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Studies in Mycenaean Texts, Language and Culture
in Honor of José Luis Melena Jiménez

Edited by

Julián Méndez Dosuna

Thomas G. Palaima

Carlos Varias García

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TA-U-RO-QO-RO: Studies in Mycenaean Texts, Language, and Culture in Honor of José Luis Melena Jiménez, edited by Julián Méndez Dosuna, Thomas G. Palaima, and Carlos Varias García

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José Luis Melena Jiménez

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'J' followed by 'Luis' and 'Jiménez' in a cursive script.

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Preface

WORKS OF SCHOLARSHIP, LIKE HUMAN LIVES, move through time and space in ways as unpredictable as the human lives to which they are attached. This Festschrift in honor of José Luis Melena is no exception. What has made the contributors persist in perfecting their papers is the unique individual whom we are honoring.

José Luis Melena is, among philologists, a unique example of wisdom, capacity for work, tenacious determination, a deep and reverent sense of the vocation of being a scholar and a concomitant recognition that it is a rare privilege to pursue scholarly truths as a life's work. Personally—and all of us contributors have felt the effects of José's personality—he is generous towards others and has an unwavering sense of humanity, despite the disappointments, frustrations, sorrows, and miseries we inevitably confront as we live out our lives. In his career life and in his home life, José has been tested as if a modern Job. As William Faulkner put it about one of his most memorable characters, it is often a signal mark of success in the lives we lead to endure and endure and endure. José has done that and done so much more for all of us and for many others with equanimity and with intelligent understanding of human weaknesses.

Born in 1946, while still an adolescent schoolboy in his native San Sebastián at the beginning of the 1960s, during one of his frequent visits to the Reading Room of the Municipal Library, he began to read with great interest a Spanish translation of *The Aegean Civilization* by Gustav Glotz: *La Civilización Egea* (1926). He remembers being captivated by drawings of the Knossos tablets, much like the decipherer of Linear B, Michael Ventris, reading Adolf Erman's *Die Hieroglyphen*. And at once he was clear about where he was going to direct a big part of his studies: the Aegean writing systems.

A few years later, he found on the shelves of the library of the Peñaflorida Institute, where he was studying for the Higher Baccalaureate, a precious book, *Diecisiete tablillas micénicas* by Manuel Fernández Galiano (1959). He read it in full, as well as all the works available about Mycenae during his high school years in

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San Sebastián. Such an early and determined sense of vocation in a recondite and complex area of scholarly inquiry that was studied by very few people in those days is very rare. In some ways it parallels the boyhood interests of Michael Ventris, who in young adulthood in the late 40's and early 50's, after his military service in World War II, virtually abandoned the career field of architecture that his mother more or less had dictated that he take up and instead worked intensively toward the decipherment of Aegean scripts, his real passion.

With characteristic intelligence and determination and Delphic self-knowledge, José Luis Melena stayed his course. It is not surprising, therefore, that, in October 1965, having just arrived in Salamanca to begin his university studies, he caught the attention of Manuel García Teijeiro, who was going to teach Mycenaean Greek, and the leading Spanish figure in the understanding of Mycenaean script and language, Martín S. Ruipérez himself. José asked specifically for the two volumes of *Scripta Minoa* (1909 and 1952) and for the run of the journal *Minos*. It was clear why José Luis Melena chose the University of Salamanca to study Classical Philology.

But staying the course was not without investigating seriously other areas of interest. Recently, José reminded us (personal communication August 3, 2021) that “my Master Thesis dealt with the taboo in Ancient Greece (1970) as a preliminary study for my [then proposed] PhD dissertation on the Homeric words for ‘strength’ which I eventually abandoned for a Mycenaean subject.” We can see how far José went down this alternative path by reading his impressive early article that merged intensive study of Indo-European and Homeric vocabulary with what has been his lifelong passion for Mycenaeanology: “El testimonio del micénico a propósito de los nombres de las distintas fuerzas en Homero,” *Emerita* 44:2 (1976): 421–436.

From the time he received his diploma (with Extraordinary Award) in 1970 to today, José Melena has done enormous and extraordinary work in virtually all the subfields that make up the field of Mycenaean studies. He has provided all kinds of help, sometimes without due recognition, to hundreds of researchers around the world, beginning with his decisive work in the edition of *Acta Mycenaea*, the proceedings of the Fifth International Colloquium of Mycenaean Studies organized by his teacher Martín S. Ruipérez in 1970. The *acta* were published as separate volumes of the journal *Minos* XI (1971) and XII (1972). This and many other tasks, which include his doctoral thesis (“Estudios sobre las inscripciones de Cnoso,” Madrid: Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, 1973) and his work on the journal *Minos: Revista de Filología Egea*, were carried out in a first stage of job instability and regular travel (Madrid, Salamanca, Canarias) until he achieved the position of Professor of Greek Philology at the University of the Basque Country, in 1983.

Mycenology would not have had the strong development that it has had throughout the world in the last fifty years without the tireless cooperative work of José Luis Melena. Among many other major scholarly duties that he performed during all this time, it is worth mentioning first and foremost the journal *Mínos*. For over four decades (1970–2011), its enormous international prestige in this field was due almost exclusively to the work of José Luis Melena, first as secretary and then as editor.

It is a pity that, for various reasons, this tribute could not appear in the journal to which José dedicated a large part of his life. We are very grateful to the Center for Hellenic Studies, especially to Gregory Nagy, Leonard Muellner, Kerri Cox Sullivan, and Jill Curry Robbins for their roles in publishing our Festschrift. We thank Charles Delattre, Roser Gómez Guiu, Jörg Weilhartner, Jared Petroll, and Zafeirios Adramerinas, who were of great help with proofing and formatting these complicated texts. Tom Palaima always thanks Garrett Bruner, PASP archivist, for locating needed materials.

José's excellent scientific production and his capacity for work and planning made it natural for José to be chosen Secretary General of the Comité International Permanent des Études Mycéniennes (CIPEM) in 1990, relieving John Chadwick. At the same time he replaced Martín S. Ruipérez as representative of Spain in CIPEM. He went well beyond working dutifully in these two key positions until he voluntarily ceded them to successors twenty years later in 2010.

The scientific prestige of José Luis Melena transcends the scope of Mycenaean and Classical Philology, as is made clear by two important external recognitions. The first is his appointment in 1987 as Cultural Attaché of the Embassy of Spain in Athens and Director of the Instituto Cultural Español Reina Sofía (now known as the Instituto Cervantes) in the Greek capital, a position from which he was ignominiously dismissed in 1990 through political machinations. The second was receiving the Euskadi Research Prize from the Basque Government in 1999.

We would like to close on a personal note beyond the expressions of gratitude that we have made, as have other contributors, in our papers and/or in the section of brief personal comments that closes this volume.

I, Carlos Varias García, would like to highlight the unparalleled kindness of José Luis Melena in guiding my doctoral thesis. In a letter written in January 1991 that I have treasured ever since receiving it, José Melena, having just recently arrived in Vitoria after enduring the shock of being removed from Athens, responded to my letter from Barcelona asking him to direct my doctoral thesis. José not only welcomed my request, at a very difficult time for him, but also proposed a change of thesis topic from one having to do with Mycenaean anthroponymy to another, the joint study of the inscriptions in Linear B of Mycenae.

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The letter contains an impeccable argument that later proved to be correct. My thesis, from beginning to end, has the stamp of José Luis Melena, and without him as director it would never have seen the light of day. Such was his continuous support and scientific direction that I received as doctoral student, despite being at a different university. José's support was just as decisive throughout my entire academic career for which I have many times heartily thanked him. Thank you, again, José.

I, Tom Palaima, consider José my second mentor, after Emmett L. Bennett, Jr. José shares with Emmett a sincere sense of the fun in working on problems having to do with the Mycenaean Greeks and the writing system that they used. I was honored that he invited me to serve first on the Comité de Redacción of *Minos* from 1986–2011; then as assistant editor and book review editor 1990–95, and finally as co-editor and book review editor 1995–2011. Working with José, our labors were no burden at all. His open-mindedness, high scholarly standards humanely applied to submissions, and his critical and truly selfless enthusiasm for new ideas were so wonderful to absorb that it is only in recent years that I have come to see how exceptional these attributes were within our field or any scholarly fields. I share fully Carlos's sense that José Melena is a generous person.

There are stories that could be told of how calmly José withstood personal professional attacks and life tragedies that would have caused most human beings to respond by becoming bitter and hateful or by despairing of life itself. I share with Carlos a deep sense of gratitude for the forty-one years now that I have known and cooperated with José. I have asked him many stupid questions. I have always gotten careful, sincere, and kind answers.

We are sure that if life circumstances permitted Julián Méndez Dosuna, who did an enormous amount of work in organizing, collecting, and editing this volume in the first years of work on it, would add reflections similar to ours. Without Julián's work, this volume would not exist. He is truly, not just alphabetically, its first editor.

We, all three of us, are proud to have José Luis Melena as a mentor, a colleague, a guiding spirit, a friend, and a fellow explorer in the often sad and sorrowful pathways of life

We thank all our fellow contributors for making this volume a thank offering worthy of a remarkable scholar and human being.

Carlos Varias García, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona
Thomas Gerard Palaima, PASP, University of Texas at Austin
Julián Méndez Dosuna, Universidad de Salamanca

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Abbreviations

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TA-U-RO-QO-RO

𐌲𐌳𐌹𐌹

Afterword

How Far We Have Come in Mycenology in Seventy Years

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“**A**PRIL IS THE CRUELLEST MONTH, BREEDING” is how T. S. Eliot draws us into his landmark poetic thoughts and feelings on the human condition after the carnage and waste, really mass butchery, that we now refer to as World War I (1914–1918). It was then so singular in its scale and impact upon human lives that it was called either “The Great War” or “The War to End All Wars.”

The second great war (1939–1945) played a significant role in the history of Mycenology. Its outbreak caused the some six hundred Pylos Linear B tablets unearthed by Carl Blegen (1887–1971) in 1939 to be hastily, but fortunately securely, stored in the vaults of the National Bank of Greece in Athens for the duration of the war. The war and the Nazi occupation of Greece also caused the closing of the Herakleion Museum on Crete, making the Knossos tablets inaccessible. The Museum opened again to the public only in 1952, tragically after the death on May 16, 1950, of Alice E. Kober (1906–1950), the greatest scholar of Aegean scripts during the first half-century of the 1900s.¹ Kober’s death impelled Emmett L. Bennett, Jr. (1918–2011) to go and study the tablets by special arrangement in the summer of 1950.²

¹ Fox 2013; Palaima 2017.

² The abridged chronology, based on the correspondence among Bennett, Blegen, Ventris, and Myres is as follows. MAY 17: letter sent to Bennett by Kober’s family informing him of her death and her wishes that he be sent her papers. MAY 20: Myres’s letter to Bennett regarding

Where readings of the Linear B tablets and analytical identification of the standard elements of the script were concerned, Bennett essentially took over Kober's role in trying to help Sir John Myres (1869–1954) produce a more scientific edition of *Scripta Minoa* II. Myres was a retired professor of ancient history, a distinguished field archaeologist, especially in Cyprus, and a champion of anthropology. Although a past Gladstone Professor of Greek, he had but a passing general interest in Aegean linear scripts before being entrusted with seeing the project begun by Sir Arthur Evans (1851–1941) through to publication, following Evans' death on July 12, 1941.³ What would become *Scripta Minoa* II was in piecemeal manuscript form when Myres inherited it.

In the end, Kober's and Bennett's help was a failure, as we can read in the correspondence of April 1952 between Bennett and Michael Ventris. Myres was driven by his loyalty to the original pre-World War II conceptions of Sir Arthur Evans, although many were woefully outdated. Myres was also constrained by the postwar economic exigencies of the Clarendon Press. The press could not afford to redo plates and sign charts—and create new script-character fonts—that it had already made for Sir Arthur's version. *Scripta Minoa* II when it appeared early in 1952 maintained the old Evans system of identification of the signs, instead of the Kober-Bennett system adopted by Ventris. It also contained what were known by Ventris and Bennett (and in some cases by Kober before them) to be misreadings of signs and mistakes in making references to tablets.

In the Herakleion Museum in July and August 1950, Bennett autopsied the tablets, making new readings and joins and also correcting inventory numbers and the like. He then had an absolute mastery of the material and generously went about making indices of all the “word” occurrences both for Knossos and for Pylos. These he shared with Michael Ventris, the eventual decipherer of Linear B, just as Bennett and Kober had swapped her knowledge of the Knossos

Kober's death and asking if Bennett knows anybody who could take her place in Greece for the summer in order to proof the Knossos tablet readings for *Scripta Minoa* II (*SM* II). MAY 29: Bennett writes Carl Blegen, quoting Myres's letter verbatim on the sudden Knossos tablets/*SM* II problem. JUNE 26: Bennett writes Blegen that he has secured funding for the trip and has booked a flight to be in London on July 8, and is in the middle of filing for a passport. JUNE 27: Bennett writes to Ventris about this trip. JUNE 27: Bennett receives word from Myres that necessary Herakleion museum resources are approved by director Nikolaos Platon and are in place for Bennett's arrival. AUGUST 12: Bennett reports to Myres in detail regarding his work on the Knossos tablets in the Herakleion Museum. AUGUST 27: Bennett writes to Myres about leaving Greece on September 3 and mentions that he has created a concordance of the Knossos tablets with improved readings.

³ Robinson 2002:44–45. On Myres's general knowledge of Linear A, Linear B, and Cretan Hieroglyphic, see Myres 1933:285–289, 300.

material and his knowledge of the Pylos material after Bennett finished his landmark dissertation in 1947.

The Second World War also redirected two of the three main figures in the story of the decipherment of Linear B, Bennett and Ventris, into military service. Michael Ventris navigated bombers in missions over Europe. He was lucky to survive—the odds of doing so and living were 50–50. Bennett went into wartime code-breaking, working with pattern analysis of intercepted Japanese messages. As we have mentioned, he finished his groundbreaking dissertation in 1947, the year in which Kober set aside her own absolutely fundamental work on the scripts in order to begin helping Sir John Myres publish Sir Arthur Evans’ *Scripta Minoa II*. When published early in 1952 with an appendix of Bennett’s new readings and improvements, the volume was seriously flawed as a scientific instrument because of many complex practical and psychological reasons alluded to above and because Kober’s end-of-life extended illness removed the positive influence she was having in bringing the text up to date (1947–1950). But its appearance in the Spring of 1952 still provided frustrating help to the two remaining lead figures in the attack on Linear B, Bennett and Ventris.

For our purposes here, the second great war also created the devastated world into which José Luis Melena was born on December 1, 1946. A reading of George Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four* or W. H. Auden’s “The Shield of Achilles” captures the atmosphere in Europe as Melena was growing up. In Spain, three great figures, Francisco R. Adrados (1922–2020), Martín S. Ruipérez (1923–2015), and Antonio Tovar (1911–1985) had firmly laid down the foundations for Spain and for José L. Melena to play leading roles in Mycenological research now for over seventy years. Tovar founded the journal *Minos* to explore the obscure scripts and languages that had fascinated him for years.⁴ And Tovar, Adrados, and Ruipérez explored the dialect makeup of Greek in historical and prehistoric times, helping to create a fervent interest in texts that would give us insight into how the Greek language looked in the second half of the second millennium BCE.⁵

As Melena wrote on July 4, 2015, notifying the Aegean-scripts scholarly world of the death of his mentor:

Martín Ruipérez was the first Spanish classicist to achieve international prominence and recognition in modern times. He opened new routes in Greek linguistics and played a crucial role in the development of Mycenaean studies. He was the editor of *Minos* from 1956 to 1981.⁶

⁴ Volume 1 appeared in 1951 with a necrology of Kober written by Bennett.

⁵ Tovar 1944; Adrados 1952; Ruipérez 1953 (1954).

⁶ At which point Melena took over active and inspirational editorship for the next thirty years.

If we turn back the clock seventy years to April of 1952, we will see that Michael Ventris in “Work Note 19” (20 March 1952)⁷ and in his personal correspondence with Bennett (18 April 1952; 26 April 1952, cf. Fig. A1a and A1b⁸) was still wedded to the idea that the main language represented in the Linear B inscriptions was somehow related to Pelasgian/Etruscan.⁹ In the letter of 26 April 1952, Ventris is using Kober’s analyses and Bennett’s indices to speculate whether variations in the shapes of particular signs are significant for their values (as when we write *c* or *ç*, *e* or *ê*). He uses Kober’s categories of sign groups and is speculating which groups are verbal forms (finite and participial). He has hunches about how endings convey gender and cases (with their corresponding grammatical functions).

In “Work Note 20” (1 June 1952), Ventris asks the question “Are the Knossos and Pylos tablets written in Greek?”¹⁰ He notified Bennett and Myres of the “decipherment” of Linear B as Greek in separate letters dated June 18, 1952. The public announcement was famously a BBC broadcast of July 1, 1952. But, in the letter of 26 April 1952, Ventris is employing Kober’s idea of the grid¹¹ to good effect.

Bennett once told me, “The place names were the Rosetta stone.” Only in reading through his April correspondence with Ventris in order to write this afterword, have I come to realize how significant this comment was. Ventris, in his letter of 26 April (Fig. A1b), is still using Etruscan vocabulary (and phonetics) to “read” the Linear B signs and texts that Kober and Bennett had done so much to make precise. Nonetheless in the handwritten section that ends his letter, by using Kober’s evidence for primary nouns and derivative adjectival inflections, he already has isolated the three-sign sequence for ‘Knossos’ and the four-sign sequence for ‘Amnisos’. He also speaks of the now famous “Pylos ‘9’” place names (particularly the place name with the sequence we now read as *pa-ki-ja-na*) in what we now know as the Hither Province. Yet he still is using Etruscan values to try to identify the group of people now transliterated as *ki-ri-te-wi-ja-i* via the Etruscan word for ‘peasants, locals’.

When we move forward seventy years to April 2022, we see how sweepingly masterful and centrally important José Melena’s work with tablet joins, tablet reading, text transcription, the representation of language by the Linear B script, and the state of the Greek language 1400–1170 BCE has been. His

⁷ Ventris 1988:321–326.

⁸ <https://repositories.lib.utexas.edu/handle/2152/20893>.

⁹ Ventris 1988:322: “Vaguely analogous are those instances, in Etruscan, where singular and plural forms of an oblique case are differentiated by the choice of variant endings which in themselves carry no suggestion of number.” He then cites two Etruscan phrases.

¹⁰ Ventris 1988:327–332.

¹¹ Palaima 2017:771–772, 777 and figs. 3 and 4.

47 Highpoint,
North Hill,
Highgate,
LONDON, N.6.

26 April 1952

Dear Bennett,

Your index arrived this morning. It is an excellent piece of work, and I am most grateful to you for it. I had not realized that this version was to include the Pylos sign-groups with the Knossos sign-groups, but this makes it doubly useful.

On glancing through it, I notice that a number of the Evans/Myres forms which seemed suspicious have been suitably amended; though I expect that there will also be a few less welcome emendations, such as ones which knock the bottom out of little theories one had built up. I had already realized that 𐀥𐀢 - on the chariot tablets has to be divided off as a separate word, and that therefore no amount of ingenuity will connect together 𐀥𐀢𐀢𐀢𐀢 and 𐀥𐀢-𐀢𐀢𐀢 as I tried to do in my last Note (p 170). If the theory which regards 𐀥 and 𐀢 as closely similar sounds is correct, then 𐀥𐀢 might I suppose be connected with the adverbial (?) 𐀢𐀢 of Jn04.7. (- and 𐀥𐀢𐀢𐀢 with 𐀢𐀢𐀢𐀢𐀢???)

I am baffled by the last sign of 𐀥𐀢𐀢𐀢𐀢 and 𐀥𐀢𐀢𐀢 on the Chariot tablets. I had hoped that checking of the tablets would have revealed a clear choice of -𐀢 or of -𐀥 throughout these cases. For the tidiness of the grammatical forms, -𐀥 would be very much more welcome, but if -𐀢 is certain we shall have to try and fit it in. I note you give 𐀥𐀢𐀢𐀢𐀢 (04.22) but 𐀥𐀢𐀢𐀢𐀢 (04.02 etc), but both 𐀥𐀢𐀢𐀢 and 𐀥𐀢𐀢𐀢. Your criterion is, I expect, whether the sign has one or two horizontal strokes above the "crook". Is it your opinion that there really is a deliberate distinction here, or that all Kober's "verbal" forms in fact are only badly-written -𐀥 s? In your list of rejected sign-groups, a mistake has I think crept in in 𐀥𐀢𐀢𐀢 and 𐀥𐀢𐀢𐀢, which in Myres' reference to 04.16 and 04-05.2 do not have the internal-𐀢𐀢- (and should not, if 𐀥 is only the alternative vocalisation of the same consonant as 𐀢𐀢).

𐀥𐀢𐀢𐀢 (04-16) is rather surprising: -𐀢 can't be genitival, I suppose, since it follows Vowel 2, and I suspect that 𐀥𐀢𐀢𐀢 may stand to 𐀥𐀢𐀢𐀢 as 𐀥𐀢𐀢𐀢 does to 𐀥𐀢𐀢.

Myres' idea that the chariot tablets contain just a random list of craftsmen's names is not very imaginative, and cannot be right. I do not, either, entirely agree with his argument that the chariots of 04-19 etc are a different sort from those of 04-01 etc. After all, there's no yoke on them; they look far more like the same ~~chariots~~ chariots in an early state of manufacture; and this ties up with the fact that a different "verb" is used with the two ^{geographical} theories.

My guess is that two stages are recorded (leaving out a possible previous stage recorded by 𐀥𐀢𐀢𐀢 of 04-28).

- 1) The provision of the 𐀥𐀢𐀢𐀢 (main ~~fixing~~ governed by the word (verb?) 𐀥𐀢𐀢, and qualified by 𐀥𐀢𐀢 (plural) - 𐀥𐀢𐀢 (sing?)).
- 2) The provision of the 𐀥𐀢𐀢𐀢 (equipment: mounting rail, floor, yoke, traces etc) - a word constructed like 𐀥𐀢𐀢, but made verbal: 𐀥𐀢𐀢𐀢. [The -𐀢- forms seem to argue against a compound form with -𐀢𐀢- (Er01.1).]
- 3) Whether the "wheel" tablets record an inventory of wheels, or the fitting of them, isn't clear, but as they aren't all in pairs it must be a separate part of the process. Myres' suggestion that the wheels were changed frequently ties in with this.

Parallel, apparently, in root to 𐀥𐀢𐀢 and 𐀥𐀢𐀢 are the two entities 𐀥𐀢 and 𐀥𐀢𐀢 (unless the former is connected rather with 𐀥𐀢). The latter occurs in slightly different spelling as 𐀥𐀢𐀢 on most of the "sword" tablets 1541 etc, which ties up with some idea of 'equipping' or 'armoury' etc, and makes it unlikely that the "sword" formula is one of Myres' lists of names either.

hand
doubtful
amw
check
2.
(An 18. rev. 1)
57-1/57-2
+1/57 as

Figure 1a. Letter from Michael Ventris to Emmett L. Bennett, Jr., 26 April 1952, page 1. By permission of Thomas G. Palaima and the archives of the Program in Aegean Scripts and Prehistory.

interpretations of the texts as historical documents have been ingenious and inventive—but still fundamentally sound.¹² It is truly a colossal achievement to produce the definitive authoritative transcriptions, with exacting apparatuses, of the Linear B tablets from both Pylos and Knossos and to have co-authored the authoritative transcriptions of tablets from Tiryns, Thebes and Mycenae.¹³

He has furthered the rich tradition of Mycenaean studies in Spain and thus fulfilled his pious duties to his native mentors and founding fathers. He has also helped bring to fruition the ground-breaking work of the decipherment trio Bennett, Kober, and Ventris.

The entire field of Mycenaeanology is now and forever in his debt.

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¹² See especially the joint vision of the Mycenaean society as a society composed of living and breathing human beings co-authored by Melena and his mentor: M. S. Ruipérez and J. L. Melena 1990.

¹³ Melena 2019 and 2021. Melena and Olivier 1991. Privately circulated are Melena’s and Olivier’s corrected and true readings (2003) of the Thebes tablets discovered in 1994 and after. It displaces Aravantinos, Del Freo, Godart and Sacconi 2005, especially in reading *65 instead of FAR.

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