



Review

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ple, while “master” has been replaced by “sculptor,” the latter is also a modern concept (although it has connotations the author embraces). Moreover, she assumes the figure-makers were men, a position she defends in footnote 3, using arguments that do not stand up to studies such as J. Gero’s “Genderlithics” (in J. Gero and M. Conkey, eds., *Engendering Archaeology* [Cambridge Mass. 1991] 163–87). The often-used phrase “said to have been found on” (vel. sim.) may prompt the reader to question her database, though, in fact, Getz-Gentle offers it as potentially interesting information, rather than as a euphemism for the likely findspot of an artifact (e.g., nn. 134–6 on the “Keros Hoard”). Whether specialist or layperson, one should not attribute more to the phrase than this author means. If criticism is to be made, it should be directed at Getz-Gentle’s willingness to provide us with rumor and allow us to do with it what we will.

The author’s methodology has also come under attack. Among others, Cherry (“Beazley in the Bronze Age?” in R. Laffineur and J. Crowley, eds., *EIKON* [Aegeum 8, Liège 1992] 123–44) rejects Getz-Gentle’s methods on the grounds that the self-conscious artist, or some “master/pupil/school” relationship cannot be ascertained for the Bronze Age from the archaeological record. And since Morellian details have been found to be unreliable in attribution studies for works produced during the historical period, he questions whether stylistic details can be relied upon to identify prehistoric artisans. But there is a difference: in the (probable?) absence of self-conscious artistry, slavish imitation of style in the Early Bronze Age seems unlikely.

The first two chapters proceed chronologically; the first examines works attributed to the transitional period stretching from the Late Neolithic to the beginning of the Early Bronze Age, and the second focuses on the EC II period. These chronological distinctions are left broad and generalized; in fact it works to the author’s advantage that the chronology of the EC period is characterized by a relative dating based on style rather than on long stratigraphic sequences. By familiarizing her audience with general physical features of the various “types” in chapters 1 and 2, Getz-Gentle leads the reader in chapters 3 and 4 to discern individual choices, deviations from this baseline. Although these latter chapters are broken into formalistic essays on each identified worker, other, broader issues are touched upon. This is particularly true in the essay on the “Goulandris Sculptor” (84–92), where Getz-Gentle discusses in more detail than elsewhere her reasons for judging a work “immature” or “mature,” important for her argument about the development of individual sculptors. As the key to her methodology, this is a discussion that may have been more useful, in even greater detail, as an introduction, rather than toward the end of the book.

In chapter 5, de Vries seeks to test an early hypothesis of Getz-Gentle’s, that systems of proportions were calculated in order to plan the initial stages of folded-arm-figure production. He has made measurements, using a consistent technique, of 85 Spedos-variety works, of which 50 are presented in this chapter. De Vries seems to have been influenced by Getz-Gentle in interpreting his measurements when he argues that the midpoint of the figure (marginally the highest point, when the figure is in a re-

clining position) would be the focal point of the composition. This revives the concept of the EC figure as a fertility figure, if this point is, as de Vries suggests, the “symbolic center of life itself” (118). I am less convinced, given the frequency of large, painted eyes on the face (Hendrix, “The Paint Motifs on Early Cycladic Figures,” Ph.D. diss. [University of Michigan, Ann Arbor 2000]), that the abdomen area of the figure was most important, and I argue elsewhere (“Painted Early Cycladic Figures and Neolithic Antecedents,” [forthcoming]) that it is the prominence of the head (literally and figuratively) over the anthropogenic aspects of the (upright) female form that distinguishes the function of Early Cycladic figures from that of their Neolithic predecessors. While a general adherence to deliberate proportions (most likely “eye-balled,” in my opinion) is readily apparent from a thoughtful visual analysis of the Spedos-type figures, de Vries’s numbers do not convince me that rulers must have been applied.

Nonetheless, it is difficult for this reviewer to proceed through the text and plates without coming largely to Getz-Gentle’s conclusion: since some marble figures share many stylistic features, they can, with some likelihood, be attributed to an (analytical) individual. To that end, the book itself is compelling: maps and figures are clear and helpful; photographs are chosen and reproduced to provide the most information possible (including consistent front, back, and profile views); and, as in her previous books, a series of “checklists” provides convenient references to works attributed to a particular marble worker, and, importantly, the current location of these works.

Those scholars who can begin to accept her main conclusions have, thanks to Getz-Gentle’s perseverance and excellent documentation, a body of evidence that invites the next series of questions: If a few marble workers made many works, might that indicate they were supported by their communities? What of the many more marble figures that do not lend themselves to being counted within a group attributable to an individual—did a great many Bronze Age islanders make one figure each, while a few made several? What can associated contexts and finds contribute to these queries? Such questions may fruitfully affect the way archaeologists approach EC sites and art.

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THÈBES, FOUILLES DE LA CADMÉE. Vol. 1, LES TABLETTES EN LINÉAIRE B DE LA *Odos Pelopidou*, ÉDITION ET COMMENTAIRE, by V.L. Aravantinos, L. Godart, and A. Sacconi. (Biblioteca di “Pasiphae”.) Pp. 460, photos 243, drawings 243, paleographic drawings 43, map 1, plans 3. Istituti Editoriali e Poligrafici Internazionali, Pisa and Rome 2001. €103. ISBN 88-8147-228-7 (paper).

As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the decipherment of Linear B by Michael Ventris, we should recall

the principles of research enunciated by Alice Kober. In "The Minoan Scripts: Fact and Theory," (*AJA* 52 [1948] 82–103), Kober attributed lack of progress in more than 40 years of research on prehistoric Aegean scripts to the unwillingness of scholars to follow rigorous methods and to study all the pertinent data before theorizing. She concluded: "Before judging a theory, we must . . . know what the facts are. . . . Until we have [the facts], no conclusions are possible." She believed in careful publication of the primary data as a *sine qua non*. She wrote to Sir John Myres (30 January 1948): "[S]ince forty years of short-cuts hasn't produced very much, I think perhaps ten more years of doing it the hard way may be better."

Ventris learned from Kober and used, in his own way, her precise techniques of analysis. Key to his success were the careful editions of the Pylos (1951) and Knossos (1952) tablets. Ventris considered axiomatic the principles of architectural group working theory that scholars share ideas and lay out completely all evidence for and against their own interpretations.

This edition of the 238 new Thebes tablets and tablet fragments discovered from 1993 to 1995 reminds us that Kober's iron will to produce painstakingly accurate publications of Linear B inscriptions was exceptional. Few scholars will ever match it. Scholars will take shortcuts. They will propose hypotheses that outstrip the available data. They will not share information as openly as Ventris did. There are understandable reasons for these things, but they are no less lamentable.

The volume is divided into two parts: (1) the formal edition of the inscriptions and (2) an extensive interpretive commentary. I concentrate here on giving a correct impression of the evidence the tablets provide for the reconstruction of prehistoric Aegean and later Greek culture. I discuss matters of interest to prehistorians and historians who do not specialize in Linear B.

The formal edition of the texts is sound. Shortcomings will mainly bother specialists (e.g., the omission of signs *63, *67, and part of *61 from the paleographical charts, which also do not set out the scribal hands). There are no exact plans of tablet findspots, but these may appear in volume two in this series. Aravantinos assigns the tablets to LH III B:2 by context. The photographs are generally of excellent quality as are the expert drawings of tablets by Louis Godart.

The tablets have been classified into 12 series, based on their contents. These series are:

1. Av (8 documents): men listed by personal and professional names and the VIR (MAN) ideogram. Two Av tablets refer to measured amounts of *si-to* = *sitos* "grain" or "food." The editors (167) reinterpret *si-to* as an otherwise unattested prehistoric goddess Σιτώ.
2. Ev (1 document): a small fragment recording the ideogram GRANUM (abbr. GRA: wheat or barley?).
3. Fq (125 documents): allocations of HORDEUM (abbr. HORD) to individuals, to occupational groups, and to animals. HORD is a cereal commodity (barley or wheat?). The editors hypothesize that some of the recipients are deities and cult functionaries, mainly associated with the worship of Bronze Age

Demeter. Their interpretations (see below) involve questionable linguistic reconstructions.

4. Ft (16 documents): texts recording olives and GRA (wheat or barley?). One page-shaped tablet (Ft 140) records large quantities at various locations. In adding up the total, the scribe likely misread an entry of T 7 as T 5. He thus added quantities T 5 and T 7 as T 10 = GRA 1 rather than T 12 = GRA 1 T 2. The editors, however, hypothesize (162) that Ft 140 alone among over 5,000 Linear B tablets gives evidence for an idiosyncratic ratio T 12 = WIOLE DRY UNIT.

Leaf-shaped Ft tablets record allocations of olives to an individual likely named *Akrodamos* or *Arg(ri)odamos* (*a-ko-ro-da-mo*) and to geese (*ka-si*). The editors interpret *a-ko-ro-da-mo* as "an assembler of a mystic *agurmos*" (171). Their interpretation is impossible. The form would have to be *a-ke-re-da-mo*, and one would have to prove that *da-mo* in this period can refer generally to "the people." The word *damos* has this meaning in the historical period when the competing term *laos* has fallen out of general use.
5. Gf (3 documents): three tablets without object ideograms and recording weighed commodities (M units = ca. 1 kg). On the basis of one partial lexical entry]*na-ko* (Gf 108.2), the editors hypothesize (274–5) that this series refers to spices (cf. Myc. *ka-na-ko* = saffron). But all other entries seem to be personal names in the genitive or dative. One of these *we-na-ko-jo* (Gf 163.2) provides a much more likely restoration for Gf 108.2: **we-]na-ko* or **we-re-]na-ko* (dative). Thus there is no basis for claiming that these tablets refer to spices.
6. Gp (54 documents): allotments of wine—and once (Gp 290) of *cyperus*—to individuals, animals (*e-pe-to-i* "quadrupeds"—not "snakes"—and *e-mi-jo-no-i* "mules"), crafts personnel (carpenters, horse-feeders) and perhaps a specific location (**63-te-ra*).
7. Ka (2 documents): one tablet Ka 113 records 40 baskets (*ka-]na-to*) and eight amphorae.
8. Lf (1 document): the tablet lists 13 units of the cloth ideogram TELA² + PO.
9. Oh (3 documents): three tablets dealing with wool (LANA) allocated to specialist cloth workers, including a weaver (**plekeus*) and a newly attested male occupational term (**onukeus*, a specialist in the cloth element *o-nu-ka*).
10. Uo (1 document): Uo 121 records one sheep, one goat, one sheep's hide, 9.6 liters of wine, and ideogram *190 (tallow?, milk?, beer?). This record resembles those at Knossos and Pylos listing foodstuffs assembled for communal feasts, often accompanied by animal sacrifice.
11. V (2 documents): one fragmentary tablet (V 159) mentioning a chariot (*i-qi-ja*) and one small tablet (V 160) cut at left and right with a nominative personal name. The tablets resemble in size, format, and contents those from the Room of the Chariot Tablets at Knossos.
12. X (19 documents): very fragmentary texts. X 105 refers to the Mycenaean *wanax* ("king").

In the transcriptions, two major problems occur. The sign the editors read 25 times as the ideogram FAR (= flour) is in many cases the phonetic sign *65 = *ju*. In these cases it follows patronymic adjectives or personal names in the genitive or dative as part of the expression “son of So-and-So” or “So-and-So junior.” The editors’ alternative is disproved *inter alia* by the occurrence of the supposed FAR on tablets like Fq 229 and Fq 254[+]255, which list and total HORD in all other entries. Moreover, another scribe (H 306?) writes an entry *ru-]ke-da-mo-ni-jo-u-jo* (Gp 227.2) = “son of Lakedaimon” or “Lakedaimonios, Jr.” This is the same person recorded in a slightly different phrasing at least five times by scribe 305 as *ra-ke-da-mi-ni-jo-ju* (not *ra-ke-da-mi-ni-jo* FAR).

The alignment of text in the transcriptions, which should reflect the layout of the tablets, is inexact (e.g., Fq 123, 124, 130). This encourages misinterpretation of sign clusters.

In the commentary, for which L. Godart is primarily responsible, the editors interpret the main texts along religious lines. Readers should exercise extreme caution. Doubts about ritual or ceremonial texts in the Mycenaean corpus generally have concerned single lexical items (e.g., Pylos Ta 711 *te-ke*; Tn 316 *po-re-na*), and the parameters of reasonable interpretation have been clarified over time. But most “religious” texts provide other clear evidence that fixes their interpretation and attribution to the “religious” sphere. These are:

- a. Time references (month names are so far exclusive to “religious” texts; and festival names: *re-ke-e-to-ro-te-ri-jo*, *to-no-e-ke-te-ri-jo*)
- b. Vocabulary of donating or sending (*do-se*, *do-so-si*, *do-so-mo*, *qe-te-o*, *qe-te-a₂*, *i-je-to*, *i-je-si*)
- c. References to the “sacred” (*i-je-ro*, not **a-ko-no* or **a₂-ko-no*), religious zones or structures (*do-de?*, *wo-ko-de*, *te-me-no*, **na-wo*), or specific sanctuaries (*di-wi-jo-de* and *di-u-jo*, *da-da-re-jo-de*, *po-si-da-i-jo*, *di-u-ja-jo*, *pe-re*-*82-*jo*, *pa-ki-ja-ne*)
- d. Clearly identifiable theonyms: *di-wo*, *di-wi-ja*, *po-ti-ni-ja* (in many forms), *e-ra*, *di-wo-nu-so*, *e-ma-a₂*, *po-se-da-o*, *po-si-da-e-ja*, *pa-si-te-o-i*, *qe-ra-si-ja*, *e-ri-nu*, *pa-de*, *pi-pi-tu-na*
- e. Clearly identifiable religious functionaries: *i-je-re-u*, *i-je-re-ja*, *i-je-ro-wo-ko*, *da-ko-ro*, *ka-ra-wi-po-ro*, **o-wi-de-ta?*, **ka-ru-ka*, **po-re?*, *du-ma*, *te-o-jo do-e-ro-ra*
- f. Goods appropriate for offering: olive oil, HORD, honey, animals for sacrifice (often singletons), assorted foodstuffs for collective feasts, ceremonial vessels, and ritual implements

These are almost completely absent from the new Thebes tablets.

As mentioned above, the single Uo tablet certainly looks like a basic text for a commensal ceremony. Three tablets (Fq 126, Fq 130 and Fq 254[+]255) contain lead temporal clauses that indicate ceremonial activity. But the occasion on Fq 254[+]255 is the “assembling of all the elders.” Two wine allocation texts (Gp 109 and 147) specify that the wine is “to be paid as a religious fine” (*qe-te-jo*). Otherwise, we find none of the many recognizable deities (Greek and non-Greek) known from other sites and from other tablets at

Thebes, for example, *potnia*. The few words interpreted here as deities, cult officials, and sacred animals all have reasonable interpretations as human personal names, common nouns, and plain animals. The editors (169–71) propose some silly things. For example, *to-pa-po-ro-i* are clearly “bearers of *to-pa*,” (cf. PY Ub 1318), that is, either “pack animals” or human beings identified by a title similar to the later Greek *kanephoroi*. The editors propose “ritual torch bearers,” relying on a metaphorical usage unattested in Mycenaean or historical Greek.

Tablet Fq 254[+]255 has 29 entries dealing with HORD. The editors interpret 23 as personal names or occupational terms. Of the six remaining entries, two are misinterpreted: the temporal clause and *a-ko-da-mo*. The editors (180) interpret a third *a-ke-ne-u-si* as *hagneusi* (“holy men”); but Mycenaean Greek universally uses *hi-eros*, not unattested *hagnos* for the concept “holy.” *a-ke-ne-u-si* is probably *akhneusi* “winnowers,” a term appropriate to grain allocations.

In a fourth entry, the editors find Zeus (191), interpreting *o-po-re-i* as a divine epithet. But in Linear B, descriptive epithets do not normally occur without their theonyms. *o-po-re-i* is a simple anthroponym “Mountain Man” (cf. historical Greek Orestes). The term *ko-wa* (“girl”) is interpreted as Kore = Persephone (188–90), but *ko-wa* is nowhere directly associated with *ma-ka*, the supposed term for Demeter. As for the sixth and final “religious” entry (*ma-ka* interpreted as “to Mother Earth”), the editors ignore John Chadwick’s posthumous article in which he declares (*Minos* 31-31 [1996–1997 (1998)] 293): “I make no secret of the fact that I find the interpretation as Mq Tq unacceptable.”

The transcriptions, photographs, drawings, indices, and paleographical tables in this volume are good and useful. Most errors and omissions are readily corrigible. The commentary, however, is seriously flawed. The editors propose many more speculative or linguistically impossible interpretations than I have been able to discuss in this brief review. They do not provide bibliographical references or a framing discussion that would offer readers who are not literate in Linear B some means of evaluating these interpretations within the context of 50 years of Mycenaean linguistic and textual scholarship. To borrow a metaphor from Emmett L. Bennett, Jr., the commentary as a whole constructs a “Linear B house of cards.” Once the editors identify a dubious Bronze Age Demeter in the texts, they try to find ritual or cultic significance wherever they can. Scholars of religion, anthropology, iconography, material culture, prehistory, and history are advised to use healthy doses of Alice Kober’s skepticism about theories that distort or ignore the facts at hand.

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