



SEPTEMBER 2021

Edited by

John Bennet, Artemis Karnava and Torsten Meißner

ARIADNE
The Journal of the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Crete
Supplement Series - 5

ΑΡΙΑΔΝΗ
Το περιοδικό της Φιλοσοφικής Σχολής του Πανεπιστημίου Κρήτης
Παράρτημα 5

KO-RO-NO-WE-SA
Proceedings of the 15th international colloquium
on Mycenaean studies
SEPTEMBER 2021

KO-RO-NO-WE-SA
Πρακτικά του 15ου διεθνούς συνεδρίου μυκηναϊκών σπουδών
Σεπτέμβριος 2021

Edited by
JOHN BENNET
ARTEMIS KARNAVA
TORSTEN MEIßNER

FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY, UNIVERSITY OF CRETE
RETHYMNON
ΦΙΛΟΣΟΦΙΚΗ ΣΧΟΛΗ, ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΟ ΚΡΗΤΗΣ
ΡΕΘΥΜΝΟ
2024

Cover: Linear B tablet **PY Ta 711** with the word *ko-ro-no-we-sa* (image: Courtesy of The Pylos Tablets Digital Project, Palace of Nestor Excavations, The Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati)

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Ariadne Supplements to Ariadne, the Journal of the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Crete, 2018-

Vol. 5 (2024)

ISSN 2623-4726 (series)

e-ISSN 2653-9608 (series)

ISBN 978-618-85496-9-2

e-ISBN 978-618-5762-00-1

1. Greek archaeology 2. Greek philology 3. Greek epigraphy
4. Mycenology 5. Linear B

Copy editing

mare creative service (info@mare.gr)

Cover design

pencilcase.gr

Printing and binding

Γραφοτεχνική Κρήτης Α.Ε.Ε. (info@grafotekniki.gr)

Printed volume distribution

Crete University Press (<https://cup.gr/>)

KO-RO-NO-WE-SA

Proceedings of the 15th international colloquium on Mycenaean studies
September 2021

Abbreviations

Preface and acknowledgements

List of contributors

1. Keynote lectures - new discoveries

An archaeological and epigraphical overview of some inscriptions found in the Cult Center of the city of Knossos (Anetaki plot) Athanasia Kanta, Dimitri Nakassis, Thomas G. Palaima, Massimo Perna	27
An assemblage of Linear B administrative documents from Ayios Vasileios, Laconia: preliminary report on the study of the documents in their archaeological context Adamantia Vasilogamvrou, John Bennet, Angeliki Karagianni, Vassilis Petrakis, Nektarios Karadimas, Eleftheria Kardamaki	45

2. Reports, projects, databases and archival material

Rapport 2016-2021 sur les textes en écriture hiéroglyphique crétoise, en linéaire A et en linéaire B Maurizio Del Freo	87
2016-2020 report on the Cypriot syllabic inscriptions Markus Egetmeyer	125
Rapporto sulla preparazione del corpus della scrittura cipro-minoica Massimo Perna	137
DĀMOS, database of Mycenaean at Oslo – Developments and perspectives Federico Aurora	143
Mycenaean philology and materiality: the “ <i>pa-i-to</i> Epigraphic Project.” An integrative approach to Linear B tablets from Knossos Georgia Flouda, Erika Notti	161
Mycenaean palaeography: the “ <i>pa-i-to</i> Epigraphic Project.” An integrative approach to Linear B tablets from Knossos Alessandro Greco	175

A new tool on Greek lexicography: <i>El léxico del griego micénico</i> Juan Piquero Rodríguez	193
<i>Errata et corrigenda</i> à PTT ² au 04/07/22 Maurizio Del Freo	207
Η αποκρυπτογράφηση της Γραμμικής Β και ο Κωνσταντίνος Δ. Κτιστόπουλος Vasileios L. Aravantinos, Charalambos E. Maravelias	215
Wilhelm Deecke's bequest at the <i>Bibliothèque Nationale et Universitaire de Strasbourg</i> : a glimpse into 19th century archaeological investigations in Cyprus Artemis Karnava	239

3. Linear A and Linear B texts

Landowning and the creation of private estates in Pylian <i>pa-ki-ja-ne</i> Claudia Valeria Alonso Moreno	259
<i>a₂-geš-gar-ra</i> during the Ur III period: an early example of <i>ta-ra-si-ja</i> Richard Firth	271
Quelques remarques sur les tablettes en linéaire B de Pylos Louis Godart, Anna Sacconi	287
Notes on the Knossos L(2) tablets John T. Killen	301
Migration in the Mycenaean world: the evidence for immigrants Stavroula Nikoloudis	311
Diachronic perspectives on the Knossos textiles (L-series) in the Room of the Chariot Tablets, the North Entrance Passage and the Main Archival Phase Marie-Louise Nosch	325
L'administration de l'huile à Ougarit et dans le monde mycénien: aspects des procédures palatiales Françoise Rougemont, Juan-Pablo Vita	347
Signs of the times? Testing the chronological significance of Linear A and B palaeography Ester Salgarella, Anna P. Judson	359
Gold in the Linear B tablets Jörg Weilhartner	381

4. Linear B vocabulary

Mycenaean <i>to-ko</i> Alberto Bernabé	399
Linguistic evidence for animal husbandry in the Linear B tablets: occupational terms, titles and personal names Elena Džukeska	403
The supposed thematic genitive in <i>-(C)o</i> in Mycenaean: a mirage José L. García Ramón	417
Mycenaean names in <i>-to</i> : the Minoan component in the 2nd millennium BC through the lens of anthroponymy José Miguel Jiménez Delgado	433
Historical reflections on the Pylos Ta series: putting <i>te-ke</i> in its place Thomas G. Palaima	449
Linguistic idiosyncrasies and chronology of Linear B tablets from the Room of the Chariot Tablets and the North Entrance Passage at Knossos Rachele Pierini	467
Mycenaean <i>qe-te-o</i> and Greek adjectives in <i>-τέος</i> and <i>*-eyo-</i> Rupert J. E. Thompson	483
<i>o-u-ka</i> , <i>o-u-ko</i> and the Mycenae Oe tablets revisited Carlos Varias García	497

5. Scripts and archaeology

Comparing Cretan Hieroglyphic and Linear A seal stones: a preliminary assessment of forms, materials, sequences, uses Matilde Civitillo	511
The date of the final destruction of the Palace of Nestor at Pylos Jack L. Davis, Sharon R. Stocker, Salvatore Vitale, John Bennet, Hariclia Brecolaki, Anna P. Judson	527
Reduce, reuse, recycle? The clay of the Pylos tablets Julie Hruby, Dimitri Nakassis	545
The Linear B tablets from the North Entrance Passage at Knossos: a preliminary account of an interdisciplinary approach Ophélie Mouthuy	561

Colloquium minutes and resolutions

Minutes of the CIPEM meeting	581
Resolutions of the <i>Comité des signes</i>	585
Resolutions of the <i>Comité des instruments de travail</i>	589
Resolutions of the <i>Committee on digital approaches to Aegean scripts</i> . . .	593

Indexes

Cretan Hieroglyphic, Linear A, Linear B, Cypro-Minoan and Cypriot syllabic texts	599
Cretan Hieroglyphic, Linear A, Linear B, Cypro-Minoan and Cypriot words and sign-groups	619

Abbreviations

I. Mycenological colloquia

Études Mycéniennes 1956 = LEJEUNE, M. (ed.) 1956 *Études Mycéniennes. Actes du Colloque international sur les textes mycéniens*, Gif-sur-Yvette, 3-7 avril 1956.

Mycenaeae Studies 1961 = BENNETT, E. L., JR. (ed.) 1964 *Mycenaeae Studies. Proceedings of the Third International Colloquium for Mycenaeae Studies held at 'Wingspread', 4-8 September 1961.*

Cambridge Colloquium 1965 = PALMER, L. R. & CHADWICK, J. (eds) 1966 *Proceedings of the Cambridge Colloquium on Mycenaeae Studies*, 7-12 April 1965.

Acta Mycenaea 1970 = RUIPÉREZ, M. S. (ed.) 1972 *Acta Mycenaea. Actes du cinquième Colloque international des études mycéniennes*, Salamanca, 30 mars-3 avril 1970, *Minos* 11-12, 1970-1971.

Colloquium Mycenaeum 1975 = RISCH, E. & MÜHLESTEIN, H. (eds) 1979 *Colloquium Mycenaeum. Actes du sixième colloque international sur les textes mycéniens et égéens tenu à Chaumont sur Neuchâtel*, 7-13 septembre 1975.

Res Mycenaeae 1981 = HEUBECK, A. & NEUMANN, G. (eds) 1983 *Res Mycenaeae. Akten des VII. Internationalen Mykenologischen Colloquiums*, Nürnberg, 6.-10. April 1981.

Tractata Mycenaea 1985 = ILIEVSKI, P. HR. & CREPAJAC, L. (eds) 1987 *Tractata Mycenaea. Proceedings of the Eighth International Colloquium of Mycenaeae Studies*, Ohrid 15-20 September 1985.

Mykenaiika 1990 = OLIVIER, J.-P. (ed.) 1992 *Mykenaiika. Actes du IXe Colloque international sur les textes mycéniens et égéens organisé par le Centre de l'Antiquité Grecque et Romaine de la Fondation Hellénique des Recherches Scientifiques et l'École Française d'Athènes*, Athènes, 2-6 octobre 1990, *BCH-Suppl.* 25.

Floreat 1995 = DEGER-JALKOTZY, S., HILLER, S. & PANAGL, O. (eds) 1999 *Floreat Studia Mycenaea. Akten des X. Internationalen Mykenolo-*

gischen Kolloquiums in Salzburg vom 1.-5. Mai 1995, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Klasse, Denkschriften 274.

Austin Colloquium 2000 = Proceedings of the 11th Mycenological Colloquium, Austin, 7-13 May 2000, Unpublished.

Colloquium Romanum 2006 = SACCONI, A., DEL FREO, M., GODART, L. & NEGRI, M. (eds) 2008 Colloquium Romanum. Atti del XII colloquio internazionale di Micenologia, Roma, 20-25 febbraio 2006, Pasiphae 1.

Études Mycéniennes 2010 = CARLIER, P., DE LAMBERTERIE, CH., EGETMEYER, M., GUILLEUX, N., ROUGEMONT, F. & ZURBACH, J. (eds) 2012 Études mycéniennes 2010. Actes du XIIIe colloque international sur les textes égéens, Sèvres, Paris, Nanterre, 20-23 septembre 2010, Biblioteca di Pasiphae 10.

Aegean Scripts 2015 = NOSCH, M.-L. & LANDENIUS ENEGREN, H. (eds) 2017 Aegean Scripts. Proceedings of the 14th International Colloquium on Mycenaean Studies, Copenhagen, 2-5 September 2015, Incunabula Graeca 105.

II. Text editions and new texts

The documents referred to throughout the papers of the volume come from the following editions and are marked in **bold**:

ARN = GODART, L. & SACCONI, A. 2019-2020 *Les archives du roi Nestor. Corpus des inscriptions en linéaire B de Pylos*, Pasiphae 13-14.

CHIC = OLIVIER, J.-P. & GODART, L. 1996 *Corpus Hieroglyphicarum Inscriptionum Cretae*, Études Crétoises 31.

CIV = SACCONI, A. 1974 *Corpus delle iscrizioni vascolari in lineare B*, Incunabula Graeca 57.

CIV-Suppl = GODART, L. & SACCONI, A. 2017 *Supplemento al corpus delle iscrizioni vascolari in lineare B*, Biblioteca di Pasiphae 11.

CoMIK I-IV = CHADWICK, J., GODART, L., KILLEN, J. T., OLIVIER, J.-P., SACCONI, A. & SAKELLARAKIS, I. A. 1986-1998 *Corpus of Mycenaean inscriptions from Knossos I-IV*, Incunabula Graeca 88.

CMS I-XIII = MATZ, F., BIESANTZ, H., PINI, I. & MÜLLER, W. (eds) 1964-2009 *Corpus der minoischen und mykenischen Siegel I-XIII*.

Docs¹ = VENTRIS, M. & CHADWICK, J. 1956 *Documents in Mycenaean Greek*.

Docs² = VENTRIS, M. & CHADWICK, J. 1973 *Documents in Mycenaean Greek*, 2nd ed.

- FdC I = ARAVANTINOS, V. L., GODART, L. & SACCONI, A. 2001 *Thèbes. Fouilles de la Cadmée, I. Les tablettes en linéaire B de la Odos Pelopidou. Édition et commentaire*, Biblioteca di Pasiphae 1.
- FdC III = ARAVANTINOS, V. L., GODART, L. & SACCONI, A. 2002 *Thèbes. Fouilles de la Cadmée, III. Corpus des documents d'archives en linéaire B de Thèbes (1-433)*, Biblioteca di Pasiphae 3.
- FdC IV = ARAVANTINOS, V. L., DEL FREO, M., GODART, L. & SACCONI, A. 2005 *Thèbes. Fouilles de la Cadmée, IV. Les textes de Thèbes (1-433). Translittération et tableaux des scribes*, Biblioteca di Pasiphae 4.
- GORILA I-V = GODART, L. & OLIVIER, J.-P. 1976-1985 *Recueil des inscriptions en linéaire A I-V*, Études Crétoises 21.
- HoChyMin = OLIVIER, J.-P., avec la collaboration de VANDENABEELE, F. 2007 *Édition holistique des textes chypro-minoens*, Biblioteca di Pasiphae 6.
- ICS = MASSON, O. 1983 *Les inscriptions chypriotes syllabiques. Recueil critique commenté*, 2nd ed., Études Chypriotes 1.
- IG XV 1,1 = KARNAVA, A. & PERNA, M., adiuante EGETMEYER, M. 2020 *Inscriptiones Graecae. Volumen XV. Inscriptiones Cypri. Pars I. Inscriptiones Cypri Syllabicae. Fasciculus I. Inscriptiones Amathuntis, Curii, Marii*.
- KT⁵ = KILLEN, J. T. & OLIVIER, J.-P. 1989 *The Knossos tablets. Fifth edition. A transliteration*, Minos-Suppl. 11.
- KT⁶ = MELENA, J. L., in collaboration with FIRTH, R. J. 2019 *The Knossos Tablets. Sixth Edition. A Transliteration*.
- MT IV = OLIVIER, J.-P. 1969 *The Mycenae tablets IV. A revised transliteration*.
- PTT² = OLIVIER, J.-P. & DEL FREO, M. 2020 *The Pylos Tablets Transcribed. Deuxième édition*.
- PT³ = MELENA, J. L., with the collaboration of FIRTH, R. J. 2021 *The Pylos Tablets. Third Edition in Transliteration*. Anejos de Veleia, Series Maior 14.
- Rapport 1991-1995 = OLIVIER, J.-P. 1999 *Rapport 1991-1995 sur les textes en écriture hiéroglyphique crétoise, en linéaire A et en linéaire B*. In *Floreat* 1995, 419-435.
- Rapport 1996-2000 = OLIVIER, J.-P. 2009 *Rapport 1996-2000 sur les textes en écriture hiéroglyphique crétoise, en linéaire A et en linéaire B*, *Pasiphae* 3, 187-197.
- Rapport 2001-2005 = DEL FREO, M. 2008 *Rapport 2001-2005 sur les textes en écriture hiéroglyphique crétoise, en linéaire A et en linéaire B*. In *Colloquium Romanum* 2006, 199-222.

- Rapport* 2006-2010 = DEL FREO, M. 2012 *Rapport 2006-2010 sur les textes en écriture hiéroglyphique crétoise, en linéaire A et en linéaire B*. In *Études mycéniennes* 2010, 3-21.
- Rapport* 2011-2015 = DEL FREO, M. 2017 *Rapport 2011-2015 sur les textes en écriture hiéroglyphique crétoise, en linéaire A et en linéaire B*. In *Aegean Scripts* 2015, 3-30.
- Report* 2011-2015 = EGETMEYER, M., KARNAVA, A., LANDENIUS ENEGREN, H. & PERNA, M. 2017 2011-2015 report on the Cypriot syllabic inscriptions. In *Aegean Scripts* 2015, 31-44.
- TITHEMY* = MELENA, J. L. & OLIVIER, J.-P. 1991 *TITHEMY. The tablets and nodules in Linear B from Tiryns, Thebes and Mycenae. A revised transliteration*, Minos-Suppl. 12.

III. Grammars, dictionaries and handbooks

- CÉG = BLANC, A., DE LAMBERTERIE, CH. & PERPILLOU, J.-L. (eds) 2000-2020 *Chronique d'étymologie grecque* 5-18, *RPhil*.
- Companion* 1-3 = DUHOUX, Y. & MORPURGO DAVIES, A. (eds) 2008-2014 *Companion to Linear B. Mycenaean Greek texts and their world* 1-3.
- DELG = CHANTRAINE, P. 2009 *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque*, 2nd ed.
- DGE = RODRÍGUEZ ADRADOS, F. 1980- *Diccionario griego-español*.
- DMic I-II = AURA JORRO, F. 1985/1993 *DGE Anejo I-II. Diccionario griego-micénico* I-II.
- DMicSupl = AURA JORRO, F. BERNABÉ, A., LUJÁN, E. R., PIQUERO RODRÍGUEZ, J. & VARIAS GARCÍA, C. 2020 *Diccionario griego-español. Anejo VII. Suplemento al Diccionario Micénico*.
- EDG = BEEKES, R. S. P. 2010 *Etymological dictionary of Greek*.
- GEW = FRISK, H. 1954-1972 *Griechisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*.
- LGM = PIQUERO RODRÍGUEZ, J. 2019 *El léxico del griego micénico. Étude et mise à jour de la bibliographie*, *Études anciennes* 73.
- LGPN I-V = 1987-2018 *A Lexicon of Greek Personal Names*.
- LSJ⁹ = LIDDELL, H. G., SCOTT, R., JONES, H. S. & MACKENZIE, R., 1996 *Greek-English Lexicon*.
- Manuale* = DEL FREO, M. & PERNA, M. (eds) 2016 *Manuale di epigrafia micenea. Introduzione allo studio dei testi in Lineare B*.
- MGL = MORPURGO DAVIES, A. 1963 *Mycenaeae Graecitatis Lexicon*, *In-cunabula Graeca* 3.
- SEG = *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*

IV. Journals

Journal abbreviations can be found in the *American Journal of Archaeology* (AJA: <https://www.ajaonline.org/submissions/journals-series>), except for:

ABSA = Annual of the British School at Athens

CCÉC = Cahiers du Centre d'Études Chypriotes

SMEA NS = Studi Micenei ed Egeo-Anatolici - New Series

V. Electronic resources

Cretan Hieroglyphic inscriptions, YOUNGER = <http://people.ku.edu/~jyounger/Hiero>

Linear A inscriptions, YOUNGER = <http://people.ku.edu/~jyounger/LinearA/>

Linear A inscriptions, SigLA = <https://sigla.phis.me>

Linear B, CaLiBRA - Cambridge Linear B Research Archive = <http://calibra.classics.cam.ac.uk>

Linear B, DĀMOS – Database of Mycenaean at Oslo = <https://damos.hf.uio.no>

Linear B, LiBER – Linear B Electronic Resources = <https://liber.cnr.it>

Index of DMic = <https://www.cervantesvirtual.com/bib/portal/diccionario-micénico/>

CoPY, JUDSON, A. P. 2020 *Concordance to Pylos scribal attributions* = <https://hcommons.org/docs/judson-copy/>

Seals and sealings, CMS – Arachne = <https://arachne.uni-koeln.de/arachne/>

LGPN = *The Lexicon of Greek Personal Names*: <https://www.lgpn.ox.ac.uk>

Portal of ancient texts, mostly papyrology, Trismegistos = <https://www.trismegistos.org/>

EpiDoc alignment to the Wingspread convention (work in progress)

<https://epidoc.stoa.org/gl/latest/app-epi-mycenaean.html>

VI. Text conventions

Cretan Hieroglyphic (after CHIC)

Document numbers: #315

Signs: 001-096

Doubtful recognitions of signs: 001-096

Linear A (after GORILA)

Document numbers: **PH 28**

Signs: AB 01-AB 87, A 100/102-191, A 301-371, A 400^{VAS}-418^{VAS}, A 501-664, A 701-743

Doubtful recognitions of signs: A 301+A 303

Signs tentatively transcribed: SE-TO-I-JA

Linear B (after the various corpora)

Document numbers: **KN F(1) 1**

Syllabic signs: *ti-ri-po-de*

Undeciphered signs: *75

Doubtful readings of signs: pø

Deciphered logograms/ideograms: LANA

Acronymic logograms/ideograms: TU-RO

Undeciphered logograms/ideograms: *201^{VAS}

Cypro-Minoan (after HoChyMin)

Document numbers: **##001-##217**

Cypriot syllabic (after ICS and IG XV 1,1)

Document numbers: **ICS 1-464**; IG XV 1, 229

The date of the final destruction of the Palace of Nestor at Pylos

**Jack L. Davis, Sharon R. Stocker, Salvatore Vitale,
John Bennet, Hariclia Brecolaki, Anna P. Judson**

*Dedicated to the memories of Mervyn Popham
and Lisa French*

The recent publication by Louis Godart and Anna Sacconi of the Linear B tablets from Pylos, first excavated in 1939 and then in the 1950s and 1960s by a team from the University of Cincinnati under the direction of Carl Blegen, may raise doubts about their date, and the time of the destruction of the Palace of Nestor.* If correct, Godart's conclusions would require a fundamental reimagining of Mycenaean prehistory in Late Helladic III.

In the Introduction to his and Sacconi's work, Godart states: "La question de la datation des archives de Pylos est tout autre que résolue," suggesting that both the destruction of the palace and its tablets should be dated around 1250 BC, i.e. around the middle of LH IIIB1, rather than to LH IIIC Early 1, early in the 12th century, the date now gener-

* We gratefully acknowledge continuing financial support for the aspects of work at Pylos discussed here from the Louise Taft Semple Fund of Cincinnati, the Institute for Aegean Prehistory, the Malcolm H. Wiener Foundation, and the Potamianos-Homen family. We are also appreciative of our long-term collaboration with the Ministry of Culture of Greece. Judson's research reported here was undertaken as part of the project 'Writing at Pylos' at the British School at Athens, which received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement no. 885977.

ally accepted by Aegean prehistorians.¹ In his view, an earlier date explains “les éléments archaïques associés à bien des objets (en particulier les meubles de la série **Ta**, les vases et leur décoration, les sceaux et les fresques).”² He further speculates that the same Cretan artists painted wall paintings in the throne rooms at both Knossos and Pylos.

One linchpin in Godart’s argument is his claim that one scribe wrote tablets found in the Archives Complex of the Palace of Nestor and others supposedly found in LH IIIA2 contexts. Godart also depends heavily on an outdated paper where Patrick Thomas once argued that later LH IIIB elements are missing from the destruction levels of the palace.³

The authors of this paper have a deep knowledge of the constructional history of the palace, the stratigraphy of the site, the stylistic development of its arts and crafts, and of the pottery found in the destruction layers. We individually present evidence in support of a date in LH IIIC Early 1 for the destruction of the palace and its Archives.

We conclude that Godart’s arguments for re-dating cannot be substantiated. Nor do we find supportable the arguments for earlier dates by Mervyn Popham, Elizabeth French, or Patrick Thomas, which run the gamut from early LH IIIB1 to LH IIIB2 Early.⁴ It should be noted that not all those who have proposed early dates have proposed the same date.

Here we address points most critical to Godart’s case for an earlier dating, beginning with a re-examination by Sharon Stocker and Jack Davis of Popham’s and French’s concerns about the stratigraphy of Hall 46, the so-called Queen’s Hall. Salvatore Vitale then discusses the ceramic chronology of the palace, as we now understand it in light of recent research. Hariklia Breccoulaki next rebuts Godart’s idea that the character of the Pylos wall paintings testifies to an earlier date for the palace’s final destruction. Finally, Anna Judson and John Bennet find no conclusive evidence for dating any Linear B tablets before the final destruction.

¹ ARN, xvii.

² ARN, xvii.

³ THOMAS 2004.

⁴ VITALE 2006, 190–191.

*Hall 46 of the Palace of Nestor**By S. R. Stocker & J. L. Davis*

Popham suggested that, if one vase, no. 677 (Fig. 1a), could be removed from the destruction deposit of Hall 46, nothing would remain in the palace that points to a destruction date later than early LH IIIB.⁵ He considered no. 677 stylistically to be significantly later than LH IIIB. Here we demonstrate that the stratigraphy of Hall 46 does not allow no. 677 to be separated from the destruction deposit as a whole. In the next section, Vitale argues that there is also no compelling stylistic reason to seek to do so.

Popham proposed a “detailed re-examination of the excavation notebooks and of the surviving Iron Age pottery.” Davis and Kathleen Lynch followed his advice and studied the post-Bronze Age pottery. They concluded that, although small-scale activities continued in and around the ruins of the palace after its destruction, the evidence did not attest to an extensive reoccupation phase, nor to the existence of a later hero cult.⁶

In 2011, Stocker and Davis examined the context of no. 677 shortly after a meeting with Elizabeth French in Cambridge. French also thought that Blegen might have made an error. In 1970, she wrote Blegen a letter in which she wondered then if no. 677 belonged to a reoccupation phase and had somehow fallen into a cavity left by the chimney over the hearth in Hall 46. She believed that the destruction of the Palace of Nestor was contemporary with the catastrophes that marked the end of Phase VII at Mycenae, i.e., in LH IIIB2 Early.

We wrote to French on July 17, 2011:

“[We] had a look at the stratigraphy in Hall 46 ... as you know, whole pots, #677 among them, were found in clumps around the edge of the room. All of those presented in [the first volume of the *Palace of Nestor*] were similarly burnt, #677 among them ... The preceding factors make it difficult for us to figure out a way to extract [#677] from the remainder of the burnt finds...”

⁵ See BLEGEN & RAWSON 1966, 203; POPHAM 1991.

⁶ DAVIS & LYNCH 2017. The existence of a cult was suggested by several scholars: see DAVIS 2017, for a critique of arguments in COOPER & FORTENBERRY 2017.

In the summer of 2021, we again reviewed the stratigraphy of the room even more systematically and confirmed our earlier observation. Hall 46 was excavated in 1956 by Marion Rawson, an architect and an admirably careful and accurate excavator. Rawson found seven clusters of pottery on the floor of the room, most around its edges. The locations of the clusters were documented in a plan of the room and in photographs, and her notebook confirms that all the pottery from these clusters was highly burnt—as can be observed today in the Museum of Chora. No. 677 was found in cluster 4, at the edge of the room, not in its centre, where the chimney fell.

Ceramic Chronology

By S. Vitale

The present discussion of the pottery from the Palace of Nestor begins from the floor deposit in Hall 46, the importance of which is addressed above. Vessel no. 677, the crucial component of this context, is a dark-ground deep bowl with a monochrome interior and dashed semicircles in a narrow window in the handle zone (Fig. 1a). There is no published Mycenaean vase showing this syntax type before the LH IIIB-LH IIIC Early transition. Known examples include a stemmed bowl from Kos (LH IIIB2 Late), a deep bowl from Attica (LH IIIB2 Late/LH IIIC Early 1), and an amphoriskos from Laconia (LH IIIC Early), all exhibiting monochrome interiors.⁷

Dark-ground decoration becomes more common during LH IIIC Middle-Late and continues in Messenia throughout the Early Iron Age [henceforth: EIA].⁸ This explains why Popham hypothesized that Hall 46 was reoccupied in advanced LH IIIC or the EIA, and that Blegen had incorrectly assigned vessels from this context to the palace destruction.⁹ In addition to the stratigraphy of Hall 46 already discussed by Davis and Stocker, Popham's speculation is also not supported by ceramic evidence.

Vessel no. 677 cannot date to advanced LH IIIC, as this phase is not represented at the Palace of Nestor, except for two fragmentary LH IIIC

⁷ MOUNTJOY 1999, 282, 560, 1087, Figs. 95:180, 205:292, 448:61.

⁸ COULSON 1986; MOUNTJOY 1999.

⁹ POPHAM 1991.

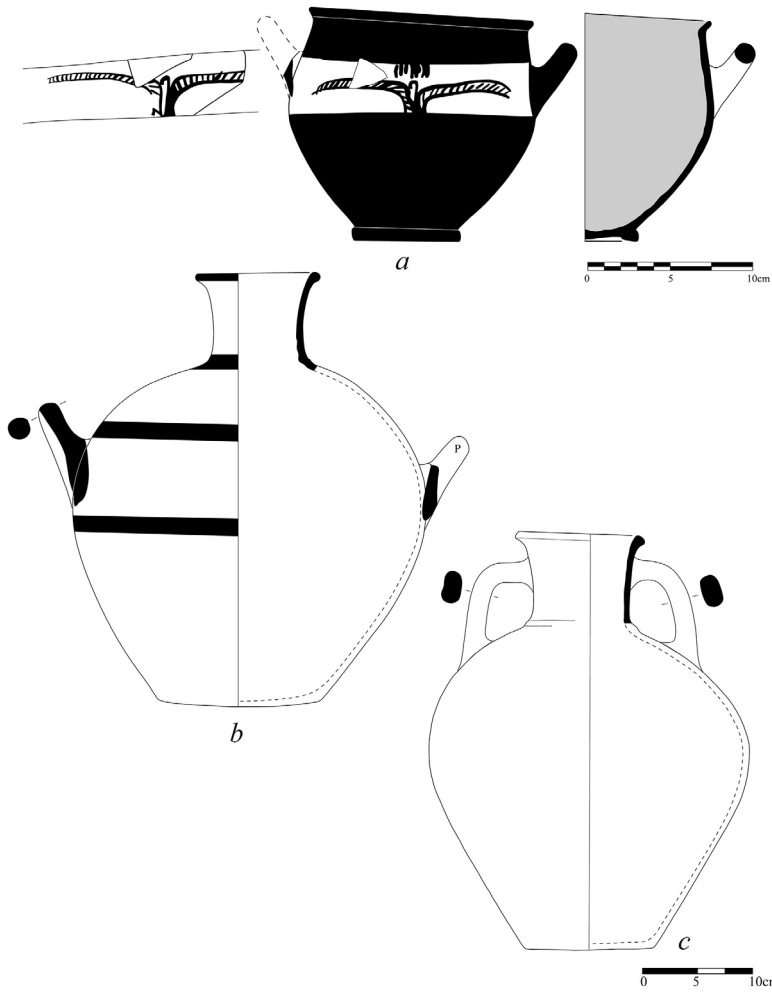


Fig. 1. LH IIIC Early 1 vessels from Hall 46. a: Patterned darkground deep bowl FS 284 with dashed semicircles FM 43, no. 677; b: Linear belly-handled amphora FS 58, no. 1141; c: Plain neck-handled amphora FS 70, no. 675 (drawings: T. Ross, courtesy of the Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati).

Late vessels from Court 3, a jug or hydria and a hydria.¹⁰ The partial preservation of these vessels implies that, while sporadic visits to the palace ruins occurred during LH IIIC Late, no reoccupation of the Main Building happened at that time. Moreover, at least the jug or hydria from

¹⁰ VITALE *et al.* 2022, 129-130 and n. 36.

Court 3 has a distinctive soft white fabric, which is noticeably different from that of vessel no. 677.

Recent re-examinations of EIA ceramics from the palace area suggest that these materials date between William Coulson's Dark Age II and the Late Geometric period.¹¹ The deep bowl no. 677 is incompatible with such a late time span, based on its 6mm wall thickness, its lightly burnished surface, and its dull paint decoration.¹² If advanced LH IIIC and the EIA are excluded, considering the parallels outlined above, vessel no. 677 can only date to the LH IIIB-LH IIIC Early transition. This conclusion is supported by the everted rim of this shape, which makes it a classical Transitional Type 2 deep bowl.¹³

Most of the other vessels from Hall 46 can be assigned to either LH IIIB or LH IIIC Early 1.¹⁴ At least two of them, however, are best at home in LH IIIC Early 1, including a linear belly-handled and a plain neck-handled amphora (nos. 675, 1141; Fig. 1b-c). The occurrence in the same context of these specimens and vessel no. 677 demonstrates that the deposit from Hall 46 dates to LH IIIC Early 1.

More generally, besides Hall 46, the pottery from the destruction layers of the palace can be sub-divided into four distinct groups, which include: non-diagnostic; LH IIIB; LH IIIB/LH IIIC Early 1; and LH IIIC Early 1 vessels. Quantitative analysis of painted shapes demonstrates that LH IIIC Early 1 specimens are the most prominent component in this assemblage (Fig. 2). Moreover, some of the stylistically most advanced specimens from the palace are absent or rare on the Greek mainland before the LH IIIB-LH IIIC Early transition or LH IIIC Early 1. In addition to the types represented in Hall 46, these features include linear juglets and mugs, a patterned collar-necked jar, and patterned or monochrome Transitional Type 1 and 2 deep bowls.¹⁵ The stylistically latest vessels in the plain pottery fraction are also consistent with a LH IIIC Early 1 date, as indicated by shallow cups, kylikes, and shallow angular bowls with beaded, lipless, and/or flaring lipless rims.¹⁶

¹¹ DAVIS & LYNCH 2017; VITALE *et al.* 2022, 129-130.

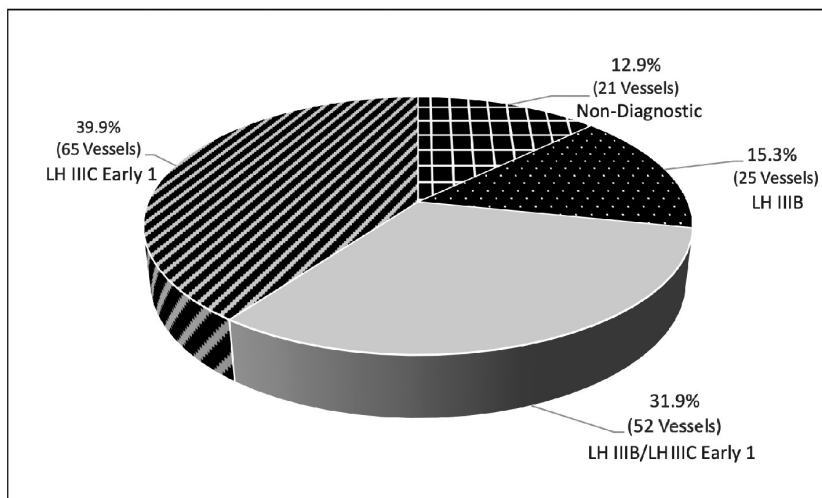
¹² For diagnostic features of Dark Age II-Late Geometric Messenian pottery, see COULSON 1986, 28-78.

¹³ MOUNTJOY 1999, 37.

¹⁴ BLEGEN & RAWSON 1966, 197-203, figs. 332-333.

¹⁵ VITALE *et al.* 2022, 131-133, tables 8-9.

¹⁶ VITALE *et al.* 2022, 131-133, Figs. 11-12. For a review of all proposed dates for the Pylos destruction, see VITALE 2006, 190; VITALE *et al.* 2022, 128-130.



Non-Diagnostic: Blegen & Rawson 1966, Shapes 9, 19, 42, 45, 50, 54:a-b, 56, 57, 65:e;
 LH IIB: Blegen & Rawson 1966, Shapes 44, 52, 53, 63, 64, 65:c-d;
 LH IIB/LH IIIC Early 1: Blegen & Rawson 1966, Shapes 20, 21, 38, 43, 45, 52, 60, 65:a-b, f;
 LH IIIC Early 1: Blegen & Rawson 1966, Shapes 1, 33, 34, 37, 45, 49, 52, 60, 63, 68.

Fig. 2. Stylistic trends in the painted vessels from the destruction layer of the Palace of Nestor (S. Vitale).

In 2004, following in the footsteps of Popham, Thomas also argued for a destruction date of the palace very early in LH IIIB1.¹⁷ According to Thomas, if vessel no. 677 was removed from the picture (something that stratigraphy does not permit, as noted above), such a dating would be supported by three features: the occurrence of shapes stylistically assignable to LH IIIB1; the absence of Zygouries kylikes (FS 258A); and the absence of LH IIIB2 shapes, such as Group B deep bowls.

This argument overlooks the fact that the deep bowl is the most common painted drinking shape present in the palace destruction deposits. Should the absence of decorated kylikes at Pylos imply an early LH IIIB1 destruction date, then one would also expect to find no deep bowls.¹⁸ Furthermore, new excavations in areas around the palace have uncovered several examples of the decorated kylix (FS 258B) (Fig. 3a-d), a type which chronologically overlaps with Zygouries kylikes. The absence of Zygouries kylikes thus has no chronological meaning at Py-

¹⁷ THOMAS 2004.

¹⁸ By definition, a closed context with abundant *in situ* materials, characterized by the absence of decorated kylikes and the occurrence of deep bowls, cannot be earlier than LH IIIB2 Early, see VITALE & VAN DE MOORTELT 2020, 30-33.

los, but represents a deliberate rejection of Argive drinking fashions, nicely paralleled by the dearth of Ephyraean goblets at the site during LH IIB.¹⁹ Finally, recent studies of unpublished materials from Blegen's excavations in the Megaron area of the palace show that, prior to the final destruction, Group B deep bowls were, indeed, used at Pylos during LH IIIB2 (Fig. 3e).²⁰

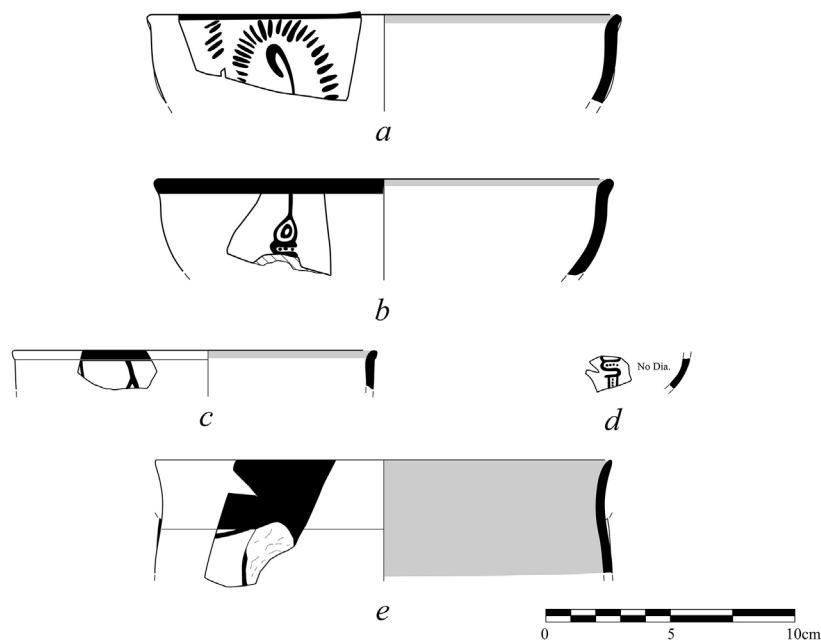


Fig. 3. LH IIIB1 and LH IIIB2 fragments from the Palace of Nestor area. a-d: Patterned kylikes FS 258B with flower FM 18 or vertical whorl shell FM 23, LH IIIB1, nos. N-G07-110-P06, N-G16-74-P14, N-G07-71-P01, N-G07-104-P01; e: Patterned Group B deep bowl FS 284 with running spiral FM 46, LH IIIB2, unnumbered (a, b-d: T. Ross; c: M. Rossin & T. Ross; e: E. Egan with additions by T. Ross & S. Vitale; courtesy of the Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati).

The discovery of decorated kylikes (FS 258B) and Group B deep bowls demonstrates that the palace was used throughout LH IIIB. The continuation of some early LH IIIB shapes in an otherwise LH IIIC Early 1 context reflects the continuity in the performance of long-standing ritual feasts

¹⁹ VITALE *et al.* 2021, 199, 208.

²⁰ EGAN 2015, 66–67, Pls. 79, 98–100, 115; VITALE *et al.* 2022, 129–131, Fig. 7:3–4.

in the area of the palace.²¹ As argued recently, these ceremonies had been a defining cultural tradition of the Pylian social space since LH IIB.²²

Wall paintings

By H. Breccoulaki

Pylos wall paintings from Blegen's excavations fall into two major groups according to their find-spots. The first consists of fragments *in situ* on ground floor walls or, more often, fallen from them or a second storey. All are contemporary with earlier or later stages in the life of the final palace. Those fragments undamaged by fire were almost certainly not on walls when the palace was destroyed in LH IIIC Early 1, but had been incorporated in rubble wall fill, or used as bedding for the upper floor.

The second group comprises several thousand fragments thrown away in dumps or scattered randomly around the slopes of the acropolis; these had been stripped from the palace walls during episodes of periodic re-decorating.

Still earlier discarded fragments were recovered during recent excavations in conjunction with the construction of a new shelter over the final palace remains. Owing to these discoveries, a long-term history of wall painting that began already in MH III is now documented.²³

Fragments from earlier contexts share affinities of colour and style that distinguish them from wallpaintings of the final palatial phase, notably a predilection for bright, uniform, abstract blue, and occasionally red and yellow backgrounds. These function as prominent homogenous stylistic markers of a workshop.²⁴

In contrast, the latest decoration of the palace employed a gamut of mineral and organic pigments, some of which (e.g., murex purple) require complex preparation and application. The overall colour sensibility of paintings then shifted from saturated hues to more nuanced and subtle chromatic values. The earlier preference for saturated backgrounds was abandoned, together with the primary colours triad. Painters became aware of the significance of complementary colours.²⁵

²¹ VITALE *et al.* 2022.

²² VITALE *et al.* 2021.

²³ EGAN 2021.

²⁴ For an extensive discussion of this topic, see BRECCOULAKI *et al.* 2021.

²⁵ BRECCOULAKI 2018.

To propose a dating for the wall paintings based only on iconographic, stylistic, and technological features, with a disregard for their stratigraphical context and associated pottery deposits, is a vain and dangerous exercise. Wall paintings, unlike pottery, cannot offer secure dating criteria *per se*. The evolution of the art of painting was a slower and more complex phenomenon, dependent on artistic idiosyncrasies within specific micro-contexts, elite ideologies, and local visual conventions and traditions within wider social and cultural macro-contexts. In certain instances, innovative techniques and styles in the Pylos paintings intentionally reproduced conservative or traditional iconographies that originated in temporally remote Minoan and Cycladic figurative repertoires. We have elsewhere stressed affinities between the ships in the West House miniature 'Flotilla Fresco' and those in the deliberately archaizing 'Naval Scene' of Hall 64 at Pylos.²⁶

Although comparisons of Pylos paintings with compositions from other sites and contexts are desirable, caution must be exercised. For example, the griffins from the Throne Room at Knossos are usually juxtaposed with those from Hall 46 and the Throne Room of Pylos, but any similarities imply neither a direct participation of Knossian painters or workshops in the decorative program at Pylos, nor a straightforward adaptation of a Cretan motif and its transfer to a Mycenaean context.²⁷ Not only is the arrangement of the Pylian griffins more complex than those at Knossos, but, as already noted by Lang, the differences between the two compositions and their individual features are more obvious than their similarities.²⁸ In spite of the fact that the Knossos griffin painting doubtless was an influential predecessor of the Pylos griffins, there is no reason to believe that the decorative programs of the two palaces are of the same date, let alone created by the same artist or workshop.

Lang also observed similarities between the papyrus in the Throne Room of Knossos and the papyrus with deer from Pylos, but again stressed significant differences:

"The stem and leaves on 36C17 are quite close in style, but flowers have

²⁶ BRECCOULAKI *et al.* 2015.

²⁷ Contrary to the suggestion by GODART in his introduction (ARN, xviii): "...peut-on exclure que des artistes crétois ayant opéré à Cnossos aient peint les murs de la salle du trône du palais de Nestor."

²⁸ LANG 1969, 101-102.

been added to the plant which are schematic in the extreme; they are stylizations not of papyrus flowers but of some generalized concept of a flower, reminiscent of some flowers on vases. This seems to be a fairly clear indication not so much of a stylistic difference between the two paintings but of a difference in time sufficient to make complete a divorce already initiated: that is, the Knossian artist used the papyrus flowers to decorate the griffin, but the connection was still sufficiently alive for him to associate closely the flower and plants; for the Pylian artist the papyrus had not only lost its own flower but has taken on a new bloom completely unrelated to the plant.”²⁹

The more we move away from the original source, the more a ‘borrowed’ motif is de-constructed and re-elaborated through eclectic practices, acquiring different forms according to the contexts in which it is employed.

Earlier Linear B tablets

By A. P. Judson & J. Bennet

The vast majority of Linear B tablets from Pylos are associated with the palace’s final destruction, either due to their stratification within this destruction layer or to their associations with tablets from this layer (by joins, scribal hand, and/or administrative relationships).³⁰ However, in addition to a small number of fragments not (certainly) found *in situ*, about whose dating nothing can be securely said,³¹ two main groups of tablets have been argued to belong to earlier periods.

The H91/Civ tablets are commonly attributed to an earlier period than the majority of the Pylos tablets, usually dated as LH IIIA,³² following the argument of Thomas Palaima.³³ These include **Ae 995** and **Xa 1419** (attributed by Palaima to H91), **Xa 1420** (Civ), and **La 994**

²⁹ LANG 1969, 125.

³⁰ PALAIMA 1988, Chapter 3; SHELMEERDINE 1998-1999.

³¹ See, e.g., JUDSON *et al.* 2019.

³² E.g. DEL FREO 2019, 194; DRIESSEN 2008, 73.

³³ PALAIMA 1983; 1988, 111-113, 165, 169. Palaima’s designation ‘H91’ corresponds to H691 in ARN and GODART 2021, H46 in *PT*³, and H46/H47 in *PTT*². Other scribal attributions follow *PTT*² unless otherwise stated.

(*ex Ua; Civ?*).³⁴ Although this dating is based primarily on these tablets' palaeography,³⁵ Palaima also argued that their findspots suggest an earlier date, since most come from areas which included finds from earlier periods: **Xa 1419** and **1420** from the northern part of the Southwestern Area, and **Ae 995** from Rooms 55-57 (**La 994**'s findspot is unclear).³⁶ However, the disturbed nature of the stratigraphy in these areas means that none of these tablets can securely be associated with material from LH IIIA (or any other period); they therefore cannot be archaeologically dated.

A second group from the Megaron includes 13 tablets found in the destruction layer of burned red brick which covered the whole of the Megaron, attributed to H13, H27, and H28;³⁷ one found in a pottery basket, attributed to H27;³⁸ and three from the Southwestern Area which may have been displaced from the Megaron post-destruction.³⁹ The excavators attributed these tablets to a balcony above the room;⁴⁰ they have generally been interpreted as a deposit from an upper-storey textile workroom/storeroom.⁴¹ No certain links exist between these tablets and those from other areas of the palace.

The suggestion that the Megaron tablets are earlier than the rest of the Pylos texts was first made by José Melena. Although none of the tablets is complete, there also are few joining fragments, as would be expected for tablets fallen from above: Melena therefore suggested that they were used after a previous destruction to make the bricks which fell into the Megaron during the final destruction, citing in support "the rather primitive character of the tablets themselves both in pinacological and palaeographic aspects."⁴² A similar argument has been made

³⁴ **Xn 1449** (findspot unknown) was originally also assigned to H91 (PALAIMA 1983, 81-82; 1988, 111-113) but is now joined to **Vn 1339** (from the Northeastern Building: MELENA 1996-1997, 165-166).

³⁵ See SALGARELLA & JUDSON, this volume.

³⁶ On disturbances of the material in Rooms 55-57 and the difficulties of interpretation these cause, see BLEGEN & RAWSON 1966, 223, 225-227 (which does not mention any tablets). It is possible (as argued by Palaima) that **La 994**, along with **Ae 995**, is one of the two tablets from this area referred to in BLEGEN 1953, 25, 29, but this is uncertain.

³⁷ **Ae 629, 634; La 622-624, 626-628, 630-633, 635.**

³⁸ **La 640.**

³⁹ **La 1393, 1394; Wr 1374** (PALAIMA 1988, 162-166; SHELMEKDINE 1998-1999).

⁴⁰ BLEGEN & RAWSON 1966, 81, 91; followed by PALAIMA 1988, 137-138.

⁴¹ E.g. JASINK 1990-1991, 228; KYRIAKIDIS 1996-1997, 217.

⁴² MELENA 2000-2001, 367.

by Christina Skelton on the basis of a more detailed palaeographic and pinacological analysis of the Megaron tablets.⁴³ However, Emily Egan suggests that some of the small finds from the brick layer fell from an upper-storey room adjacent to the Megaron.⁴⁴ It therefore remains an open question whether at the time of the final destruction the tablets were in an active use context or in the walls.

Godart's arguments for an earlier dating for the final destruction are based partly on possible links between the H91/Civ tablets, assumed to date to LH IIIA, and those associated with the final destruction.⁴⁵ These links consist of:

- 1) the attribution of **La 994**⁴⁶ to the Megaron scribe H28/H664,⁴⁷ based on its unusual form of LANA.⁴⁸
- 2) the attribution of **Vn 1339** (from the Northeastern Building), to which **Xn 1449** (previously H91) is joined, to H46?/H691?.⁴⁹

If these attributions are accepted (both tablets remain unattributed in *PTT*²), this would indeed link **La 994** to the Megaron and the H91 tablets to the final destruction. However, since both the H91/Civ tablets and the Megaron tablets are of uncertain date, linking them via **La 994** (itself not even certainly associated archaeologically with the other H91/Civ tablets) does not help to date either of these groups (Godart does not discuss the arguments for the Megaron tablets possibly dating to an earlier period than the rest of the tablets). The tentative association of H91 with the Northeastern Building, if confirmed, would certainly provide an argument against the separation of this hand's tablets from the main archives, but this would be evidence against an earlier date for these tablets from disturbed areas, not for the earlier dating of all of the tablets securely associated with the final destruction.

The most that can therefore be said, overall, is that (setting aside the palaeographic and pinacological arguments), there is no conclusive

⁴³ SKELTON 2008, 171-172; 2010; 2011a; 2011b, 75; see also FIRTH & SKELTON 2016, 223-224.

⁴⁴ EGAN 2015, 107-108; see also LAFAYETTE 2011.

⁴⁵ GODART 2021, 90-91.

⁴⁶ Civ? in PALAIMA 1988.

⁴⁷ *PT*³/GODART 2021 = Palaima's S632-Ciii.

⁴⁸ See Godart's earlier association of **La 994** with 'H613???' (*ARN*).

⁴⁹ *PT*³/GODART 2021 = Palaima's H91?.

archaeological evidence for dating the H91/Civ and the Megaron tablets either as contemporary with or as earlier than the remainder of the Pylos tablets.

The date of the destruction of the Palace

It is our view that future historical studies of the Aegean Bronze Age should build on our conclusions, as presented here, which stem from a comprehensive examination of old and new excavation data as well as primary documents. Godart's arguments for an earlier dating for the destruction of the Palace of Nestor are based on a misunderstanding of the stratigraphy and ceramic chronology of the site, of the contexts of those Linear B tablets supposedly earlier than LH IIIC Early 1, the style and technique of Pylian wall paintings, and the likely source of earlier artefacts found in the destruction levels of the palace.

The wall paintings of the Throne Room at Pylos are significantly different from those of Knossos. There is no definitive evidence that any Linear B tablets can be dated earlier than LH IIIC Early 1. While many older objects were, indeed, being used in the final days of the Palace, these had likely been up-cycled when Early Mycenaean graves were plundered.⁵⁰ Nor is there any justification for disassociating the main body of tablets from Rooms 7 and 8 from the destruction of LH IIIC Early 1.

We now also know that the issue of reoccupation of the site is more complicated than had been imagined by Popham. Hruba has argued that one room in the Pantries was reused for small-scale ritual purposes almost immediately after the destruction of the palace—so near in time, in fact, that the ceramics from it cannot be distinguished from those in the actual destruction debris of the palace.⁵¹ But the palace was never re-settled on a large scale after its destruction.

⁵⁰ On the likely source of antique hard stone seals employed by the later palace bureaucracy, see STOCKER & DAVIS 2017, 601, n. 61. On earlier plaster offering tables see DAVIS & STOCKER 2022, Chapter 6. An antique knife was also found in Room 6 of the Archives Complex in association with remains of sacrifice (see STOCKER & DAVIS 2004, 184–185, n. 24). Lastly, we should hardly be surprised to find “des trépieds de fabrication crétoise” recensés en Ta 641.1a” in the Ta tablets; their mention tells us nothing about the date of destruction (*pace* ARN, xviii, n. 47). PALAIMA (2003) has convincingly argued that these were antique at the time of the final destruction.

⁵¹ HRUBA 2006, 36–45.

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