

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-107-50341-0 - Documents in Mycenaean Greek: Three Hundred Selected Tablets From Knossos, Pylos and Mycenae  
with Commentary and Vocabulary  
Michael Ventris and John Chadwick  
Frontmatter  
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DOCUMENTS IN  
MYCENAEAN GREEK

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PLATE I



46=Au102, Mycenaean tablet of 'page' shape

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# DOCUMENTS IN MYCENAEAN GREEK

THREE HUNDRED SELECTED TABLETS  
FROM KNOSSOS, PYLOS AND MYCENAE WITH  
COMMENTARY AND VOCABULARY

BY

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AND

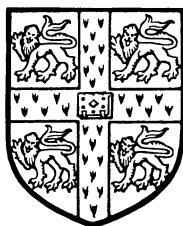
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*Lecturer in Classics in the University of Cambridge*

WITH A FOREWORD BY

ALAN J. B. WACE

*Emeritus Professor of Classical Archaeology in the  
University of Cambridge*



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*To the memory of*  
**HEINRICH SCHLIEMANN**

1822–1890

FATHER OF MYCENAEAN ARCHAEOLOGY

*I had always passionately longed to learn Greek; but up to the time of the Crimean War it appeared to me inadvisable to abandon myself to this study, since I feared that the powerful fascination of this wonderful language would take too great a hold on me and would alienate me from my commercial interests. But when the first news of peace arrived at St Petersburg in January 1856, I could no longer contain my desire, and without delay I applied myself with great diligence to the new study. Again I faithfully followed my old methods. In order to master the vocabulary in a short time (even more difficult for me than in the case of Russian), I obtained a modern Greek translation of Paul et Virginie; and read this from cover to cover, all the time carefully comparing each word with its counterpart in the French original. After a single reading I had absorbed at least half of the words in the book, and after a repetition of this process I had learnt practically all of them—without having wasted a single moment in looking a word up in a dictionary. In this way I succeeded, within the short space of six weeks, in mastering the difficulties of modern Greek. Then I embarked on the study of the ancient language, of which I gained a sufficient knowledge in three months to enable me to understand some of the ancient authors—especially Homer, whom I read again and again with the greatest enthusiasm. . . .*

(SELBSTBIOGRAPHIE, pp. 21–2.)

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## PREFACE

During the months following the appearance of our first article ‘Evidence for Greek dialect in the Mycenaean archives’ (*JHS*, 73, 1953, pp. 84–103) we received several invitations to discuss the results of our decipherment at book length. Our first reaction was to regard the writing of such a book as premature, in view of the uncertainty and incompleteness of much of the interpretation; but since 1953 there have been a number of changes in the situation:

1. A large number of new Mycenaean tablets, found at Pylos and Mycenae in the seasons 1952–4, have been added to the known material and must now be taken into account. Through the kindness of Prof. C. W. Blegen, Prof. A. J. B. Wace, Dr Emmett L. Bennett Jr. and Dr Ch. Karouzos (director of the National Museum in Athens), we have been able to study many of these documents in advance of publication; our thanks are also due to Dr N. Platon (director of the Iraklion Museum) and to his assistant S. Alexiou for making available to us the originals of the Knossos tablets, many of which are not to be found in Evans and Myres’ *Scripta Minoa II*. We are indebted to them for the photographs of tablets which appear in the Plates. While this book contains a selection of all the Mycenaean tablets known at the time of writing (Easter, 1955), it is uncertain whether the next few seasons’ excavation will provide any material addition to their numbers, and this may therefore be an opportune moment to review the evidence.

2. The 1952–4 tablets have enabled us to improve many of our earlier interpretations of signs, vocabulary and grammar, and have provided new and conclusive evidence that the language of the Mycenaean script really is a form of Greek. The documents here published are thus of great importance in forming almost the earliest record of Indo-European speech (of the family to which our own language belongs), and in providing the present-day speakers of Greek with a language history which may now be traced back more than 3350 years. A complete and detailed Mycenaean Vocabulary is becoming a necessity for comparative purposes.

3. A large number of classical scholars, philologists and archaeologists have begun to join in the interpretation of the documents. A general survey of the evidence will, we hope, be useful as a background against which to appreciate this new research discipline, already embodied in numerous articles dealing with points of detail. It may also provide a useful summary of its first results for those who have not the time for the cryptographic technicalities, but who

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nevertheless wish to know more about the subject-matter that the tablets record and of the language in which they are written. While we would be the first to admit that our translations of the tablets are necessarily very tentative and imperfect, we hope that this book will have the advantage over previous articles in offering the remaining sceptics an overwhelming mass of evidence to show that the widespread support for the principle of the decipherment is justified.

The book has been planned in three sections. Part I contains a retrospective account of the half-century of research which has culminated in decipherment; a detailed discussion of the Mycenaean script, language and proper names; and a summary of the cultural evidence which can be extracted from the tablets. Part II, the core of the book, is devoted to the printing of 300 selected texts from Knossos, Pylos and Mycenae in transliteration, together with translation and commentary. We have tried to include all the tablets which provide useful material for a discussion of language, life and institutions, and have divided these into six chapters according to their different subject-matter. Part III comprises a complete Mycenaean Vocabulary, a selective list of personal names and a bibliography, together with concordances to the tablet numbering and a general index.

Our views on the detailed relationship of this Greek dialect are given in ch. III; but until a satisfactory terminology is agreed we have preferred to refer to it non-committally as ‘Mycenaean Greek’, which is intended to mean no more than ‘that form of Greek which has so far been proved to occur in a Mycenaean context’. It may be objected that this would leave us without a distinguishing label for the speech of Mycenae itself, should further evidence reveal dialect differences between it and those of Pylos or Knossos; but similar considerations have not prevented the term ‘Mycenaean’ from coming into general use to describe the culture of the same wide area. Some apology is, however, due to the archaeologists for the necessity of referring to ‘Mycenaean’ dialect, script or institutions at Knossos in the period whose culture is properly known as Late Minoan II.

For the convenience of the printer and of those unfamiliar with the Mycenaean script, texts and words have generally been printed in the syllabic transliteration shown in fig. 4 (p. 23). Since in several respects the phonology of our dialect does not necessarily coincide with that of the later classical Greek, we have reluctantly decided to print the reconstructed Mycenaean forms in Roman letters (as in the transcription of other ancient Near Eastern scripts) rather than by an anachronistic use of the Greek alphabet. This has been replaced by the conventions *a b g d e w z h ē th i k l m n x o p r s t u ph kh ps ō*. The labio-velar series is represented by *q<sup>u</sup> g<sup>u</sup> q<sup>u</sup>h*; *ê* and *ô* indicate vowels

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in which compensatory lengthening might be expected (Attic ‘spurious’ diphthongs εἰ and οὐ). This transcription is to be regarded as no more than a conventional approximation; the exact pronunciation of these phonemes may be subject to considerable uncertainty (particularly in the case of *z*, *h*, *qʷ* and *s*).

We have wherever possible taken account of the interpretations of individual words, signs and contexts which have been proposed by other scholars during the period from 1953 up to the completion of this manuscript at Easter, 1955, and have tried to give them due credit in the commentaries and Vocabulary. Bennett’s edition of the 1939–54 Pylos tablets unfortunately appeared too late (February 1956) for full conformity to be ensured, particularly with regard to his new numbering of the 1939 tablets (see p. 153). We have preferred to leave many details of the interpretation as uncertain, where the solutions so far advanced appear to be premature or unsatisfactory. There will inevitably be cases where we withhold credit to others for solutions at which we had in fact already arrived independently, and for any such apparent injustice we apologize in advance. Books and articles have been referred to in the text merely by their author and year of publication (or other abbreviation), for which the key will be found in the bibliography on pages 428–33.

In preparing the first draft of this book, we divided its contents between us in alternating sections; but these were subsequently amended, and where necessary rewritten, to take account of the other’s criticisms, so that it is hardly possible to apportion responsibility. Continuous discussion and correspondence have resolved most of our differences; where we still hold strongly to opposing views this is indicated.

We are greatly indebted to Prof. Alan J. B. Wace for writing the Foreword to this book, which enables us to leave in his competent hands the discussion of the historical background to the Knossos and Mainland records; to Prof. C. W. Blegen for the encouragement and generous facilities given to our studies in connexion with his successive finds at Pylos; to Dr Emmett L. Bennett, Jr. for his indispensable published reference works, for a prolonged and fruitful private exchange of views, and for assistance with the tables of phonetic signs and ideograms; to Mr T. B. Mitford for the tables of Cypriot syllabary signs shown in fig. 12; and to Monsieur O. Masson for help with the table of Cypriot linear signs (fig. 11).

We must also acknowledge with thanks the benefit which many different parts of our book have derived from discussion and correspondence with Professors E. G. Turner, T. B. L. Webster and L. R. Palmer, Col. P. B. S. Andrews and other members of the seminar of the Institute of Classical Studies

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in London; with Professors G. Björck ✱, P. Chantraine, A. Furumark, M. S. Ruipérez and E. Sittig ✱, Dr F. Stubbings, Mr T. J. Dunbabin ✱, Herr Hugo Mühlestein; and with many others.

Our thanks are due to the Trustees of the Leverhulme Research Fellowships for a grant which enabled John Chadwick to make a special journey to Greece in the spring of 1955 to examine the original documents; and to the British School of Archaeology at Athens for the hospitality and facilities extended to us on this and other occasions.

We are indebted to the Oxford University Press for permission to reproduce the illustration from *Scripta Minoa I* shown as fig. 1, and to Messrs Macmillan for fig. 18, taken from *The Palace of Minos*.

We must express our gratitude, finally, to the Cambridge University Press for the speed, accuracy and co-operativeness with which it has undertaken the printing of our far from straightforward manuscript.

M. G. F. VENTRIS  
J. CHADWICK

LONDON  
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*May 1955*

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## FOREWORD

### CHRONOLOGICAL NOTE

The Aegean area divides geographically into three main regions, the Greek Mainland, the Archipelago, and Crete. The archaeological finds from these three regions are dated archaeologically by what are called ‘sequence dates’. From the successive strata of the sites that have been excavated, such as Knossos, Phylakopi, Korakou, Lianokladi, Eutresis, the succession of the different styles is known although their absolute dating is by no means certain. For the sake of convenience the whole Aegean Bronze Age is divided into three main periods, Early, Middle and Late. Each period can be subdivided into three sub-periods. The finds from the three main regions are thus described as Early, Middle and Late Helladic for the Mainland, Cycladic for the Archipelago, and Minoan for Crete. The three main periods are roughly parallel with the three great periods of Egypt, the Old Kingdom, the Middle Kingdom, and the Late Empire. This gives an approximate dating, which although not exactly accurate is not so far out as to make much difference. The Late Bronze Age begins with the establishment of the XVIIIth Egyptian Dynasty about 1580 B.C. and comes to an end in the days of the XXth Dynasty towards the end of the twelfth century. The sub-periods of the Late Bronze Age which most concern us, Late Helladic I, Late Helladic II and Late Helladic III, can be dated approximately as 1580–1500, 1500–1400, and 1400–1100 B.C. Many points are still under discussion, but new discoveries and future study are not very likely to change these approximate dates seriously. The sequence dates are of course fixed, unless there is an archaeological revolution, which is hardly possible.

In 1874 Schliemann made a series of trial pits on the Acropolis of Mycenae in order to select the most promising area for future excavations on a larger scale. In these tests Mycenaean pottery and Mycenaean terracotta figurines were found.<sup>1</sup> In 1876 Schliemann carried out his really epoch-making excavation at Mycenae when he discovered the Grave Circle and the royal graves with all their astonishing treasures. This, as he said, opened out a new world for archaeology: this was the beginning of Aegean Archaeology and the first landmark in the revelation of the prehistoric civilization of Greece. The second landmark came with the opening of Evans’ excavations at Knossos in 1900, when he first discovered the clay tablets inscribed in Linear Script B, as he called it. The third landmark came in 1952 when Michael Ventris announced

<sup>1</sup> Actually in 1809 Thomas Burgon picked up at Mycenae ‘south of the southernmost angle of the wall of the Acropolis’ some fragments of Mycenaean pottery. These he published in 1847 in a coloured plate in his paper ‘An Attempt to point out the Vases of Greece Proper which belong to the Heroic and Homeric Age’ (*Transactions of the R. Society of Literature*, Vol. II, New Series, pp. 258ff., pl. IV, A, B, C) which in some respects foreshadows the results of modern research.

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that he had succeeded in deciphering the Linear B script as Greek. These are the three main stages in the unveiling of the earliest ages of Greece.

In the years between these landmarks much patient archaeological work was carried out, especially by Tsountas, but the results of this were not immediately seen in their correct perspective. In 1884 Schliemann and Dörpfeld excavated the fortress of Tiryns and discovered the Mycenaean palace there. Unfortunately the interest of the architectural remains was allowed to overshadow the purely archaeological side of stratigraphy, and the ruins of the palace itself were interpreted in the light of the assumptions of Homeric critics about the plan and appearance of a Homeric house. In the years 1896 to 1899 the British School at Athens excavated a prehistoric island site at Phylakopi in Melos which gave the successive phases of the Bronze Age culture in the Cyclades. In 1901 the excavations at Dimini in Thessaly brought the first knowledge of the Neolithic Age of Greece, and subsequent research began to find a place in the series for various finds from many sites which had not been properly evaluated before.

The point which archaeologists were slow in recognizing was the all-important one of stratification. Furtwängler and Loeschke, publishing in 1879 and 1886 the pottery from Schliemann's excavations at Mycenae and pottery of similar types which had been found elsewhere, had recognized that the matt-painted pottery was probably older than the pottery with lustrous paint, but practically no excavator up to 1900 in southern Greece at least had endeavoured to disentangle the order of the strata that had preceded the Mycenaean Age, as it was called. It was customary to label everything as pre-Mycenaean, and though much of interest had come to light at important sites like Eleusis and Thorikos, no stratigraphic study was attempted; even the sequence of burials in the chamber tombs which were found at many sites was not noted. Moreover, the pottery from the chamber tombs excavated by Tsountas at Mycenae itself was not studied or even mended. Much valuable evidence was thus lost.

Gradually, with the beginning of the new century and after Evans' discoveries at Knossos, a fresher spirit entered into Greek prehistoric archaeology. The stratification of the Thessalian sites provided a guide, and the Bavarian work at Orchomenos and the Greek work in Boeotia and Phokis showed something of the earlier periods of the Bronze Age before the greatness of Mycenae.<sup>1</sup> The stratigraphic sequence was at last provided by Blegen's excavations at Korakou near Lechaem in 1915 and 1916, where the sequence of what we

<sup>1</sup> Fimmen's *Kretisch-mykenische Kultur*, published in 1920, is a good conspectus of our knowledge down to 1915.

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now call Early Helladic, Middle Helladic and Late Helladic was clearly revealed.<sup>1</sup> Four years later came the new excavations at Mycenae, which at last began to reveal the true history of the site, and other evidence accumulated from new excavations at sites like Asine, Eutresis and Eleusis, where the sequences illustrated by Korakou proved of invaluable assistance. In 1939 Blegen discovered in the Palace of Nestor at Pylos several hundred clay tablets inscribed in the Linear B script, which when analysed by Bennett proved of inestimable value in the decipherment studies of Ventris.

By 1930 the archaeologists had, by studying the successive strata, come to accept generally the thesis that the Greeks must have first entered Greece with the beginning of the Middle Bronze Age, deducing this from the following archaeological facts. The first stage of civilization in Greece is represented by the prehistoric mounds of Thessaly and contemporary sites in Central and Southern Greece. The earliest layers are Neolithic, and though we cannot as yet suggest even an approximate date, they probably are not later than the fourth millennium B.C. Their earliest inhabitants had reached a pottery stage of development and (to judge by the presence of Melian obsidian) were able to cross the narrow seas. We know nothing of their origin, which is still a matter of archaeological debate. They were succeeded at the beginning of the Bronze Age by a new people who, to judge from their artefacts, were racially dissimilar.<sup>2</sup> This new people used copper and later bronze and made pottery of a more sophisticated type, but had not yet learnt the potter's wheel. It would appear that this people introduced into Greece many words, mostly place and plant names, ending in *-nthos*, *-assos*, *-ttos* and *-ene* which are recognized as non-Indo-European: such words are Korinthos, *terebinthos*, *asaminthos*, Parnassos, Hymettos, Mykene. The original home of the Early Helladic people is usually placed in south-western Asia Minor, where similar place-names occur, but there is as yet no proof for this. This folk was akin to the contemporary Bronze Age peoples of the Cyclades and of Crete, and thus we can recognize that the cultures of the Early Bronze Age in these areas were not only contemporary but closely related. These cultures may not have been actually sisters, but were probably at least first cousins.

The Early Helladic people overran the Mainland, and presumably did not extirpate the Neolithic folk but coalesced with the survivors. In any case, as far as we can tell, they were not Indo-European. Some German

<sup>1</sup> Wace and Blegen, *BSA*, xxii, pp. 175 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Some writers (Matz, *Historia*, i, p. 173) believe that the early stage of the Early Helladic period overlapped with the later stage of the Neolithic period. There is, however, so far no stratigraphic evidence in favour of this, and the stratification at Lianokladi, Hagia Marina, Tsani, Prosymna and Orchomenos is against it.

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scholars,<sup>1</sup> however, wish to see in the Early Helladic period two strains, one Indo-European and one non-Indo-European, basing their ideas on the tectonic and syntactic character of some of the ornament on the patterned pottery. To extract ethnological conclusions from psychological speculations of this type is, to say the least, unwise: archaeology, especially prehistoric archaeology, should be as factual as possible and not imaginative to this extent.

With the beginning of the Middle Bronze Age on the Mainland of Greece in the nineteenth century B.C. a new element appears. In the stratification of excavated sites such as Korakou, Eutresis and Lianokladi it is obvious that there is no transition or evolution from the Early Bronze Age culture to that of the Middle Bronze Age. It is clear that a new factor at this time came into Greece; and since the material signs of its culture, pottery (which was made on the wheel), house plans, tombs, and in general all artefacts, differ markedly from those of the preceding Early Bronze Age, we assume that these differences mean a difference of race. This new racial element presumably in its turn also overran and amalgamated with the survivors of the Early Helladic inhabitants. From this time onwards there is no similar sign of any cultural break: the Middle Bronze Age develops slowly and naturally into the Late Bronze Age. This can be seen clearly in the pottery from the late Middle Helladic grave circle at Mycenae recently excavated by Dr Papademetriou and Professor George Mylonas.<sup>2</sup> Likewise at the end of the Late Bronze Age there can be observed, in spite of the more or less general destruction of the principal sites like Mycenae and Tiryns, a similar *gradual* change in culture (visible most of all in the pottery) from the end of the Bronze Age into the Early Iron Age. From the Early Iron Age henceforward there is no break in the development of culture in Greece: the Early Iron Age evolves naturally into the Orientalizing and Archaic periods and so into the great Classical Age of Greece. Thus by a process of elimination we deduce that since neither the Neolithic nor the Early Helladic people were Indo-Europeans, that is Greeks, then the Middle Helladic people who introduced into Greece the mysterious pottery called Minyan Ware (the characteristic pottery of the Middle Bronze Age) were probably the first Greeks to enter Hellas. So far no sign of their presence in the north of the Balkan peninsula can be found, and apart from Troy we have no indications of their presence in Asia Minor. The original home of the Greeks still remains a problem awaiting solution.

The Middle Helladic people apparently did not immediately come into contact with Crete and the Minoan culture; they met however in Melos,

<sup>1</sup> E.g. Matz, *Handbuch der Archäologie*, II, p. 203. He develops similar ideas in his *Torsion*.

<sup>2</sup> *Archaeology*, v, pp. 194ff.

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where at Phylakopi Kamares ware and Minyan ware are found side by side in the same Middle Cycladic strata. Towards the end of the Middle Bronze Age some of the painted Middle Helladic pottery shows signs of Cretan (Kamares) influence, but actual imports from Crete are rare. During the transition from the Middle to the Late Bronze Age the Mainland people became at last fully aware of the Minoan culture, which influenced the Mainland in much the same way as that in which classical Greek culture influenced Etruria. Just as in Crete the latest Middle Minoan products almost abruptly change into the new style of Late Minoan I, so on the Mainland the last style of Middle Helladic gives way rather suddenly to the bloom of Late Helladic I. The oversea connexions of the Mainland in this and the following period are to be seen in the fact that the 'Aegean' pottery found in Egypt at this date is Late Helladic and not Late Minoan.<sup>1</sup> Little or no Middle Helladic pottery has been observed in Crete;<sup>2</sup> but Melian vases of Middle Cycladic III date were found in the Knossian temple repositories of Middle Minoan III, and a small vase of Knossian faience of the same period in Shaft Grave A of the new Middle Helladic grave circle at Mycenae.<sup>3</sup> At all events from Late Minoan I/Late Helladic I onwards the contacts between Crete, Knossos in particular, and the Mainland (as exemplified at Mycenae) were frequent and intimate. The trained eye can, however, nearly always distinguish between Cretan and Mainland vases. The Zakro cups, for instance, are quite different in fabric from their contemporaries on the Mainland. In the succeeding Late Minoan II or Palace Period, actual Mainland vases are found at Knossos<sup>4</sup> and imitations of them are common, for instance the Ephryaeon goblets of Knossos.<sup>5</sup>

As pointed out below, it was the fashion down to the beginning of Evans' excavations at Knossos to call the remains of the prehistoric age of Greece Mycenaean or pre-Mycenaean; and thus the Late Bronze Age remains of Crete were designated as Mycenaean, the Middle Bronze Age in Crete was called the Kamares period, and so on. Gradually Evans by 1905 evolved the Minoan system of sequence dating, and so thenceforward he and others working in Crete began to speak of Early, Middle and Late Minoan for their three phases of the Cretan Bronze Age. As Evans developed his theory that the Late Bronze culture of the Greek Mainland was due to a Cretan or Minoan

<sup>1</sup> Wace and Blegen, *Klio*, xxxii (1939), pp. 145 ff. Even the famous Marseilles ewer is Late Helladic II. We re-examined it in 1952. It was in the collection of Clot Bey which was formed in Egypt.

<sup>2</sup> Evans notes only one sherd of Minyan ware as found at Knossos (*PM*, II, p. 309).

<sup>3</sup> Excavated by Dr Papademetriou and Professor Mylonas.

<sup>4</sup> E.g. Evans, *PM*, II, p. 484, fig. 291 *d* and *e*.

<sup>5</sup> Evans, *PM*, IV, p. 360, figs. 301, 302, 306.

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conquest and colonization, he began to call the Late Bronze Age remains of the Mainland Late Minoan; this nomenclature has persisted in some cases, such as in the writings of Myres, down to the present time. After the resumed excavations at Mycenae in 1920, it became clear to archaeologists such as Karo working on the Greek Mainland that the culture of the Mainland, though undoubtedly influenced by Crete, was largely independent of it; thus the system of Early, Middle and Late Helladic was proposed as a parallel series for the development of the culture of the Greek Mainland. Evans naturally was opposed to this because he refused to the last to modify his views about the relationship of Crete and the Mainland. He called those who refused to accept his views preposterous and perverse. His pan-Minoan theories are everywhere prominent in his *Palace of Minos*.<sup>1</sup>

With the impulse of excavations such as Korakou and the new work at Mycenae, students of prehistoric Greek archaeology began to recognize certain facts which emphasize the differences and likenesses of Knossos and the Greek Mainland in the second phase of the Late Bronze Age (Late Minoan II and Late Helladic II).

In Crete at this time, which Evans called the Palace Period at Knossos, it must be observed that Knossos differed much from the rest of Crete. The Palace Style, as such, is practically non-existent in the rest of Crete outside Knossos, and if examples of it are found they are generally considered as imports from Knossos. It has long been recognized that in East Crete, for instance, the Late Minoan II Palace Style period does not exist, but that there is instead a prolongation of the Late Minoan I style which gradually evolves into the Late Minoan III style. It should also be remarked that the Linear B script is so far known in Crete only at Knossos, whereas the Linear A script is known both at Knossos and in the rest of Crete. The Linear B script is the only script so far found on the Mainland, and it is far more widespread there than in Crete, where it occurs only at one site, for it is known at Orchomenos, Thebes, Eleusis, Tiryns, Mycenae and Pylos.

In the excavations at Korakou a type of pottery was first noticed to which the name of Ephyraean was applied. This belongs to the Late Helladic II period and is characterized by a class of well designed and proportioned goblets of fine, smooth, buff fabric painted with floral and marine patterns. They are easily distinguished by their patterns and fabric and are remarkable for their simplicity and dignity. In 1920 it was observed that a class of vases similar to

<sup>1</sup> Evans always refused to recognize any distinction between the Late Bronze Age pottery of the Mainland and that of Crete. He called it all Late Minoan and thus obscured much of the historical value of his discoveries.

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the Ephyraean vases of the Mainland was found at Knossos belonging to the same general date, the second phase of the Late Bronze Age. The Knossian examples, however, are less well made and less well designed; they also lack the simplicity of the Mainland examples and the patterns on them are too large in proportion. Further, it became apparent that the type of vase called by Evans an *alabastron*, which occurs throughout the Late Bronze Age, is far more common on the Mainland of Greece than in Crete. Because vases of this shape in actual alabaster were found in the ruins of the throne room at Knossos<sup>1</sup> it was assumed that it must be a Cretan shape; there are, however, from chamber tombs at Mycenae excavated by Tsountas, two vases<sup>2</sup> of this shape in gypsum which may well be of Mainland manufacture. The tombs<sup>3</sup> in Crete in which clay alabaster are found are of this Late Minoan II period, the period which is characterized by the so-called Palace Style of decoration for pottery.

Vases of the Palace Style, large amphorae, are on the Mainland a notable feature of the Late Helladic II period, especially in the beehive tombs. Kurt Müller long ago pointed out that those found at Kakovatos were of local and not of Cretan fabric, in opposition to the then current belief that all Palace Style vases were Cretan imports, a view which some apparently still hold.<sup>4</sup> All the large Palace Style jars found on the Mainland are definitely of local manufacture: those found at Vaphio, for instance, are of the same pinkish clay as the later Laconian vases of the Orientalizing period. Careful study of these three classes of vases indicates that in all probability their occurrence in Crete is due to influence from the Mainland.

Other Mainland influences can be discerned. The beehive tombs so characteristic of the Mainland, especially in Late Helladic II, are represented by a few examples at Knossos; and at Knossos alone in the whole of Crete at this time, so far as our present knowledge goes. On the other hand, on the Mainland between forty and fifty beehive tombs are known: thus if number is the principal test beehive tombs seem to be a feature of the Mainland, where their structural development can be followed, rather than of Knossos.

The three palaces so far excavated on the Mainland at Tiryns, Mycenae and Pylos have throne rooms. Knossos has a throne room which belongs to the latest part of the palace and seems to be a later insertion into an earlier plan;<sup>5</sup> the other Cretan palaces have not so far revealed throne rooms. At

<sup>1</sup> *BSA*, vi, p. 41.

<sup>2</sup> National Museum at Athens, No. 2769, from a chamber tomb at Mycenae 1887–88, and No. 3163 from Tomb 88 at Mycenae.

<sup>3</sup> See below, p. xxv.

<sup>4</sup> Picard, *Religions Préhelléniques*, p. 282.

<sup>5</sup> According to Evans (*PM*, iv, pp. 901f.) it is a 'revolutionary intrusion' of the early part of LM II.

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Knossos several fragmentary examples of friezes carved with rosettes or with the Mycenaean triglyph pattern have been found. Evans wished to attribute these to Middle Minoan III and to regard them as the models for similar friezes from Mycenae and Tiryns, which are of Late Helladic III date. The stratification of the fragments from Knossos is by no means secure: they belong to the upper strata of the palace, and are probably due to Mainland influence. There are fluted columns at Knossos, but these again belong to the Late Minoan II period and we know now that fluted columns were used at Mycenae and also at Pylos; fluted columns are not known at Phaestus and other Cretan sites outside Knossos.

Two other points call for mention. It has been observed that the style of the frescoes<sup>1</sup> of the last palace at Knossos is much more akin to that of the frescoes of Mycenae, Thebes, Tiryns and other Mainland sites than to the style of the frescoes found at Phaestus and other Cretan sites. The Cretan frescoes are naturalistic in character; those of Knossos and the Mainland are more interested in the human figure and in warlike scenes. Evans noted the military spirit of Knossos in this time, Late Minoan II.

In the palace at Knossos Evans found a store of blocks of green porphyry, *lapis Lacedaemonius*, the only source of which is Krokeai in Laconia, half-way between Sparta and the sea. This stone was popular at Mycenae and other Late Helladic centres for making stone vases, and the raw material seems to have been brought from Laconia to Mycenae to be worked. This porphyry is then yet another hint of Mainland influence on Knossos in Late Minoan II.

It was from a study of such points that several archaeologists had come to the conclusion that Knossos at this time, the Palace Period, stood apart from the rest of Crete and had more kinship with the Mainland. They suggested that the factors which Evans had interpreted as proofs of a Minoan colonization and conquest of the Mainland really pointed in the opposite direction, and that they indicated strong Mainland influence on Knossos as opposed to the rest of Crete. They at the same time emphasized the necessity for distinguishing between Late Minoan and Late Helladic pottery, especially at such sites as Phylakopi in Melos and Ialysos in Rhodes. At Phylakopi Cretan influence is first to be observed in the Middle Bronze Age, when Middle Minoan pottery (Kamarea ware) was freely imported at the same time as Minyan ware from the Mainland makes its appearance in the island. With the Late Cycladic period both Late Minoan I and Late Helladic I pottery are found at Phylakopi, by Late Cycladic II the quantity of Mainland Late Helladic II pottery outstrips the Late Minoan II, and by Late Cycladic III

<sup>1</sup> Banti in Γέρας 'Αντωνίου Κεραμοπούλλου, pp. 119ff.

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Mainland Late Helladic pottery is dominant and there is little if anything from Crete. In the early days before Aegean archaeologists recognized that it was possible to distinguish between Late Minoan I and Late Helladic I pottery (and the importance of doing so), practically all imported Late Bronze Age vases at Phylakopi were called Minoan, even some which we now know are obviously of Late Helladic II fabric.<sup>1</sup> This gradual displacement of Cretan influence by Mainland influence is a point to which too little attention has been paid.

At Ialysos<sup>2</sup> the earliest Aegean settlement seems to have taken place at the end of the Middle Bronze Age, for late Middle Minoan pottery has been found there. With the opening of the Late Bronze Age both Late Minoan and Late Helladic vases are present, with perhaps the Cretan in the lead. By the second phase of the Late Bronze Age the story of Phylakopi is repeated and Late Helladic II influence becomes dominant, and by that time the occupation or perhaps colonization of Rhodes from the Mainland was so strong that 'Mycenaean' pottery was by then being made on the island.

At Knossos actual Late Helladic II vases have been found,<sup>3</sup> and the recently discovered tombs also show Mainland influence. The new warrior graves, apart from weapons, contain Palace Style vases, alabastra and Knossian imitations of Ephyraean ware;<sup>4</sup> the other graves of the same date recently discovered at Katsamba near Knossos show the same characteristics.<sup>5</sup> Thus Aegean archaeologists had deduced that the relations between Mycenae and Knossos were not as believed by Evans, but rather the reverse, that the Mainland had strongly influenced or dominated Knossos. Evans had pointed out<sup>6</sup> that in his Palace Period (when he suggested that a new dynasty with strong military tendencies was in power at Knossos) other Cretan centres were overthrown; he attributed this to the dominance of Knossos over the rest of Crete, and at the same time he believed that this strong military Knossos had extended its power to the Mainland and had established a colonial empire there. The inherent natural strength of the Middle Helladic tradition, which persisted all through Late Helladic in spite of any influences absorbed from Crete or else-

<sup>1</sup> *BSA*, xvii, Pl. XI.

<sup>2</sup> Monaco, *Clara Rhodos*, x, pp. 41 ff. Furumark's paper (*Acta Inst. Rom. R. Sueciae*, xv, pp. 150 ff.) on the Ialysos discoveries was written without his ever seeing the actual pottery, which my wife and I have been allowed to study in the Rhodes Museum by the kindness of Dr Kontes.

<sup>3</sup> Evans, *PM*, II, p. 485, fig. 291 *d* and *e*. The Palaikastro ogival canopy jug (*ibid.* p. 490, fig. 296 *a*) is of Cretan fabric.

<sup>4</sup> *BSA*, xlvii, pp. 246 ff.

<sup>5</sup> *BCH*, 1954, pp. 150 f., figs. 50, 51. The vases include Knossian Ephyraean goblets, Palace Style vases and alabastra. Compare *Antiquity*, xxviii, pp. 183 f.

<sup>6</sup> *PM*, iv, pp. 884 f., 944 f.

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where, shows clearly to those who have eyes to see that the Mainland and Crete during the Late Bronze Age are basically and essentially different.<sup>1</sup>

Thus the general belief was spreading among those who had devoted serious study to the problem and knew the actual objects (in short, the excavators and field archaeologists) and who had already deduced that the Mycenaeans must be Greeks, that at this time Knossos must have been at least under strong Mainland influence, perhaps even under the rule of a Mainland prince.<sup>2</sup> It was consequently suggested that the destruction of Knossos at the close of the fifteenth century (at the end of Late Minoan II) was not due to an invasion from overseas or an earthquake, but to a revolt of the native Cretans, the 'Minoans', against the intruding Greek dynasty or overlords. The deductions about Mainland influence at Knossos<sup>3</sup> were based on facts, archaeological facts, the value of which far outweighs all theories and hypotheses about Minoan empires and colonies.

The Aegean archaeologists naturally believed that the 'Mycenaeans' of the Mainland were Greeks, and that they would have spoken and written Greek. Thus the discovery of the Pylos tablets in 1939 and their obvious similarity in script and probably in language with the Linear B tablets from Knossos posed an entirely new problem, which could only be solved by the decipherment of the script. The 'Minoans' naturally held that the Pylos tablets proved the Minoan conquest of the Mainland. One scholar even suggested that the tablets were loot from Knossos! The 'Mainlanders' believed that the Pylos tablets ought to be written in Greek, and toyed with the idea that the Knossos tablets might be Greek also, though even they did not then see the wider implications of the result of all this. 'Whether the language of the Mainland, probably then Greek, was the same as that of Crete we cannot yet determine.'<sup>4</sup>

In 1952, as explained below, Mr Ventris announced his decipherment of the Linear B script as Greek,<sup>5</sup> and many things thereupon became clear and the archaeological deductions received linguistic confirmation, a great triumph for both methods. Working independently, the archaeologists and the linguists had come to the same conclusions. It is not often that learned researches support one another so decisively or so neatly.

Thus at one stroke what is practically a revolution has taken place in Greek

<sup>1</sup> Compare Furumark, *op. cit.* pp. 186 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Pendlebury, *Archaeology of Crete*, p. 229. This suggestion was rejected by Matz, *Handbuch der Archäologie*, II, p. 271.

<sup>3</sup> Compare Kantor, *The Aegean and the Orient in the Second Millennium B.C.*

<sup>4</sup> Wace, *Mycenae* (1949), p. 117.

<sup>5</sup> If the Linear B script which is that of the Mainland represents Greek, then the Linear A script, known so far only in Crete, probably represents the Minoan language.

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studies. The prehistoric period of the Middle and Late Bronze Ages on the Mainland (Middle and Late Helladic) must now be recognized as Hellenic; we cannot include Crete, because we cannot yet read the Minoan Linear A script, which represents a different language from the Linear B script, and thus the Minoan culture cannot be called Hellenic. We must in future differentiate between the Linear A *Minoan* script and the Linear B *Mycenaean* script; for the latter is far commoner on the Mainland, where it is found from Orchomenos in the north to Pylos in the south, than it is in Crete.

We must in future speak of pre-Classical and Classical Greek art and culture. From the beginning of Schliemann's discoveries at Mycenae the conservatism of classical archaeologists has obstructed progress in the study of Greek civilization as a whole. Because the pre-Classical Mycenaean culture was in many ways naturally unlike the culture of Classical Greece of the sixth, fifth and fourth centuries B.C., archaeologists refused to believe that it could possibly be Greek. They could hardly have expected that the culture of Mycenae, one thousand years older, and that of Periclean Athens would be the same. The more, however, we study Mycenaean art and culture, the more we find in it elements that anticipate Classical Greek art.

From the first, because Mycenaean art was unlike Classical Greek art, it was dismissed as oriental. Even when it was admitted that the Greeks might have arrived in Greece at the beginning of the Middle Bronze Age, it was stated that Greek art did not develop until one thousand years later, after an interregnum of chaos. One writer for example says: 'When the sun of Homer rose out of the darkness of this wild time, it shone over the ruins of Creto-Mycenaean culture; but the new life of pure Hellenism grew up out of its ruins.'<sup>1</sup> We are told that the first creation of Greek art was the Geometric style, as though it had suddenly descended from Olympus about 1000 B.C. These 'orthodox' archaeologists never reflected for one moment on the growth and evolution of the Geometric style. We now know that it evolved gradually from the pre-Classical culture of the Late Bronze Age, just as that in its turn evolved from the culture of the Middle Bronze Age. Nature does not work *per saltus* but by slow and sometimes painful processes of growth and change and development. In any study of Greek art to concentrate on the Classical period alone is a fatal mistake. The true student of Greek art must begin his studies with the Middle Bronze Age at least; also, he must not end his studies with the death of Alexander, as so many do, and refuse even to look at Hellenistic art.

Schliemann in the enthusiasm of his first discoveries was overawed by the

<sup>1</sup> Pfuhl, *Masterpieces of Greek Drawing and Painting*, pp. 10f.

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‘experts’, who insisted that his finds could not be Greek but must be Phoenician, Asiatic and so on. When he found frescoes at Mycenae, the ‘experts’ insisted that they could not possibly be prehistoric and deterred him from publishing them. Other ‘experts’ have held that there is a great chasm between pre-Classical and Classical Greece. An Oxford professor wrote<sup>1</sup> as late as 1911: ‘The chasm dividing prehistoric and historic Greece is growing wider and deeper; and those who were at first disposed to leap over it now recognize such feats are impossible.’ It is this spirit which has impeded progress in our studies of pre-Classical Greece. Now, with the revelation of a pre-Homeric Greek going back to the fifteenth century B.C., we have before us a great opportunity to discard old assumptions and the shibboleths once regarded almost as sacred dogma.

The history of Greece and of Greek culture will have to be rewritten from the outlook of our present knowledge, and as more pre-Classical texts are found and deciphered, so our knowledge will grow. Greek art is one and indivisible, and has a continuous history from the first arrival of the Greeks. A fresh examination of the legends of early Greece must also be undertaken to estimate their archaeological and historical value.

There are three points, at least, which future discoveries and study will undoubtedly make clearer. The orthodox view of classical archaeologists is that there was a ‘Dark Age’, when all culture in Greece declined to barbarism, at the close of the Bronze Age and in the early period of the ensuing Iron Age. Even now, when it is admitted that the Greeks of the Late Bronze Age could read and write with the Linear B script, it is still believed by some that in the transition from the Age of Bronze to that of Iron the Greeks forgot how to read and write, until about the eighth century when they adopted the Phoenician alphabet. It is incredible that a people as intelligent as the Greeks should have forgotten how to read and write once they had learned how to do so. It is more probable that the Linear B script continued in use, and perhaps even overlapped the first appearance of the Greek adaptation of the Phoenician alphabet. This would have taken place in much the same manner as that in which the native Cypriot syllabary continued in use until the third century B.C. and overlapped the Greek alphabet in the island. The Cypriot syllabary seems to be a development of the local so-called Cypro-Minoan script, examples of which have been found at Enkomi and Ras Shamra. Future discoveries may well reveal to us that the Linear B script continued into the Early Iron Age and was then gradually replaced by the Phoenician alphabet, which the Greeks found more convenient for writing their language.

<sup>1</sup> P. Gardner, *JHS*, 1911, p. lix.

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The clay tablets with the Linear B Mycenaean script so far found at Pylos, Knossos or Mycenae are all inventories of one kind or another. No documents such as letters or anything of a literary character have yet been found. We can hardly doubt that such existed, though they were probably written on materials less able to survive disaster than clay: the inventories of clay were baked and so preserved by the violent fires which destroyed so much. Letters or literary texts may well have been on wooden tablets or some form of parchment or even papyrus; some fortunate discovery will possibly one day reveal them to us. So elaborate a system of writing cannot have been employed only for recording inventories of goods or payments of taxes, things in themselves ephemeral; the Linear B script was probably also used for letters, treaties and even literary texts.

Evans<sup>1</sup> long ago suggested that perhaps the earliest Greek epics had been written in 'Minoan' and then translated into Greek. There is now no longer any need to imagine this, since we know that the Linear B tablets are in Greek and an early epic poet, had he been so minded, could have recorded his masterpieces on clay. Homer is the earliest existing monument of Greek literature and the *Iliad* can hardly have been the first Greek poem ever composed: its very perfection in language, composition, style and metre shows that it is not the work of a mere prentice hand, but that of a master who must have learned his art from a long succession of predecessors. We need not therefore be surprised if excavation or some casual find in Greece gives us an early document—a letter, or a literary text, a history or a poem—from some long-forgotten forerunner of Homer.

As we have said, historians and archaeologists are accustomed to speak of the period of transition from the Bronze Age to that of Iron, and of the early years of the Iron Age, as a 'Dark Age' and to assume that culture in Greece then underwent a severe recession; thus they assert that literacy was forgotten, civilization declined, all was turmoil and barbarism. Actually the principal reason why this is called a 'Dark Age' is that we have little or no evidence for it in archaeology, in history or in literature. No inhabited site of this period or of the Geometric period has been excavated. Our earliest sites are sanctuaries like the Orthia site at Sparta and like Perachora. The evidence of the cemeteries which have been excavated (as at the Kerameikos) shows that from

<sup>1</sup> See Evans' paper in *JHS*, 1912, pp. 277 ff., especially p. 288. In this paper he rightly says (p. 277): 'The scientific study of Greek civilization is becoming less and less possible without taking into constant account that of the Minoan and Mycenaean world that went before it.' He throughout emphasizes the pre-Classical survivals in Classical Greek art, which in the light of the decipherment of Linear B as Greek is almost prophetic. The reader should, however, remember that Evans makes no distinction between Minoan and Mycenaean.

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the close of the Bronze Age to the Early Iron Age there was no violent archaeological break, only a gradual transition or evolution from one age to the next. Likewise in Dorian Argolis, as in non-Dorian Attica, evidence is slowly accumulating to show that a similar process of evolution took place. As exploration proceeds, evidence of the same kind will no doubt come to light from the other areas of Greece. Tombs do not usually, even at the height of the Classical period, yield much if any epigraphical material.

But what of the Dorians and the so-called Dorian Invasion? The effects of the Dorian migration into the Peloponnese have been exaggerated by historians. To the Greeks of the Classical period there was no great Dorian Invasion. They called it the 'Return of the Herakleidai', and we know from Homer that even at the time of the Trojan war Herakleidai were in power in Greece: Tlepolemus,<sup>1</sup> the son of Herakles, the great Dorian hero, led the contingents from Rhodes and the southern Sporades. The Dorians, according to Thucydides, came into the Peloponnese with the returning Herakleidai. There is nowhere in the Greek tradition any hint that the Dorians were different except in dialect from any other Greek tribe. The Dorians were Greeks and found Greeks already thoroughly established in Hellas. There is no suggestion that they introduced any new or foreign culture: all efforts to find in the archaeological remains things specifically Dorian have failed completely. There are undoubtedly changes and developments in the artefacts from the close of the Bronze Age down into the Iron Age and the Geometric period, but these are natural developments and not revolutionary changes: we must not deny to the intelligence of the Greeks any touch of inventiveness or originality. Matz<sup>2</sup> who says 'Das wirklich Neue beginnt erst mit dem Proto-Geometrischen' overlooks the clear evidence of the evolution of proto-Geometric from the latest Mycenaean wares. The Dorian migration brought about not a cultural but only a political change in Greece. The return of the Alkmaionidai and their clients is a parallel event and we need not imagine that the Dorians altered in Laconia, for instance, anything but the political structure of the country. The Dorians on the Return of the Herakleidai to the Peloponnese obtained political control of Corinth, Argos, Laconia and Messenia. Pausanias' notes on the gradual occupation of Laconia by the Dorians suggest no more than the slow winning of political control. In Argolis Mycenae remained independent until some time after her co-operation in the victory of Plataea.

<sup>1</sup> Some Homeric critics call him a Dorian interpolation, e.g. Lorimer, *Homer and the Monuments*, p. 47. He occurs, however, in the Homeric Catalogue inscription of the late third century B.C. from Chios (*JHS*, 1954, p. 162).

<sup>2</sup> *Handbuch der Archäologie*, II, p. 305. Compare Furumark, *Acta Inst. Rom. R. Sueciae*, x (*Op. Arch.* III), p. 195 n. 1.