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MYCENAEAN INSCRIBED VASES

I. THE EVIDENCE FROM THE "UNEXPLORED MANSION" AT KNOSSOS

The Mycenaean vases with painted inscriptions in the Linear B script have entered largely into recent discussions on the relations between Crete and the Mainland during the LH IIIB period and the chronological determination of the Linear B tablets from Knossos. In 1959 the observation was made¹ that certain of the words on the Mainland vessels were identical with those representing place-names that recur on the Knossos tablets. The suggestion that they were imports from Crete was later tested by spectrographic analysis of the clay of certain of the Theban vessels, and the results indicated importation from East Crete². Yet this conclusion appeared paradoxical to J. Raison in his monumental study of the inscribed vases³ because, with the exception of one inscribed sherd from Knossos, no such inscribed pot had been found in Crete itself: they were essentially a Mainland phenomenon. Apparently at a late state of Raison's book precisely such material came to light at Chania in an evidently LM IIIB context. This evidence introduced a new factor into the debate about the position of Crete in the Mycenaean world during the thirteenth century B. C. As Raison wrote (p. 19), "*Le moins qu'on puisse dire, si ces faits se confirment, c'est que la trouvaille risque d'avoir un certain retentissement sur les conceptions jusqu'ici admises concernant la chronologie et la diffusion des écritures en Crète.*"

Particularly for those, like Catling, who do not share Raison's reservations about the validity of the chemical analyses, the resultant historical picture became more of a paradox than ever. Folk using the Linear B script inhabited the west and east parts of Crete, and in the east, at any rate, they were exporting jars (and

¹ Gnomon 31, 1959, 433.

² H. W. Catling and A. Millett, "A study of the Inscribed Stirrup Jars from Thebes", *Archaeometry* 8, 1965, 3—85. These results will be discussed in the second part of this article.

³ *Les vases à inscriptions peintes de l'âge mycénien*, 1968

their contents) to the Mainland. Moreover, M. R. Popham produced evidence that the east and the west were in contact⁴. Yet, according to the still generally favoured picture, in central Crete Linear B ceased to be used at Knossos after the great destruction of LM II/IIIA 2. Here, too, the picture has been transformed by the find of an inscribed LM IIIB vase during the British School excavation of the Unexplored Mansion.

To quote the preliminary report on the excavation⁵, "This inscription is the first sure evidence for continuing literacy at Knossos in the IIIB period." Despite this important find, a note of disappointment and almost of apology sounds from the Director's report (pp. 32—33). In fact the dig was a successful scientific experiment, and it resolved a question of fundamental importance. It will be the task of this article to make this clear and to show that another step has been taken along the converging paths which have steadily led "Towards a Final Solution"⁶ and which will reconcile the sharp divergencies over Knossos chronology that arose within the British School in 1960. Such agreement will come, I believe, simply from clarification of the basic issues raised in the debate.

The success of a scientific experiment can only be gauged if its purpose is made clear. A quotation from a book whose reading has already been recommended⁷ is pertinent here: "Ideally an excavation is a deliberate and planned piece of research designed to provide answers to certain specific questions. An excavator does not — or should not — dig with only vague questions in his mind or simply to see what fate will hand out to him. If he does, he will end up with vague answers or no answers or with mere pieces for a museum." The report underlines among the positive results of the excavations first and foremost stratified deposits of LM II, IIIA 1, IIIA 2, IIIB, and IIIC pottery. But this was not the most important question which was settled by the dig. This will

⁴ BSA 62, 1967, 349: "The decoration of both [*sc.* a kylix and a jug] is so similar as to suggest that they were made in the same workshop but one comes from Episkopi in East Crete and the other from Chania in the west; so intercourse between these areas at this period is likely and indeed supported by other instances."

⁵ Archaeological Reports for 1968—69, 33

⁶ See my paper "Knossos: Towards a Final Solution", *Congresso di Micenologia* 1967, I 318—322.

⁷ F. T. Wainwright, *Archaeology and Place-names and History*, London (Kegan Paul) 1962, 24

be brought out if we consider the history of the discovery of the Unexplored Mansion.

In 1905 Evans located the building which came to be known as the Little Palace. Exploration was resumed there in 1908, and it was then that the excavation was carried far enough west to uncover part of an adjacent building. This was the Unexplored Mansion. It is evident that the excavation of the latter building might resolve questions left open by the excavation of the Little Palace. Of overriding importance was the question of the date of Linear B literacy. It is well known that on this point Evans, at different dates, gave two diametrically opposed accounts of his Little Palace finds. Since this question has already been the subject of protracted debate⁸, a short summary of the facts will suffice. In the excavation report for 1905⁹ Evans described the heaps of more or less fragmentary clay sealings "found on the later floors, attesting the survival of similar usages as regards securing documents and possessions." Along with these sealings were found some fragmentary clay tablets. Evans concluded "that the fully developed Linear script of Minoan Crete continued to be at least partially in use during the later period." Mackenzie's Day Book for 1905 fills out the evidence. A sketch plan records the distribution of the seals: in the Room of the Fetish and three of the adjacent rooms the deposit, characterized by fierce conflagration, contained quantities of sealings. In these rooms "the pottery found was also invariably of the same Late Minoan III character as elsewhere in the house". Evans gave the same version of the excavation evidence and repeated his conclusion in *Scripta Minoa* I, 55, as part of his evidence for the survival of writing during the decadence of the Minoan and Mycenaean culture. Let us call this first version of the facts Evans⁽¹⁾. In the Palace of Minos¹⁰ Evans recoiled from this conclusion: "the squatters, who at a later date introduced their crude fetish worship into the Little Palace were surely *analfabeti*". Let us call this version Evans⁽²⁾. It is crucial to note that Evans⁽²⁾ does not tamper with the reported excavation *facts* of Evans⁽¹⁾. It is the *conclusion* which is altered. The stone objects conjure up the picture of crude fetish worshippers. Such folk, he opined, could not be literate. It should be noted that the second

⁸ See L. R. Palmer and J. Boardman, *On the Knossos Tablets* (hereafter OKT) 163—69, 61—67.

⁹ BSA 11, 1905, 16

¹⁰ PoM ii 543, n. 1

conclusion leaves the primary facts unexplained. The sealings, together with the few fragments of tablets, were found in the conflagration debris closely associated with the late pottery and the stone fetish, which itself showed traces of burning¹¹. Moreover, even in his final account Evans insisted that at least in this part of the building "there had been no overwhelming destruction or general conflagration at the end of the palatial period"¹².

This, then, is the focal question which the excavation of the adjacent Unexplored Mansion could be expected to solve. It is the vital question of the reliability of our sources of information: shall we give greater credence to Evans⁽¹⁾ (1905—1909) or to Evans⁽²⁾ (1928—1935)? The question is all the more pertinent in the present connection in that Popham, who was directing the excavation of the Unexplored Mansion, had followed J. Boardman in his rejection of Evans's earlier account. Boardman¹³ had paradoxically defended Evans⁽²⁾ by casting doubt on the factual statements of Evans⁽¹⁾: "they [sc. the tablets] were certainly not as closely associated with the sealings as Evans asserts in *1905, 16*". But this would still leave us with the great quantities of sealings attesting similar bureaucratic practices as in the Palace itself. There could be no doubt about the association of these with the burnt stone fetish in the fire debris. And if we group these¹⁴ with the Late Palace sealings (whether we designate this period LM II or IIIA 1 or III A 2), this leaves us with a puzzling association. Sealings and tablets require baking in order to survive. Evans, as we saw, insisted to the last¹⁵ that there was no fire in the Little Palace at the end of the palatial period. If the sealings and tablets are given Evans's second, earlier dating, how did they survive unbaked and get into the fire debris dated to the later period by the pottery consistently found in it on the floor level? For we must not overlook Evans's location of the heaps of sealings "on the later floors". This chronological conclusion is supported by Mackenzie's notes about the complete 'Reoccupation' of the building¹⁶ and his observation that "the pottery was also *invariably* [my italics] of the same Late Minoan III character as elsewhere in the house". To

¹¹ DM/DB 1905, 2 May: see OKT, 166.

¹² PoM ii 544

¹³ OKT 66, n. 2

¹⁴ With V. E. G. Kenna, *Cretan Seals* 56 ff.

¹⁵ See note 12

¹⁶ OKT 167

obviate this difficulty Boardman tentatively put forward a suggestion¹⁷ which contradicts even the account of Evans⁽²⁾: "... perhaps fire and partial collapse, at the end of the LM II—IIIA 1". But in general he contents himself with a non liquet: "we need not follow his [*sc.* Evans's] arguments in either his first or second thoughts on the matter. We can now see that the excavation evidence was indecisive". Much the same line was taken by Popham in his review of *On the Knossos Tablets*¹⁸. In support he quoted DM / DB 1908 17 June: "Throughout the area covered by the W House and the interval between it and the new building [*sc.* the Unexplored Mansion] the greatest confusion prevailed everywhere in the deposit." The next sentence is, however, also pertinent: "The pottery next the floor levels was for the most part LM III", with only scattered fragments of fine Palace Style pottery. This underlines Mackenzie's previous observation, already quoted, about the invariably late character of the pots found on the floors. It is evident that the disturbance did not reach this low level.

In his review of the discussions bearing on the Little Palace, D. Levi¹⁹ underlined the spectacular retraction by Evans of his earlier account, and he also noted that the dissociation of tablets from the other material found with them can be sustained only against the express affirmations of both Evans and Mackenzie. In an intervention at the First Mycenological Congress in 1967²⁰, the same scholar urged that it would be more profitable, instead of wrangling over old discoveries, to seek new data which alone can clarify the various problems. This is precisely what Popham's excavation has provided, and the results are all the more impressive in that they give the excavator grounds for preferring after all Evans's earlier account of the finds in the adjacent Little Palace and his conclusions about the survival of Linear B literacy into the LM III B period. The Unexplored Mansion appears to have been an LM II construction which, after "several misfortunes", had been reoccupied in LM III B. To this latest period belonged the stirrup jar with a painted Linear B inscription. I quote Popham's conclusion²¹: "It may, now, be taken together with others

¹⁷ OKT 66

¹⁸ JHS 85, 1965, 195

¹⁹ *Parola del Passato* 96, 1964, 187

²⁰ I 324

²¹ *Kadmos* 8, 1969, 43

recently published from Chania as evidence for continuing literacy in Crete during the thirteenth century."

It is evident that this is wholly consistent with Evans's earlier account of the excavation facts from the Little Palace, and this is an item of source criticism of fundamental importance to discussion bearing on the excavation of Knossos. It now remains to apply this new insight to Evans's other testimony for Linear B literacy during the LM III B period and to see how this affects the major question of the history of the Palace itself during the same period. Constantly, as we follow up the consequences of the new discovery, we shall encounter Popham's own researches, in which there is a rigour and consistency all the more heartening and meritorious in that the results persistently go counter to the views which he embraced in 1960 and has long defended so strongly. Before leaving the Little Palace, however, it will be pertinent to take note of Popham's closer determination of pottery from this building. He calls attention²² to a deposit which "is either late IIIB or early III C", and he further notes (*ibid.*) that the open style of III C is "well represented in the Little Palace deposit". This chronological determination is of relevance to the next step in the investigation.

In the section of *Scripta Minoa* I already quoted Evans gave pride of place to the tablets from the Corridor of the Sword Tablets. Here, too, the considered conclusion of 1909 is consistent with the factual account in the earlier excavation report (1902)²³. This in its turn is supported by the excavation notebooks. In *The Palace of Minos* not only is the earlier conclusion rejected, as in the case of the Little Palace, but an entirely new version of the excavation data is offered. The matter has been thoroughly ventilated in a recent publication²⁴ and again a bare summary will suffice. Whereas in the excavation report the tablets are located in the surface strata of the corridor overlying late pottery on the floor, in *PoM* we find two discrepant versions. In ii 331 the clay seals and tablets are located "at a somewhat higher level" than the floor level and had "apparently fallen from an upper chamber". In iv 854—7 the tablets rest on a plaster floor, and above them, separated by 25 cm of deposit, were LM IIIB sherds. Other dis-

²² BSA 62, 1967, 349

²³ BSA 8, 1902, 93 ff.

²⁴ L. R. Palmer, *The Penultimate Palace of Knossos*, 93—97

turbing facts have come to light. Popham has shown²⁵ that in the photograph purporting to show the state of the adjoining Shrine of the Double Axes "there had been some tidying up . . . and more seriously some other pots possibly substituted in place of those found there". Finally, in i 618—9 Linear A tablets are assigned to the Corridor of the Sword Tablets though in all probability they were found in the Temple Repositories. The siting of a peg-top rhyton (from Mycenae!) in this corridor instead of the jug actually found there (drawn by Evans in his 1902 notebook) is due to simple muddle, as a comparison of the text with the caption of PoM iv 264 fig. 196 will show.

Of greater importance to the general history of Knossos is Popham's discovery that certain LM IIIB pottery from this quarter exhibits signs of severe burning. It will be recalled that a key argument in defence of the earlier chronology of the tablets was that there was little or no burnt LM IIIB pottery from the palace site. This 'fact' was used to dissociate the Great Deposit of tablets in the Northern Entrance Passage from the great quantities of LM IIIB double jars with which they were indubitably entangled. Popham, it is true, sought to explain away his important findings by a special hypothesis:²⁶ the burnt cups had been used as incense burners by pilgrims who had acquired them from a sect of priests who had established themselves on the site of the ruined palace. Now, however, with his new evidence for Linear B literacy at Knossos during the LM IIIB period, the excavator may well wish to reconsider the necessity for his escape hypothesis.

Of greater chronological interest is Popham's examination and classification of the pottery which is known to have been found in the Corridor of the Sword Tablets below the tablets and sealings. It included a one-handled cup with a flat base to which Popham might well have given a LM IIIC classification "if this pot had been alone"²⁷. This provides an interesting archaeological cross-reference to Pylos, where Blegen also noted the presence of some LM IIIC pottery in a predominantly IIIB context and also to the Little Palace, the final abandonment of which took place in IIIC (see above). More important is that this late date for the destruction of the palace is consistent with another stylistic determination by Popham which affects the date of the construction of Throne

²⁵ Last Days of the Palace of Knossos, 11, note 17

²⁶ See the discussion in Penultimate Palace, 95ff.

²⁷ Last Days, no. 28, cf. Pl. 8 (b)

Room. Before this is followed up, attention may be drawn once again to yet another repercussion of Popham's researches. If the Sword Tablets are to be dated to the transition between LM IIIB and IIIC, this will inevitably affect the chronology of the tablets and sealings from the Arsenal. For it will be recalled that sealings found there were impressed with the same seal which had been used for some sealings in the Corridor of the Sword Tablets.

For the date of the construction of the Throne Room, the researches by members of the British School, including Popham, have been decisive. The facts are by now well enough known²⁸. The key evidence was obtained by Evans in his test 59—60 of 1913. The sherds have been located and identified beyond reasonable doubt. J. Raison classified one of them as LM IIIA 2 and M. S. F. Hood, who re-examined the material, agreed with this classification and reported other material of similar date in the box, including one plain kylix with signs of burning. In his contribution to OKT Popham did not deal with this important material. He remedies this, at least by implication, in a recent study of Late Minoan pottery²⁹. Raison, in his study of the Throne Room sherd³⁰, compared the pattern on it with Furumark's motif 24d, with a classification as LM IIIA 2. A very similar motif is included in fig. 6 no. 7 (cf. Plate 88) of Popham's article among the patterns typical of LM IIIB. It would thus appear (though Popham does not seem to have noticed the resemblance to the Throne Room sherd) that he would date the construction of the Throne Room rather later than those who give a LM IIIA 2 classification. Such a terminus post quem would be consistent with his LM IIIC cup in the destruction deposits from the Corridor of the Sword Tablets³¹.

One more step may now be taken in pursuing Popham's researches into the material from the Knossos excavations. One of his most daunting discoveries was that not one of the vases assigned by Evans to the Room of the Stirrup Jars was in fact found there.

²⁸ See most recently Penultimate Palace, 32—37.

²⁹ "Late Minoan Pottery: a Summary", BSA 62, 1967, 335—351 with Plates 76—90

³⁰ OKT 246—7

³¹ Hood has drawn my attention to another piece of evidence which I find consistent with a LM IIIB construction date for the Last Palace at Knossos and a destruction date of LM IIIB/C. This comes from tomb H at Katsamba, which surely must be of 'pre-destruction' date. A stirrup jar found in that tomb has two motives which figure in Popham's table of LM IIIC motifs.

The famous 'strainer' may be singled out because its authentic location, established by Popham from Mackenzie's pottery notebook of 1901, sites it in a context³² where Popham's own later researches may rid him of certain hesitations he has expressed about the precise classification of this strainer. One of the most curious features of the second half of *On the Knossos Tablets* was the wide and unreconciled divergence of views between Boardman and Popham on the classification of this important vessel. Whereas Popham declared (p. 94) that the stores of pots found in the Room of the Stirrup Vases (i. e. including the strainer), like those from the Northern Entrance Passage and elsewhere, belong to "a much later date, in LM IIIB", Boardman (p. 47 n. 2), for his part, classified the strainer as LM I—II³³. In the following year Popham, while not adopting Boardman's extremely early dating, expressed some doubt³⁴: "... It certainly looks earlier than LM IIIB and could well be LM IIIA". However, still more recent study by Popham of other material from this same quarter of the Palace may here, too, resolve his doubts. The point is all the more interesting and important in that it involves three members of the British School: Peter Warren in addition to Hood and Popham. The debate which has developed between them about the material found above and below the pavement of the Last Palace is most illuminating and fruitful. It has, I believe, brought us close to a harmony of views which will end the dispute that began some ten years ago.

The points at issue will emerge clearly if we first review the progress of the debate. The turning point came in 1964 when Hood communicated his finding³⁵ that the Reoccupation was a myth invented by Mackenzie and Evans and that the Linear B tablets and the associated sealings were found in the same horizon of destruction as the so-called 'Reoccupation' pottery. Moreover, there was evidence of sub-floor deposits of late pottery, some of it showing signs of severe burning. Hood devised two ways of escape from his newly established facts: he proposed (1) to re-classify the LM

³² In the Gallery of the Jewel Fresco together with the Vase Tablets which were scattered at a high level across the Long Corridor into Magazine VIII. See *Penultimate Palace*, 60ff.

³³ It may well be that the inconsistency is to be explained by insertion of the footnote at a late stage of the proofs after it had been discovered where the vase had really been found.

³⁴ *Last Days*, 11, n. 13

³⁵ For the progress of the debate see the article cited in note 6.

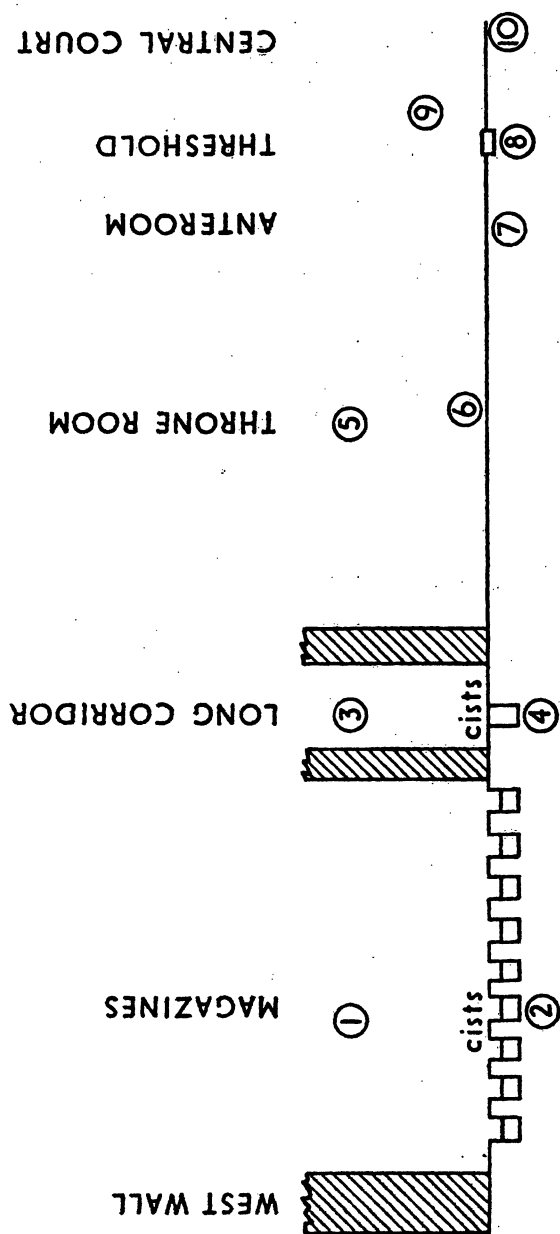


Fig. 1. Schematic section from the West Magazines to the Central Court

1. Tablets, sealings, and carved stone frieze.
2. LM III A sherds and pieces of stone vases.
3. Tablets.
4. LM III B pottery.
5. Tablets.
6. Stone alabastra.
7. LM III sherd.
8. LM III A—B sherd.
9. Tablet.
10. LM III sherds

IIIB pottery as LM IIIA 2, and (2) to dismiss all the sub-floor late pottery as intrusive. Popham wrote a reasoned rejection³⁶ of (1) and more recently P. Åström observed³⁷ "few, if any archaeologists follow Sinclair Hood's Late Minoan IIIA 2 date for the pottery from the last phase at Knossos". He refers students to Popham's book *The Last Days . . .* It is significant that neither Popham nor Åström has challenged Hood's statement about the overall LM IIIB associations of the tablets and sealings. They have simply closed Hood's first way of escape. Now, in the article to be discussed, two younger scholars of the British School with equal firmness reject Hood's way of disposing of the no less important sub-floor evidence.

The material concerned (Fig. 1 item 2) was obtained from Magazine XIII in 1904 in explorations specifically devised by Evans and Mackenzie to secure evidence bearing on the earlier history of the Palace³⁸. It is important to stress this at the outset since there can be no reasonable doubt that it formed part of the fill of the earlier cists in the Magazine, which had been reconstructed when shallower cists were built above them, these last being a feature of the last architectural phase of the Palace. The material in question (I follow Warren's exposition) consisted largely of "fragments of unfinished stone vases and waste pieces from the manufacture of stone vases". It is "what remains of a gypsum vase maker's workshop". In his study of the material Warren enlisted the help of Popham in classifying the sherd material. This included at least eight sherds of LM IIIA classification, "probably not later than early IIIA 2". Since it is unlikely that all eight sherds are 'strays', the conclusion which imposes itself is "that the date of the laying of the upper slabs was LM II/IIIA 1". The evidence of the gypsum stone vases is consonant with the ceramic indication: "it shows that L.M. II—IIIA 1 is the date of the workshop. This date is confirmed by the triglyph and rosette fresco fragments", also found in the fill. Such is the joint fact-finding of the two scholars.

Hood himself had also scrutinized the fill from the cists at an earlier date and he announced his findings in 1964: "The pottery

³⁶ AJA 68, 1964, 349—54

³⁷ Primo Congresso di Micenologia I, 323

³⁸ OKT 98, Penultimate Palace 65—7 with Plate IV. The boxes of the Stratigraphical Museum were examined by Raison and Hood. The latter drew P. Warren's attention to the fragments of stone vases, and Warren has published his study, "A Stone Vase-Maker's Workshop in the Palace at Knossos" in BSA 62, 1967, 195—201, with Plate 40.

from *all* the cists in Magazine 13 (SMK D. XVII, 1—7) is LM III in character, and includes one much burnt kylix rim (D. XVII. 5).” The implications of such late sub-floor material for the constructional history of the palace were perfectly plain to Hood, and he promptly suggested that it must have come from the upper cists. He attempted to convince Warren of this, but this way of escape is firmly closed by the younger scholar: “it seems to the writer virtually certain that the stone pieces, labelled 1904, came from the 1904 excavation of the lower cists”. Warren, however, clings to Popham’s LM IIIA 2 date for the destruction of the Last Palace, and this involves him in a series of aporiai from which Hood was trying to rescue him. Scrutiny of these consequences will advance us, I believe, towards final agreement on these vexed problems.

Warren’s difficulties are the result of attempting to squeeze the last phase of the palace (the Linear B phase) into the period represented by LM IIIA 2³⁹. Before pursuing them in detail, it is worth noting the drastic revision of The Palace of Minos involved in Warren’s new findings. Evans, it will be recalled, dated the closing of the cists to MM IIIB⁴⁰. But right from the beginning of the discussion in 1960 I pointed out that Evans’s second thoughts⁴¹ about the pottery from the Sculptor’s Workshop quarter in the East Wing (changing MM IIIB into LM IIIB) also involved the history of the Long Corridor, because he reported that certain bowls found there were identical with specimens from the sub-floor cists of the corridor (Fig. 1 item 4). The acknowledged LM IIIB date of these bowls, ignored by Warren, is evidence which must be exploited in any attempt to read the architectural history of this part of the palace.

As noted above, the essence of Warren’s difficulties is that he accepts Popham’s IIIA 2 date for the destruction of the Last Palace. As a consequence, he has allowed himself so little elbow room that he is forced to bring both sub-floor and supra-floor deposits (including the Linear B tablets and sealings, Fig. 1 items 1 and 3) into one period. This ‘knotty point’ is frankly acknowl-

³⁹ Warren sees quite clearly (cf. his note 21) that the latest material in the fill simply gives a terminus post quem for the laying of the bottom slabs of the new cists: “This date for the laying of the upper slabs tells us precisely nothing about how long activities went on afterwards above them, i. e. we are not here concerned with the destruction date of the Palace or reoccupation.” In fact he cannot escape being concerned. See his note 5, discussed below.

⁴⁰ See the summary OKT 220.

⁴¹ PoM iii, 265ff.

edged by him⁴². The workshop is earlier than the tablets since the material is from the lower cists, "which were closed *just before the destruction* [my italics] to which the tablets belong". But as there is very little difference in date" . . . it is reasonable to discuss the archives and workshop together as indicating the nature of the upper floor — at two slightly different phases in the final Palace period (LM II—early IIIA 2)". But even this is more chronological latitude than Warren can rightly claim, because, on his own showing, the sub-floor sherd material could be as late as IIIA 2, to say nothing of the LM IIIB bowls under the Corridor pavement (see above, p. 198). When he says that the destruction of the Last Palace followed closely on the remodelling of the cists, he is compressing the whole of the history of the Last Palace within the space of a few decades. This brief span has to suffice for the drastic rebuilding of this part of the palace from the basement up⁴³, for the introduction of the Linear B script, for the extension of Mycenaean domination to virtually the whole island, and for the final expulsion of the Mycenaean Greeks from Crete⁴⁴.

Similar difficulties and a head-on collision with Evans himself await Warren in the Sculptor's Workshop in the East Wing, for he maintains on technical and stylistic grounds that "... the workshop is approximately contemporary with that above Magazine XIII". Now, the objects found in the workshop included, as is well known, an unfinished giant gypsum amphora. We thus have valuable evidence dating from the final moments of the Last Palace. Yet this is regarded by Warren as contemporary with the products of the workshop from the Penultimate Palace of the West Wing. Once again the history of the Last Palace is reduced to virtually nothing, for surely that is how the phrase "approximately contemporary" must be read. Yet here, too, the saving testimony of Evans himself was available to show a way out of the aporia. It is pertinent, if wearisome, to recall once again the

⁴² p. 196, note 5

⁴³ See Penultimate Palace, 65 for a discussion of the buttresses built into Magazines VII and IX.

⁴⁴ When Warren says that the LM III A 2 material got into the lower cists just before the destruction, he is saying that the destruction of the Last Palace followed closely on the destruction of the Penultimate Palace, that is if he regards his material as belonging to the last days of the penultimate phase. This was clearly seen by Hood. Hence his attempt to persuade Warren that it came from the upper cists.

necessity of giving a careful reading⁴⁵ to Evans's drastically revised account of the history of this quarter of the palace after his excavations of 1928—9. In PoM iii Evans recanted on the version presented in the first volume of his great work and stated that the whole of the School Room Area had been reconstructed at an advanced state of LM IIIB, and this, as we have seen, was also implied of the West Magazine Quarter, where the sub-floor cists contained bowls identical with those from the Magazine to the west of the Sculptor's Workshop.

Warren's stylistic comparisons next carry him to the Throne Room where, following Evans, he notes that the large gypsum alabastrons have a type of spiraliform decoration exactly like that on the unfinished amphora from the School Room Area. But here the same stratigraphic difficulties await him in a still more formidable shape. The sub-threshold sherds from Evans's test pit of 1913 (Fig. 1 item 6) have been examined not only by Hood and Raison (with a IIIA 2 classification) but by Warren's own collaborator Popham, from whose table of motifs, as we saw, a IIIB date may be gathered. Pertinent also is the same scholar's IIIB date for the pilgrim bottle from the corridor north of the Throne Room suite⁴⁶, for Linear B tablets were found in the corridor while yet another tablet (Fig. 1 item 9) was found above the pavement of the Central Court just in front of the threshold to the Anteroom of the Throne Room, that is at the very place where Evans's test pits 59—60 were sunk in 1913. So once again, if we accept the classifications of the experts concerned and simply site the objects in their attested stratigraphic positions, without recourse to saving hypotheses of 'intrusion', a simple and satisfactory historical picture emerges for the Last Palace (the Linear B Palace) which is essentially what was suggested by Blegen in his article of 1958⁴⁷.

That the Last Palace was constructed when LM IIIA 2 had already become stratified emerges in yet another part of the Palace thanks, once again, to the combined researches of Popham and Warren. This time we are concerned with the area of the South Propylaeum, and with deposits both above and below the floor. Warren discusses the rosette fragments from the Propylaeum⁴⁸,

⁴⁵ Especially iii, 265, note 4. See Penultimate Palace, 128—30 for Warren's treatment of the evidence and Hood's own reactions.

⁴⁶ See most recently Penultimate Palace, 18, 52f., 89, 119, 129.

⁴⁷ *Minoica*, 61—66

⁴⁸ In the article under discussion, note 22.

which Evans sited 70 cm. below the MM IIIB pavement; but he is now aware that the piece of carved stone was found in fact 70 cm. below the surface before excavation "and was thus almost certainly part of the destruction debris, as was the rosette fresco from the Propylaeum. It thus looks as though all the stone pieces and the South Propylaeum fresco were part of the destruction debris". The factual picture will be more complete if we insert in Warren's exposition the important point that the piece of carved stone was found adjacent to, and above, the bases of the LM IIIB pithoi.

Warren also deals with the sub-floor material from this part of the palace in his catalogue under pieces of "L.M. II—IIIA 1 / Early 2 Context"⁴⁹. The object is a libation table: "Court of Altar, 1922/1923 excavations (cf. Boardman 17) not from a dated context, libation table (HM 2099), unpublished, type as *PM* ii, fig. 537e (see below, *Mycenae*)". Although Warren writes "not from a dated context", the fact that the object was recovered in 1922 to 1923 is enough to show that it was in a sub-floor deposit. That these deposits contained extensive LM III material was abundantly evident from the explorations of 1925 in the South Propylaeum Area, for which the account written by Evans in *PoM* is strikingly discrepant with the meticulous catalogue given in *DM/DB* 1925⁵⁰. The same picture emerges from Popham's examination of pottery from the same area. The sherds he used to reconstruct an amphoroid krater to which he gave a LM IIIA classification were obtained from inside the spur of wall which projected eastwards from the west wall of the Propylaeum, alongside which the LM IIIB pithoi were standing⁵¹. The find circumstances give no warrant for assigning the sherds to the destruction debris of the Last Palace. Here we see in a still crasser form the recurrent dilemma facing the two experts: supra-floor pieces of carved stone in an undeniable association with LM IIIB pots are assigned to the same palace period as the sherds inside the masonry and a libation table from below the floor of the Court of the Altar. In brief, if the latest material below the floor of the Last Palace is indicative of the destruction date of the Penultimate Palace, the equation of this material with

⁴⁹ p. 200

⁵⁰ For a detailed discussion see *Penultimate Palace*, 76f. with *Testimonium* 9 (pp. 145—46).

⁵¹ See *Penultimate Palace*, 75—6 and Fig. 7 (c).

the destruction debris of the Last Palace means reducing the history of the Last Palace virtually to nil.

The essential consistency of the stratigraphic picture, now established by the researches of Evans's defenders, emerges from the schematic section of Figure 1. It runs from the block of magazines XI—XIV through the Long Corridor, and the Throne Room suite (embracing also the corridor which flanks it on the north side) as far as the Central Court. The section should be compared with T. Fyfe's plan [1903] (see Penultimate Palace Plan I A) and with the sections Penultimate Palace 57, Fig. 5 (Magazine VIII and Gallery of the Jewel Fresco) and 39, Fig. 2(a) (Throne Room and Central Court). For the South Propylaeum see Penultimate Palace 7, Fig. 7(c) and for the Sculptor's Workshop 87, Fig. 9. The facts thus having been satisfactorily established (they agree in all essentials with the results of The Penultimate Palace), a reconciliation between the three scholars of the British School is easy and obvious, and it has been suggested by Popham's own discovery of the inscribed LM IIIB stirrup jar from the Unexplored Mansion. Hood's general statement of the LM IIIB associations of the tablets has remained unchallenged. His two ways of escape have been firmly rejected by archaeologists in general and by Warren and Popham in particular. Now that the latter has accepted the fact of Linear B literacy in LM IIIB Crete, including Knossos, nothing should stand in the way of accepting the find facts as Hood verified them. This will release the two younger scholars from their struggles between the lower and upper LM IIIA millstones and give them the chronological elbow-room necessary for the deployment of the Mycenaean Greeks in Crete. The history of the Last Palace at Knossos was played out, like that of the Palace of Nestor at Pylos, almost wholly within the LM IIIB period. This was the period of Linear B literacy in Crete in general and Knossos in particular. The destruction of the Palace came when LM IIIB was merging into LM IIIC. In his article Warren stresses the Mycenaean character of the LM III phase at Knossos. In the second half of this article we shall be incidentally concerned with the relations between Crete and the Mainland during the LM IIIB period.

The inscription on the new vase calls for little in the way of comment. *Winajo* is attested several times in the Knossos tablets as the name of herdsmen: Da 1197 (at *rasuto*), Db 1225 (at *56*kowe*), Db 1282 (at *rukito*), Dv 1330 (at *era*) and Dv 5198. Fh 1059 records

a small quantity of oil in connection with *winajo erajo*, which may be interpreted as 'winajo of era'. The *winajo* of K 875⁵² is likely to have been of higher status for, like the others in the list, the name is followed by *qasirewija dipa anowoto*.

Of palaeographical interest is the form of the last character (*jo*), which has three vertical strokes below the horizontal bar. This is particularly characteristic of Hand 124 (Room of the Chariot Tablets)⁵³ and it recurs also in Hand 107 (chiefly Northern Entrance Passage) and Hand 118 (Room of the Saffron Gatherer and Northern Entrance Passage).

It will be appropriate to end this part of the article by citing Olivier's verdict⁵⁴ on Evans's groups of 'later tablets'. It will be recalled that the sealings from the Corridor of the Sword Tablets impressed with the same seal as that used in the Arsenal were inscribed with the ideogram MAN^B and that some of the accompanying tablets were also distinguished by the same ideogram. There is some uncertainty about the identity of these tablets, but they are to be sought among As 1517, 1518, 1519, 1520. Olivier concludes from a study of the hands of these tablets as follows: since more than one MAN tablet was found with the Sword Tablets and since As 1517 is the only tablet of the group which cannot be attributed to a scribe contemporary with the great majority of the other scribes, there is a high probability that the Sword Tablets are likewise contemporary with the bulk of the archives⁵⁵. This is wholly in accord with our own findings. As for the tablets from the Little Palace, Olivier's observation is that they do not present any characteristics which would detach them certainly from the rest of the archives.

⁵² Docs. 330f., Interpretation 363f.

⁵³ See J.-P. Olivier, *Les scribes de Cnossos*, 67.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* 120f.

⁵⁵ On the 'Unity of the Archives' see now *Penultimate Palace*, 28f., 131ff.