

CLIPPINGS

Ta Nea, 12 Aug. 1969, S. Anagnostopoulos. For comparison with Minoan figurines and frescoes there are offered wall-paintings of the Sahara, which, according to Henri Λότ, date from ca. 6000 B.C., and represent peoples from the Aegean.

NYTimes, 19 Aug. 1969. With a recalibration of Carbon 14 dates and a new dating of Stonehenge constructions between 2200 and 1700 B.C., there is need for a reassessment of the alleged links between Wessex and the Mycenaean culture of Greece.

Ethnos, 19 Sep. 1969. Excavation at the Tomb of Salganeus, at Drosia in Boiotia, discloses a well-made floor of the Mycenaean period, with destruction by fire, house-walls, and many objects.

Athens News Agency Weekly Bulletin, 19-25 Aug. 1969; United Press International, ca. 25 Aug. 1969; Associated Press, ca. 12 Sep. 1969. Press conference of Mr. C. Vovolinis, and accounts of the excavation of Santorini, with speculation on the possible presence of Linear A inscriptions.

Ta Nea, 22 Sep. 1969. Petrified bones of large mammals have been found in excavations at Alonnisos.

Ta Nea, 10 Sep. 1969; Ethnos, 20 Sep. 1969; Eleftheros Kosmos, 17 & 23 Sep. 1969, M. Paraskevaidis. Accounts of the First International Congress of Hephasteiology, with communications from S. Marinatos, G. Georgalas, P. Faure, R. Amiran, C. Schaeffer, S. Hood, N. Platon, L. Pomerance, and A. Galanopoulos.

NYTimes, 4 Oct. 1969, W. Sullivan. An account of the project of Ian Graham to prepare a photographic corpus of the Mayan inscriptions.

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor: - At a meeting of the South Australian branch of "Mensa," I performed an experiment to see how far the early stages of the decipherment could be reenacted by intelligent people unaware of what had actually been done. After a brief account of the background copies of various tablets were handed out and the group asked to comment on them.

On MY Au 102 and MY V 659 (both, of course, post-decipherment) the group immediately spotted the tablets as lists and quickly identified the person ideogram of 102, the word-divider, and the numerals. They were then invited to consider the button sign and after about 1/4 hour agreed that it was an enclitic sign for "and." Presented next with PY Ng 319, they at once worked out the numeral system; on PY Aa 61 and 62 "boy" and "girl" were identified after some discussion (without knowing which was which), and the preceding ideogram guessed as "woman." They then considered PY Eb 473 and 477 (2nd line) and PY Jn 310 and 389 (8th line); the word for "total," common to the two groups, was identified after some discussion and after considerable debate the calculations of the Jn tablets were recognised as some kind of measuring system and approximately worked out. PY Tn 996 and KN Sd 0403 were also shown for interest.

After a bibulous interval, the group was then given p. 16 of "Docs." with Kober's triplets and explanation of the "tentative phonetic pattern," together with Fig. 3 (the state of the grid prior to decipherment) and "Decipherment" Fig. 6 (Cypriot syllabary). They were informed that Kober's triplets were place-names and invited to identify them from the following list: Amnissos, Gortus, Knossos, Luktos, Methone, Olympia, Phaistos, Praisos, Pylos, Rhion, Tulissos. The subsequent babel of conversation was so great it was difficult to follow exactly what was happening, but after about half-an-hour all the main identifications had been correctly made. The meeting ended with a discussion of KN Ca 895, KN Ra 1540 and PY Ta 641.

The above may be of interest to Nestor readers as showing that a group of people presented (admittedly) with selected evidence and told what to look at, but not (except in the case of the place-names) told what to look for, successfully repeated many of the predictions made before the decipherment against which the decipherment was checked. None of them had any previous knowledge of Greek or of the decipherment.

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24 September 1969

Yours, &c.
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