FROM THE EDITORS

After a year abroad, the editors are pleased to be back in Bloomington and once again "in harness". We welcome the assistance of Ms. Margaret Milhous and Mr. Constantine Gianikos of the Program in Classical Archaeology and remind you that all correspondence for the Forum section of Nestor should be addressed to Dr. Karl Petruse, Archaeological Studies Program, Boston University, 232 Bay State Road, Boston, MA 02215.

COMMUNICATIONS

A "table ronde" focusing on the transition from the Neolithic to the Bronze Age in eastern Europe was held at Sarajevo from 21-24 September. It was sponsored by the Center of Balkan Studies of the Academy of Arts and Sciences of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Archaeological Commission of the Polish Academy of Sciences (Krakow Section). Details about the proceedings can be procured by writing the following address:

Centar za balkanološka ispitivanja Akademije nauka i umjetnosti Bosne i Hercegovine
7100 Sarajevo
ul. 6. novembra 7

FORUM

The editors of Minos are pleased to announce that recent improvements in typesetting and printing will result in speedier production of issues of the journal (beginning with vol. 18). Manuscripts submitted before October 1, 1981 will appear in early 1982. For further information, authors may contact Professor J.L. Melena, Facultad de Filologia y Letras, Universidad de La Laguna, Tenerife, Spain.

To the Editors:

Homer's πίσως: 'four' and "normal Mycenaean"

Thrice in the Iliad (0 680, Ψ 171, Ω 233) and three times in the Odyssey (ε 70, π 249, χ 111), Homer uses the curious word πίσως for
the usual τέσσαρες 'four'. This is an Aeolicism, showing p from
the labiovelar q (preserved in Mycenaean qe-to-ro) before a front
vowel instead of the t of Ionic and most other Greek dialects. The
iota is anomalous; Aeolic proper has πέσσαρες (Lesbian) or ΠΕΣΣΑΡΕΣ.
L.R. Palmer, in his new book The Greek Language (Humanities Press:
Atlantic Highlands, 1980) attempts (p. 240) to explain this iota as
a "postulated anaptyctic vowel" but on p. 290 resgins himself to
labeling it "unexplained". Such scholars as Paul Wathelet and Michel
Lejeune have seen in it a development of a "zero grade" but in that
case would we not expect zero, not iota?

A better approach is to link this word, showing as it does the
development of e to i in the neighborhood of a labial or labiovelar
with words exhibiting a similar tendency in Mycenaean Greek. Ernst
Risch showed in his essay "Les différences dialectales dans le mycénien"
(Cambridge Colloquium on Mycenaean Studies (Cambridge: 1966), pp. 150-
157) that a great many scribes, especially at Pylos, write i for e
and o for a in the neighborhood of a labial/labiovelar: a-ti-mi-te
(Artimitel, dat.) vs. a-te-mi-to (Artemitos, gen.), ti-mi-t. (thimis,
thimit-) vs. te-mi(-t.) (themis, themit-), pe-mo (spermo) vs. pe-ma
(sperma). Scribes who make these changes retain -ει for the dative/
locative, while those retaining e and o in the above words often use
-i for the dative/locative. Risch has dubbed the a-ti-mi-te/pe-mo/
ei-dative variant of Mycenaean mycénien normal and the other-less
common at Pylos-tendency mycénien spécial. He ascribes two words
in Homer and later Greek, τυDavis and πουλIo (which both also show
unetymological h's) to the influence of mycénien normal, which he
regards as the language of the Mycenaean courts. For these words
Mycenaean has i-ο, a-mo 'wheel' and a-ra-ro-mo-te-me-na/no 'fitted
out' vel sim.

I would like to suggest that πέσσαρες belongs with these words
as a legacy of mycénien normal, a court speech which disappeared
after the fall of the palaces, while spécial became the ancestor of
Arcadian and Cyprian. The why's and wherefore's of this I intend to
explore in the near future and therefore invite comment from NESTOR'S
readers.

Yours, &c.
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Dear Sirs:

It might be interesting for your readers to know about an
important new project, namely the systematic study of Bronze Age
Aegean seals through standardized descriptions. Recently in Paris,
under the auspices of the Centre Nationale de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS), an international group of 15 experts met to discuss the use of the computer in more accurately arriving at typologies for seal motifs, forms and syntactic schemes as necessary steps in a more certain chronology for the ca. 7500 known examples. Although the literature on Aegean seals has grown prodigiously since the turn of the century, surprisingly little systematic work has thus far appeared. And only since the first volumes of the Corpus of Minoan and Mycenaean Seals (CMS) appeared in the mid 1960's was a comparative and systematic treatment possible.

In 1971, called together at the home of the CMS in Marburg, Germany by its founder, Friedrich Matz, specialists discussed problems with regard to the typology, chronology, foreign relations and falsification of Aegean seals. Matz's successor as editor of the CMS, Ingo Pini, conducted a second similar symposium in 1978 which led to the Paris meeting in 1980, with its goal of discussing and implementing the normalization of the descriptions of seals so that they can be studied more effectively with the help of a computer. The results of the first two symposia are available in print.

The driving force behind the use of computers to study seals are the French scholars R. Ginovès and A.M. Guimier-Sorbets (with regard to the programming system) and H. and M. van Effenterre (for the actual typologizing of the individual motifs and syntactic schemes).

With each of the three succeeding symposia increasingly observable has been a rapid maturing in the study of Aegean seals and a clearer appreciation among students of the problems involved. Whereas the previous generation, for instance on the basis of a scanty and, in some ways, unrepresentative sampling of the material, made exaggerated claims for stylistic and typological similarities with objects from Southeast Europe and Western Asia for various purposes, we are now in a position to ask more productive questions owing to a better overview of the material.

Under the leadership of Mssrs. John Betts, Henri van Effenterre and Ingo Pini a fourth symposium is to take place in England which will address itself even more directly to the typology and programmed study of seal shapes, materials, motifs and syntactic schemes. In the meantime, individual seal experts have been assigned the preparation of the various component topics involved; for example, the nomenclature for seal materials and their colors, the typology of seal shapes, typologies for motifs such as humans, marine animals, other animals, plants, ornaments, etc. At the forthcoming meeting this "homework" will be studied, discussed and applied toward the final goal of a systematic study of Bronze Age Aegean seals.

Yours, &c., Paul Yule
DAI, Königstr. 73
53 Bonn West Germany
WORK IN PROGRESS

Ms. Silvia Damiani Indelicato has presented the thesis, "L'Urbanisme dans la Crête Minoenne", directed by Professor H. van Effenterre, at the University of Paris I (Panthéon-Sorbonne).

Mr. William C. Chrisant, Department of Classics, The University of Akron, Akron, Ohio 44325, is preparing a "Comprehensive Bibliography on the Island of Thera". Interested readers may write Mr. Chrisant for further details.

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REVIEW


