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THE KHYAN LID DEPOSIT AT KNOSSOS*

I. Anachronisms

In the course of his famous dispute with Sir Arthur Evans over the date of the Treasury of Atreus at Mycenae A. J. B. Wace observed¹ “. . . It was a Cretan and Mainland custom to preserve antiques and even to put them in tombs. In the Isopata tomb (L.M. II) part of an Early Dynastic stone bowl was found and part of a similar bowl (presumably Egyptian) in Tomb II at Asine . . .” J. D. S. Pendlebury made a similar point in his *Archaeology of Crete*, where his Index contains an entry “Stone vases, dangerous for dating”; by way of example he cites (p. xxvi) a middle pre-dynastic vase still in use at Tell el-Amarna in the XVIIIth Dynasty. In a recent study² it has been shown that a large proportion of stone vessels

- * Summary: Evans provided no illustration either of the fragmentary stone ewers or of the pottery which allegedly provided a *terminus post quem* for Late Minoan. The sources permit a fairly full restoration of the excavation data of 1901. They reveal Late Mycenaean structures above a burnt stratum which was characterized predominantly by Late Minoan III A sherds. This contained the ‘Lid’ and also a Sumerian cylinder seal, which was later moved two strata down. Wall fresco, depicting a chariot scene, can be assigned to the Late Minoan III B rooms. Cross-connexions show a similar stratification in many parts of the Palace and also in the Little Palace. In addition, relations with the contemporary Mainland are established.

Acknowledgement: My thanks are due to Leon Pomerance for his generosity in putting at my disposal the two photographs of Plate I and to the Visitors of the Ashmolean Museum for permission to publish them.

Abbreviations: DM/DB: The Daybooks of the Knossos Excavations. DM/Pot: Duncan Mackenzie, Pottery Notebooks. DPK: M. R. Popham, The Destruction of the Palace of Knossos. LDPK: M. R. Popham, Last Days of the Palace of Knossos. OKT: L. R. Palmer and John Boardman, On the Knossos Tablets. PM: Sir Arthur Evans, The Palace of Minos. PP: L. R. Palmer, The Penultimate Palace of Knossos. SMK: J. D. S. Pendlebury, A Guide to the Stratigraphical Museum in the Palace of Knossos.

¹ ‘The Date of the Treasury of Atreus’, JHS 46, 1926, 110–20.

² L. Pomerance in ‘The possible Role of Tomb Robbers and Viziers of the 18th Dynasty in Confusing Minoan Chronology’ (*Antichità Cretesi* I, 21–30) has examined the Egyptian objects considered vital for Aegean chronology by Peter Warreh (Minoan Stone Vases) and shown that there is no basis in the excavation data for believing that Predynastic to VI Dynasty vases from unstratified or later contexts reached Crete at

found in Crete are similarly 'out of time context' and so useless for dating purposes. The find-place of Pendlebury's example is in line with Pomerance's suggestion that tomb-robbers of the XVIIIth Dynasty were the ultimate suppliers of such Aegyptiaca on the international market, an explanation which has found favour with many Egyptologists and some Aegean scholars.

II. The Khyan Lid

The present study bears on the find-circumstances of an object of exceptional importance in Aegean pre-history which continues to figure in authoritative contributions in this field of study. Thus M. R. Popham in a recent article³ on late Minoan Chronology writes: "The best *terminus post quem* for the Late Minoan period remains the lid inscribed with the name of the Hyksos king Khyan found by Sir Arthur Evans at Knossos (PM I, 419, fig. 304a, b: here Fig. 1) in a Middle Minoan III

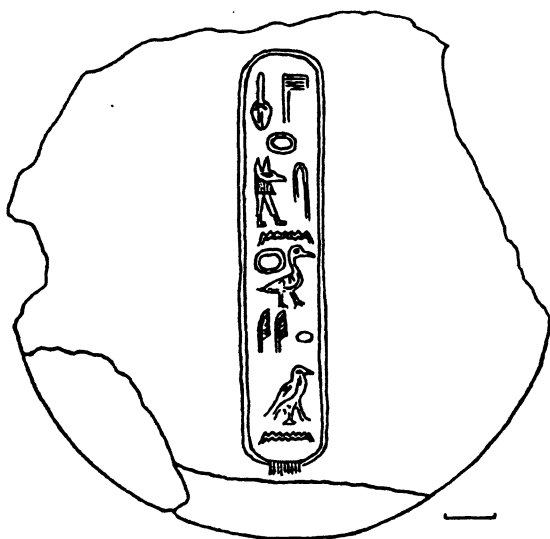


Fig. 1. The Khyan Lid

about the time of their fabrication in Egypt. His fig. 1 tabulating the facts demonstrates that fourteen such objects listed by Warren were on an average over a thousand years 'out of time context'. In this connexion Pomerance (p. 72) pointed to the importance of securing further information about the find circumstances of the Khyan Lid since Warren (p. 42) simply refers to "the North Lustral Basin deposit or the contemporary Khyan lid deposit a few metres to the west." At this point Pomerance entered into collaboration with Palmer, who in PP, 56 had drawn attention to the fact that Evans never reproduced any of the MM III A pottery found with the lid.

³ AJA 74, 1970, 226-28.

context which Evans later, and perhaps too precisely, defined as MM III A." The account in PM repeats in all essentials that in BSA 7, 1901, 63 ff., including the elaborate stratigraphic section (fig. 20 of the report).

The find-circumstances were reported with great precision. Immediately north of the North Terrace Wall of the palace, in line with the Long Corridor of the Magazines (see Fig. 2a), had been built a room with walls of rubble masonry, its west face coated with painted stucco, and with a clay floor 60 cm lower than the top of the terrace wall. The foundations went down 30 cm below the floor and rested on a "well-marked archaeological stratum" containing a mass of carbonized wood,

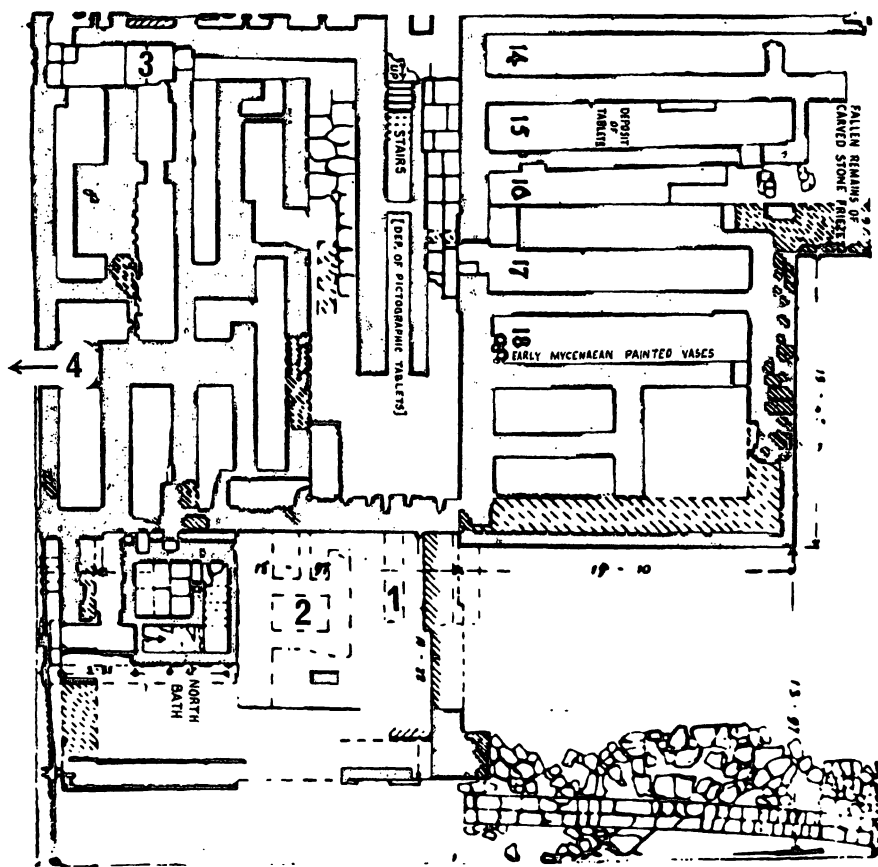
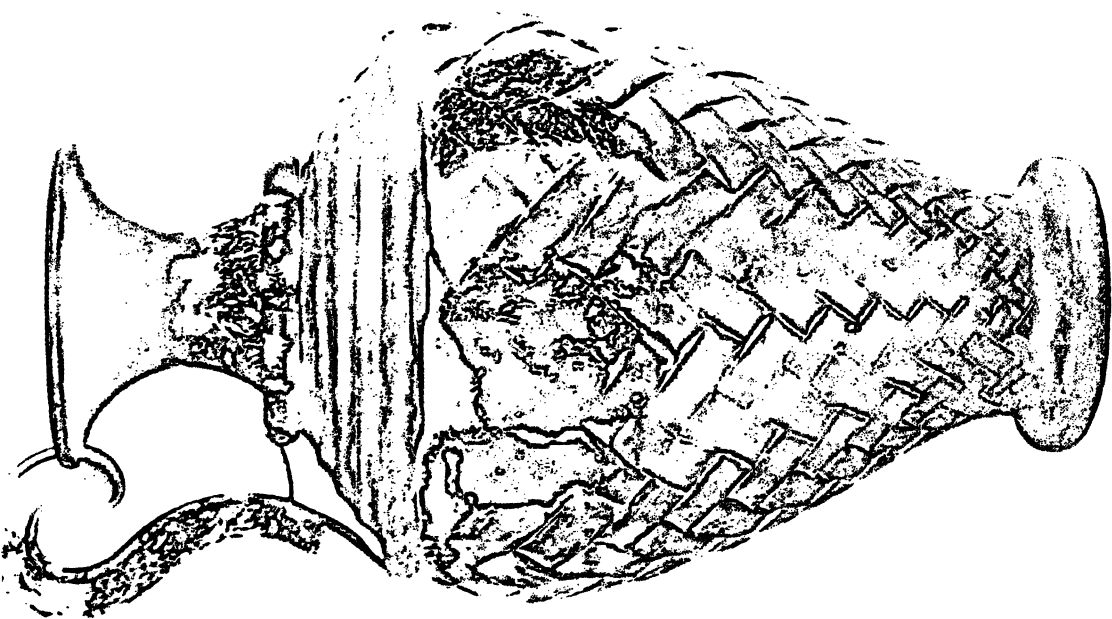
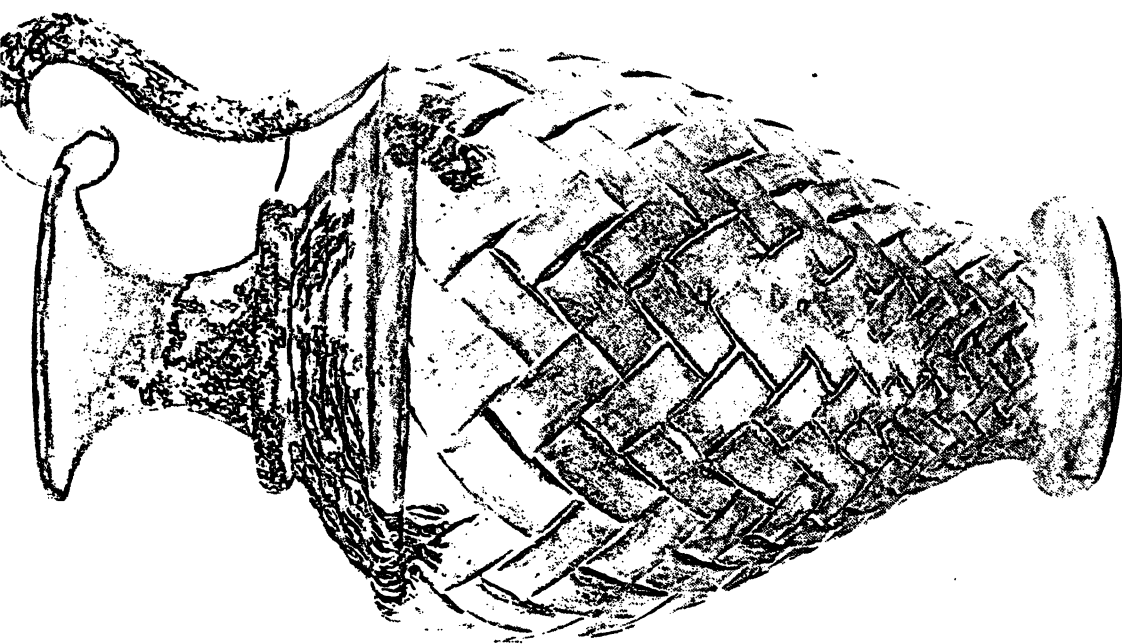


Fig. 2a. Plan of the 'North Bath' Area including the adjacent West Magazines and North-west Magazines (detail from T. Fyfe's unpublished plan of 1903). The 'dash and dot' convention = 'Walls of Period of Re-Occupation [Late Mycenaean].' 1) East wall of Late Mycenaean Chamber. 2) Late Mycenaean cistern. 3) Find-place of 'pilgrim's bottle' (LM III B) and stone basin. 4) Room of the Stirrup Jars.



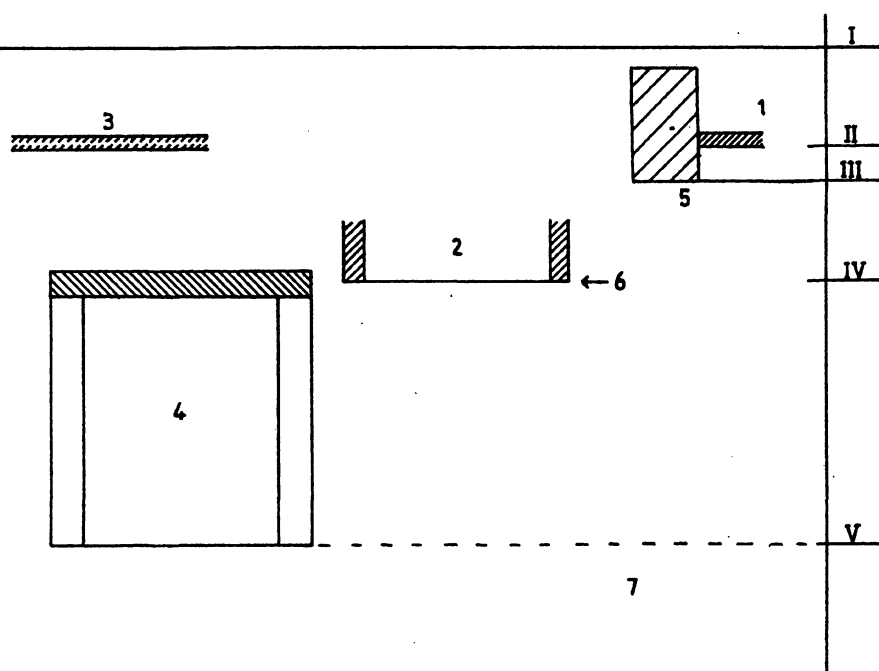


Fig. 2b. Schematic Section of 'North Bath' Area (after BSA 1901).

I Top of Terrace Wall. II Floors of 'Late Mycenaean' rooms. III Upper level of burned deposit. IV Later walls above 'Bath' walls and bottom of Mycenaean cistern. V 'Bath' floor (lower limit of 'MM III A').

1) 'Mycenaean' room with wall stucco. 2) 'Mycenaean' cistern. 3) 'Mycenaean' stucco walling and clay pavement. 4) 'Bath' (Lustral Basin). 5) Find-place of Khyan's lid.

6) Find-place of cylinder seal (after BSA 1901). 7) Find-place of cylinder seal (after PM IV).

which extended westwards as far as the Northern Bath, some 6 m to the East, over which similar late structures had been erected. In 1965 the papers of Evans's architect, T. Fyfe, came to light and in his plan (see PP Plan IA) these late walls are entered in the convention 'Walls of Re-occupation [Late Mycenaean]' (see Fig. 2a, 1). This plan was found among the papers of Evans, who evidently approved of it since he had it printed and supplied a copy to A. Mosso, who published it in his *The Palaces of Crete*, unfortunately without the key to the conventions (see below). In the burnt stratum some 10 cm below the 'Late Mycenaean' foundations the 'Egyptian Lid' was found c. 3 m from the terrace wall in company with fragments of stone ewers with plait-work decoration, "in fact a complete imitation of basketry".

A number of points may be made at once. If by 1903 the excavators had come to the conclusion that the uppermost structures were of post-

palatial date, then they must have thought that a LM III A/B room had been directly superimposed on a MM III A stratum and that there was no trace of the LM II occupation of the immediately adjoining Magazine area of the palace, to say nothing of MM III B—LM I B. It is of particular interest that in the report there is no mention of sherds, and the dating is based on the fragments of carved stone. This is underlined by the fact that in PM the words “and pottery” have been inserted, in the caption of the same stratigraphic diagram, after the mention of “fragments of stone vases”.

In it also puzzling that Evans gave no illustration either of the stone fragments or of the MM III A sherds from this deposit. Instead he referred to the discussion of the finds in the ‘Lustral Basin’ area, where he reported evidence of a line of demarcation between an earlier and a later MM III phase (see below, p. 116). Thus the all-important *terminus post quem* is based on Evans’s stylistic dating of the unillustrated stone fragments and the accompanying pottery. It is fortunate that, with the help of the reports and records, it has now proved possible to identify an ewer reconstructed from the fragments found in the deposit and also to supply a detailed list of the sherds associated with them. It is doubly fortunate that M. R. Popham has contributed a commentary not only on this pottery but also on the sherds recovered further east in the Lustral Basin deposit (see below).

III. The associated stone ewer and pottery

In his *Minoan Stone Vases*, 43, Peter Warren lists an unpublished restored stone ewer in the Ashmolean Museum (AM AE 850): “Limestone, mottled maroon and grey/white. Plait-work decoration. Restored, about a third surviving. Khyan lid deposit.” He provides no drawing or photograph. However, during a recent visit to Oxford L. Pomerance identified the ewer in a show-case bearing a label assigning it to the Khyan lid deposit. It was photographed at his request and is published here (Plate I) by kind permission of the Visitors to the Ashmolean Museum. The basket-weave pattern is identical with that of the ewer in the Heraklion Museum (HM 1366), which Evans illustrated (PM I, fig. 296) and assigned to the Lustral Basin (see below).

In view of Pendlebury’s warning against such evidence, the associated pottery in the deposit is of vital importance, all the more so in consideration of Evans’s silence. Here the records supply what may be regarded as a reasonably complete list of the sherds recovered with the lid. This

information came to light with the re-emergence of Duncan Mackenzie's pottery notebooks (DM/Pot). The list was published long ago⁴ but met with immediate rejection⁵, and later discussions content themselves with a bare reference to Hood's letter. Warren writes (*loc. cit.*) "these ewers . . . seem securely dated to MM III because of the accompanying pottery, black ground with white dots (*PM* I, 410–12; Hood, *Nestor*, August 1964)". However, in the month following the publication⁶ of the letter Hood radically changed his views on the validity of the unpublished records: he accepted the stratigraphic association of the Linear B tablets with the so-called 'Re-occupation' pottery and rejected the 'Re-occupation' as a disastrous archaeological error. Mackenzie's list of sherds therefore deserves renewed examination. It is agreed that the lid was found along with some fragments of stone ewers and some sherds in the burnt stratum underlying the later structures; the sole outstanding issue is the nature of the pottery.

Under the heading "Lot from N. Foundations – Area of Egyptian lid" DM recorded (DM/Pot I, 1901), in one and the same basket (along with "many fragments of stone vases in different colours of stone. Prominent—fragments with imitation basket work in relief"), a considerable amount of pottery ranging from Neolithic to 'Mycenaean'. Of particular interest is the sherd described by DM as "Palace scale or network pattern in slightly lustrous varnish on buff clay slip on similarly coloured clay. S. 2." On the opposite page he drew the pattern, comparing "F.&L. Myk. Vasen Texte p. 23, fig. 10. Also Schliemann Tiryns XXVII a." Both these designs are drawn with the comment "Our example more stylized than either of these." This is the sherd classified by Popham as LM III A 1 (OKT, 93, n.5).

We now turn to examine Hood's comments on DM's list, all the more attentively because Warren deemed it a sufficient justification of Evans's bare statement about the MM III A context of the lid. He first remarks: "This pottery is clearly a mixture of different periods." This surely is precisely what would be expected of a sub-floor deposit; for if a site is

⁴ Nestor I v 1964, 323–24.

⁵ M. S. F. Hood, *ibid.* 1 vii 1964, 342–43.

⁶ First in Mins.Lond.Seminar 30 ix 1964, 299–305, when he announced his adherence to the view that the Linear B tablets at Knossos had been found associated with pottery of the so-called 'Re-occupation' class. For a bibliography of the 'Knossos controversy' see S. Hiller, *Das minoische Kreta nach den Ausgrabungen des letzten Jahrzehnts*, 1977, 25–26, to which add E. Hallager, *The Mycenaean Palace at Knossos*, 1977, with reviews by M. S. F. Hood CR 29, 1979, 283–4 and Hiller Gnomon 51, 1979, 768–73.

levelled for new construction, sherds of all periods down to the time of levelling tend to occur, the latest providing the *terminus post quem*.

Hood next throws doubt on the accuracy of Evans's precisely indicated find-place of the lid. He refers to a plan in BSA 1901 (Plan I) where the Mycenaean wall is 5 m long. But at that time Fyfe's meticulously drawn plan of 1903 had not yet emerged. There it will be seen (Fig. 2a, 1) that the east wall of the little room extends 4 m from the terrace wall, the west wall parallel with it being of exactly the same length. Thus both plans confirm Evans's statement about the find place: situated 3 m from the terrace wall, it will have been under the foundations of the east wall. Hood, however, adduces a rough sketch from AE/NB 1901 and suggests that the lid may not have been found under the wall. Having thus cast doubt on the stratigraphic position of the lid and discounted the detailed list of pottery recorded by DM, Hood is left with a 'floating' lid and no evidence for associated pottery. Despite this he concludes: "There seems to be no good reason for doubting the context in which the lid was found". However, he does note that the recorded 'Egyptian Lid' deposit is "comparable with two of the four lots of pottery of the year 1901 preserved in the Stratigraphical Museum at Knossos (SMK E.I. 1, 12)."

IV. Comparable pottery nearby

It is not surprising that the recording of so late a sherd in what has been almost universally regarded as a MM III A stratum should have provoked scepticism, and we should be wise to follow Hood in seeking confirmation in the extension of the same deposit further east. Even then, in so important a matter, it would be prudent to integrate the findings in an overall picture of the whole palace. Here, too, we begin with the careful account of the dig in BSA 1901, for the record contains valuable and precise information which has not been fully exploited. Fyfe's plans should be read in conjunction with the excellent photograph of this part of the site in BSA 1901. For convenience we supply (Fig. 2a) an enlargement of the relevant part of Fyfe's plan of 1903. Of prime importance are the late structures. The North Terrace wall survived in two sections with a gap in the middle. Opposite the gap to the north lies the 'North Bath'. To the south are the Northwest Magazines. What has escaped notice in the present connexion is the drastic remodelling of this area in the 'Re-occupation' period. In the two magazines immediately south of the 'Bath' the massive blockings can be seen which align with important walls in the 'Prisons' area, particularly the north wall of the

Room of the Stirrup Vases. That these were of 'Re-occupation' date was established in the unreported dig which was recorded in DM/DB 1923⁷. On this Hood wrote⁸ "This whole passage of 1923 is instructive. There is no mention of any traces of 'Re-occupation' in this area in the published accounts." Later, after the re-emergence of Fyfe's measuring books, it was possible to resurvey this important part of the site and to establish in precise detail the excavation data and the stratigraphy⁹. The more easterly of these two blocked magazines abuts on the Corridor of the Stone Basin just to the east of the doorway. Here (Fig. 2a, 3) was found not only the famous 'stone font' but also, virtually touching it and alongside the burnt door jambs, the LM III B 'pilgrim bottle'¹⁰. In the 'Bath' area immediately north of the NW Magazines there was much evidence of similar late building activities (see our section, Fig. 2b).

The 'Bath' area was approached from the east (the North Piazza) by a double entrance "partly obscured by later walls". The 'Bath' system was part of the original structure of the palace; but after some disaster it had been filled in and the 'Bath' itself was crossed by two walls running N-S and another two running E-W, their foundations resting partly on the upper surface of the 'Bath' walls. On the south side there was evidence that a considerable interval intervened between the destruction and the erection of the later structure. A bare metre from the top of the terrace wall parts of a painted stucco still adhered to the wall and there was a full metre of deposit between the cement pavement and the top of the 'Bath' (see Fig. 2b, 3). Evidently this room was a counterpart to that above the lid deposit. Fyfe [1903] enters the late structures likewise as 'Re-occupation' Late Mycenaean (cf. BSA 1901, Plan I, with the late walls above the 'Bath' walls).

We are especially interested in the deposit below the late walls, particularly the sherds. Once again we are fortunate. In the first place the boxes referred to by Hood in SMK¹¹ bear references to DM/Pot¹²,

⁷ See PP 51-53. The position of the blockings is shown in Fig. 3 (p. 47); cf. OKT Plate XIV.

⁸ Kadmos 4, 1965, 34, n. 69.

⁹ L. R. Palmer and J. Raison, 'L'Insula Nord-ouest de Knossos', *Minos* 14, 1975, 17-38.

¹⁰ OKT 110 with Plate XIII.

¹¹ E I 1 (594): [DM/Pot] II 4; E I 12 (620): [DM/Pot] I 50. E I 1 is described in DM/Pot I 50. DM/Pot I 28 may also refer to the same area.

¹² The puzzle presented by these numbers was solved when DM/Pot emerged. See OKT 233-34. This link-up countered the objection that little reliance can be placed on the material in the SMK.

which increase confidence in the material they contain. Secondly, this material has been carefully examined by Popham whose conclusion is harmonious: "Leaving aside the earlier MM and LM I material, the sherds are uniformly LM III A, with the possible exception of two fragments from N. of the N. W. Tank which could be later. For the rest, the vase fragments look to be contemporary; if so, they could afford valuable synchronisms with Mycenaean pottery. Mention has already been made of the curved-stripe jug and the curve-stemmed papyrus motive. Equally important are the two shapes of cup, the shallow hollow-footed variety and the bell-shaped type with ring foot: both have a fair claim to being un-Minoan shapes in imitation of Mycenaean vases from the Mainland where the closest parallels belong to the III A 1 and early III A 2 phases" (DPK 42).

All the evidence points to this material having been recovered from the underlying burnt deposit above the choked 'Bath' system. Thus Popham has produced clear evidence that there was a destruction by fire in LM III A and that the deposit in the 'Bath' area matches that described by DM for the 'Lid' deposit. Yet Popham does not mention DM's list¹³, though it cannot be seriously doubted that we have here evidence for destruction by fire in LM III A in the penultimate phase of the palace. So once again we seek confirmation for this important finding, and it is provided again by Popham. He has recognized in the adjoining West Magazines¹⁴ sub-floor sherds of a class "not earlier than LM III A 2", notably in the lower cists of Magazine XIII. and the adjoining Long Corridor (DKP 51ff.). He comments on the fresco fragments found in these cists: "The contents of the lower cists in Magazine 13 were similarly dated to MM III B in PM I and the fresco fragments are referred to as 'the best dated deposit' and they are said in PM II to have been found 'in a pure MM III medium' (p. 599), though the pottery is not itself described." Similarly regarding the dating of the Khyan lid in PM I he writes: "It is stated to have been found in a pure MM III A medium though the pottery is not itself described." Popham accepts the testimony of SMK supported by DM/Pot in the West Magazines: why not apropos of the 'Lid'?

Thus the discussion of the 'North Foundations' deposit will confirm that the bulk of Popham's LM III A 1 and 2 material derives from the penultimate destruction level, implying that the building suffered wide-

¹³ On this signal omission see *Minos* 15, 1974 (1976), 40.

¹⁴ For the Magazines see OKT 88-113, 217-220. For the whole Palace see PP *passim*.

spread damage by a fire dated by him as 'not earlier than LM III A 2'. His important monograph should be entitled 'A Destruction of the Palace of Knossos'.¹⁵

V. The cylinder seal

This amendment of PM is relevant to another interesting find, the cylinder seal which Evans adduced as further support for the chronological conclusions suggested by the lid (BSA 1901, 67–8). West of the 'Bath' were found the remains of a solidly cemented cistern of rubble structure "belonging to the same Mycenaean date as the later walls on either side of it, and a wall abutting on its south face showed the usual wall-stucco still clinging to it." Here again the photograph in BSA 1901, Pl. II illuminates the text just quoted. It shows a) the late walls built over the north and west walls of the 'Bath' (cf. Fyfe's entries in BSA 1901, Pl. I), and b) immediately to the west the walls of the 'Mycenaean Cistern' with the circular base. Evans goes on: "At the base of the western side of the cistern about two and a half metres from the spot where the engraved lid was found, and embedded in the rubble material, was a cylinder of lapis lazuli mounted at each end with gold caps bearing filigree decorations. The cylinder had evidently got into its position at the base of the Mycenaean wall from an earlier deposit, perhaps not far removed in date from that containing the relic of Khyan." This location can be measured on Fyfe's plan 1903 (Fig. 2a, 2) where the rectangular 'Late Mycenaean' structure is almost exactly two and a half metres east of the wall under which the lid was found, while two other late walls on the south side jut forward from the North Terrace Wall.

It will be evident that both the lid and the seal (which may antedate even the building of the First Minoan Palaces) are no more than vague *termini post quos* for the Late Mycenaean structures above the stratum in which they were found.

Today scholars will feel no surprise at the find of such an object in so late a context. H.-G. Buchholz has discussed¹⁶ a Syrian cylinder seal

¹⁵ See further DPK and S. Hiller (see n. 6), especially p. 216: "Since the sherd material preserved in the Stratigraphical Museum of Knossos derives at least in part from relatively late soundings, particularly from those sunk in the 1920s below floors cleared many years earlier, it is reasonable to suppose that it dates not the destruction of the Last Palace but that of the Penultimate Palace."

¹⁶ For a recent discussion see W. Helck, *Die Beziehungen Ägyptens und Vorderasiens zur Ägäis bis ins 7. Jahrhundert v. Chr.* *Erträge der Forschung* Bd. 120, 1979, 125 f. (with

which seems to have belonged to a merchant travelling on the ship which was wrecked off Cape Gelidonya about 1200 B.C. Buchholz assigns the seal to the eighteenth if not to the end of the nineteenth century B.C. and comments: "The cylinder seal is the oldest of the objects found and its age at the time the ship sank was more than half a millennium." A cache in Egypt (eṭ-Ṭod) contained cylinder seals of widely varying date, and this is paralleled by the thirty-six seals found in the Kadmeia at Thebes, the destruction of which is now put at the transition between LM III B and III C.¹⁷ There seems to have been a trade in such discarded seals, which were valued because of their precious material, particularly lapis lazuli. It may well be that these mysteriously engraved objects were regarded as having magic powers, and this may be why both the lid and the cylinder seal were found so close together under the foundations (the seal being embedded in the rubble material) of the late structures above the destruction stratum that had engulfed the whole 'Bath' area.

Antique seals were particularly used to decorate pottery. H. W. Catling and V. Karageorghis in a paper on Late Minoan imports into Cyprus (BSA 55, 1960, 106–127) describe a sherd of a large pithos with a "horizontal band of relief ornament evidently produced by rolling a cylinder over a blocked-out band": They refer further to J. L. Benson's discussion of similar sherds from Episkopo (The Aegean and the Near East: Studies presented to Hetty Goldman, 59ff.) and note (p. 123f.): "where the date of the sherds is known stratigraphically Dr. Benson shows the seals used on them be up to four centuries earlier than the pots they were used to decorate."

Buchholz's general observations (p. 151) are relevant to another find at Knossos. "Originally, cylinder seals from the Aegean were expected to furnish a means of dating objects discovered with them, and a check on chronology. The cylinder seal from the Gelidonya ship now serves as a proof of what considerable length of time must be taken into account between the manufacture of a seal and its final 'loss'." In a footnote he adds that the faulty evidential logic still continues, and he cites as an example BCH 78, 1954, 112. A more recent example is to be found in OKT 72, where Boardman refers to Evans's treatment (PM IV 596–99) of an impression of a Syro-Hittite cylinder which formed part of the

reference to H. Buchholz in G. F. Bass, 'Cape Gelidonya: A Bronze Age Shipwreck', *Trans. Am. Philos. Soc.* 57, part 8, 1967, 148–159).

¹⁷ T. G. Spyropoulos and J. Chadwick, *The Thebes Tablets*, 1975.

large 'Archives Deposit', the major part of which was found on the upper flight of the 'Service Staircase' (also called the 'Wooden Staircase'), where they overlay a stair-cupboard containing LM III B pots. Yet Boardman used the sealing as evidence for a destruction c. 1400 B.C.: "Another interesting piece of dating evidence from another source is provided by the sealing from a Cypriot cylinder, found in a passage by the Service Stairs . . . This is a seal of Porada's Group II (*AJA* lii, 184ff.) which she dates to the years about 1400 B.C." But it should now be clear that what dates the 'Archives Deposit' is not the seal impressions but the pottery found with them. Moreover, there is abundant evidence that this wing of the palace was rebuilt in LM III. We may adduce in support a fact noted by Boardman, the importance of which he has overlooked. In the Little Palace, the destruction of which was put by the excavators in the LM III B period, sealings were also found scattered on the main stairs (see OKT, Plate XXVI). Boardman writes (p. 64): "There were more sealings on the stairs". In a footnote he adds "Below the upper flight Pendlebury records MM III-LM III." The plan to SMK marks this test half-way up the second flight. Its date is 1908 (the Little Palace was cleared in 1905), and the mixed deposit is matched by that obtained in a probe of 1928 in the Private Staircase of the Queen's Megaron, from which Popham (DPK 28-30) has reported much LM III B pottery. Once again we observe the striking unity in the 'penultimate' horizon which is repeated in the 'Lid' deposit.

It was not until the publication of PM IV that Evans gave a full account and illustration of this 'Lapis-Lazuli Cylinder with early Chaldaean Connexions' (pp. 422-25, with figs. 349 and 350). Once again we are faced with the basic problem of its provenance. He dates its manufacture to 2400 B.C., but the find-place is now altered: "This remarkable cylinder was found 40 centimetres deeper than the M.M. IIIa stratum, in the Initiatory Area just beyond the Western border of the 'North Lustral Basin'." He suggests that it may have reached Crete slightly later than the date of its manufacture, "but the probability remains that the stratum from which it had been derived goes back at least to the Twenty-Fourth Century B.C." There is no mention of the 'Mycenaean Cistern'. But in any case since the floor of the Lustral Basin was the lowest level cleared in 1901 and (on the evidence of the photograph referred to above) the ground to the west of it had been left at the height of the top of the 'Bath' walls, then the cylinder seal cannot have been recovered 40 cm below the 'MM III A' stratum. Evans's confusion may have arisen from the stated position of the 'Lid', 40 cm below the 'Mycenaean' floor. At all events, the incompatibility of PM with the

account presented in the report (to which he refers!) is here particularly crass¹⁸.

VI. Mainland comparisons

In PM IV (22ff.), in a section headed "Spiral and Plaitwork Fragments of Gypsum Capital from 'Clytemnestra' Façade of MM IIIa Character", Evans compares a sculptured piece of stone described by Wace as "a fragment of gypsum carved with a spiral pattern with the angles filled in with a plaited design" with the material from the 'North-East [sic] Lustral Basin'. Evans was unable to trace the fragment in question, but, if his equation is accepted, it would be more prudent to base our conclusions on the firmly established 13th century date for the 'Clytemnestra' tomb. Then it would not be surprising that a constructional element of the mainland structure should find its counterpart in a stratum at Knossos characterized by a preponderance of sherds of LM III A date which afforded "valuable synchronisms with Mycenaean pottery" (Popham).

The section of PM just mentioned follows immediately on the discussion of the 'Treasury of Atreus' (pp. 225-8). Here, too, Evans sought to refute Wace by stylistic equations between the mainland tomb and pieces of carved stone from Knossos. Evans was right with his equations but wrong with his dates; for it is now evident from the true excavation data of Knossos that the Cretan stone fragments, like the mainland tomb, dated from the late thirteenth century. Since 1960 it has been recognized, on the evidence entered in Evans's own notebook for 1900, that he was mistaken in his belief about the find-place of these Knossian fragments. They had been found in 1900 in the South Propylaeum 70 cm below the surface alongside LM III B pithoi; and not in 1925 70 cm below a MM III B floor of *terrazza*. Moreover, the wall-spur alongside was found to contain sherds at least as late as LM III A 1. The same holds good of the statuette of User (*Wsr*) in the Central Court. By the time he came to write *The Palace of Minos* Evans was convinced that he had found it 70 cm below the pavement of the court in a pure MM II B deposit. This

¹⁸ As will become clear from the stratigraphic diagram (Fig. 2b) this displacement enabled Evans to refer the walls above the 'Bath' to MM III B. Popham, who seems to be unaware of the account in BSA 1901 and uses Mosso's incomplete version of Fyfe's 1903 plan, accepts the PM version of the excavation data: '... other walls were built over them [the Lustral Basin and Foundation walls associated with it] in the MM III B reconstruction' (DPK 41).

contradicted the find-position communicated in the 1900 Report, which was: on the pavement, 70 cm below the surface. Here, too, all the sources show that the sub-floor deposits contained sherds at least as late as LM III A, reaching down to the second metre.

VII. Fresco fragments

Another find from this deposit not only is of intrinsic importance (it concerns the history of Cretan fresco painting and its relation to that of the Mainland) but also poses a basic question of principle. In 1964 S. Alexiou published¹⁹ a fresco assigned to the 'Area of the North Foundations' which had been previously examined and described by Rodenwaldt. It depicts part of the neck of a horse together with three tufts of the mane. Alexiou links it with another fragment from Knossos, a coloured drawing of which was found among Rodenwaldt's papers. The stratigraphic context of these two pieces cannot be determined, but Alexiou groups them stylistically with some remarkable finds from the Southeast Basements at Knossos. Here, in 1955, during work of conservation and restoration, N. Platon found a fragmentary fresco still adhering to the south wall of what Evans called²⁰ 'The Lapidary's Workshop of Re-occupation Date'. Two other fragments were discovered in the Museum magazines by M. Cameron and they evidently belong to the same picture²¹. The box in which they were found bears contradictory indications of location: North Threshing Floor Area; and Area of the Man in High Relief. Alexiou argues for the latter location, and this is supported by the reference numbers inscribed on the fresco fragments: B VIII 3 and 7. This may be interpreted plausibly as grid square B 8 (see the plan in BSA 1901) rooms 3 and 7, for in DM/DB 18 v 1901, where the excavations in this area are recorded, the north-south wall which runs between the 'Priest-King Fresco' and the Area of the Wheat and Beans (see Fig. 3a) is referred to as 'wall 3-7' (see OKT 152).

The notebooks and the Report give us abundant information about the finds in this group of rooms and their stratigraphic position (summarized in Fig. 3b). In the first place it is clear that major constructional works had been carried out at a late date. The massive terrace wall had been strengthened by a buttress of clay and rubble masonry. It is of

¹⁹ 'Neue Wagendarstellungen aus Kreta', AA 1964, 785-804.

²⁰ See OKT 151 ff.; PP 98-106.

²¹ For the restoration see Alexiou op. cit. Abb. 3.

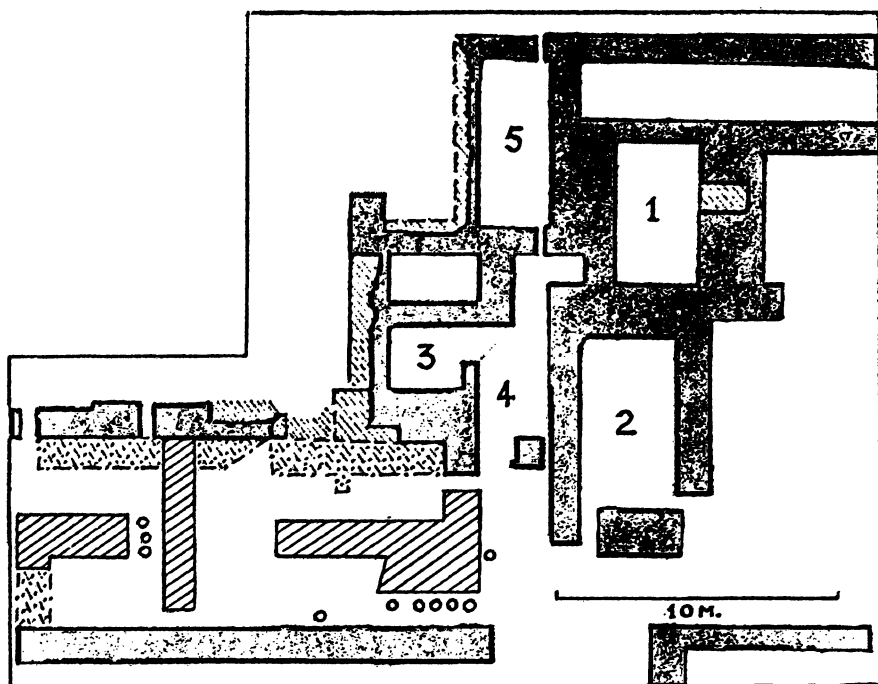


Fig. 3a. Plan of the Southeast Basements (after Fyfe 1903).

- 1) Room of the Wheat. 2) Lapidary's Workshop (Area of the Beans). 3) Room of the Clay Sealings. 4) Room of the Clay Matrix. 5) Room of the 'Priest-King Fresco' (Man in Bas-relief).

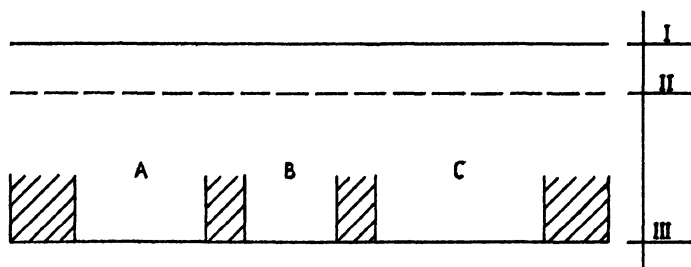


Fig. 3b. Schematic Section in Southeast Basements.

- A. Room of the Clay Sealings (deposit scattered over the adjacent room spaces). B. Room of the Clay Matrix. C. Lapidary's Workshop of Reoccupation Date (Area of the Beans). I Floor level of main palace. II Surface before excavation (close to the surface were found a) the jar of burned beans, b) tablets and sealings, c) chessmen and the pieces of bas-relief fresco). III Floor level of basement rooms. In the room north of C the floor was half covered with burned wheat.

particular interest that the wall dividing the Lapidary's workshop (Area of the Beans) from the Area of the Wheat had foundations higher (just below the modern surface) than the other walls. Moreover, the massive block of rubble immediately south of the Room of the Clay Seals (Fig. 3a, 3) aligns systematically with the east wall of the room and also with two shallow steps further south. It follows that at the upper level a S-N corridor ran above the basement spaces Fig. 3a, 4 and 5, where the clay matrix and the pieces of the 'Priest-King' fresco were found above the floor level of the basements. The whole area was found engulfed with fire debris extending downwards from the surface to the floors of the rooms. Tablets were found without exception close to the surface, and the same is true of a pot of burned beans in what came to be known as the Lapidary's Workshop, while in the room immediately north (east of the find-place of the Priest-King fresco) a pile of charred wheat covered the northern half of the floor. Mackenzie also described with great precision some of the complete pots found in this group of basement rooms while others are located at the south and east sides of the late rubble support just mentioned.

This late date for the frescoes is supported by evidence from the North Piazza (see Fig. 2a). Here too late rubble walls had been built, and superimposed on these walls was a great heap of fresco fragments. Evans himself wrote (PM III 37 with note 1), "Not only did the deposit contain some L.M. III fresco patterns, but it was superimposed on wall-stumps of 'Re-occupation' date." The same deposit also yielded a new join to the famous 'Parisienne' from the West Magazines. M. A. S. Cameron, to whom this discovery is due, comments (Mins.Lond.Sem. 3 June 1970): "Other pieces from this fresco dump likewise seem to belong to scenes of which other pieces were certainly found elsewhere in the Palace, and those most likely to have collected the fresco debris and thrown it out into the North Portico may again be the LM III B 'Squatters'." If 'squatters' there were, then they must have operated after the construction and abandonment of the rooms of 'reoccupation' date found throughout this area above the extensive LM III A burnt stratum, walls which cannot be separated from the frescoes which Evans records on the structures in question in the 'Bath Area' immediately west of the North Piazza.

Alexiou's discussion of the date of the frescoes throws up a basic question of principle. The chronology, based on pots, has been satisfactorily determined. Yet the fact that the main piece of the chariot fresco was found still attached to the wall of a room described by Evans as of 'reoccupation date' is dismissed by Alexiou as a 'strange chance' (ein sonderbarer Zufall). True, he does make a half-hearted attempt to

query Evans's late dating, but Popham's commentary on the vases registered in DM/Pot²² leaves little room for doubt that this whole area was occupied in LM III B. DM ascribes the LM III B pots not only to the Area of the Chessmen, the Area of the Beans, and the Area of the Wheat, but also to the Area of the Clay Signet and the Area N. of the Clay Signet, which is where the Priest-King Fresco ('The Man in High Relief') was found. Yet Alexiou holds that his stylistic analysis is of overriding importance and that an LM III B date is 'unthinkable' (undenkbar). In fact, he comments, it may well be that the fresco was executed in the first years of the 'Achaean' occupation of Knossos, that is towards the end of LM I B. If so, it must have persisted through the drastic reconstruction of the palace in LM II down to the 'penultimate' destruction by fire in LM III A 1-2. It would also have been incorporated into the restored Last Palace, which (according to Popham) lasted only until the end of LM III A 2, when again a great fire raged. Finally, it would still have remained in situ after (to quote Evans) the construction of "late walls inserted at a later date to buttress up the main south wall . . ." Finally, it must be supposed, the whole area with its abundant LM III B pottery was mysteriously engulfed by the fire-debris of the LM III A 2 disaster which included Linear B tablets and accompanying sealings. Some of these 'LM III A 1' sealings, still more mysteriously, had lodged themselves above a floor where the LM III B lapidary had been at work leaving behind him not only half-finished bead seals but also "clay nodules which had been used for trial pieces by the engraver during his work and showed parts of very late animal designs" (PM IV 595).

Curiously enough, in the adjoining East Wing of the Palace we find another fresco to which an even longer physical history is implicitly attributed. The High Relief Frescoes were found close to the surface in the burnt debris of a suite of rooms which Evans came to realise had been constructed from the ground up in LM III B. These facts had been clear since 1930 (PM III), when Evans realized that he had been mistaken in classifying the pots found in the store-rooms as MM III B. Not only were these in fact LM III B, but below the floors and inside the masonry there was evidence of construction at an advanced phase of the 'Re-occupation'. Thus a MM III A date for the High Relief Frescoes implies a persistence stretching from the First Palace down to the end of Evans's post-palatial period²³. Here, too, a lapidary had left behind, close to the

²² LDPK 5f., 13-15.

²³ For a recent discussion of the frescoes see L. R. Palmer, *Forschungen und Funde: Festschrift Bernhard Neutsch* (Innsbrucker Beiträge zur Kulturwissenschaft Bd. 21), 325-333.

surface, unfinished products of remarkable quality, closely comparable with those found on the floor of the Throne Room.

We may content ourselves with a bare statement of the archaeological context of the frescoes studied by Alexiou in his valuable article. If we accept the contemporaneity of all the fragments, then the pieces from the North Foundations can easily be assigned to the frescoes found *in situ* attached to the walls of the 'Reoccupation [Late Mycenaean]' rooms built over the LM III A destruction stratum. It is particularly satisfactory that the horse with the three-tufted mane finds a remarkable parallel in a sealing from the Little Palace, a building which, as the excavators insisted, had been destroyed by fire in LM III B. Evans in the report for 1905 commented: "The exact correspondences between the dressing of the mane here shown and that of the horses on the fragmentary frescoes found in the Megaron of the Palace of Mycenae may be taken as a fair indication that we have to do with the same stock."²⁴ An important observation bearing on the connexions of the LM III B Little Palace we once again owe to Popham. He has shown that some vases found here were imports from the contemporary settlement at Kydonia, the links of which with the Mainland have been finally confirmed by the admission that certain inscribed stirrup-jars found in Thebes and Tiryns were imports from that area of Crete.

VIII. Conclusions

When Evans consulted his notebooks to remind himself of the find-place of the stone rosettes, it seems clear that he read '70 cm down' as meaning 'below the floor' and not 'below the surface'. By a similar misreading he sited the Egyptian statuette 70 cm below the pavement instead of below the surface. That there was no pure MM II B stratum below the Central Court had long been clear from the Guide to the Stratigraphical Museum. But both he and Mackenzie were convinced of the 'squatter' re-occupation and so discounted as 'intrusive' all LM III material that was awkwardly sited.

We agree with Popham that it is the overall picture which counts. In a matter of such central importance as the 'Khyan Lid' deposit, we should not treat this in isolation but should take into consideration also the adjacent areas of the Palace. Here, as always, we search for agreed positions. Popham, as we saw, rejects the testimony of PM for the sub-floor

²⁴ On this seal see L. R. Palmer, *Mycenaeans and Minoans*², 194-96.

deposit in the West Magazines and the Long Corridor and admits pottery as late as LM III A 1 and 2 together with the evidence for destruction by fire at the penultimate stage of the palace. Immediately east lie the Northwest Magazines, and here Hood has embraced the results of the elaborate unreported excavation recorded in DM/DB 1923, which showed a thoroughgoing reconstruction from the ground up in the 'Reoccupation' period. He has also firmly dismissed as an aberration the whole 'Reoccupation' hypothesis which, as he said, distorted all reports from 1901 onwards.

As for the all-important pottery in the form of whole vessels found on the floors, we have already mentioned the 'pilgrim bottle' at the south end of one of the NW magazines (Fig. 2a, 3). To Popham we owe valuable information bearing on the Room of the Stirrup Jars just to the east of the NW Magazines (Fig. 2a, 4). Not only did he help to discredit Evans's notorious 'decisive stratigraphy' by showing that not one of the vessels concerned was found in this room, but he also provided positive information by identifying²⁵ two stirrup-jars assignable to it. One of these (no. 20 with Plate 4d) is of exceptional interest in that it points to relations with the Mainland: "The quality of the slip and paint distinguishes it from other large stirrup jars from the Palace and raises the suspicion that it may be an imported vase". A tomb at Suda, which also contained a Mycenaean chariot crater, yielded a comparable jar: "The torus disk base on stirrup jars, not a Minoan feature, appears on the Mainland at the end of LH III A . . . The rather exaggerated torus disk foot seems to be a III B and III C feature". The significance of this Mycenaean import is heightened by Popham's remarks on a vase from the Area of the Wheat (p. 14, no. 8 with Plate 6e-f): "Fabric, paint and decoration all show this pot to be of Mycenaean manufacture. This was recognised by Furumark *MP Chr.* 108 n. 9 . . ." We add now Hallager's observation that the stirrup-jar from the Area of the Wheat (Popham no. 10 with Plate 5a-b) shows traces of fire, and combine it with Popham's commentary: "The finely decorated octopus stirrup jar is particularly Minoan; Mycenaean pottery does not seem to have used this form of decoration on small stirrup-jars from LH III A until III C when its introduction is clearly due to Cretan influence".

The conclusion seems inescapable. The LM III B 're-occupiers' of the Southeast Basement rooms were Mycenaean Greeks who used the Linear B script and were in contact with the Mainland²⁶. The same is

²⁵ LPDK 15.

²⁶ For the export of LM III B stirrup-jars from Crete to the Mainland see H. W. Catling and R. E. Jones, *Archaeometry* 19, 1977, 137-146. If we add Popham's detection of

true of the Northwest quarter of the palace (including the Room of the Stirrup Jars) where, as Hood and Popham have recognised, their extensive reconstructions from the ground up are minutely recorded in the area immediately south of the 'North Bath' area. Why should either scholar be surprised at finding here too a penultimate burnt stratum characterized by a predominance of LM III A sherds with overlying 'Late Mycenaean' structures decorated with frescoes which seem to have included a chariot scene linked by Alexiou with that from the Southeast Basement? We find it difficult to detect any grounds for disagreement.

For easy reference and comprehension we present the key excavation data in a schematic section (Fig. 2b) and draw the evident conclusion: the Khyan Lid, the Sumerian seal, and the associated fragments of stone ewers must join the lengthening list of foreign objects found on Aegean sites so far 'out of time-context' as to be useless for dating purposes. In our search we have pointed to evidence which supports Hallager's verdict on PM IV: "This volume is riddled with so many errors and inaccuracies that we must, by and large, reject this work as a source in scientific excavation." Regrettably, we submit, this is true of PM as a whole.

How necessary is our restatement of the excavation data may be judged from the most recent work on the connexion of the Aegean with Egypt and the Near East (see n. 16). For in this study by Helck, not only is Khyan's lid used to date the beginning of MM III (pp. 48–50, with a reference to Hood's Nestor letter as the latest pronouncement on the subject, Hagen's reign being dated to 1609–1588, but User's statuette, "found together with MM II B pottery" is thought to have been traded from Heliopolis to Crete in the Hyksos period²⁷. Finally, no mention is

LM III B imports from Kydonia in the Little Palace, and his discovery of an inscribed LM III B stirrup-jar in the adjoining 'Unexplored Mansion', it is difficult to believe that he would still subscribe to his view of the reoccupation (LDPK 8f.): "Indeed it is tempting to believe that most if not all the reoccupation was connected with the shrine [of the Double Axes] . . . It could well be that the occupiers of the Palace ruins were some priestly body and that the stores of pots were meant primarily for sale to worshippers visiting the shrine." Did they also import pottery for this purpose from the Mainland? What function had the small stirrup-jar in the Ruinenkult?

²⁷ The find-place of the statuette was correctly stated in the Report for 1900 (BSA 6, 27) and confirmation was found in DM/DB 25 iv 1900 early in 1960 (see OKT x, xxxiii–xxiv, 29–30. P. Åström was advised of this after his paper to the First Cretological Congress 'Remarks on Middle Minoan Chronology' in 1961, and since then it has been repeatedly brought to the notice of scholars (Palmer, *Mycenaeans and Minoans*², 221–23, in the Chapter 'Checking the Facts'; PP 19–21; *New Guide to the Palace of Knossos* 18, 27, 123). It is unfortunate that the same error appears along with the MM III A dating of Khyan's Lid in so authoritative a reference book as the new edition of

made of the twenty years of controversy about the date of the Knossos tablets. The tablets are assigned to LM II and the beginning of the 'Achaean' period at Knossos is put "with some precision" at 1445 B.C. If by 'Mycenaean Greek Palace' we mean the palace of the Linear B tablets, then the fundamental archaeological datum is that not a scrap was found in the penultimate burnt LM III A destruction level. We thus have no evidence for Greek occupation of Knossos until the LM III B 'Last Palace'.

Once again, an enquiry into a key excavation datum, the most recent of a long series which started in 1960 with an examination of the 'decisive stratigraphy' in the Room of the Stirrup Jars, has led us to virtually all parts of the palace and embraced not only the tablets and sealings but also artefacts like stone vases and frescoes. Originally we spoke of the 'Unity of the Archives'. What has emerged in twenty years of research is the impressive unity of the archaeological pattern as a whole, particularly in respect of the penultimate burnt stratum, datable at the earliest to LM III A 2. Once this firmly established fact is generally acknowledged, Aegean scholarship can begin the long delayed task of re-writing not only the history of the Aegean during the period which hitherto has begun with the 'fall of Knossos' and the supposed isolation of Crete about 1400 B.C. but also the various branches of art history. In particular the Knossos sealings still await full publication.

the Cambridge Ancient History. The relevant section (vol. II, chapter IV(b)), by F. Matz, was issued in 1962 but obviously had been written before the re-establishment of the true excavation data.