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ΑΝΑΤΥΠΟΝ
ΕΚ ΤΟΥ Α' ΤΟΜΟΥ

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Nearly 4300 tablets inscribed in Linear B have been uncovered by archaeological excavation at Knossos in Crete and at Pylos, Mycenae, Thebes and Tiryns on mainland Greece¹. Our understanding of the organizational systems used by Mycenaean scribes naturally depends on the study of these finds. During the academic year 1979-80 with the kind permission of the Greek Archaeological Service and the helpful cooperation of the director of the Prehistoric Collection and the staff of the National Archaeological Museum in Athens, I was able to study carefully each of the over 1200 tablets and fragments of tablets from the site of Ano Englianos near modern Pylos in the southwest Peloponnese². In this paper I shall present some results of my research. I shall survey relevant evidence from the five Mycenaean sites in order to illustrate the unique aspects of scribal organization at Pylos³.

First, let me explain how such a study proceeds. There are two funda-

1. I shall use the following standard abbreviations: KT IV: J. Chadwick, J.T. Killen, J.-P. Olivier, eds., *The Knossos Tablets*, 4th ed.;

Les Scribes: J.-P. Olivier, *Les Scribes de Cnossos*, *Incunabula Graeca* 17;

MT II: E.L. Bennett, ed., *The Mycenae Tablets II*, *Trans. Amer. Philosoph. Soc.* NS 48:1;

MT III: J. Chadwick, ed., *The Mycenae Tablets III*, *Trans. Amer. Philosoph. Soc.* NS 52:7;

Palace of Nestor: C.W. Blegen, M. Rawson, *The Palace of Nestor in Western Messenia*, Vol. I, part 1;

TT I: J. Chadwick, «Linear B Tablets from Thebes», *Minos* 10 (1968) 115-137;

TT II: J. Chadwick, Th. Spyropoulos, *The Thebes Tablets II*, *Minos Suppl.* 4.

2. I wish also to thank the Fulbright Foundation for a full grant and the Archaeological Institute of America for the Harriet Pomerance fellowship. These made study of the texts over so necessarily long a time financially possible.

3. The full results of my research are at this stage complete in the form of a Ph. D. dissertation, «The Scribes of Pylos» (University of Wisconsin, 1980).

mental requirements. First, one must know precisely where the tablets come from¹. Second, one must be able to identify the work of individual scribes. Fortunately both of these requirements are fulfilled in the case of the tablets from Pylos.

Because of the extreme care taken during the joint Greek-American excavation of the site from 1939-1962, we know the exact provenience of almost all of the 1200 tablets and fragments². Referring to the final key plan of the site (fig.1), one can identify the different units that make up the palace's record-keeping system. Rooms 7 and 8, conveniently located at the entrance of the palace³, functioned as the central storage area for tablets. 79% of the tablets come from this pair of rooms. The most important records were stored here, whether one defines importance by contents (records of land-holdings, lists of military personnel, records of costly offerings to deities) or by administrative category (summations, compilations, revisions). We have evidence here of a scribal supervisor who edited, summarized and filed tablets⁴. He is the archivist who controlled the work of the eighteen securely identified scribes found here⁵. His tablets are found only in the archives complex.

In other areas we have what should technically be called «deposits» of tablets. By deposits I mean tablets that are associated with work done or materials stored in the areas where the tablets were found. These are primarily short, leaf-shaped tablets that record single transactions. Their administrative purpose is generally confined to the areas where they were found⁶.

From the NE workshop (rooms 95 and 99) come tablets dealing with leather and bronze work⁷. From the oil storerooms (rooms 23 and 24) we

1. It is essential to study the tablets in relation to their place of discovery, a principle formulated for the study of clay tablet archives by G. G o o s s e n s, *RAssyr* 46 (1952) 98-107. See E r n s t P o s n e r, *Archives in the Ancient World* (Cambridge, 1972) 15.

2. The find-spots of the tablets are treated by B e n n e t t, *Mycenaean Studies* (Madison, 1964) 241-252, and A. S a c c o n i, *SMEA* 2 (1967) 94-102.

3. G o o s s e n s, 103, emphasizes the location of archives at places of easy access, e.g., at an entrance, along a main corridor, or off a central court.

4. I dealt with the work of this scribal supervisor in a paper presented at the 1979 annual meeting of the Archaeological Institute of America. For an abstract see *AJA* 84 (1980) 226. See now «The Scribes of Pylos», 19-50.

5. «The Scribes of Pylos», 162.

6. O l i v i e r, *Les Scribes*, 8 note 4, first applied the distinction between archives and deposits to the study of Linear B documents.

7. For descriptions of activity in the NE Workshop see M. L a n g, *AJA* 62 (1958) 191; *Palace of Nestor*, 299 and 321.

have tablets by three different scribes recording individual allotments of oil. Other rooms where oil tablets were found (rooms 32, 38 and 43) likewise contained vases for the storage or transport of oil¹. In the throne room complex (rooms 5 and 6) were found tablets dealing with textile work and textiles workers. These tablets had fallen from rooms on the upper floor². Finally, a group of tablets was found along the SW slope. These tablets were associated with work done in the SW building³.

For the Archives Complex proper we have exact records of the location of tablets within 10 cm⁴. Tablets were originally stored on shelves or on the low clay bench of room 8. Tablets with related information were stored together and, consequently, often fell together in a specific area when the walls of the palace were destroyed⁵. Filing labels, like Wa 114 which was written by the archivist, are often found together with such groups of tablets. Wa 114 has on its front (fig. 2a) a brief description of the set of tablets with which it was found: monthly rations (me-ni-jo) for the women (ideogram) in the Further Province (pe-ra₃-ko-ra-i-ja). On its back (fig. 2b) one can see the marks of the wicker basket in which the tablets were stored.

So much for the location of tablets. Now let us consider how one identifies the work of a scribe⁶. The chief criterion is the style of writing. Signs in Linear B are complex. The order of strokes, the shape of strokes, and the number and position of strokes that make up any sign may differ from scribe to scribe. Figure 3 gives clear examples of significant differences in the writing styles of several scribes at Pylos (Hands 1, 21, 34, 41).

Other factors can support stylistic identification. Scribes sometimes spell the same word differently. For example, Hand 21 writes me-re-ti-ra₂ using the sign ra₂=rja, while Hand 1 and Hand 4 both write me-re-ti-ri-ja. This occurs on tablets dealing with the same groups of women (Aa 62, Aa 764, Ab 789), so we have a secure context by which to identify the word⁷.

1. Palace of Nestor, 134-141, 158-160, 171-173, 188-190.

2. Palace of Nestor, 81.

3. Lang, A J A 64 (1960) 160; A J A 65 (1961) 158-159; Bennett, Mycenaean Studies, 252.

4. The location of these tablets is explained in Bennett-Olivier, The Pylos Tablets Transcribed. Part II, Incunabula Graeca 59, 23-25.

5. For example, the Sa tablets of Hand 26 were found in separate groups corresponding to differences in subject matter. «The Scribes of Pylos», 99-102.

6. The criteria for distinguishing scribal hands are discussed by Bennett, MT I, 440-441, and MT II, 90. For a fuller discussion and systematization see «The Scribes of Pylos», 5-17.

7. Context is very important in deciding whether an apparent spelling «variant» is

This brings us to other corroborating features such as the shape of tablets and the format in which information is arranged on tablets. In figure 4 I place side by side a tablet (Aa 354) written by Hand 1, the archivist at Pylos, and a tablet (Ab 372) written by Hand 21, another major scribe. These tablets give related information about the same group of women. Scribes in general made their own tablets. Here we see that the tablets of the two scribes have distinctive shapes. Hand 1 cuts his tablet (Aa 354) at the right; Hand 21 does not cut Ab 372. Hand 21, though, writes smaller and along the bottom edge of his tablets. He varies the height of the signs in order to help distinguish different words. He also adds the toponym *pu-ro* (Pylos) at the beginning of his tablet. Hand 1 felt no need to do either of these things.

This then is how one identifies the work of the scribes. Now what can we say about the system of record-keeping at Pylos in comparison with those at other sites. Let us first consider the site that has yielded the most tablets in Linear B, Knossos on Crete. Scribal organization at Knossos has been studied thoroughly by Jean-Pierre Olivier. Olivier has identified recognizable departments within the palace of Knossos¹. In contrast with Pylos, the record-keeping system of the sprawling palace of Knossos was intensively specialized. The distinguishable departments worked independently. A scribe generally was trained in one department and then worked in this single department exclusively. No department can be compared with the central archives at Pylos².

At Knossos, however, Olivier faced difficulties because of the absence of exact records from the original excavations. At Pylos we know that all nineteen of the clay filing labels found come from the Archives Complex. This information in fact helps to confirm the identification of rooms 7 and 8 as an archives. Moreover, as I have mentioned, we can often link the labels with the groups of tablets that they labeled. At Knossos, however, we know the provenience of only four of thirty-four labels. And we can securely identify a scribe for only two.

Nevertheless bureau C at Knossos might possibly be a minor archives. Just as the archives at Pylos was conveniently located at the entrance of the palace, bureau C is situated along access routes to storage areas and to the

significant for the purpose of corroborating the identification of scribal hands. For spelling variations at Knossos see *Les Scribes*, 98-100; at Thebes T T II, 97. I discuss extenuating factors in «The Scribes of Pylos», 14-16.

1. See *Les Scribes*, 125-128 and 21 (plan).

2. Only bureaus C and I were not specialized and, therefore, possible archives, *Les Scribes*, 128-129, 133.

central court. As in the Pylos archives, tablets from bureau C record a wide range of subjects: men, women, children, sheep, pigs, oxen, cereal, spices, aromatics, cloth, vases, and military equipment¹. Yet one does not find any evidence for the revision and compilation of tablets. Nor does one find the large number of different writing styles that one finds in the Pylos archives.

In brief then, the larger palace at Knossos used a system of numerous specialized administrative units working independently. There is very little evidence of centralized control or of interaction between departments.

For the other sites on the mainland our knowledge is restricted by the number and types of finds. At Tiryns, Mycenae and Thebes so far only deposits of tablets have been discovered.

From Tiryns we have five tablets from scattered locations outside of the acropolis. They are all palm-leaf tablets that record simple transactions, and accordingly they have been properly identified as deposits, not archives².

At Mycenae one has seventy-one tablets from scattered locations mostly outside of the citadel proper. Many of these tablets are associated with other finds that definitely characterize the tablets as deposits. For example, Fo 101, a list of persons receiving oil, was found in Room 1 of the House of the Oil Merchant behind many oil pithoi³. Ge 602-611 deal with spices and vases; the tablets were found next to a room that contained seeds, mortar and pestle, objects that attest to work with spices in the area⁴. Sealings Wt 501-507 record names of vases. The sealings were found in a room «full of vases of various domestic kinds»⁵. In a nearby room was a pageshaped tablet containing a full record of the deliveries to which the sealings were originally attached⁶. These tablets then record work done in the houses at Mycenae. They are deposits of temporary records of no long term value. Their best parallels at Pylos are the sealings from the Wine Magazine (room 105), the tablets from the oil storage areas, and the tablets from the NE Workshop.

At Thebes we have forty-three tablets from two groups (series Of and Ug) found in separate locations. Each group deals with a specific commo-

1. Les Scribes, 125, and the list of subjects for main «124» on page 122.

2. Olivier, Godart, «Nouveaux Textes en linéaire B de Tirynthe», in Tiryns VIII, ed. Ulf Jantzen (Mainz, 1975) 37.

3. MT II, 7.

4. MT II, 12-13.

5. MT II, 11.

6. MT II, 102-105.

dity (LANA and O) and each is the work of two scribes¹. Chadwick recognized that the Ug tablets, like the oil tablets from Pylos and the tablets from Mycenae, were «local records of a particular store or workshop, rather than a section of a main archives»². The wool tablets of the Of series also come from a workshop, a wool-processing center as identified by Spyropoulos³. As at Tiryns and Mycenae, there is no evidence of a scribe working in more than one area⁴.

This survey has illustrated the striking differences between the organizational principles of the scribal system at Pylos and those of the other four sites. Pylos is unique in having a central storage area. Pylos had «deposits» of tablets as did the other sites. As at Thebes and Mycenae, these recorded transactions involving materials in workshops and storerooms. Yet it was in the conveniently located Archives Complex that most of the important tablets were found. This central focus meant that scribes at Pylos worked in a far different way than scribes at Knossos. I have mentioned the intensive specialization revealed by Olivier's study of the Knossos records. In fact only four of the forty-one principal scribes at Knossos have left traces of their work in two distinct bureaus⁵. More significantly only two of the forty-one principal scribes do not specialize in documents concerned with a particular branch of the palace's economic life⁶. But at Pylos thirteen of the twenty-five main scribes wrote tablets found in more than one bureau⁷. At least ten main scribes wrote documents that are concerned with more than one branch of the palace's economy⁸.

The Pylian system demanded that scribes be more versatile. Scribes would be assigned to work and to keep records in different areas of the palace as the need arose. More important records would then be brought to the Archives Complex where they would be stored or edited, or where their information would be used to write other documents. This central complex was under the control of one scribe, the archivist (Hand I). Hand I not only

1. For the identification of scribal hands see Godart, Saccioni, *Les Tablettes en linéaire B de Thebes, Incunabula Graeca* 71, 103. The tablets are discussed thoroughly in TT I and TT II.

2. TT I, 127.

3. TT II, 22-23. Yet the area was misleadingly called the «Archive Room».

4. MT III, 70.

5. *Les Scribes*, 134.

6. *Les Scribes*, 131-133.

7. *Hands*, 1, 2, 3, 4, 12, 13, 15, 21, 26, 34, 41, 43, 44.

8. *Hands* 1, 2, 4, 11, 21, 24, 41, 42, 43, 44. I have not included hands whose different subjects may be attached to the same phase of the palace's operation.

compiled information from the texts of other scribes and filed their texts, but he also corrected and edited their texts¹. This is unparalleled at the four other sites. At Knossos only a few tablets have definite traces of two hands. But on these tablets the entries by the two scribes are distinct and, therefore, offer no evidence of one scribe supervising the other². The only other text possibly written by two scribes is Ge 603 from the House of the Sphinxes at Mycenae³. But if the ascription to two hands is correct, we would have here the completion by one scribe of a text begun by another scribe, not actual correction or revision as at Pylos. Hand 1's work as a supervisor or archivist in the central storage area for tablets at Pylos is unparalleled. It is this type of centralized control that makes scribal organization at Pylos unique.

THOMAS G. PALAIMA

Π Ε Ρ Ι Λ Η Ψ Ι Σ

Thomas G. Palaima, 'Η οργάνωσις τῆς γραφειοκρατίας εἰς τὴν Πύλον

Οἱ πινακίδες τῆς Γραμμικῆς Γραφῆς Β πού εὑρέθησαν εἰς τὴν Κνωσσόν, Μυκήνας, Θήβας, Τίρυνθα καὶ τὴν Πύλον ἐξετάζονται ὡς πρὸς τὴν θέσιν καὶ τὴν διάταξιν εἰς τὴν ὁποίαν εὑρέθησαν.

Ἐχει ἐρευνηθῆ ὑπὸ τοῦ J.P. Olivier ἡ ὀριζόντια διάταξις ὡς πρὸς τὴν ὀργάνωσιν τοῦ γραπτοῦ ὑλικοῦ τῆς Κνωσσοῦ ἐνῶ τὸ μικρότερον εἰς μέγεθος ἀνάκτορον τῆς Πύλου ἐπέβαλε τὴν φύλαξιν αὐτοῦ ὑπὸ κεντρικὸν ἔλεγχον. Τὸ 79% τῶν πινακίδων τῆς Πύλου εὑρέθη εἰς ἰδανικὴν θέσιν χρήσεως ἐνῶ τὸ ἐκτὸς τῶν ἀρχείων ὑλικὸν εὑρέθη εἰς ἀποθήκας καὶ ἐργαστήρια καὶ ἔχει σχέσιν μὲ δοσοληψίας καὶ ἀποθηκευμένον ὑλικόν. Ἐχομεν ἐνδείξεις ὅτι ὑπῆρχε ἐπόπτης διὰ τὴν διόρθωσιν, σύνθεσιν κλπ. κειμένων πού ἐγράφησαν ἀπὸ ἄλλους γραφεῖς καὶ ἡ σχετικὴ λεπτομερὴς ἔρευνα ἀπέδειξε τὴν ὑπαρξιν ἐνὸς συγκεντρωτικοῦ συστήματος τελείως διαφόρου ἐκείνου τῆς Κνωσσοῦ μὲ τὰ ἀνεξάρτητα τμήματα.

1. «The Scribes of Pylos», 44-50.

2. See *Les Scribes*, 97. The tablets Lc 481, 483, 504, 512, 581, 7377, 7438 (formerly Og 7438) have rectos by Hand 113, versos by Hand 115. Sd 4422 by Hand 128 might have traces of Hand 131 over an erasure on the recto surface. The other cases listed in *Les Scribes* were no longer thought definite enough for even questionable designation in KT IV. For Sd 4422 KT IV notes a possible intervention by a second hand, but no longer identifies the hand as Hand 131.

3. See *Sacconi*, *Corpus delle iscrizioni in lineare B di Micene, Inclunabula Graeca* 58, 50-51.

Figure 3 Examples of Significant Sign Variations

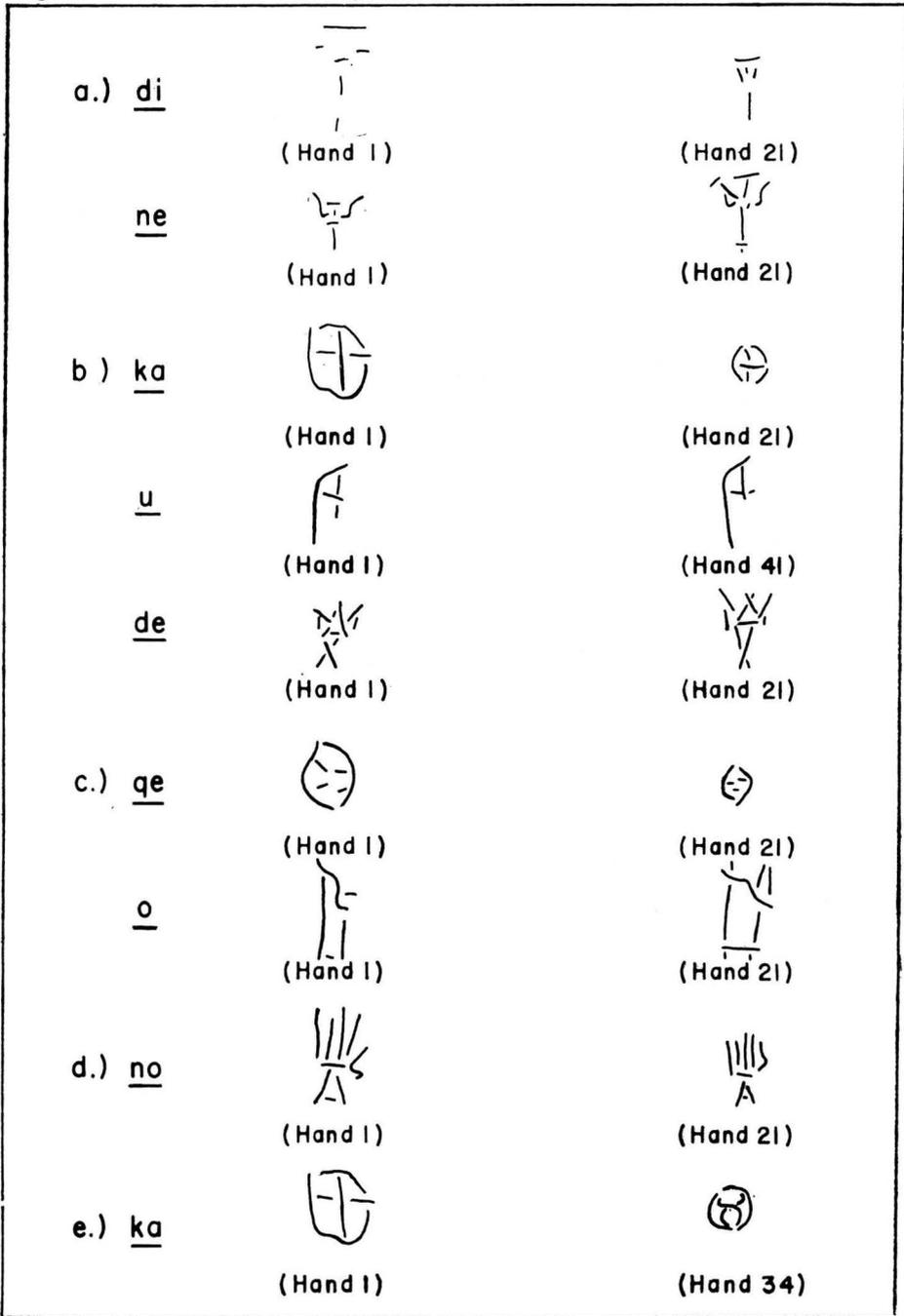
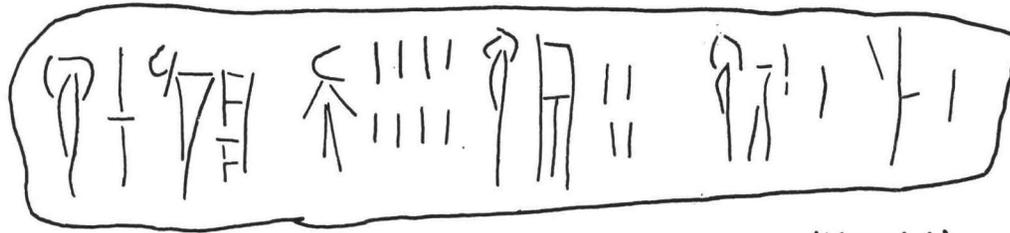
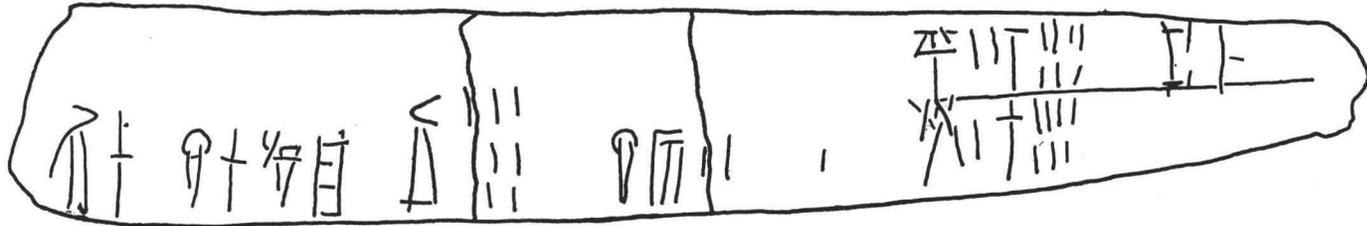


Figure 4



(Hand 1)

Aa 354



(Hand 21)

Ab 372

