

NEW YORK STATE COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE ~~AT~~ CORNELL UNIVERSITY

~~CORNELL UNIVERSITY AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION~~

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DEPARTMENT OF ENTOMOLOGY

Dear Miss Kober

Since I received your letter I have gone over to the Architecture library and checked up some of those tablets, and got Evans' number system. I had had only the Sundwall one, which is totally different, in my notes.

It strikes me that the big "man" tablet (fig. 686) may complicate things, since it appears to have the names in two of your cases. At least a large number of names end in E59 F to, which is one of your cases (or at least like one of them), while an equal number end in E40 nga, and one of them (line 8, word 1) fits right into your system. I note this tablet also has an extraordinarily high percent of the se two endings and E25 + lo, which on other tablets are evidently rare. It begins to make me tend back to my earlier position that these are not personal but place names, and that a part of them are plurals in -nga, as in classical -nai names. In any case it looks as though F and nga represent the same case, on your own argument. If that works out we have a count-up of men assigned to x villages in three districts, and I note that one each in the first two groups is not counted, - in the second group quite clearly "one man" 24 times, but "total 23", in the upper 31 visible, and evidently one lost in the upper right corner, but "total 31". Omitting the nga words, there is an amazing dominance of o-words (certain and probable), 10 F to, 13 + lo, 2 vo, 1 po, 3 ko, total 29 out of 60 (or without nga 50) with final syllable legible. And the residual 21 includes a good many with meaning not guessed at, some of which might well end in o.

I wonder if any other tablet has such a dominance of one or two types of ending.

At this point I took time off to check the idea this was the list of the "hundred" cities of Crete, in their three divisions. It seems a sound idea. There are eight names in -na, given by Ptolemy, and a larger number in -to (tos, ton), which fit my supposed values of nga and F to nicely, but there is no third group in lo, so if this is a good theory lo must be some suffix not preserved to historic times (all but one of the + words are in a single section of the tablet). There is also nothing to match the large number of initial me, but you had also noted that could be a prefix. I can't match up any names with satisfaction; but pa-na-n-nga is suggestive at least of Pannona, and 1-lo (line 4 at beginning) is a possible Olous. Both are near Cnosos on the map, and in the first 2 groups on the tablet.

I am puzzled by the statement that Kistipoulos "started from the Cypriote" I find in the list you give only 7 cases where he agrees with the Cypriote, while a larger number (of exact or very probable) differ.

There are a lot in io, but they seem Hellenic as a rule rather than Prehellenic.

Another case

Some kind of ending impossible words of F tablets

Yes - this is my

*

I will write ~~him~~, - but hope that if "English troubles him he can perhaps manage with French or German, as my modern Greek is pretty weak. Unfortunately we don't have his paper in the library, - also I can't find one of the "Sundwall papers you cite, so couldn't check the "saffron" group of words, etc.

In any case I will take care in future to put in the Minoan character as well as my guess at its value.

I agree the Eleusis vase may well have a Minoan word (or words) on it. Have also assumed that for a long period Minoan and Greek were spoken side by side on the mainland at least, and probably after 1400 on Crete also. I had imagined a relation something like Norman French and Old English in England, where the language that finally won out had been borrowing words from the other over a couple of centuries. Incidentally my Polynesian link suggests the true meaning of the "Barion Pedion" at Eleusis, - not the 'field of the abortion', but the 'Fallow Field'. But the curious Attic form of Persephone (Pherophatta) suggests an island rather than a direct Minoan connection. It could be the Cretan Martis (maiden) reduplicated and dialectically distorted. (Britomartis - Mrto-martis; Pherophatta - Phr'o-pharta) - but this is wild speculation. Incidentally ~~of~~ lu must be a rare sign on Crete, since I don't find a number for it either in Sundwall or Evans' big tabulation (fig. 666)

By your "first declension" I meant merely the first system of three cases you set up (partly out of your fig. 1) i.e. with τ to alternating with τι and suffix. I might similarly have called your other set of examples where you had the same two suffixes without change of the preceding symbol, a second declension. (Of course if there were any analogy with the Greco-Latin systems τι would have to be with the third, rather than first or second. I also admit that the idea of ψ ψ ψ poteti being miswritten pateti, ψ ψ ψ is pretty weak, but it seemed like a not improbable slip if written from dictation and if the syllable were unaccented. I had not imagined a regular vowel change, and if the odd form appears more than once it will destroy my idea.

It is interesting to note that the dotted circle (ya) also appears on the Phaistos disc, and there it is on the second word of names, which I suppose will be the genitive of the person's father (in one case the first word of one name appears as the second of another). It also appears in the prefix to names, - at least those cited fully with three words each.

I wonder if adjectives are declined at all. The only hints of such I have found are the two words ending in re in the heading of fig. 686, and the fossilized phrase amenena karena in Homer, which is otherwise explained in the grammars but sounds to me like a prehellenic remnant.

I shall be most interested to see that unpublished material when it comes along. My feeling is that the whole matter would have gone much further if the material had been available to a greater variety of people with divergent points of view. But if feel that if inflection had been

It is
#90
Evans
idea -

does not
confirm
you -

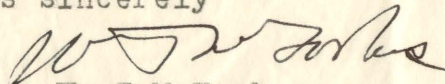
as much a matter of course as in Greek, we should have already seen more obvious traces of it.

Bonfante's article did not leave me quite completely cold; my feeling is that he has something, but may not be quite sure what he has. In any case we agree that the non-hellenic element (or some one such element) in classical Greek is a centum-language but not showing the normal Hellenic sound-shifts; if he chooses to call it Illyrian I suppose I should not quarrel, though I was brought up to use that term in a different sense,-- of the language branch to which Phrygian, Albanian, Thracian and Armenian are supposed to belong.. For that reason I am calling the hypothetical language "Lelegian", as suggesting Carian, but not the classical Carian of which some inscriptions have survived. I am also influenced by the Mycenae gate, which I sometimes would like to make a rebus: two lions and a column - Lele-ki. (The fourth word of the Phaistos disc, which should represent the home of its leader, also has two lions and a third character.)

My present hypothesis (purely hypothetical) of the languages is that in the neolithic and EM (EH) periods the language of Greece was a primitive Hellenic, that of Crete perhaps a primitive "Lybian", that the Leleges (Bonfante's Illyrians) swept down at the beginning of MH (perhaps MMII) and drove the Hellenic to the swamps and mountains, from which it returned in the movement represented by the legends of Deucalion, Endymion, etc. So on my language map of MH and LHI Greece the Hellenes will be in the mountains of the north (Dorian and "Northwest") the swamps of Boeotia (Deucalionids, "Aeolians"), the islands of the north Aegean (Ionians) and of the Peloponnese (Arcadians), while the Lelegians (or Illyrians) held the productive parts of Greece, and Crete, and a closely related dialect or language ("Telchinian") occupied Attica and those Cyclades which have mainly aspirated names (Kythnos, Seriphos, Siphnos, Pholegandros, Thera, Anaphe, Carpathos, but not the eastern row of Cyclades; also perhaps Ithaca, Cephallenia and Zacynthos, Cythera, Thasos and Skiathos).

But now back to the Lepidoptera for a time.

Yours sincerely



Wm. T. M. Forbes