

ERIK HALLAGER

A FRAGMENT OF A LINEAR B TABLET FROM KNOSSOS¹

During my studies in the Stratigraphical Museum at Knossos in the Spring of 1975 I happened to come across yet another fragment of a Linear B tablet. The fragment was found in Box 1856 which is marked: "EVANS' MATERIAL. NO PROVENANCE". The box contained mainly Late Minoan sherds (from LM I to LM III B). Some of the sherds were individually marked by Mackenzie as coming from "Central Square", "Central Square W. of Bay1", "W. of NE Kamares Area", "4" and "Entrance". These sherds may all be from the excavations of the eastern part of the Palace in 1901 and 1902.

Description (Plate I a, b): Left-hand fragment of a probably palm-leaf shaped Linear B tablet. The fragment has finely gritted clay whose original colour is impossible to decide since it is burnt dark grey to black all over. On the back and along parts of the edge the clay is loose and porous like cinder or pumice-stone, as a consequence of the severe burning. The surface and the upper part of the edges are smooth. Measurements: H. 2.7 cm, W. 2.1 cm, T. 0.6—0.8 cms. The inscription comprises remains of three signs, one complete:

KN X 8832

(—)

]pa-mo-re[

]te-mo-re[not entirely excluded.

Commentary: Neither]pa-mo-re[nor]te-mo-re[forms a sequence which fits into any known word of the Linear B vocabulary. Since it stands near the beginning, that is the left, of a palm-leaf shaped tablet, the inscription is most probably part of a personal name, as would be, for example, the case in the D-series. By comparison with other series, such as the Fh tablets, an interpretation as a place-name or as recipients cannot be excluded. The fragment is still kept in the Stratigraphical

¹ I am most grateful to the Managing Committee of the British School at Athens for permission to publish this fragment.



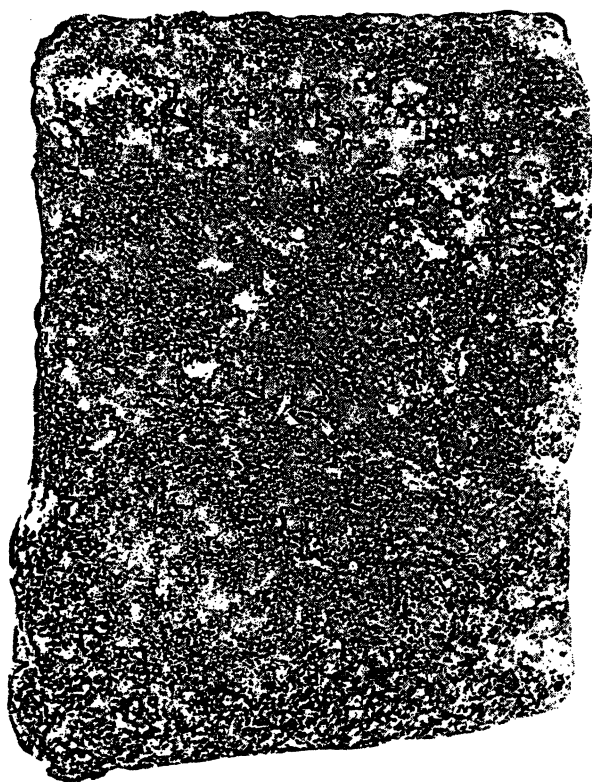
a



KN X 8832



b



c

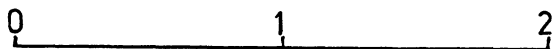


Plate I. Fragment of tablet from Knossos

Museum at Knossos and it is difficult to decide whether or not it may join other fragments. This, however, does not seem likely².

There are so many 'hands' without *mo*, and the signs *pq* and *re* are so fragmentary, that it is impossible to attribute the fragment to any 'scribal hand'. It must be noted, though, that the *mo* is written in an unusual way which is not obviously recognizable in the existing Linear B tablets at Knossos.

As for the physical appearance of the tablet, this may give a clue to its original provenance. As noted above, the reverse of the tablet, the broken edges, and parts of the sides were so hard-burnt that it looked like cinder or pumice (Plate I c.). Only relatively few tablets appear to have been through such a severe fire. Some of them come from the E-W Corridor in the East Wing of the Palace. Should further studies prove that *all* the tablets which are burnt more or less porous come from the D-series of the E-W Corridor, it would be a strong indication that KN X 8832 also was originally from this part of the Palace and formed part of the D-series. If so, there could be almost no doubt that the reading of [*pq-mo-re*] is part of a personal name—thus adding still another to the long list of personal names.

² I want to express my gratitude to Professor John Chadwick and Dr. Jean-Pierre Olivier who have most kindly informed me that they, at present, see no possibility of a join.