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THE LINEAR B TABLETS OF THE WEST WING OF THE PALACE AT KNOSSOS

Abstract: In the Magazines of the West Wing of the Palace of Knossos there were three offices where Linear B records were kept. Tablets of a department of perfumery and offerings were found dispersed over a wide area, while records dealing with sheep (slightly different from those of Scribe 117 in the North Archive) came to light in Magazines F1 and F2. Magazines F6 and F7 yielded the Lc(2), Ak(2), and V(3) sets recording woollen cloths and lists of personnel. Magazine F10 gave records of cloth and wool by another scribe. The most important deposit of tablets belonging to the department of the textile industry was in Magazine F14, recording manpower, comestibles for the manpower, and special kinds of textile. If some errant records were found in Magazine F14, they are totalling tablets or records of some kind of summarization.

The first systematic description of the tablets of the West Magazines (fig. 1) is due to L.R. Palmer.¹ In his book on the find-places of the Linear B tablets of the Palace of Knossos, these documents are considered as a coherent group. His main interest being the chronology of the clay documents, he does not attempt any further classification (scribes, content of the tablets, sets, etc.). J.-P. Olivier² was the first to distinguish different groups of tablets, partly on the basis of the hands of the scribes, partly on the location of the records. Olivier's systematization served as a basis for Chadwick's classification in 1970.³ According to this

¹ *The Find-Places of the Knossos Tablets* (Oxford 1963) 88-105.

² *Scribes* 121-34.

³ J. Chadwick, "The Classification of the Knossos Tablets," in *Acta Mycenaea* I, 20-50.

reconstruction, in the West Magazines of the palace there were three or four offices where Linear B tablets were kept: one was a specialized bureau (to use Olivier's term) concerned with the administration of sheep flocks, another a specialized department running the administration of the textile industry (Olivier's "ensemble de bureaux"). Tablets of another specialized department recorded aromatics, spices, honey and offerings. Other tablets from the same area dealing with olive oil and with further offerings have been separately described by the Belgian scholar. Subsequent work by L. Godart⁴ and E.D. Foster⁵ has demonstrated that this department was an administrative unit where some commodities were collected while others were distributed.

The specialized bureau involved in the administration of sheep flocks spread over two magazines and a narrow corridor in front of them (F1, F2, F15). We have two scribes here and, accordingly, two sets of sheep-records: Dq(1) and two tablets of Dq(3). The scribe of the Dq(1) set, Scribe 121, was mainly concerned with sheep *and* missing sheep; the number of his tablets is 9. The other tablets of the Dq series do not record missing sheep. It is remarkable that the same place names, and the names of the same "shepherds" and "collectors" or "owners" appear again on some Da tablets with very similar numbers of sheep. The Dq(3) set (in the hand of Scribe 217) comes, on the other hand, from F1, B4 (the South West Area beyond the West Wall) and I3 (the East Wing, where the office mainly concerned with the management of flocks of sheep was located. These archives near the main entrance of the palace are regarded as the main depository of the palace records). A common feature of this Dq(3) set is that—except the tablets from the area of the West Magazines (Dq(3) 442 and 445)—all tablets name as collectors men with a compound word whose second element is invariably *-qo-ta* (in gen. *-qo-ta-o*): thus we have *pe-ri-qo-ta-o* three times (42, 46, 8351), *a-no-qo-ta-o* once (45) and *wi-*

⁴ "Les quantités d'huile de la série Fh de Cnossos," in *Atti Roma* II, 598-610; "*kupirijo* dans les textes mycéniens," *SMEA* 5 (1968) 64-70. Godart has shown that the office listing olive oil was undoubtedly part of the same administrative unit as the department listing honey and aromatics, since both dealt with *ku-pi-ri-jo*. It seems assured that tablets in which this word appears listed disbursements from the palace stores.

⁵ "An Administrative Department at Knossos Concerned with Perfumery and Offerings," *Minos* 16 (1977) 19-51.

jo-qo-ta-o twice (1026+7273, 7852);⁶ two broken tablets give *ko-ta-o* (7126) viz. *-ta-o* (7137). We may ask whether this is a mere chance.

A major problem can be raised in connexion with Special Department I, the administrative center of the textile industry. Olivier has dodged the question of the systematization of tablets coming from not less than 14 different find-spots (9 magazines and 5 sections of the Great Corridor) and has described this coherent group of tablets as a unit, limiting himself to the analysis of scribal hands. On the basis of recent prosopographical and analytical studies, we are able to raise the question of a stricter localization of the tablets. We are fully aware that (i) the tablets were dispersed during the destruction of the palace and records originally stored in a particular spot sometimes came to light very far from each other; (ii) it is even possible that—like the tablets of the Department of Perfumery—these records fell to the level of the Magazines from an upper floor where they were originally kept;⁷ (iii) Evans' description of his excavation work is not as accurate as one would wish; (iv) some points in the recording of details of producing different kinds of textiles remain notoriously obscure.

The first location to deal with is the find-spot of Magazines F6 and F7, a spot described by Evans as "Near Door of Magazines F6."⁸ We should leave aside for now the intriguing problem of the Pp tablets from Magazine F7. This homogeneous group of tablets was found *in situ*; the tablets were so close to each other that one can be sure that the inventory numeration reflects the order in which they were found.⁹ All are by the same scribe (119) (who has written the Dk(2) set). The ideogram *168, however, makes the interpretation of these records very difficult. It was interpreted by

⁶ Cf. *BCH* 112 (1988) 70.

⁷ J.W. Graham ("Further Notes on Minoan Palace Architecture: 1. West Magazines and Upper Halls at Knossos and Mallia," *AJA* 83 [1979] 49-64), supposing that there were three two-columned Reception Halls at Knossos on the Piano Nobile (over the West Magazines), rejects the argument of J.D.S. Pendlebury (*Handbook to the Palace of Minos* [London 1932] 43) that "from upper offices must have come the quantities of clay tablets inscribed in the latest linear script." Evans also claimed that tablets had fallen from the room above into some of the Magazines (*PoM* IV, 621).

⁸ Cf. Palmer (supra n. 1) 102.

⁹ Cf. Chadwick (supra n. 3) 26-27.

Evans himself as an adze,¹⁰ an interpretation which is now abandoned. J.L. Melena speculates that the ideogram depicts a wicker basket or the material contained in it, and thus the tablets belong to the group of entries concerning the deliveries of wool to the palace.¹¹ Costas Davaras recognizes here the symbol of a beehive and considers these records as a problem of Minoan bee-keeping.¹²

Both F6 and F7 have yielded a certain number of tablets related to one another, and we cannot decide which of these was the original storing place for these records. We have here five scribes: Nos. 108, 113/5 (the recto of tablets was written by 113, the verso by 115) 208 and 209.

The most important clerk here is Scribe 115. He wrote 38 tablets, but we only know the provenience of 22 of these. It is interesting to note that all but two records of known provenience come from this find-spot. Seven of them belong to the Lc(2) set, of which the rectos were written by Scribe 113.

These tablets can be characterized—in contrast to other records of the Lc series, i.e., Lc(1) written by the main scribe of the West Wing and of the textile industry at the same time, Scribe 103—by the fact that they are two-line records of "plain" TELA, i.e., the cloth ideogram without surcharge, and LANA (wool). An important difference is that while the place-names or ethnics on the tablets of Hand 103 refer to Central Crete (Knossos, Amnissos, *da-wa*, etc.), the place-names or ethnics on our tablets from Magazines F6 and F7 come from the western part of the island: *ku-do-ni-ja*, *ru-so-no*, *si-ra-ri-ja*.¹³ In addition it may be remarked that while in this series we find the same structural variations as on the tablets of Scribe 103, i.e., (i) feminine ethnic, (ii) place-name and occupational description, (iii) owner, none of these designations occurs on the tablets of Scribe 103. It seems that these scribes

¹⁰ SM I, 43-46.

¹¹ *Studies on Some Mycenaean Inscriptions from Knossos Dealing with Textiles* (Salamanca 1975) 118-34.

¹² "A New Interpretation of the Ideogram *168," *Kadmos* 25 (1986) 38-43.

¹³ J.T. Killen, "Two Notes on the Knossos Ak Tablets," in *Acta Mycenaea* II, 432.

supplemented the information provided by Scribe 103 with data relating to some additional groups and places.¹⁴

The Od set by the same scribe consists of five tablets listing *ko-ro-to* and LANA (485, 486, 487). *ko-ro-to* can be interpreted as dyed wool. Killen has demonstrated that *o-nu-ke* ("nails" in a special technical sense—a type of decoration) found on tablet 485, refers to finishing context.¹⁵ One tablet of this set (Od 666) came from Magazine F14. Its structure is different from that of the other Od records. Its interpretation is difficult because most words are *hapax legomena*. The most important word is *]ke-me-no* written in major signs. The first line registers a missing quantity of wool (although the critical apparatus of *CoMIK* points out that we cannot exclude the reading *to-so-o*). This means that there is no divider between *to-so* and *o*. *to-so-o* recurs once on a PY tablet [Xn 1342], but the context is obscure¹⁶).

It seems certain that this tablet deals with wool used in finishing cloth, since other tablets (where the finishing context is clear) record wool in extremely fine measurements. Whereas the raw wool recorded on the Dk "shearing" records is never listed in quantities smaller than 1 M, wool in finishing contexts is regularly recorded in terms of the much smaller P unit. It is probable that the amount designated as missing (*o*) from the total in line a. (LANA 14) refers to the difference between this figure and the sum of the quantities listed on the *verso* and on the *lat. sup.* of the tablet. That is, the missing quantity is not more than 4 kg. and 590 gr.¹⁷

The same holds true for the V(3) tablets of the same scribe. These tablets are similar to those of Scribe 103, though their structure and the number of lines are somewhat different. 11 tablets come from Magazine F6 and F7 or the adjacent corridor (F16), one tablet again from Magazine F14. This is again a kind of totalling tablet (line 4: *to-so*) which we can compare with tablet As 604 of Scribe 103 coming from the same area (Magazine F14). The first word of both tablets is *e-re-dwo-e* and it seems that the function of this word is the same, evidently serving as a description

¹⁴ Cf. I. Tegyey, "Scribe 103 at Knossos," in P. Oliva and A. Frolikova eds., *Concilium Eirene XVI* (Prague 1983) III, 129.

¹⁵ "The Knossos Ld(1) Tablets," in *Chaumont Colloquium*, 158-66.

¹⁶ Cf. *Documents*, 587; Melena (supra n. 11) 128.

¹⁷ Killen, "Linear B Sign *115 on KN Ws 1703: Commodity or Weight," *Kadmos* 24 (1985) 150; Killen (supra n. 15) 173.

of the men listed on the tablet. It is worth noting that some pairs of names appear on the tablets by Scribes 115 and 103, resp.: *ja-pa-ra-ro*, *ka-na-po*; *o-du*, *mi-ru*, *nu-to*, *ta-qa-ra-te*. Granted that the workers of the As(1) series were finishers, it is probable that Scribe 115 had finishing connexions.

Next comes Scribe 209. His production consists of eight tablets, two of known provenience (501, 503: Magazine F7). Although the tablets are badly mutilated, we find a common word on five of them (513, 5092, 7380, 7834, 8441, perhaps 7393).¹⁸ The key word is *qe-te-o*, the exact meaning of which is a matter of controversy. However, it is most plausibly interpreted as *qeiteon* "to be paid," "still outstanding."¹⁹ Killen's palaeographical analysis²⁰ shows that the *qe-te-o* entry is a subsidiary one. He puts these records in finishing contexts and interprets this word as "shortfall" (not in the cloth supplied by the finisher, but in the cloth supplied to the finisher by the palace). Less can be said of Scribe 208. His tablets from Magazines F6 and F7 (all broken) belong to the L(4) series (475, 480, 484, 489, 515, 516, 7413, 7415, 7416, 7578) listing various kinds of cloths on two tablets from the place *do-ti-ja* (475, 484).

The tablets of Scribe 108 come from Magazine F7. A characteristic feature of these Ak(2) tablets recording women working with wool and textiles is that he uses different expressions for the apprentices' ages.²¹

That brings us to Magazine F10.²² Of the 43 tablets of Lc(1) set, 42 were found here; Lc(1) 561 was unearthed (together with Od(1) 562, 563) in Magazine F11. Two tablets of set Od(1) came from here (one from F8 and two from F11 listing deliveries of various qualities of wool to the textile workshop). One tablet (667), however, comes from Magazine F14, where *qo-ja-te*, as an

¹⁸ These tablets form set L(5). The form of the tablets shows another distribution: tablets 501, 503, and 5757 are lined, the others are unlined, cf. *Scribes 90-91*.

¹⁹ Palmer, *Interpretation*, 297.

²⁰ *Supra* n. 15, 169-70; see also St. Hiller, "Amnisos in den mykenischen Texten," *Kadmos* 21 (1982) 41.

²¹ Cf. Killen (*supra* n. 13) 426-34.

²² Magazine F8 yielded only four tablets: one of the Od(1) set in the hand of Scribe 103 (570), and three unassigned (L 520, X 522, L 523). A single tablet came from F9: Xe 524 in the hand of Scribe 103. For *po-po* and *ta-qa-ra-te* cf. Killen (*supra* n. 15) 169 and Hiller (*supra* n. 20) 41.

afterthought of the scribe, is written on the *lat. inf.* of the tablet. Killen's analysis demonstrates that this word (recurring on Od(1) 681) shows finishing connexions again, but the structure of the tablet is different.²³

We have mentioned above the three tablets from Magazine F11; Magazine F12 yielded L 564 and 565, unassigned to scribal hand. F13 has three tablets by Scribe 103 (Am(1) 568, As(1) 566, L(1) 567); other records of these sets come from F14. We have to return to our Scribe 115, whose tablets came to light in Magazines F6 and F7. In F13 we have Vc(2) 569 (giving a single word: *a-ta-no*, a man's name recurring on As 603.1 and 1520.2 in the hands of Scribes 103 and 105). The problem in connexion with this tablet is that no other find spot of records of this series (Vc(2) 5510, 7517, 7518, 7520, 7533, 7537) is known, although Chadwick thinks that all come from Magazine F13.²⁴

It is beyond doubt that the most important storing place of the textile department was Magazine F14. This magazine is completely closed off to access from Magazine F1 to F12 and from the Long Corridor, being cut off by another smaller cross wall; it is accessible only from the Central Court through a door near the main Archives I.²⁵ According to Evans this enclave was thus converted into a kind of Palace Treasury closed "in such a way that it could be kept under careful custody."²⁶ This magazine was the place of activity of Scribe 103, who was the leading clerk of the textile industry. His main task was to take account of the personnel working in the processing of wool and cloth (Ak tablets listing women and children, Ap tablets recording female personnel, As and Am series which deal with manpower. The presence of the ideogram TELA on some As tablets indicate that the men recorded here are connected with the textile industry.) Three E-tablets by

²³ Killen (supra n. 17) 150.

²⁴ Chadwick (supra n. 3) 27-28.

²⁵ *PofM* I, 449.

²⁶ *PofM* I, 449. According to Palmer (*A New Guide to the Palace of Knossos* [London 1969] 57) these rooms, especially F14, were used for storage of textiles. Graham (supra n. 7) assumes that there was a ramp (in the same position where Evans restored a stairway) leading to a doorway opening on the area at the west ends of Magazines 15 (=F14) and 16. The oblong space to the west of the west ends of Magazines 15 and 16 "could serve admirably for the use of overseers or scribes recording goods being brought out of the West Magazines."

Scribe 103 which come from F14 (668, 669, 670) record units of grain sufficient for feeding 550 persons (on the basis of a monthly ration of T 2). It is hardly accidental that the Ak, Ap, Am, and As tablets mention about 500 men and women besides 100 children. Other tablets dealing not with men or women, but with wool and/or textiles register special cases: e.g. Le 641 and 642 have the words *de-ka-sa-to* and *de-ko-to* "received"; Le 654 is a kind of summarizing tablet: it records a number of towns in Crete. All tablets of the L(2) series have the word *e-ni-qe* describing a kind of cloth. The common word on L(1) tablets is *ri-ta* ("linen"). V(4) yields very fragmentary tablets, the interpretation of which is very difficult.

The only important scribe of this section of the West Magazines area is Scribe 116. He wrote 27 records of the Ld(1) set, where we have *158 and TELA or TELA and TELA, but the main information on these tablets is the qualification of *pa-we-a* ("pieces of clothing"): this is primarily the identification of the color of the cloth, a distinctive feature that is confined almost exclusively to Scribe 116.²⁷

²⁷ Cf. Tegyey (supra n. 14) 127-132.