

COMMUNICATIONS

The Eleventh International Congress of Classical Archaeology will be held in London, September 3-9, 1978. Theme: Greece and Italy in the Classical World. The First Circular and the Enrolment form may be obtained from: Dr. Ann Birchall, Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities, British Museum, London WC1B 3DG, England. The Enrolment Form should be returned by 10th June, 1976, or as soon as possible thereafter.

The Publication Committee of the Swedish Institute in Athens has decided to reduce the price for Arne Furumark, *The Mycenaean Pottery*, from 250 to 125 Crowns, and the *Chronology of Mycenaean Pottery*, from 75 to 37:50 Crowns. The supplementary volume of plates is still in preparation, now due in 1977. The books may be ordered from Paul Åström, Södra Vägen 61, S-412 54 Göteborg, Sweden.

WORK IN PROGRESS

Guggenheim Fellowship, 1976. Stanislav Segert, "Studies on the origin of the Greek alphabet."

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor: - Food rations for "men" and "boys." In commenting on Chadwick's interpretation of a Mycenaean text, Daniel A. Was (Nestor 1031) correctly observes that in many societies "coming of age" is a major event in an individual's life. However, to characterize Mycenaean society as "primitive" may be considered ethnocentric. These literate people with a sophisticated technology and extensive "international" trade relations were more likely operating as part of an incipient state, if not as part of a developed city-state political system. The Mycenaeans, as well as numbers of peoples whom Dr. Was might characterize as "primitive," were certainly aware that the food requirements and consumption potential of "young men" or boys in their late teens is often in excess of mature adult males. The food requirements for working "boys," therefore, must be seen as a function of labor output as well as metabolic growth requirements. We have no reason to believe that Chadwick's (Nestor 1003-4) inference that the "men" and "boys" were receiving equal or similar rations was not true in this case.

Since the detailed study of food distribution and consumption in hunting and gathering societies as well as in simple agrarian societies is just now becoming a focal point within anthropology, and is also a concern to nutritionists, comparative data from which tentative conclusions may be drawn do not appear to be available. However, at this point there exists no evidence to suggest that a deliberate effort would be made to deprive the "boys" in this instance of necessary rations.

If the "boys" in this example are near manhood, or possibly unmarried (but possibly young adult) males, then one would have every reason to suspect that

all the members of this work-group would receive an equal ration. While the point made by Was is well taken, Chadwick's interpretation may be seen as secure in the light of available evidence. This comment in no way negates the accuracy of the other texts referenced by Was, but is intended to support the concept that "boyhood" and "manhood" are not always two vastly different life stages separated by a major ritual event. Varying subcategories of growth and development within each of these two areas are recognized by all peoples, and Chadwick's interpretation merely requires that we be aware of these possible variations.

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30 March 1976

Yours, &c.
Marshall Joseph Becker

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