sources for the publication of many articles in the bibliography, and the kinds of cross-disciplinary workshops that have been held in the field of ancient texts (see Palaima n.d.b) or sealing systems (Palaima 1990; Ferioli et al. 1994; Ferioli, Fiandra, and Fissore 1996; and Perna 1998).

Other advances have been achieved by Spanish scholars in the field of lexicography where we now have a fairly up-to-date comprehensive lexicon and detailed studies of words relating to specific aspects of the Mycenaean world (Aura Jorro 1985, 1993; Luján 1996–97; Bernabé et al. 1990–91, 1992–93).

One important negative development, or rather nondevelopment, during this period is that no comprehensive study of the Linear B documents on the scale of Ventris and Chadwick 1956 and 1973 has made up-to-date information about the general evidence in the tablets readily available to nonspecialist scholars. The last collaborative state-of-the-art survey was by Davies and Duhoux (1985), which for our purposes is noteworthy for its comprehensive survey of textual evidence for the Mycenaean economy (Killen 1985), its convincing demonstration that particular Homeric verses predate the earliest Linear B texts (Ruijgh 1985), and its cursory treatment of small-scale topics in Mycenaean religion.

The failure to produce a serious new source volume for the Linear B evidence is due partly to the fact that the techniques of interpretation have become so sophisticated and the questions asked of the tablets so complicated that work on a single tablet, a single tablet series, or a single technical

term, if done correctly (for example, Del Frio 1996–97), can now take years to complete satisfactorily. There is also a tendency among Mycenological scholars not to review comprehensively the history of scholarship on related topics, so that underlying assumptions are perpetuated and problems and questions ignored because they are considered resolved. Moreover, we have had periodic discoveries of new tablets. Delays, however justifiable or unavoidable, in the publication of these new tablets create a disincentive for Mycenological scholars to bring specialized studies to completion, if they know that data relevant to their topics are contained in the new inscriptions.

Palaima (n.d.c) restudies the Ta series in the context of commensal ceremonies, administrative *realia*, and an exhaustive review of pertinent scholarship. Palaima (1999) interprets Tn 316 in its archival, ceremonial, and social contexts, and traces the history of scholarship back to observations made in an unpublished letter by Michael Ventris prededecipherment. Each is a good example of technical, yet combinatory, scholarship that is ensconced or soon to be ensconced in the specialist literature. Each represents about four years of intensive, albeit sometimes intermittent, work and even longer background periods while looking at specific side topics impinging upon the proper interpretation of such texts. Some of these side topics were identified by pursuing the neglected area of the history of scholarship, whereby it has been possible to identify assumptions and even forgotten side avenues that have steered scholarly interpretation along particular paths. Recall the probable misidentification, or at least ill-reasoned identification, of fundamental Linear B ideograms for grain, cited above, as another good example of how potentially “false” ideas can be perpetuated uncritically.

Specialized publications (for example, Palaima 1998) can have serious ramifications for the general interpretation of key texts of interest to archaeologists, anthropologists, and specialists in the history of culture. But they risk being virtually inaccessible to such scholars, if the results do not make their way into readily accessible and up-to-date handbooks. We should note that the problem is exacerbated by “mainstream” journals in archaeology, history, or philology not providing any room for technical articles in subdisciplines like Mycenology, papyrology, or epigraphy.

Nonspecialists wanting to exploit the evidence of the Linear B texts are now working with a “bible” (Ventris and Chadwick 1973) that has an interpretive outlook on the documents set in the early 1950s. At that time, understanding of the Linear B material was primitive. Ventris and Chadwick did not have available the results now achieved by refinements and advances in paleographical, pinacological, linguistic, dialectal, and archival studies, and by the vast array of new approaches and newly posed questions derived from the fields of archaeology and anthropology.

The second edition of the Mycenaean “bible” is nearly a full scholarly generation old. It is a partial updating that, of course, does not take into account any of the significant new tablet discoveries at Thebes, Tiryns, Midea, Khania, Pylos, and Knossos during the last three decades. Chadwick (1976b) is now outdated and presents the interpretive views of a scholar who did not have deep interests in archaeological or anthropological data, theories, and questions. Hiller and Panagl (1976), of the same date, is a solid, condensed overview. The most advanced, concise thematic overview that incorporates discussion of new texts and the latest interpretive theories is by Ruipérez and Melena (1996), an update of their popular handbook (Ruipepérez and Melena 1990). But it focuses on fewer than 100 Linear B texts of the approximately 5000 we now possess. Ventrís and Chadwick (1973) covers only about 400.

The hyper-technicality of the field and the proliferation of specialist publications devoted to problems in sub-areas of research within the field of Mycenology often make the tracking of scholarship problematical for archaeologists and general prehistorians. There are now three volumes of a specialist Polish periodical devoted to Mycenology (Sharypkin et al. 2000–01). The annotated analytical bibliography for the field, entitled *Studies in Mycenaean Inscriptions and Dialect* (SMID), suspended publication in 1978. It has now been revived by the Program in Aegean Scripts and Prehistory (PASP) at the University of Texas at Austin. Volumes for 1978–83 and 1994–99 have appeared. The volume for 1984–85 is almost set for publication. An on-line version of an integrated database for the new volumes will become available when our limited technical resources are sufficient to keep it up and on-line. But there are constant worries about sustainability, given the resources and person-hours of specialized technical research that go into producing a single volume of a resource like SMID.

Sustainability is also a chief concern for graduate programs that conduct research and train new scholars. The field has lost solid footing in some countries as senior scholars have retired and not been replaced at their universities, or as research centers have gradually shifted focus. This is true even of the general field of Aegean prehistory. In Palaima (n.d.e) I cited Sweden as an example of a country in which what appeared to be a well-established tradition of research in Aegean prehistory has collapsed. It spanned nearly the entire century and included major field excavators and excavations, major specialist scholars (in Mycenaean pottery, Minoan and Mycenaean religion, Linear B prosopography, onomastics, and grammar), scholarly symposia and colloquia in Sweden and at the Swedish Archaeological Institute in Athens, a major monograph series (*Studies in Mediterranean Archaeology*) and for a brief period a main philological journal (see *Eranos* 1952–55), and

posts for professors at three of the four major Swedish universities. There will soon be no Aegeanists occupying the chairs once held by such great figures as Nilsson, Persson, Furumark, Åström, and Hägg at the Universities of Lund, Göteborg, and Uppsala; and minor posts have also disappeared.

It might also appear shocking to outsiders—or even to insiders who have remained obtuse to the “corporatization” of universities worldwide—that Cambridge University made a first choice to have no scholar in a permanent position who has a primary research focus on Mycenology and could sustain the pioneering tradition of John Chadwick and John Killen. This situation has rectified itself, as it were accidentally, with an unexpected resignation and the appointment of Rupert Thompson. Likewise in the United States, Harvard University, Bryn Mawr College, and the University of Wisconsin have not sustained the traditions that could have developed from eminent scholars (and related programmatic resources) such as Emily Vermeule, Mabel Lang, and Emmett L. Bennett, Jr. Each of these scholars represented a range of approaches to Aegean prehistory coordinated with other subjects. Vermeule was a prodigious and wide-ranging intellect adept at addressing archaeological, art historical, and general cultural problems in prehistory while paying fair attention to textual evidence. Lang did the primary work of editing Linear B tablets from Pylos in the 1950s and early 1960s and taught Linear B at Bryn Mawr throughout a long career during which she produced major studies of the Pylos frescoes, historical-period graffiti and *dipinti* from the Athenian Agora, and the classical historian Herodotus. Emmett Bennett, of course, was the leading Mycenaean epigrapher and a brilliant scholar of the history of writing per se. The noncontinuation of their Aegean prehistorical components is part of a worrisome general pattern of declining support for the humanities in general and particularly for specialized subfields within the humanities.

There have been some pockets of growth as scholars of the caliber of J. Bennet, Driessen, R. Palmer, Shelmerdine, and Varias have obtained good permanent posts. The Eleventh International Mycenological Colloquium met in Austin, Texas, on May 7–13, 2000, sponsored by PASP. In attendance were approximately seventy junior and senior participants who gave and discussed fifty-eight papers that covered a broad range of topics.³ There were more young scholars presenting papers in Austin and a much larger number of auditors than at the previous three colloquia.

There is then reason for guarded optimism about future integrative results from research in the fields of Mycenology, archaeology, and anthropology, and for an expectation of the normal course of lurching progress in areas where archaeologists, anthropologists, and textual scholars can talk across divides that are no longer so great. In some cases, the conversations

are being held at last within single human minds and psyches, or among scholars who have become used to collaborating with one another as teammates on opposite sides of traditional disciplinary boundaries. To cite one good example of a healthy trend, Van Alfen (1996–97) proposes a sound interpretation for the painted Linear B inscriptions on a limited number of Mycenaean stirrup jars. The author was able to use his extensive knowledge of Aegean and extra-Aegean trade and nautical archaeology in both the prehistoric and historical periods and considerable understanding of numismatics, sphragistics, literacy, and “closed systems” of economic marking. He has completed a dissertation on “trade and economic interaction between the Levant and Aegean during the Persian Period.” His research is likely to remain cross-cultural and interdisciplinary. It will certainly extend across the divide between history and prehistory in a way that will inform specialists in either period.

There is also good reason to hope that synthetic volumes will continue to appear, especially given the changing mandates of university presses that are reluctant to publish specialist studies purely in narrow areas of archaeology or textual studies. As mentioned, there have also been considerable new discoveries of texts in the last decade and vastly improved editions of extant texts. These lie outside the scope of this paper.

I shall close by sounding a further optimistic note relating to two areas treated at length above: Homeric studies and history of religion. Bennet (1997) provides a fine progress report on the current status of our understanding of how the Homeric poems relate to the archaeological record and to the development of Greek society from the Bronze Age into the Iron Age. His survey ably exploits recent work with the Linear B texts, the linguistic reconstruction and dating of Homeric verse, and our understanding of different cultural periods based on archaeological and anthropological data and methods. Cook and Palaima (n.d.) will be reinvestigating the “historicity” of the Homeric vision of Nestor’s Pylos using modern literary and narrative analysis and our contemporary understanding of the transition to the Greek Iron Age and of the Mycenaean textual, archaeological, and iconographical evidence for cult practice. Likewise, there are non-Mycenological scholars of the history of religion who are attuned to the Mycenaean evidence and are able to use it judiciously (Burkert 1985; Schachter 1981, 1986, 1994; Hägg 1997a; Gulizio, Palaima, and Pluta 2001).

In sum, I think we have reached the stage where Mycenological specialists rarely will work as if hermetically sealed within their specialties. The greater challenge seems to me to ensure that there are enough specialists and enough support for specialists to do the highly technical work in Mycenology that provides us with secure data for addressing larger questions and issues of

interest to archaeologists, anthropologists, prehistorians, and Mycenologists. For example, someone has to continue to be interested in such questions as whether new Linear B tablets from Khania are paleographically identical to or just similar to Knossian tablets (Palaima 1992–93; Olivier 1996; Driessen 2000:110–112). This kind of question, though argued on a very technical level, has serious implications for more general reconstructions of Aegean prehistory. Without at least three experts worldwide willing to take on such detailed questions and to disagree with one another openly and politely, the field will make only illusory progress, and we run the risk of constructing the kinds of houses of cards that long have plagued the study of Minoan Linear A. Again, I stress that it was healthy for the field in the 1950s through the 1970s to have Chadwick and Palmer producing radically different interpretations of virtually the same data.

Mycenological interpretations of the textual “evidence” emanating unchecked from even the most rigorous single scholarly minds well might introduce a factor of error that will contaminate the work of archaeologists who resort to the Linear B tablets for help in their reconstructions of the late Greek Bronze Age. I hope we can make sure in the generation ahead that archaeologists and anthropologists who resort to the Linear B evidence will always have relatively convenient ways to obtain second and third opinions, and to get them from Mycenological scholars who speak the language and understand the methods and issues of archaeology and anthropology.

Notes

1. Pinacology (deriving from the Greek *pinax* or tablet) is the technical term used in Mycenaean scholarship for the study of clay documents.
2. This four-volume work includes a general synthesis of those facets of Minoan civilization that most interested Evans: cultural reconstruction; seal and fresco iconography; inscribed materials, religion, and ritual; and the use of architectural space within the palatial center.
3. Interested parties should consult the PASP web site for the titles of papers and subjects covered: <http://www.utexas.edu/research/pasp>.