COMMUNICATIONS

To celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the Pylos tablets I hope I may be permitted to print extracts from the most pertinent documents. From a photograph I can reproduce the appearance of C. W. Blegen's notes. For W. A. McDonald's, which come on several pages and include other details, I include only a selection. I confess that I add punctuation, and change a couple of spellings, and perhaps introduce error by copying W. A. McDonald's notes from a typed copy.

--from Carl W. Blegen's notebook
Tuesday April 4

Dark + threatening weather. McDonald + I go out to Ano Eglianos.
Lv. 7:30. Arr. 8:15.

We find Charalambos + many men.
Start work with 20 men at 8:30.
Lay out long trench approx. N-S, ca. 50 m. long, 2 m. wide.
Starts just to E of hole made by someone in S bank of hill which we thought might have been a drain or a tomb.

5 sections ca. 10 m. long each.
McDonald takes charge of trench.
Soon find stone walls - several at intervals - all running approx. NW-SE. One is 1.20 m. wide, others ca. 1.10. 1 or 2 narrower.

Looks like walls of big building. Earth black + red, all burned.
Sherds few but look LH III.

In section A found ca. .30 deep a deposit of inscribed tablets, plano-convex in shape. Lined out on flat side + inscr. w. Minoan (?) signs.
Workman gets out two. Mac + I three more - all complete. One more at least left, but we leave + cover, for a drizzly rain sets in + hard to photo + to get out.

Stop work ca. 4:15 on acct' of rain.

--from W. A. McDonald's notebook

Work started ca. 8:30 in a NS trench ... 2 m. wide and 50 m. long. The trench was divided into 5 sections (A-E starting from S) each 10 m. long and 4 workmen were put in each.

Trench I, Section A
Sherds from surface layer (surface - 0.10 m.) removed. ...
2nd layer, 0.10-0.25 m. ...
3rd layer, 0.25-0.30 m. - basket removed.
4th layer, 0.30-0.35 m. - basket removed.

During the digging of the 4th layer at a point ca. 6 m. N of S end, and at a depth of 0.34 m., and ca. 0.40 m. from E side of trench, the pickman uncovered the first 2 plaques with lines and characters on them. Immediately another complete and other fragments began to appear and the work was stopped and the earth sifted for fragments. The plaques are wet and not yet in a condition to be closely examined.

... Inscribed plaques from Section A. We have numbered them in the order in which they came out of the ground.
No. 1 - taken out by workman but was probably lying face down because of the nature of the small
break made by the pick in its side.
No. 2 - also taken out by workman but was certainly lying face down since there 
are small pickmarks in the back (convex) side.
No. 3 - lay face up and partly across No. 4.
No. 4 - lay face down and partly under No. 3.
No. 5 - lay slightly to the N and W of the above two and face down.
No. 6 - fragment.
No. 7 - small fragment. It lay just above No. 5.
No. 8 - found beside Nos. 3 and 4.

The first epigraphical photograph shows the impression left in the earth by 
the removal of tablet No. 5, an impression in which can clearly be seen some 
of the ruling, and less clearly one or two of the ideograms.

In Eleftheros Kosmos of 20 November 1968 M. Nisiotis reports on excavations of M. Popham and H. Sackett which identified a Minoan megaron near the 
Little Palace. Among the finds was a pot on whose surface appeared a Linear B 
inscription. Nearby, in cooperation with S. Alexiou, tombs at Sellopoulo were 
evacuated, and excellent jewelry found.

A report in an Athenian newspaper of 13 December 1968 concerns the remains 
of a large Mycenaean city now under water between the Peloponnesos and 
Kythera. At a depth of 10 meters, near the island Pavlopetri appeared walls, 
houses, and a Mycenaean cemetery.

A bronze dagger of the 12th century B.C. illustrates the 
report of excavations at Exa- 
lolphos, 12 kilometers west of 
Trikala. A tomb with two 
graves, excavated under the 
direction of D. Theoscharis, 
contained another dagger, a 
spear, ring and pottery. M. 
Nisiotis, Eleftheros Kosmos, 
22 December 1968.

A report from Sofia appearing in an Athenian newspaper 23 February 1969, concerns a round clay seal, 2 cm. 
 thick, with a conical handle on 
the back, found at Nova-Zagora 
in Bulgaria. A photograph was 
reproduced, of which this is
only a rough sketch. The diameter is not specified. It was found in a context to be dated by pottery and other artifacts, as well as by Carbon 14, to the 4th millennium B.C. The opinion of V. Georgiev is reported to be that the marks on its surface are undoubtedly writing, and by far the earliest in Europe. As such they are to be compared on the one hand to the inscriptions from Tartaria, and on the other to the earliest Cretan scripts. He distinguished 18 signs.

The view which fills out p. 556 should need no identification, but the stages in Homeric palace building on p. 570 may have been harder to trace to their source. Norman Morrison Isham, The Homeric Palace, Providence, 1898.

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor:- A propos de la nouvelle tablette de Mycènes publiée par M. Mylonas dans Kadmos 7:1 (1968) 65-66, je vous signale que la photographie (pl. 1, fig. 1) me suggère, pour la ligne inférieure, un texte légèrement différent de celui proposé. Au lieu de pa-we-ya ko-u-ra je lirais pa-we-ya ko-u-ra. Le séparateur est net, et la moitié gauche de a2 me semble suffisamment net pour exclure ə et pour admettre, dans ce mot, l'orthographe déjà attestée sur MY Oe 127. Ceci pourrait intéresser les lecteurs de Nestor.

1 February 1969

Bâle

Yours, &c.

H. Mühlestein

To this, which should have been anticipated if the letter itself had not arrived before the copy of Kadmos, or of Mycenae’s Last Century of Greatness, which contains the same photograph, drawing, and text, one can only agree, and possibly suggest further that another divider might have followed -ra, and that a better text in line 1 would be pa-ta, (with a divider). But ko-ta, would be equally suitable for the published photograph, and the probable presence of a divider almost directly above the divider in line 2 and the trace of a sign before it make the reading of line 1 rather more doubtful than was suggested.

1 March 1969

E. L.B.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Diringer, David, The Alphabet. A Key to the History of Mankind, 3rd [90240 edition, completely revised with the collaboration of Reinhold Regensburger, London, Hutchinson & Co. 1968 [SBN 09 067640 8], 2 volumes, pp. xix, 473; 452. £12/12/-.

The Aegean scripts are naturally included, but it should be noted that there is published on i. 117-8 a letter of Michael Ventris, 7. vi. 1952.


A critical re-examination of the evidence, leading to a theory that the decisive blow by which the Dorian Greeks destroyed the Mycenaean kingdoms was a sea-borne invasion of the Peloponnese from the coasts and islands of Asia Minor.


The analysis of a Minoan dagger, showing the first recorded example of Sheffield Plate, long before Bolsover's invention, or rediscovery, of it in 1743. The appendix on the archaeological context of this dagger, alleged to be from Gouria.


