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A Companion to Linear B: Mycenaean Greek Texts and Their World. Vol. 1

EDITED BY YVES DUHOUX AND ANNA MORPURGO DAVIES. PP. XI + 448, FIGS. 96, TABLES 5. PEETERS, LOUVAIN AND DUDLEY, MASS. 2008. €55. ISBN 078-90-42-1848-1 (PAPER).

This volume has nine chapters written by specialists. Volume 2 is in preparation, and more may be coming (ix). An editorial note (xi) warns that transcriptions of Linear B words will vary (e.g., *doelos* and *dohelos* for *do-e-ro*); readers should take this warning broadly—the book is aimed not at beginners but at the already well informed.

Chapter 1 (1–23), "The Decipherment of Linear B," by Pope, begins by giving a chronological sketch of the progress toward decipherment: Cowley, in 1927 (the words for "total," and "boys" and "girls"); Evans, before 1935 (inflections); Kober, between 1945 and 1950; and the first photographs of Pylos tablets, in 1939, and Bennett's use of them, in 1951, to demonstrate that the Pylos and Knossos documents used the same script. Bennett also devised the classification of signs and used logograms to classify the tablets. In 1952, Myres' edition of *Scripta Minoa* (vol. 2 [Oxford]) published the full Knossos corpus; in the same year, Ventris published his decipherment after two years of collaboration with scholars through mimeographed reports that, among other things, developed the grid (9–13 [fig. 2.2]). Pope describes the decipherment's confirmation by tablet PY Ta 641 (317–21), the development of a general interpretation (*Docs*[1], *Docs*[2]), and the identification of complex syllabograms (e.g., *dwe, twe, nwa*) (fig. 2.2c).

Chapter 2, "How to Begin?," by Palmer (25–68), tackles Linear B conventions: the tablets' classifications, peculiarities of syllabograms and logograms, and editing principles. She describes the editorial process first in words (35–43) and then through illustrations (66–8 [figs. 2.5–2.7]) that the beginning student should study closely. Her last section deals with dictionaries, grammars, symposia, and bibliographies (44–51). Her conclusion deals briefly with ambiguities in Mycenaean spelling (e.g., *pa-te* for both Greek πατήρ and πάντες).

Chapter 3, "Chronology of the Linear B Texts," by Driessen (69–79), discusses the findspots of the tablets (76 [chart]). The bulk of the Knossos material dates to the end of Late Minoan (LM) IIIA2; from late LM/Late Helladic (LH) IIIB1 come the tablets from Khania, Pylos, and Tiryns; the Thebes and Mycenae documents come from two major periods (late LH IIIB1: Thebes Kadmeion and Mycenae houses; at the end of LH IIIB: Thebes "Archives" and Pelopidou, and Mycenae citadel). A short appendix updates us on the latest Mycenae document, new Thebes tablets, and the near certainty that the Kafkania pebble is a forgery (T. Palaima, "OL Zh 1," *Minos* 37–38 [2002–2003] 373–85).

Chapter 4, "Mycenaean History," by de Fidio (81–114), begins with a discussion of the chronology (82–5). Her section, "Coming of the Greeks" (85–7), concludes that though the problem is "outdated," still "[t]he dispersal of Indo-European dialects actually *took* place," even though "the Greeks . . . did not 'come,' but 'were formed' in Greece only" (87 [emphasis original]). She then discusses the development of Mycenaean civilization, starting with the shaft graves. She puts the Mycenaeans in Crete "at the end of LM IB" (94) but places the destruction of Knossos at the end of LM IIIB so that Knossos may control the Khania tablets (but see Driessen [70–2]). "International Relations" (97–102) is a discussion of Egyptian and Hittite texts. Her last section sketches the end of Mycenaean culture, which she links to contemporary crises in the Near East and Egypt.

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Chapter 5, "Mycenaean Society," by Shelmerdine (115–58), is first concerned with "State Organisation" (127–35): the *wanax* (Ekhelawon at Pylos, but see Duhoux [345]); the *lawagetas* (at Pylos, Wedaneus?), who controls land one-third the size of the *wanax*'s; the *Heq*^{w}*etai* (followers, companions); "Collectors" (a modern term for those responsible for commodities produced outside the palace); the *Damokoros* (provincial governor); the *Koreters* (provincial mayors); and scribes. The *Telestai* hold private (*ki-ti-me-no*) land "in return for their service (*telos*) to the wanax." Finally, the *Gwasileus*, the head of work groups, and the *Geronsia* (duties not fully understood) are titles that survived into classical times (Basileus and Gerousia): "these officials really derived their power from local communities," which "would account both for their survival and their increased status after the palatial system collapsed" (135).

Shelmerdine then discusses ordinary people. Slaves (*do-e-ro/ra*) come in three types: unnamed workers sometimes listed by owner; unnamed and named landholders; and named "slaves of the god" (*te-o-jo do-e-ro/ra*). She assumes that "groups of fully dependent textile workers" (i.e., women workers given rations) are also slaves. In "The Family" (139–41), she briefly discusses women as workers and mothers. In the "allotment system" (*ta-ra-si-ja, talansia*), the palace distributes raw material to outside workers for finishing; in return, the workers get land or a "benefit" (*o-no, onon*) (130–34; Killen [143]). People outside the palace fulfilled two state obligations: taxation (contributions of agricultural products, hides, and a simple textile or garment [*146] probably made at home [Killen (190–91, 194)]) and military service (contingents, *o-ka,* totaling some 800 coast watchers and 600 rowers).

Chapter 6, "Mycenaean Economy," by Killen (159–200), likens it to that of the ancient Near East: a "non-market, non-money, redistributive type" (160 n. 5), dominated by large palace complexes. Killen then focuses on land, who owns it, and how it benefits the holder. The palace is interested in all land in the kingdom, though most documents focus on land close to the center. Landholders can be named or referred to by profession or by their membership in the "household" of the *wanax* (*wa-na-ka-te-ro*) or *lawagetas* (*ra-wa-ke-si-jo*). Most tablets concerning these landholdings are assessing their "rateable," or appraised, value (163). Thus, they measure land in precise units of (the logogram for) "wheat." These appraisals are made for the Pylos kingdom as a whole, then divided in half for the two provinces; local officials probably assessed the taxes to be paid by their communities. Exemptions could be made for service (e.g., rowers assessed on PY Na 1027 and exempted on PY An 661).

Killen's second part discusses the purpose of taxation; it should be for the redistribution of resources within the state (173–74), but the tablets do not make this clear. He lists the various state-controlled industries (191–93), the necessary raw materials (189–90), and the allocations of these to specialists for finishing (177). While most raw materials were locally produced (e.g., wool for textiles), others had to be imported: ivory and ebony from the Near East for furniture, and, for bronze, ingots of copper from Cyprus and tin from farther east. Killen speculates that exotic materials came to the palaces as gift exchanges (182–84), and he cites stored goods, termed *ke-se-ni-wi-ja* ("for foreigners" [Duhoux (264)]). Cloth (on KN Ld 649) and perfumed oil (on PY Fr 1231) serve as examples produced for export ("better" cloth, *a-ro*$_2$*-a*, is reserved for palace use). For cloth, we hear of specialists, mostly women (e.g., headband makers, makers of *te-pa* cloth, and finishers). For the perfume, we hear of their ingredients (PY Fr 1184, Un 249 and 267) and their containers, the stirrup jars (*210^{VAS} + KA = *ka-ra-re-we*).

Most of the state-controlled industries supplied products that provided the elite with wealth and prestige (chariots, armor, leather goods, furniture). These would have been distributed to palace personnel. Some officials might have been related to the *wanax*, such as the Collectors (176 n. 42) or the *lawagetas* ("crown prince" [164]). As an example of a state-controlled product, Killen cites beds (*de-mi-ni-ja*), which are made in palatial workshops (193 n. 82) and given out to men and women, presumably in exchange for service (PY Vn 851, MY V 659) (but see Duhoux [289–94]).

Chapter 7, "Mycenaean Technology," by Bernabé and Luján (201–33), is too curt to be helpful and is the only chapter where the English is not perfect (textiles are "spinned" and "weaved"). Most of the discussions are general; I mention a few concerns. Considering the rarity of lapis lazuli in the Aegean (apart from seals), and the ubiquity of "Egyptian blue" glass (ingots on the Uluburun shipwreck), *ku-wa-no* (202–5) should be the latter. Horn is used for a variety of objects (211–13), but the authors

do not appreciate its suitability (smooth, strong yet supple) for harness rigging. They also state that there is nothing in the armor tablets (e.g., PY Sh 737) "similar to the magnificent bronze armour found in Dendra," (215) in spite of the detailed logogram *163 (fig. 7.9) that looks exactly like it. For leatherworkers, "[i]t seems that men are entrusted with the production of harnesses and women with that of shoes, bags, and dresses" (222 [evidence not cited]).

Chapter 8, "The Linear B Inscribed Vases," by van Alfen (235–42), succinctly discusses the approximately 180 LM IIIB inscribed stirrup jars (capacity 12–14 liters) that were filled with perfumed oil and exported from western Crete to the mainland. Two-thirds of the inscriptions consist of single personal names (nominative); the rest consist of a three-word formula: personal name (nominative) + place-name + personal name (genitive) or *wa-na-ka-te-ro* (or simply *wa*). This formula (cf. KN D series) should represent the producer, place, and Collector, "a sort of serial or tracking number" (238). The one-word inscriptions present the name of the producer.

Chapter 9, "Mycenaean Anthology," by Duhoux (243–397), gives an up-to-date commentary on 44 texts. After a detailed introduction, the individual discussions follow. I note a few:

1. KN Ca 895 (254–56, horses and asses): *i-qo*, horse, from IE **ekwos*, becomes aspirated in later Greek (*híppos*), perhaps through hypercorrection.
2. KN Fh 5451 (oil delivered from Amnisos for this year [256–57]): "this year" implies that "the Mycenaean administration worked on an annual basis."
3. KN Fp 1 (oil distributed by Knossos and Amnisos to divinities [257–61]): since Zeus does not get the most oil, he "had not yet the pre-eminent place that he occupied later."
4. KN Gg 702 (honey given to "all the gods" and to "Potnia of *da-pu$_2$-ri-to*" [262–64]): alone, Potnia is a goddess, but when modified or associated with a place, she may be a queen.
5. MY V 659 (women and daughters [289–94]) is usually interpreted as females getting bedding (*de-mi-ni-ja*) (Killen [195 n. 87]), but the real heading is *wo-di-je-ja* (name of the female overseer?); consequently, *de-mi-ni-ja* is probably also a woman's name, and the text simply lists women workers and their daughters (also PY Vn 851?).
6. PY Ae 303 (14 slaves of the priestess "on account of" the gold [295–96]): when *i-je-re-ja* is not modified, this must be the priestess at Pylos, *e-ri-ta* (for her dispute with the *da-mo*, PY Eb 297, see 300–2).
7. PY Tn 316 (divinities getting gold vessels, men, and women [321–35]): *po-re-na* is translated as "victims," not "bearers" of the gold vessels, since there are fewer *po-re-na* than vessels.
8. PY Un 718 (banquet materials for Poseidon [342–47]): *65 *ju*$^{?}$ is used as the logogram "FAR" (acrophonic abbreviation for Homeric *zeiai*?); "some solid food (cereal or pulse) different from wheat ('GRA') and barley ('HORD')."

Introducing his discussion of three TH Fq tablets, Duhoux presents (349–61) first principles when approaching Linear B: a religious interpretation should be avoided unless circumstances force it; short words should be treated with caution since they present great ambiguities in their transcription into Greek. Thus, *ma-ka* (e.g., TH Fq 126, 361–71) is a man's name, not a new god (*Ma Ga*)—all the new gods claimed on the TH tablets are men's names. And on TH Fq 130 (371–81), barley is given to a man named *ku-si*, not to "dogs"—none of the claimed sacred animals in these texts exists. The TH Fq series also has several men's names ending in *65 *ju?*; this is now thought to be an enclitic "son of."

In short, this is a valuable and informative summary of the present state of our knowledge of Linear B. All Aegeanists need to have this book.

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