

19 North End,
LONDON N W 3

12 April 1954

Dear Bennett,

Many thanks for this morning's letter from you. I was very interested to hear of your work in ironing out the Knossos joins, and have made a note of the ones you list. The most interesting seems to be 1105/1446, where Ai-ku-pi-ti-jo looks extraordinarily like Agyptios. I must get out the reference books and look up the current etymologies of "Egypt": I have a feeling they will probably assume the word got into Greek a considerable time after 1400.

On 0456/0477, do you get on our values the reading

po-ni-ke-a wo-ra-we-sa ?

It looks like a feminine adjective in - Feosa like BFZY ; "scarred", from wolsā > οβλή ???

The seminar which the London University Institute of Classical Studies has been operating since the New Year has got some of its members working on a card-index transcription of the Knossos tablets (experimental syllabic values included), on which I have asked them to include cross-referencing to the various numerations, and which I propose to check the readings of, as far as the SM II plates and your Index and letters allow. By the end of the year the whole thing may be ready for duplication, for private circulation. Whatever we do can of course only be a temporary substitute for whatever revised Knossos Tablets list ~~which~~ your own autopsy will produce: and I'd very much like to hear what form you intend to give this.

We'd like, meanwhile, to make our temporary list as accurate as possible. I won't certainly land you with the job of checking through our first cards and seeing whether they agree with yours (useful though that would of course be to us); but as a temporary measure I am going through the inventory of tablets in your Index and marking those which neither SM II or your Index gives the unambiguous text of (e.g. a lot of the 5000 fragments); and when we meet in the summer perhaps you will allow me to make a note of your readings of these.

It's not our intention, of course, to produce a new "Knossos Tablets" of our own in print, ahead of anything you have in mind (and Chadwick and I would still like to discuss with you further ways of collaborating, of which more when we ~~next~~ meet). Also, Chadwick and I have not sold our soul to the Institute of Classical Studies in any way, or shown them any unpublished tablets. (People may appear in print, of course, on particular groups of tablets (say "CHARIOTS") from now on.)

As regards SM III, I rang up the Society of Antiquaries, who are publishing the thing with some misgivings and at great expense, but with pious determination as honouring illustrious past members. They tell me that the book is in page proof stage, and that responsibility now rests with

W. C. BRICE,
PITT RIVERS MUSEUM,
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD.

I have had to write to him today about a lecture, and I gave him your address and asked him to get in touch with you. I also suggested that if he sent you a copy of the proofs, he might get some valuable comments from you, and some new or revised readings, for an appendix. I hope I did right.

Yours,

Michael Ventris

PS: You may be amused to hear that a Welsh Professor, engaged in dollar negotiations to get a copy of the "Mycenae Tablets", was asked by the Customs & Excise to state what disease he was proposing to treat with them!

PS: For some reason or other, the American press seems to have taken up Linear B again this week (eg Scientific American, TIME, Saturday Evening Post). If anything appears that looks inaccurate or ~~arrogant~~ arrogant, please lay it to the journalists as before.