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Dear Bennett,

I looked in at the Hellenic Society today to see if the secretary of the British School at Athens had any more news of this summer's excavations, and she asked my advice about a thing which is worrying her. Blegen had written to her about your anxiety not to offend Myres with the revelation of the number of printing and other errors in Scripta Minoa 2 in your forthcoming review of it. But I couldn't really contribute much to the discussion except to agree that your own relations with Myres are presumably good enough to be able to explain to him by letter what you are doing. I must say that I'm less concerned with the parts of Myres' book which merely involve errors in the numbering of the tablets, and so on, rather than with errors, in the index and drawings, which give misleading readings of the sign-groups themselves. And if there is to be any more printing of Scripta Minoa, in whole or in part, it is essential that all the corrections you can provide should be included. Unfortunately, the Oxford University Press are probably rather sick of the book by now, and it would really be simpler to have a separate commentary from you to read with the book, rather than try and revise the letterpress.

I was also told that Myres has a volume 3 of Scripta Minoa ~~now~~ to come, which he is getting the Society of Antiquaries to publish. What on earth is this going to contain? Anyway, they are hearing some of the criticisms of Scripta Minoa 2, and are anxious that the proofreading should be carried out better this time. It was suggested that there might be an offer from one of us to help in the proofreading. I would be quite willing.

I expect you have news of the digs yourself, but in case not, I gather the position to date is this: Blegen has discovered the central part of a large Mycenaean palace at Pylos, with the megaron and throne, the floor being laid out in octopus and other designs, but the whole thing having been rather hard to excavate because of the lime from a destructive fire about 1200 BC. The first news, I had, indirectly from Mrs Blegen, that it was a Minoan palace, was wrong, and the late date arrived at in 1939 has been confirmed. He has found 400 tablets, in good condition, which are now in the Nat. Arch. Museum, and which he proposes to spend the summer studying.

Wace has found 37 or 39 tablets, some of them quite big ones, in "Blegen's house" at Mycenae, which will be moved to Athens middle of August. There was also news in the "Times", that a plaque had been found, with an inscription of the "16th century", but this sounds garbled. The other tablets, anyway, seem to be about 1200 BC too.

If I get any encouragement from these two parties, I have half a mind to go out to Athens for a few weeks to have a look at the new stuff; and if Blegen wants someone to draw the new transcript out, and you happen to be busy, I would be quite willing to volunteer.

I'm very conscious that there are a number of loose ends in the 'vocabulary' which I sent you: in fact, that though there are some forms which go very neatly into Greek, there are a devil of a lot of other forms which just won't transliterate into anything like sense. From what ^{you} said about - 77 - jojo I can see that you have yourself been alive to many of the features which suggest that the Pylos tablets are in Greek. And the new finds this year, if they all as I suspect show the same language, make it very difficult not to expect Greek, at least in the majority of personal names. What I shall be very interested to hear from you is whether you can suggest some way of starting from the same points of departure and arriving at a more 100% solution. It's too provoking that the language shows

so many parallels in form to Greek, and yet won't surrender outright.

During the last weeks I've made, through Myres, one recruit who is, in my present state of doubts, almost embarrassingly ~~new~~ enthusiastic. He is John Chadwick, lecturer in Classical Philology at Cambridge, and had been working on the Minoan scripts for 6 years. Myres gave him a copy of the latest 'grid', and he said that he found enough Greek to satisfy him that it worked, and to suggest that the dialect was an early stage of Arcadian. One of the most striking suggestions he has since made himself is the transliteration of Knossos

52:

ⲛⲓⲧⲁⲛⲁⲓⲧⲓⲛⲓⲓⲁ
ⲉⲛⲟⲩⲱⲁⲣⲓⲓⲟ
ⲡⲁⲓⲁⲱⲟ
ⲡⲟⲩⲉⲁⲱⲱⲱⲱ

a-ta-na-po-ti-ni-ja
e-nu-wa-ri-jo
pa-ja-wo
po-se-da----

Ἀθάνᾱ πότνια [Πότνια Ἀθηναίη]
Ἑνώλιος
Παιάφων [Παιήων]
Ποσειδάων

I've tried to work out the statistical chances of finding the names of 4 Olympians on one tablet, with an arbitrary grid and rules of orthography, and they're astronomical. But it may nevertheless be tripe! Another of Chadwick's suggestions is $\pi = pu$, which gives us $\pi\alpha\pi\alpha\pi\alpha = \alpha\pi\alpha\delta\alpha\sigma\iota\varsigma$ and $\pi\lambda\lambda = \pi\upsilon\lambda\alpha\varsigma$.

If I had to go back to the beginning and start again, I should cling to the identification of $\pi = pu$ / $\pi = pu$ = πατήρ / μάτηρ Δε on An42: I just can't see any other explanation for the balancing of a masculine and a feminine "trade" name in the different phrases. Are you convinced?! The second starting-point would be the contrast between $\pi\lambda\lambda\alpha\mu\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota$ ἔχοντες and $\alpha\pi\alpha\lambda\alpha\mu\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota$ on Jn01 etc, and between $\epsilon\chi\alpha\sigma\iota$ and $\epsilon\chi\epsilon\iota$ on En02 etc. Finally, the correlation between the inflexions of the different declensions and the Greek ones:

	-ā	-ās	-os	-hūs	-tēr	-wn	-wp
	(f)	(m)					
Nom:	-ⲁ	-ⲁⲥ	-ⲟⲩ	-ⲕⲱⲥ	-ⲧⲏⲣ	-ⲱⲛ	-ⲱⲡ
Gen:	-ⲁⲓ	-ⲁⲥ	-ⲟⲩⲟ	-ⲕⲱⲥ	-ⲧⲏⲣ	-ⲱⲛ	-ⲱⲡ
Dat:	-ⲁⲓ	-ⲁⲓ	-ⲟⲩⲱ	-ⲕⲱⲥ	-ⲧⲏⲣ	-ⲱⲛ	-ⲱⲡ
Nom Pl:	-ⲁⲓ	-ⲁⲓ	-ⲟⲩⲱ	-ⲕⲱⲥ	-ⲧⲏⲣ	-ⲱⲛ	-ⲱⲡ
Gen pl:	-ⲁⲓⲱⲛ	-ⲁⲓⲱⲛ	-ⲟⲩⲱⲛ	-ⲕⲱⲥ	-ⲧⲏⲣ	-ⲱⲛ	-ⲱⲡ
Dat pl:	-ⲁⲓⲱⲛ	-ⲁⲓⲱⲛ	-ⲟⲩⲱⲛ	-ⲕⲱⲥ	-ⲧⲏⲣ	-ⲱⲛ	-ⲱⲡ

↑ invariably preceded by -e-.

The condition where the genitive and nominative are the same, but distinct from the dative, could only occur, with the spelling rules assumed, in words in -οψ and -οξ; and it is a hell of a coincidence that the only Pylos word which clearly shows this, $\pi\alpha\pi\alpha\pi\alpha$, resolves itself so nicely into the equivalent of $\alpha\pi\alpha\delta\alpha\sigma\iota\varsigma$.

Anyway, let's see what the new tablets hold in store. The diggers seem to have burst themselves to provide new material this year, and the least we could do is to try and decipher it for them before the year's out. The trouble now is that I've got so mentally confused with Hroznysque concentration on particular phonetic values that I've lost the stomach for a purely disinterested statistical analysis; and we must rely on you to keep that up.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Ventris

PS: 2 more starting-points which I should'nt like to give up in a 'second attempt': $\pi\alpha\pi\alpha = \kappa\alpha\pi\alpha\varsigma$ / $\pi\alpha\pi\alpha = \kappa\alpha\pi\alpha\varsigma$; $\pi\alpha\pi\alpha = \kappa\alpha\pi\alpha\varsigma$ passive participles.

Incidentally, Chadwick independently ~~xxxx~~ arrived at the reading

τόσσα φάσχανα for the Knossos $\pi\alpha\pi\alpha\pi\alpha$,

and this seems much better than the imaginary word given in my vocab.