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15/ix/67

Dear Professor Bennett

I was very pleased to get your letter & shall look forward to receiving the Index, & it is really very good of you to think of looking for R. Kamm's address which I did not anticipate giving you the trouble of doing so. I shall be happy to have it if you find it.

Miss Kober has long intrigued me, & I often think about her and wish I knew more about ~~her~~^{her} or could see a photograph of her, because in any account I have read of the Linear B story, she really is played out of it in about one sentence. Yet without her I am quite sure Dr Ventris would still have been sitting tracing Etruscan liberesses in Linear B because he was not an analyst born and she was. In her matter-of-fact way she put more real thought into Linear B, when she did at length bring her analytical mind on the material, than he did from 14-30 years of age. No wonder I have to make my letters private when I express such opinions! I am not copying at him because he will make up for his back once he gets going; the only thing I have come to dislike about the whole story is that he was shamed so determinedly in the limelight

and all the scholars in the story like yourself, like Dr Chadwick, like Dr Kober, quite ignored. I think it was largely Dr Chadwick's own fault; but he was much younger then when one is not so wise. For myself I prefer the team - the great company one gets out of having found one's crowd is the best compensation, and I think it is a sorry day when that ever goes for lack of forethought.

Thank you for sending the photographs from Miss Kober's paper. I have only one comment to make and that is that she is mistaken where she speaks of four circles (dots) concluding face A: there are actually five, it being one of the points I went to Gote to check in 1964. Like other very small points, in the Disc it shows up badly on photographs. I mention this only because in my paper I do deal with these & other signs on the faces, and any one reading it might think I was labouring under a mistake. I am sure it would be worth looking up her material on the Disc, she must have put in some study on it or some analysis of her own.

I come now to the last paragraph of your letter. I thought over your hint after very carefully, at first meaning to accept it very gladly without further thought. I had just completed my second draft of the hind Part III the day before your letter

in Part III, I have carried on to the hieroglyphic A text, at the Enkomi Tablet and there is a lot of work there.

I will be brief about the Disc. It is read centre to circumference, is in the same kind of Greek as hieroglyph B and carries some hieroglyph B land-terms on its faces. The lines (underlying dashes) are numeraire, and I think the small circles linked by short dashes are totals. The whole Disc appears to concern a supply of men (Face A) and allocation of yellow lands (Face B). It is addressed to people of a certain status, whose rank is marked by Character 2 (a determinative of the class), and who are in a particular district. Both men and women appear in it. Each side has it, our addressor, the one on Face A being superior to that on Face B. Each face follows a pattern of short messages of allocation near the centre, and a 'long' message on the outer perimeter. The 'long' message in Face A concerns the transfer of "customary obligations" from one person to another; that on Face B concerns the transfer of a holding of land from X to Y with a legal process involved. The two faces are quite intimately bound up by several factors, but they are also independent messages. The whole affair is very office-minded, like hieroglyph B; but on a rather

higher administrative level. I think it was written in Autumn.

I ought to add that Mr Chadwick has not seen Part III yet because I have only been clarifying and assembling it during the last two months. He has, however, had my odd reflections on it before I came to this process, while I was still disentangling the verbs of Face B; that he has had the text since 1964, & the remaining volumes since 1965 so I feel easy that he has been fully in the picture, & the only reason I cannot give him Part III is that I only have the one copy in manuscript very clearly written, and I am inclined to leave it so.

My method of work was based purely on analysis. I made no reference to Linear B or other scripts, but inspected the Disc for factors guiding to direction, analysed stems & endings in each direction, tabulated build-ups of groups; & after deciding direction, I analysed the pattern of the text on each face, then the inter-relationships of groups, the nucleation of groups, so that the prediction of the characters in syllables arose & for as possible from having seen the reaction each character produced through the text and I could ask myself what sound could produce that cause. Later on I felt it safe to consult Linear B

and the Cypriot script as a whole; & my final values were made possible by studying the hieroglyphic texts for similar contributions, assessing the values of the script, & then re-applying them to the Disc. After that, it was a business of disentangling the text & other factors, which still remain uncompleted; but this document is highly technical from the official point of view, & you can't (as I fondly hoped) just read it straight off once you have the text. I think the really was my biggest undervaluation. I thought that every scholar I presented it to, having so much more Greek & scholarship than me, could read it off at a glance; but in reality it would be complicated for anyone to read, & the study of it demands not so much scholarship as intense observation & what scholars rarely have - plenty of time. Hence I called my paper "Some Observations on the Phaistos Disc".

That is the size of the problem; & if after studying this summary, you feel it would be beyond your interest & criticism, no harm is done, and I thank you all the same for your very kind offer.

Yours sincerely

Beatrice V. Gwynn