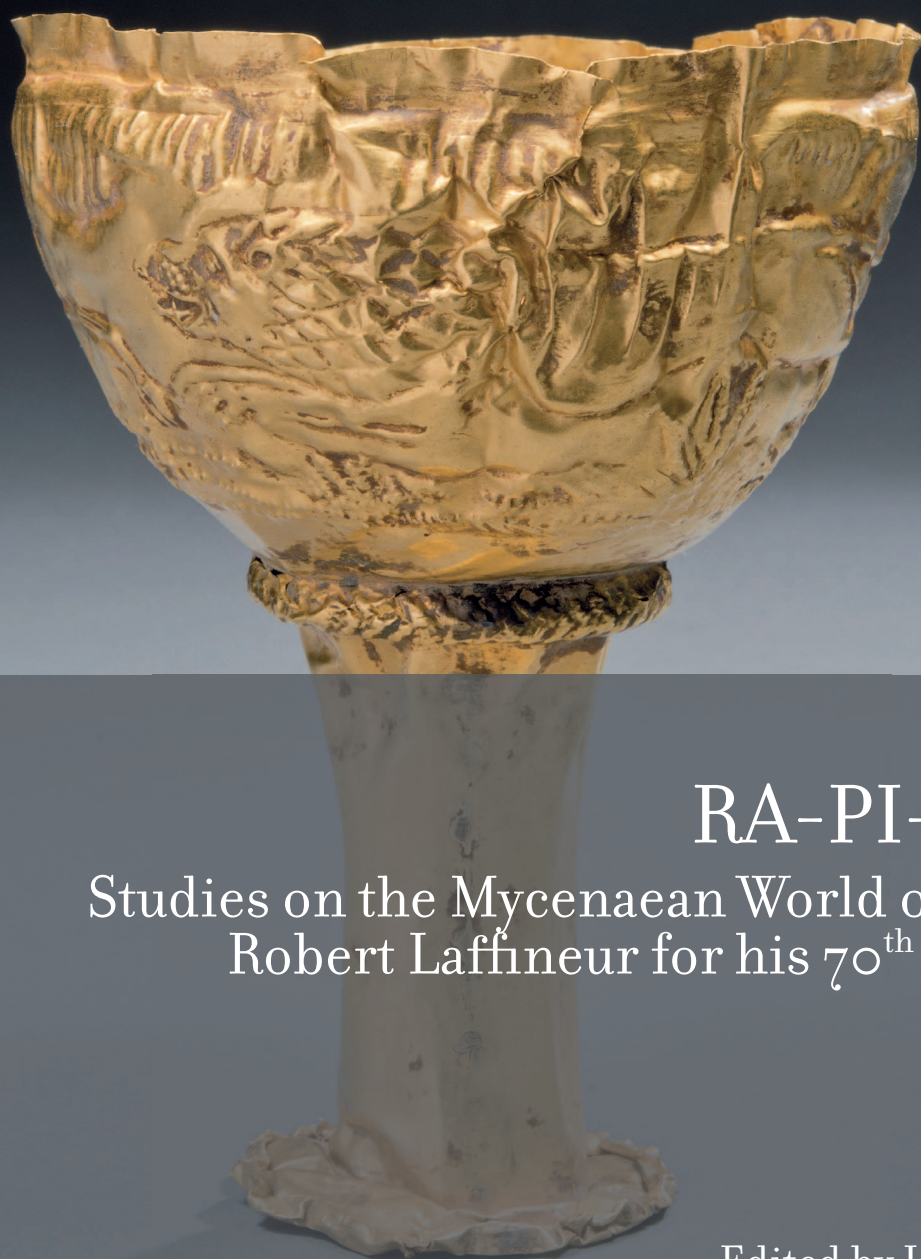


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## RA-PI-NE-U

Studies on the Mycenaean World offered to  
Robert Laffineur for his 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday

Edited by Jan Driessen

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## 14. Two Linear B Traveling Inscriptions from the University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee and the Impact of the Decipherment of Linear B on the Scholarly and Public Imagination

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Thomas G. Palaima  
Christopher M. McDonough

After nearly a quarter century (from April 23-25 1990 to April 22-25 2014) of peripatetically moving around the world and making discovery after discovery of Linear B inscriptions (and in one case a text in epichoric Euboean alphabetic script from the 7<sup>th</sup> c. BC) on a range of exotic materials and objects (including a herring, a *gaufre* or waffle, a boomerang, a cloth fragment, a conch shell and a cigar) all suited to the localities where the Aegeum conferences organised by Robert Laffineur and his Aegeanist co-conspirators have been held and all bearing inscribed texts that contained information relating thaumaturgically to the themes, papers and persons who organised and attended the particular Aegeum conferences (Palaima 2012: 807; 2014; 2016), Tom Palaima is happy to cooperate here with Christopher McDonough. McDonough is a colleague whose interests heretofore in any aspect of Aegean prehistory are so slight and whose reputation for integrity is so formidable as to make unthinkable that he would be complicit in any Guillieronesque guile. We present here two Linear B ‘inscriptions’ of an unparalleled kind (cut and inserted in stained glass, as opposed to other Linear B texts that are inscribed on clay tablets, sealings – and in one case, perhaps decorative, on ivory – and labels, painted on ceramic vessels, and, inscribed on a stone weight; Melena 2014: 9-10 with references) from a site in the Cumberland plateau region of the state of Tennessee in the United States. We discuss how these two stained-glass inscriptions came to be in their find spots and what their cultural and artistic significance is<sup>1</sup>.

The inscriptions we present here can be dated to the 1950’s, part of a longer period (the 1950’s into the 1970’s) that we may consider the pinnacle, heyday or last gasp of privileged interest in classical Greek culture and its Aegean Bronze Age antecedents in American higher education, scholarship and cultural institutions. This period includes as a significant event the decipherment of Linear B in June 1952 by Michael Ventris. Ventris achieved the decipherment in collaboration primarily with two American scholars Alice Elizabeth Kober and Emmett L. Bennett, Jr. while working toward the decipherment (Palaima, Pope & Reilly 2000; Robinson 2002; Fox 2013;) and thereafter most closely with John Chadwick (Bendall 2003; Fox 2013: 249-251) in explicating the texts readable by means of the decipherment. Chadwick and Ventris were interpreting for a scholarly audience what the decipherment revealed about the contents of the Linear B documents. Some scholars were skeptics. Among the hard and fast skeptics, some, whether intentionally or not, were vicious and satirical (Palaima forthcoming 2017), even ‘ferocious’ (Robinson 2002: 154-156), employing what John Chadwick calls ‘a hostile tone’ (Chadwick 1967: 90-100) in laying out their doubts.

This final *floruit* includes the publication of unmatched humanistic and synthetic interpretive treatments of Aegean Bronze Age culture, its discovery and discoverers. We include here Alsop 1962, Vermeule 1964, McDonald 1967, Vermeule 1972 and the very last gasp Chadwick 1976. None of these masterful works of general erudition has been replaced in the United States by works that appeal to a broad educated or coming-to-be-educated readership interested in, familiar with and inquisitive about ancient Greek culture. This is due partly to the fact that a sizable audience with

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<sup>1</sup> We thank José L. Melena, Caolán Mac An Aircinn, Cassandra Donnelly and Vassilis Petrakis for their help in making this article come to be.

these intellectual attributes began to cease to exist in the late 70's, eliminating the market for such works. Simultaneously what was called the new archaeology brought anthropological theory to the field of Aegean prehistory along with an emphasis on amassing and interpreting hard scientific data, and presenting it scientifically as well (Palaima 2003: 64-73). These two trends promoted a dry and unexciting style of writing up the results of archaeological fieldwork. Data-driven social scientific theory replaced narrative history in discussing who the Mycenaean Greeks were, how they came to be and where they went, all three topics being closely linked to what we could learn about them from the written records in the Linear B script.

The fact that the public appetite for books of this kind and the scholarly desire to meet that appetite at the level of these classic books disappeared by the late 70's is proved by the technically forbidding density of style of the works written to replace them (e.g. McDonald & Thomas 1990; Dickinson 1994). McDonald & Thomas (1990), an updated and expanded second edition of McDonald (1967), is schizophrenic in the aims and manner in which the results of archaeological research in the Aegean Bronze Age are presented: into the 1960's (by McDonald) and then from the late 60's to the late 80's (by Thomas).

The excitement generated by Ventris's decipherment (Ventris 1952), proclaimed the 'Everest' of decipherments of ancient scripts (Robinson 2002: 122), was fueled by other personal factors that intrigued the general public. First, the decipherment was achieved by a person of the 'town', not a person of the 'gown', and a young and attractive person at that, not even thirty years of age, with a David Niven flair, a charmingly understated wit, a soothingly intense way of speaking, and modest schoolboy mannerisms (e.g. Robinson 2002: 146; and see the photograph and listen to the audio excerpt from Ventris's BBC broadcast at: <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-22799109>).

An early film script for an eventually unproduced documentary on the decipherment bore the title 'The Boy Who Beat the Experts' explicitly for these reasons. Ventris had trained as an architect and had not finished off his classical education by attending Oxford, Cambridge or any other university (Robinson 2002: 30-31, 48). The personal story of his decipherment was made all the more melodramatic and captivating, albeit tragically so, when he died too young in an automobile accident on September 7, 1956, at the age of 34, just over four years after tentatively announcing his decipherment on the BBC.

Moreover, excavation at the modern site of what was identified as the 'Palace of Nestor' at Ano Englianos (= Bronze Age Pylos), restarted in 1952 after the single pre-war excavation season in 1939 that brought to light the central archives, was uncovering year after year more tablets and a palatial building complex that was impressive but, unlike Knossos on Crete, comprehensible in its size, scale and state of preservation in the period that was its acme (LH III B 1300-1200 BC). Its excavator Carl Blegen published yearly reports in a timely way. He also early on engaged Piet de Jong, the long-established (since 1922 and his work then for Sir Arthur Evans) foremost talent in rendering images of what wall paintings, floors and palatial rooms in general must have looked like. De Jong produced colourful reconstructions of what was being excavated at Ano Englianos. This helped Blegen impress clearly on scholars and non-scholarly readers the significance of his finds.

It also did not hurt that education in *artes liberales* and the learning of Greek and Latin were still considered the highest attainments in undergraduate education. Most college students and many high school graduates knew who Nestor was and how he treated Telemachus, son of Odysseus, in *Odyssey* book 3. Blegen therefore could represent that what his team was doing was revealing the palatial centre where Nestor once ruled (McDonald 1967: 239) and where he treated Telemachus to a fine state banquet (Alsop 1962; 1964: 45-77). Moreover, the tablets of the Ta-series, discovered in the very year of the decipherment, were seen to be recording the furniture, pottery, utensils and instruments for a sacrificial feast among the elites of a Bronze Age community (Palaima 2004). Blegen's words are so suffused with Homeric myth that they serve to convey the full force of what captivated classically educated scholars and their reading public of this period about research in the Aegean Bronze Age (Blegen & Kourouniotes 1939: 576):

Through the whole body of Hellenic tradition relating to the Heroic Age a single dynasty of rulers is accredited with the overlordship of southwestern Greece, and the most famous king of the Neleid line,

sage Nestor, is a peer and equal among the Achaean leaders at Troy. Though presumably represented by subordinate chieftains in his many towns, so far as the literary records tell, he clearly had no rival of like standing anywhere in his district. His royal residence might then confidently be envisaged as a palace, built on a scale commensurate with that of the abodes of the other Achaean kings, including Menelaos and even Agamemnon himself. It is just such a palace that has now been discovered at Ano Englianos, the chief citadel of Western Messenia in Mycenaean times.... We venture therefore, without hesitation, even in these early phases of our investigation, to identify the newly found palace at Ano Englianos as the home of King Nestor, the Sandy Pylos of Homer and tradition.

It is in this cultural milieu of young men being taught to be gentlemen and being imbued with, thinking thoughts about and derived from, and posing questions about Greek and Latin literature and Greek and Roman culture that two images of genuine inscriptions in the Linear B script made their way from Exeter, England to Sewanee, Tennessee and specifically to the All Saints' Chapel of the University of the South sometime between 1952 and 1960, probably after 1956 (see discussion of Matz 1956a or 1956b as a *terminus post quem* source below).

The University of the South was conceived in July 1856 in a letter sent out by Episcopalian bishop, and later confederate General, Leonidas Polk – note his distinguished classical name. Its cornerstone was laid on October 10, 1860, six months before the outbreak of the American Civil War. The war much delayed the original plans and “took the lives of Bishop Polk and other friends of Sewanee and wrecked the fortunes of most of those who survived” (Anonymous 1961: 15).

The history of the institution is told in scenes in stained glass in the narthex of the chapel, originally begun in 1904 and significantly enlarged to commemorate the University's centennial in the 1950's. Symbols and brief inscriptions accompany the glass images. Taken together, these embody and emphasise the aspirations and inspirations of its founders, leaders, professors and students. For example, atop four main windows are small seals symbolising the influences that guided and shaped the institution: “The University of North Carolina and the Confederate States of America in the first window; over the second window, Oxford and Cambridge, representing the academic tradition upon which the university was re-founded after the civil war; over the third window, a symbol of the classical tradition of ancient Greece and Rome, and of the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church; and over the fourth, the seals of Sewanee Military Academy and of West Point, representing the tradition of military service” (Anonymous 1961: 16). This worldview, similar to Carl Blegen's, finds room even for Linear B.

Along the two ambulatories of the chapel are lancet windows of stained glass<sup>2</sup>. The original intention was to depict the various departments as the college was then constituted, each with its own saint. This was done for Music (St. Cecilia), Civil Engineering (St. Swithin), and Greek (St. Clement of Alexandria). The lancet window for the department of Greek, according to the college archives and the inscription in a kind of wreathed roundel in the very bottom section of the window, was erected in memory of Matthew Nevill Joyner, an Episcopal missionary to the Sioux, who died in 1952. The entire window is now situated above a stone plaque, added later, dedicated to a beloved Sewanee classics professor, named Bayly Turlington (1919-1977), who taught there from 1950-1977. On his plaque we read in classical Greek: οὐ τὸ ζῆν περὶ πλείστου ποιητέον ἀλλὰ τὸ εὖ ζῆν, “It is not living that is to be made of most value, but living well”, a quotation from Plato's account of the trial and death of Socrates, to whose life and works Turlington had written a fine introduction (McDonough forthcoming 2016).

<sup>2</sup> Much of our information concerning the commissioning of the St. Clement lancet window in the 1950's comes from conversation with Waring McCrady, son of then Vice-Chancellor Ned McCrady, an architect (McCrady, Ward & Strode 2008: 46): “In the early 1900's there was a dispute about the aisle windows. Ralph Adams Cram, the first architect, wanted none at all, as he advocated the mystic effect of dark churches with light filtering down from on high. Sewaneeites, lovers of nature, wanted to see trees. The resulting reluctant compromise allowed twenty-four vertical slits (approximately six feet tall) in the side aisles, and for fifty years they had plain, clear glass. When the stained glass began to be installed in the 1950's, the argument resurfaced: deep, rich colors, or lots of light? The Vice-Chancellor wanted one, the Chancellor another. ... [The] happy compromise [depicted] richly colored figures set in almost clear backgrounds”.

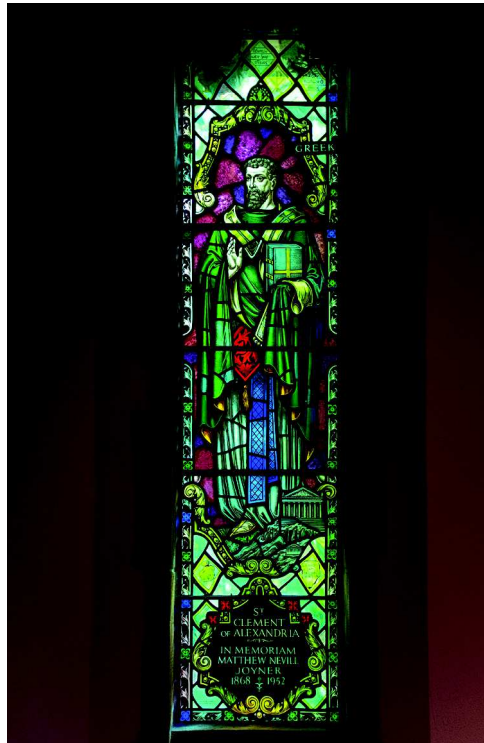


Fig. 14.1. ST. CLEMENT LANCET WINDOW, UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH, ALL SAINTS' CHAPEL, SEWANEE, TENNESSEE (PHOTO BY BUCK BUTLER, THE UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH)

The figure of St. Clement of Alexandria (Titus Flavius Clemens, *ca.* 150-220 AD) is there appropriately (**Fig. 14.1**) as a church father who expertly and eruditely bridges the gap between classical learning and the Judeo-Christian tradition into which he converted. Above the head of this figure, in the diamond-shaped section at the very top of the window, we observe an inscription from St. Clement's theological work, *Stromata* 1.5.28: πάντων μὲν γὰρ αἴτιος τῶν καλῶν ὁ θεός "For of all good things, God is the cause".

In the window, the figure of St. Clement (**Fig. 14.1**) embraces what looks like the holy scriptures in book form, its cover embossed with a gold cross. Classical Greek tradition, however, is represented at St. Clement's feet.

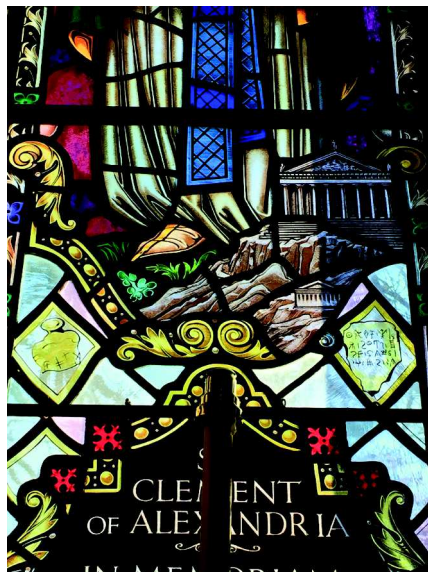


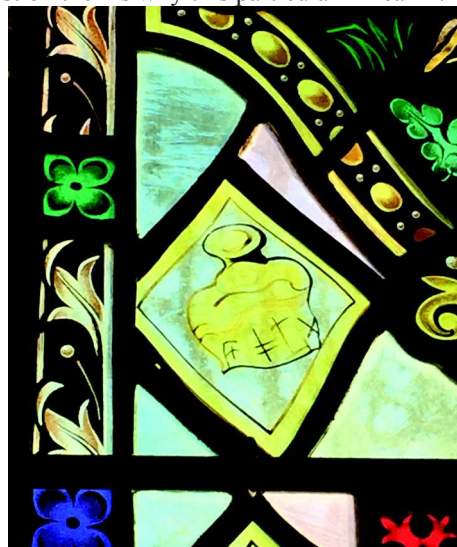
Fig. 14.2. CLOSE UP OF AREA AROUND THE FEET OF ST. CLEMENT (PHOTO BY BUCK BUTLER, THE UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH)



There (**Fig. 14.2**) is portrayed a generic Greek temple, idealised from the Parthenon, but without any distinguishing iconographical features. It sits large and dominating atop a rock outcropping, again suggesting rather than representing the acropolis of Athens. Down below is another ‘temple-like’ building, suggestive, perhaps, of the Athenian Propylaea.

More surprising still is to find antithetically arranged in the diamond-patterned glass panes that make up the non-figurative portions of the window, images not of classical pottery, armaments or inscriptions, any of which would be appropriate for the traditions of the University of the South, but two items that are clear Linear B inscriptions (**Fig. 14.2**). Our questions are: (1) who chose these particular images and why? and (2) from what archetypes were they rendered?

The window itself was executed by Arthur Frederick Erridge of J. Wippell & Co. in Exeter, UK. He was in correspondence with the American architect Edward McCrady, who was also then Vice-Chancellor of the University of the South. It is also possible that Professor Turlington, who took up his teaching of classics there in 1950, was in on planning the design. It is understandable that Linear B would enter in here, given what the image of St. Clement is trying to convey: a continuous stream of western knowledge about the nature of human beings in the world and in relation to the divine sphere from the earliest readable written texts – in the 1950’s spectacularly discovered to be Late Bronze Age writing on clay in an early form of Greek – through the Greek authors of the Archaic, Classical and Hellenistic periods and on down to St. Clement in Roman imperial times. He is the bridge to Christian writings. Our next question then is why this particular Linear B.



**Fig. 14.3.** CLOSE UP OF THE INSCRIBED STIRRUP JAR IN LEFT DIAMOND-SHAPED SECTION OF THE SEWANE LANCET WINDOW (PHOTO BY BUCK BUTLER, THE UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH)

In the left pane is a drawing of an inscribed pottery fragment (**Fig. 14.3**), to be precise an inscribed stirrup jar from Tiryns, among those discovered in excavations there in 1909 and 1910 (Pakkanen 2014: 262). It is well rendered in the image in the stained glass. Its inscription is known as Tiryns Z 1. It was known to Sir Arthur Evans who, insofar as we can tell, did not execute a full drawing of its whole inscription. But Evans (1935: 742, fig. 725b) does include the group of four signs in his text figure of known sign sequences from Linear B writing that had so far been studied. Evans then (1935: 743, fig. 726) provides a drawn reconstruction of the entire stirrup jar, from a slightly different angle, making clear which parts are extant and which not. There he even restores the last three signs (now known to be *pa*, *ta*, and *ro* in the anthroponym *u-pa-ta-ro*) to their full forms. The first sign *u* is not visible in the drawing.

The standard first comprehensive study of the Linear-B-inscribed vases, published too late to be the source for this stained glass window (Raison 1968: 162), cites Evans (1935) as above and F. Matz (1956b: plate 113). Matz 1956a (German edition) or 1956b (French edition) is a serious pictorial overview of what we would now call Minoan and Mycenaean cultures with detailed commentaries on photos of key artifacts or excavated remains.



Fig. 14.4. PHOTOGRAPH OF TI Z 1 (AFTER MATZ 1956B: PLATE 113)

Plate 113 (Fig. 14.4) in Matz's German and French editions shows just the surviving portion of TI Z 1, but seen from the same orientation as the rendering on the Sewanee stained glass window. It undoubtedly was the archetype for the painting on the glass. The library at the University of the South does not have copies of either edition, leaving open the questions of who chose this particular inscribed vase fragment, where and when. What we do know is that the artist in Exeter did not attempt to produce a precise facsimile of the original. As with his 'Parthenon', he was content to give a generally accurate rendering of one practical example of this earliest stage of Greek writing.



Fig. 14.5. CLOSE UP OF THE INSCRIBED TABLET IN RIGHT DIAMOND-SHAPED SECTION OF THE SEWANEE LANCET WINDOW (PHOTO BY BUCK BUTLER, THE UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH)

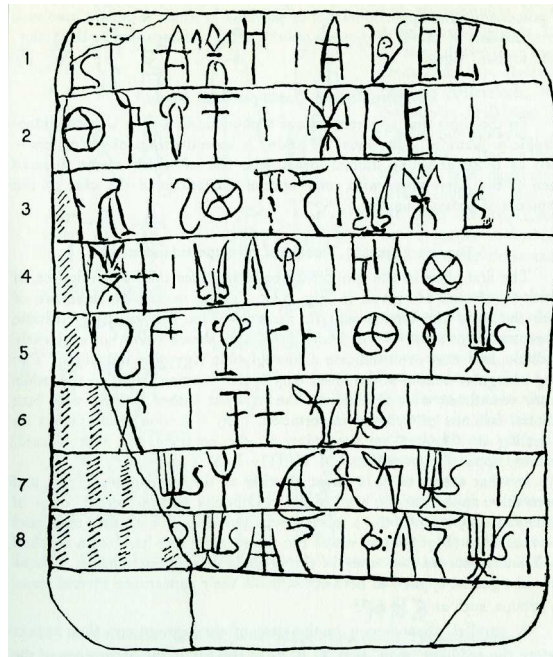


Fig. 14.6. DRAWING OF KN V 831 (AFTER EVANS 1935: 699, FIG. 683)

In the right pane (**Fig. 14.5**) is a real peculiarity. It is a drawing of, or rather based on, a Knossos tablet we now identify as V 831. A drawing and discussion of this tablet is found in Evans (1935: 699, fig. 683) (**Fig. 14.6**) reasonably close in this volume to his drawing and discussion of TI Z 1 (Evans 1935: 742-743). The tablet is not represented in Matz (1956a or 1956b). The source for the painter of the stained glass window might be the magisterial *Palace of Minos*, which is much more likely to have been acquired by libraries at institutions of learning, since it was the fundamental work on what was then conceived of as the earliest high culture in western civilisation. There is indeed a copy of *Palace of Minos* in the library at the University of the South, purchased, as its bookplate indicates, in 1947. It is also possible, but less likely, that it comes from the full ‘corpus’ of the Knossos tablets (Evans 1952: fig. 826-34 drawing, plate XCV photograph).

What is peculiar is that the artist modifies the shape of tablet V 831 and even the contours of the edges where the tablet is broken off. This he does in order to fit the tablet he is painting into the narrowing diamond-shaped space on the stained glass. He then foregoes altogether any attempt to draw rule lines and render the sign sequences as they are preserved on the first eight of the nine lines of surviving text. This would have forced him to draw signs at about half the scale of the ones he did draw. Instead he picks and chooses among sign groups to produce a text of four un-ruled lines.

His line 1 consists of the first six phonograms of KN V 831 line .2 *ka-mu-ko-to* 1 *ke-ra-ja* 1 with the clearly raised sign for ‘1’ after *ka-mu-ko-to* rendered to look like a word-divider and the sign *ja* carried over to the first sign from the right on line 2 (the last sign reading left to right). His line 2 uses the first two sign groups of V 831 line .3, the first of which is only partially preserved: *pu* 1 *we-ka-di-jo* 1. The last three signs are grossly simplified on the stained glass. *ka* has a single straight internal line, instead of two elegant intersecting curved lines. *di* is drawn as if all lines fit together and with a single long vertical stroke in sharp contrast to the much more complex ‘real-life’ *di* of Hand 203 at Knossos. The artist’s line 3 combines the first sign group of V 831.5 with a rather mangled simplified version of *do* on KN V 831.8, followed by the simple *ti* that follows *do* and then *no*, again grossly simplified, with its rightmost element, its ‘thumb’, written almost as a separate sign. His line 4 begins with the upper right curved elements of the fragmentary first sign *ko* and then the following second, third and fourth signs of KN V 831.8, with the sign *jo* written like a scraggly *we*. His line 4 ends with some traces of a single sign (instead of *do* on KN



V 831.8) followed by a *ti* that is clean and straightforward, but more schematic than the curving original. A comparison of the two texts makes clear the extreme differences:

KN V 831

Sewanee chapel version

.1 ]ra-tō 1 e-ke-a 1 e-mi-ja-ta 1	.1 ]ka-mu-ko-to   ke-ra
.2 ]ka-mu-ko-to 1 ke-ra-ja 1	.2 ]-pu 1 we-ka-di-jō 1 ja
.3 ]-pu 1 we-ka-di-jō 1 ma-ke-ra 1	.3 ]-we-u 1 dō-ti-ṇō 1
.4 ]de-ro 1 ma-ti-ko 1 a-ti-ka 1	.4 ]kō-no-si-jō 1 X-ti
.5 ]-we-u 1 qa-da-ro 1 ka-sa-no 1	
.6 ]wo 1 to-ro-ki-no 1 [[tō[ ]]	
.7 ]no-re 1 wi-ri-ki-no 1 [	
.8 ]kō-no-si-jō 1 do-ti-jō-no[	
.9 ] vac. [	

Given how distorted the stained glass artist's renderings are of signs that are clearly drawn by Evans (1935: 699 and 1952: fig. 826-34), we can propose three alternative explanations. There are no doubt others.

- He was working off a rough sketch put together by someone at the University of the South who aimed not at a precise representation of the signs or the tablet, but a 'suggestive likeness' that satisfied the purpose of including the two inscriptions. They are two symbolic alphas to the omega of the holy scriptures that St. Clement embraces in his arms.
- He was not working from a drawing, but from a photograph like Evans (1952: plate XCV). Not being familiar with the Linear B signary, he picked and chose as he saw fit, once he had modified the overall shape of the tablet to fit the diamond-shaped space available to him. If so, he must have had considerable latitude to render examples of the 'earliest Greek writing' as he saw fit.
- From the start, he did not care to produce even an approximately accurate rendering of signs because he knew that he would never be held to account. He may have reasoned that whoever looked at the St. Clement image in rural Tennessee would not care. Also, the odds of professional Mycenologists ever studying and critiquing his painted signs, as we have here, were close to 1 in a googolplex. The signs were reminiscent enough of that 'old Aegean clay tablet writing' to be satisfactory to all those he imagined would be looking at his artwork, including those who commissioned the St. Clement stained glass. We might compare these two samples of artistic rendering of the first Greek writing with a more extreme form of producing what is satisfactory to potential viewers: the nonsense alphabetic writing placed on ancient Greek vases to 'identify' potter, painter or characters in painted scenes (Immerwahr 2006).

Ironically the painter of the Sewanee St. Clement window falls in with what, with a few exceptions, we think of the individuals who painted the inscribed stirrup jars in the 13<sup>th</sup> century BC. Those who wrote on the stirrup jars were not as well versed in the niceties of script as were the full-time 'professional tablet-writers'. The stirrup jar painters used writing as part of a practical economic process, in order to keep track of who was responsible in different production locales for individual batches of transport oil vessels (van Alfen 2008; Palaima 2011: 116-121). Neither the Mycenaean rulers who occasionally had jars designated as *wa-na-ka-te-ro*, i.e. 'in the royal sphere', nor the Christian God who was worshipped by St. Clement and by all those who have gathered in the All Saints' chapel in Sewanee since the 1950's paid much attention to the handwriting of those who served them.

Still the decision was made in the late 1950's to make the earliest writing by speakers of Greek part of the iconography celebrating our long cultural heritage. Even in their imprecision, these two images of Linear B inscriptions on a university campus in rural Tennessee and their distant manufacture in the United Kingdom point to a sustained engagement with scholarly activity by subtly displaying the 'latest thing' in ancient texts and making those texts key results of our hard-won progress into the past of human culture.

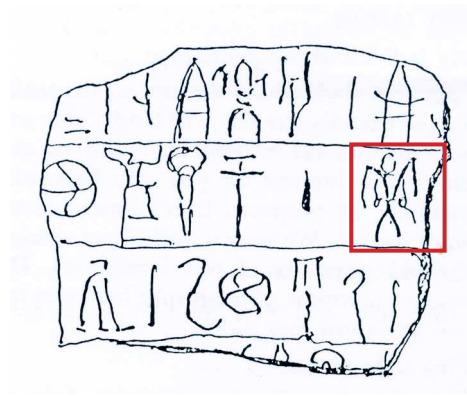


Fig. 14.7. KURT MÜLLER'S SPOOF DRAWING OF A PART OF KN V 831 AS A TABLET FIND FROM HERCULANEUM (AFTER WATERHOUSE 1986: 156)



Fig. 14.8. PHOTOGRAPH OF KN V 831, THEN IDENTIFIED SIMPLY AS LARGE TABLET WITH LINEAR SCRIPT (AFTER EVANS 1899-1900: PLATE II FACING P. 56)

## Postscript

After we submitted our contribution to the editors, we were alerted by José Luis Melena that the image of KN V 831 had been used in a similar way about fifty years before the manufacture of the Sewanee stained glass window. The evidence comes from a period when there was already concern about archaeological writing becoming too dry and scientific to reach a wider audience. Members of the British School at Athens were encouraged to “‘unbend a little’, to make their work attractive to the wider public ‘as Huxley and Tyndall did occasionally for science’” and “‘to relax (where it can with decency be done) the austere repression of their emotions’” (Waterhouse 1986: 131). An ‘archaeological take-off’ or ‘mock lecture’ (Waterhouse 1986: 132, 155) is preserved among the papers of German scholar Kurt Müller. It responded to this kind of appeal. It was used for lighter-hearted amusement at the British School of Archaeology on Odos Souidias in Athens on the winter evening of February 15, 1909.

It was discovered we have no doubt by Hartmut Döhl in preparing his biographical entry for Professor Müller in the *Deutsche Biographie* project of the *Historische Kommission der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* (for this entry cf. <https://www.deutsche-biographie.de/gnd117598364.html#ndbcontent>). Waterhouse mistakenly (1986: 155) gives his name as Hurtmuth Dohl, an error either in reading or in transcription.

In the preserved précis of Müller’s talk (Waterhouse 1986: 155-156), Müller, in what he presents as a serious scientific excavation report, claims that at Herculanum ‘a staff of 300 scholars...dugged (sic) all in the new method, without the old practices of our forefathers’. Among their finds were (1) a carved stone image of a Niobe with ‘no hairs but snakes’ and (2) a wall-painting of the same goddess that ‘ressembles (sic) some Cretan painting’ in that ‘her body is snakely’. Here he is playing on the already publicly famous faience statuettes of bare-breasted snake-goddesses that Sir Arthur Evans had found in the Temple Repositories at Knossos.

Müller further claims that, while they were still confused as to the identity of the deity to whom the temple was dedicated, ‘[f]ortunately we found in the sanctuary a written clay tablet’. He says that it is inscribed with what he calls pictographs representing Herakles, founder of Herculanum, ‘sitting on his throne with the sacred tree and pillar’.

The drawn image (**Fig. 14.7**) is a section taken from the very upper left portion (lines .1-.3) of the image of KN V 831 (**Fig. 14.8**) published by Evans (1899-1900: plate II facing p. 56) in the first of his annual Knossos excavation reports. We assume the drawing is Müller’s, given the liberty taken with the overall tablet inscription and small errors in sign forms of the kind that would be uncharacteristic of the near-sighted Sir Arthur who by inclination and training was very good at studying and drawing representations of small archaeological artefacts: coins, seals and seal impressions, tablets, pottery fragments. Müller draws the tablet as if it is a fragment broken at the right and below. He executes the signs reasonably well. He leaves off – because they are not so visible in the published photograph – the upper-left vertical and top horizontal strokes of the sign *jo* immediately before the vertical word-divider stroke at the end of line .3. Compare this sign in his drawing (**Fig. 14.7**) with the same sign in the photograph from which he was probably working (**Fig. 14.8**).

In his drawing, Müller intentionally embellishes the *ke* that is the last preserved sign on line .2 of his mock fragment (highlighted in the red rectangle in **Fig. 14.7**). He makes the sign resemble a man with some kind of formidable shoulder appurtenance. His arms are rendered as hanging at his side. His left hand would seem to hold something like the club that is Herakles’ all-purpose weapon.

Since Döhl submitted his biographical entry on Müller in 1997, it is virtually certain that this take-off on V 831 had no bearing on the design and execution of the Linear B tablet on the Sewanee window. It is, however, another indication of the impact that the discovery of inscriptions in the Aegean scripts had on scholars and the general public. It also suggests that, for all his inspirational trail-blazing, RA-PI-NE-U was not the first figure to inspire take-off texts and spoof interpretations thereof for scholarly amusement.



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## The content

This volume, in honour of one of the Odysseuses in Aegean archaeology, Professor Robert Laffineur, comprises a combination of papers presented during a seminar series on recent developments in Mycenaean archaeology at the Université de Louvain during the academic year 2015-2016. These were organised within the frame of the ARC13/18-049 (concerted research action) 'A World in Crisis?' To these are added a series of papers by friends of Robert Laffineur who were keen to offer a contribution to honour him foremost as a friend and scholar in his own right but also as editor of a respected international series founded by him – *Aegaeum* – and as the driving force and inspiration behind the biannual Aegean meetings that have travelled the world. Several papers within touch scientific domains close to Robert's heart while others present new excavations or new interpretations of known data.

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