

David Kahn  
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Dear Dr. Bennett,

Please excuse my delay in returning your very full letter, for which I am most grateful. Actually, the reason I held off in writing you was so I could check on the new reference you gave me -- the Webster. No library here on Long Island seemed to have it, so it necessitated a trip to the New York Public, which of course did have it. I found a few phrases therein that hinted at what I was looking for, as, for instance, that on page 3: "...we can measure more clearly than ever before the achievement of the Greeks in leaping out of this [Mycenaean] context to become the founders of modern civilization." But without a thorough reading of the entire text, I ~~don't think~~ did not find a specific statement of a measurement of that achievement, and my perusal of the text did not show any indication that such a measurement was given; the text seemed to be given over primarily to internal matters of life during the time from Mycenae to Homer rather than to an assessment of how much the Greeks borrowed from the earlier civilization.

It's interesting that other journalists have asked you the same question that I did. Oddly, I take this as evidence for precisely the opposite view that you take. You took this as evidence that the question were wrong; I take it as an indication that it is right. My reason is simply that my experience in communicating technical information to a lay public -- which is what much of journalism consists of -- shows that for that public to become interested in something which they have no prior interest in requires the writer to tell the story in terms of their interest. Most people, unfortunately, have no prior interest in ancient history, therefore, information about ancient history must be made meaningful in terms of their interests, such as how this affects them. People who read books like Kings ~~and~~ Must Die have this prior interest in ancient history and it is true that for them no "popularization" is required, but unfortunately these people are not in the majority. Furthermore, even they will respond with greater interest if a story is told in their own terms. And finally, the number of people who are interested in ancient history for the same reason, say, that they are interested in cosmology or details of the stock market or twelve-tone music to the extent that they will read an article on it -- namely, the pure intellectual joy of learning -- are disappointingly few and far between. Would they were not, and maybe some day there will be many more of them, but in America today, they are so rare a writer cannot depend on them for a market. So these are the reasons why other journalists have sought an answer to this question, and why we think it is a valid one.

As for my talk: it is now only in note form and in a rough draft for the proposed article. I will continue to try and dig for the information I asked of you and will then try to sell



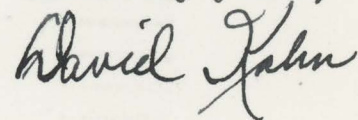
it. ~~Ex~~ If I don't succeed, I will give it to The Cryptogram, official publication of the American Cryptogram Association, for its use. In either case, however, it shall be my pleasure to send you a copy of the article when it appears.

I haven't yet tried to solve that little cryptogram from Australia, but I will bring it in to the next meeting of the New York Cipher Society and give us all a crack at it. That word consisting of the top line of a typewriter keyboard and all those AO digrams look very intriguing.

In line with your collection of things pertaining to Linear B, I am sending you a clipping from a Sunday N. Y. Times book review that you may not have seen, and a copy of a meeting notice of the New York Cipher Society listing a talk on Linear B for our next meeting. (The following notice, unlike the one enclosed, did not have a review of the talk). The speaker, Howard T. Oakley, did have a review of the Chadwick book published in American Scientist, and another (anonymous) review was published in Scientific American. I'm sorry I don't know the dates for either.

Once again, let me thank you for your very full reply to my letter. I intend to continue looking for what may be a will 'o the wisp, and -- who knows? -- perhaps I811 find it. I shall keep you posted.

Sincerely yours,



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