

September 23, 1947

President Harry D. Gideonse
Brooklyn College

Dear President Gideonse:

This is a report of what was accomplished during the year Sept. 1946-Sept. 1947, during my sabbatical year from Brooklyn College.

The John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation had granted me a Fellowship in order to study the Minoan scripts and to find out what the chances were for a successful decipherment.

The entire year was devoted to work on the project.

In Sept. 1946 the situation was this: although some thousands of inscriptions had been excavated in the course of the last fifty years, less than one tenth had been published, or in any way made accessible to scholars in general. These came from various types of writing, all included in the general term "Minoan scripts." It was my intention to see if analysis of the available material would indicate any possibility of decipherment.

The first six months of the year were devoted to analyzing, classifying, and listing all that was known of various languages known to have been used in various lands bordering the Mediterranean Sea, on the theory that some of these may eventually prove to be useful in the decipherment. Such analyses and classifications had never been made. The languages involved were Lydian, Lycian, Carian, Sumerian, Akkadian, Hurrian, Hattic, Hittite, Egyptian, and some remnants of others. These are recorded in various systems of writing, hieroglyphic, cuneiform, syllabic, alphabetic.

The analysis also included the signs used in the various systems of writing, some of which bear a resemblance to Minoan signs.

At the end of six months, a complete classification of the pertinent material was ready for use.

According to the original plan, the next six months were to be devoted to a classification of the Minoan systems of writing (already almost complete) and a careful analysis of the evidences of inflection. An article on certain evidences of inflection had already been published by the writer, and a further article on declension in Linear Class B of the scripts was by this time in the hands of the editor of the American Journal of Archaeology.

At this point in the work, Sir John Myres, Professor of New College and some other Colleges at Oxford, who was in charge of the inscriptions excavated by Sir Arthur Evans at Knossos in Crete, and then getting ready for the publication of this material, extended an invitation to the writer to come to Oxford to copy this material for her own use in the problem. As it turned out, the invitation included the privilege of assisting Myres in preparing the material for publication.