

Chadwick, John

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JOHN CHADWICK

(Cambridge)

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE MYCENAEAN ARCHIVES

We now possess well over 3,000 Linear B tablets, not to mention some thousands of minor fragments. Most are small, often with only one or two lines of text, and of the bigger ones many are incomplete. The damage sustained by the tablets is most noticeable at Knossos, where the treatment the tablets received at the hands of the excavators has made the task of reconstructing the fragments into complete documents unnecessarily difficult. None the less, I am glad to say that the two colleagues whom I have persuaded to work on this problem, Dr. J. T. Killen and Dr. J. P. Olivier, have made great progress, and although we think that there is still much that can be done we now have many more complete or largely complete tablets than a few years ago. This is of course a fundamental task. What I want to discuss here is not this problem, which we have in hand, but another which we have recently begun to appreciate.

Each tablet was not, except for rare instances, a complete, self-contained document. When it was written, it was intended as part of a series, which might run to a hundred or more tablets, or might be completed by another single tablet. We are now aware of several series of tablets making up a single document. For instance the Pylos Ta series, listing furniture and other equipment; or the Pylos *o-ka* set, giving the disposition of a coast-watching organization. Each of these documents is made up of a number of tablets of roughly similar shape and arrangement; the first tablet is distinguished by an introductory rubric, not repeated on the others; but there is no indication of the correct order of filing.

Another type of document is represented by the four aberrant members of the Pylos Eb series;¹ these are in a different hand and contain the totals of the other tablets in this series; each tablet other than the first begins with the word *o-da-a₂*, which serves to connect subsequent paragraphs of a long text. Somewhat similar is the composite document represented by PY Sn 64 and An 218. Here there appears to have been an introductory rubric, unfortunately mostly lost because the tablet is damaged at the top; but each tablet is divided into two paragraphs, and each paragraph, other than the first whose beginning is missing, again begins with *o-da-a₂*.

It is remarkable that in so well organized a system there should have been no apparent means of restoring to its correct order one of a group of tablets. Of course in some ways the groups made up of small tablets have an inherent advantage; like the modern card-index they can be arranged in different orders for different pur-

¹ 236, 317, 901, 847.

poses. But there is no "file number" to ensure that a tablet removed from its file was returned to its correct place. Much less is there any indication, even in the closely connected groups, of the order in which the tablets are to be read. Careful study of their contents may lead us to a logical order which we can presume to be that intended; but questions will always remain, and a good example of our difficulties is provided by the pair, PY Sn 64 and An 218, mentioned above. L. R. Palmer² has reversed this order, even though this means presuming the total loss of another tablet of the set.

It is true that in a few cases the order of the tablets as uncovered by the excavators may reveal the original order of filing. A good example of this is the KN Pp tablets, a photograph of which, taken as they were lifted from the ground, is published in *Scripta Minoa* II (plate xxxviii); this shows very clearly how the tablets were spilled onto the floor in such a way as to preserve in a horizontal arrangement their original (possibly vertical) order.³ Such cases, at least published ones, are unhappily rare. All too often subsequent disturbance has completely obliterated the traces we seek.

There are thus some clear and unmistakable cases where a group of tablets must be read together as a single document. But I believe the same is true of most tablets. For instance, the Pylos Eb series, excluding the group of four just mentioned, is not a jumble of disconnected documents. Each contains a single item of information, later copied on Ep tablets in large paragraphs, but clearly all forming part of a single unit. Similarly the Knossos Sd series, listing chariots devoid of wheels, is not a collection of isolated notes on the same subject, but taken together makes up a coherent record of the resources of the Palace in chariots.

It is considerations such as these which have led me to propose a new, or rather a more closely defined, grouping of the tablets. E. L. Bennett, to whose pioneer labours in the field of Mycenaean epigraphy we are all so much indebted, devised the current system of classifying tablets by prefixes, consisting of two letters of the alphabet, to designate the subject they deal with. Admirable as this work is, we must remember that it was largely devised before the decipherment, and depended mainly upon the ideograms used and the arrangement of the text with repeating formulas. Now in the light of the decipherment, I think it is time to replace, where possible, the groups designated by letters, usually called series, by others which I propose to call "sets". This will be not so much a replacement as a modification of the earlier system to allow a more sensitive grouping; in many cases a series is also a set. But first I must define what I mean by this term.

A set is a group of tablets which were intended by their writers to be read as a single document. So defined, the meaning of the concept is clear; but unfortunately, to apply it definitively we should need to know the intentions of long dead scribes. We can only work towards this as an ideal, and deduce the writers' intentions from the clues they have left.

It is not only logical but confirmed by experience that sets of tablets were filed together. We have good reason to believe that the tablets were carefully stored in boxes or baskets, briefly labelled to indicate their contents.⁴ To judge by the position of the tablets as found many of these containers were kept well above

² *Interpretation*, pp. 140-141.

³ I.e. 493, 495, 494, 496, 497, 498, 499. But the direction in which they are to be read is not clear; 499, the totalling document, could well have been the first.

⁴ See *The Mycenaean Filing System*, BICS 5 (1958), 1-5.

floor-level; probably therefore on shelving of wood, which was destroyed by the fire.⁵ The clay bench running round three sides of the Archive Room at Pylos may have been intended to support wooden shelving at a convenient height above the ground, while itself forming the lowest shelf. At Knossos in some cases tablets forming sets were found on either side of a wall, which seems to indicate that they were stored in an upper storey. A good example is afforded by the KN Gg series, some members of which were found on either side of the major wall which divides the Long Corridor and West Magazines from the areas on the western side of the Central Court. Despite the confusion and dispersal consequent upon the precipitation of the container and its destruction, many sets of tablets were found by the excavators still in close physical association.

Thus a complete record of the exact relationships of the find-spots of each fragment is a valuable clue for the establishment of sets. At Pylos the information is recorded in the note-books of the dig, but remains largely unpublished; only in *Mycenaean Studies* (pp. 241—252) has Bennett given some invaluable information of this kind. At Knossos the details were rarely recorded, and we have as a rule only an indication of the room where the tablet was found; and even this is available for only about a third of the known fragments. At Mycenae and Thebes the material is much more scanty and sufficient details are available to show the groupings by location. I have tried to set a standard by asking the archaeologists to plot on a plan the actual position (both horizontally and vertically where necessary) where each piece was found.⁶ Even if such details are forthcoming in future excavations, there will probably also always be fragments which were originally overlooked and only recovered later in sifting the earth removed. But it is clear that much valuable information can be gained by meticulous recording and reporting of find-spots.

Quite apart from the dispersal occasioned by the fire and collapse of the Palace, subsequent disturbance can have radically altered the physical relationships of tablets. The ruins were doubtless ransacked for anything useful or valuable which might have survived the fire; and some rooms may have been cleared and reoccupied — this seems reasonably certain at least at Knossos. Burrowing animals may have been responsible for moving some fragments; and after the ruins had been covered and lost to view, cultivation may still have turned up and dispersed tablets. Finally excavation, both clandestine and official, doubtless inflicted further changes on the disposition of the pieces; we may instance the two fragments,⁷ now joined, which were found at Knossos, one in the Corridor of the House Tablets, the other on the surface to the North West of the Palace, no doubt coming from excavation spoil.

It is therefore necessary to supplement the information provided by the find-spots by other means. The first and most obvious is the existence of a common subject. In so far as this is shown by the characteristic ideograms, this is the basis of Bennett's classification: e.g. the ideogram No. 241 depicting a chariot body without wheels is a key to the reconstruction of the appropriate set of tablets, the present KN Sd series. Once the recurrent formulas of the set have been established, fragments showing part of these formulas can be safely attributed to it; there is of course the danger that words which at first sight appeared characteristic of one

⁵ Cf. E. L. Bennett, *Notes on Two Broken Tablets from Pylos*, *Minos* 5 (1957), 113—116.

⁶ See *Mycenaean Tablets III*, Plans III, VII, Figs. 69, 79, 83.

⁷ Og 427 + 8102.

formula may recur in another; and the fragment must be long enough to enable the formula to be securely identified.⁸

But in many cases the ideographic classification does not go far enough. The Pylos An series is a hotch-potch of tablets listing men, and containing the remains of at least half a dozen sets. On the other hand tablets which list men but omit the ideogram *VIR*, such as Vn 865, are excluded from the An classification. Thus here too a more sensitive instrument is required to adjust the crudities arising from a rigid adherence to over-simple criteria.

At the same time there is a danger in dividing series too far, at least on mechanical lines. The subdivision of the Pylos Na series adopted in *Inscriptiones Pyliae* seems to me to suffer from this defect; eight classes, excluding fragments, are distinguished, where in view of the two totalling tablets (Ng 319, 332) I suspect these were simply divided into two files corresponding to the location of the towns in the two provinces.⁹ If we were able to restore the Na series to the original two sets, we should be able to assign almost every place-name to one or other of the provinces; but the files were no doubt adjacent, and it would appear that they became confused in the destruction.

Another line of approach to this problem is the study of scribal hands. For this we possess the classification of Pylos hands by Bennett,¹⁰ the importance of which for a correct comprehension of the original grouping had already been demonstrated in his earlier study on the Aa, Ab and Ad tablets.¹¹ In that he had shown that the Aa series divides into two sets: (i) those numbered between 60 and 98, and (ii) those numbered between 240 and 1182. Here too the arrangement of *Inscriptiones Pyliae*, which has other advantages, has obscured the important fact that the minor set (i) refers to Leuktron and other places in the Further Province, as can be shown by comparison with the corresponding Ad tablets.

If the hand of a fragment otherwise unclassifiable can be determined, this may allow us to assign it to its correct class. For instance, Bennett (*l.c.*) attributed to Hand 43 the fragment Xa 102, reading *di-wo-nu-so-jo*, [. This scribe is known to us as the author of the Ea tablets, and a few others of larger format; the only one-line tablets he is known to have written are the Ea series. There is therefore a strong probability that Xa 102 is the beginning of an Ea tablet, and perhaps we should restore *di-wo-nu-so-jo*, [*do-e-ro* or the like, after the analogy of *a-te-mi-to do-e-ro* = *Artemitos doelos* in Es 650.5.

The analysis of the scribal hands at Knossos, which has recently been brilliantly undertaken by Dr J.-P. Olivier, is rather more difficult, for it appears that the total of scribes is certainly in excess of 50, and an estimate of 75 is probably not too large. No precise figures can be expected, since many tablets offer too little material to allow a positive identification of the scribe. But here too this line of approach has led to some important conclusions: the followign illustrations are based upon Olivier's work, which is now in the press.

KN 1039 is the central section of an elongated tablet bearing only faint traces of an ideogram at the right. This was originally read as *CROCUS* and the fragment

⁸ KN X 7723 has eventually yielded its reading after several false starts; it is: (a)] *a-ja-me-na*], (b)] *a-na-mo-ta* [. This enables us to assign it to the Sf series, which may be a genuine set, though some tablets of the Sg series should be transferred to it.

⁹ Cf. *Minos* 7 (1963), 128.

¹⁰ *Athenaeum* 46 (1958), 328–331.

¹¹ In *Études Mycéniennes*, pp. 121–136.

was therefore classified as Np (*KT*²). In *KT*³ this identification was changed doubtfully to *OLEUM* and the classification consequently to Fh. Olivier has now identified the scribe as Hand 109, whose known work is exclusively in the C category, and forms a clear example of a set.¹² The formula is: place-name (or two or more place-names connected by *-qe*), official title, ideogram *SUS*, numeral 1. The mysterious traces of the ideogram on 1039 are now recognizable as belonging to *SUS* as written by this hand; *e-ra-wo*, *du-ma* is the official title; [*56-]*ko-we-ge* is the second of the place-names. All that remains is to establish a new classification which will permit these tablets to be grouped together as a set.¹³

Another example comes from Hand 115, where Olivier has demonstrated that X 486 and Od 487 belong closely with Lc 485, and this in turn not only allows reclassification, but also some restoration. Association of both hand and find-spot suggests that Ap 482 belongs to the same group of files, and is probably a list of the textile workers concerned.

Hand 127 is also very interesting. Its extent corresponds closely to the Se series; the only members of that series (as listed in *KT*³) which are excluded being 1006, 1053, 8252 and 8253. Of these, three have now been joined: 1006 to 891, 8252 to 4480 (which can now be classified as Nc), 8253 to a fragment which permits its transfer to Sc. 1053 is too small a fragment for easy identification of hand; it is left unassigned by Olivier. The only complete word it contains, *a-re-ki-si-to-ja*, recurs on Sf 4420 and in another case on So 4433, both times in a chariot or wheel context; but since these tablets belong to the Arsenal and 1053 to the Area of the Bull Relief, the site of the other Se tablets, it seems that it is probably correctly retained here.

We can however consider more closely four unclassified (X) tablets which Olivier has attributed to Hand 127. 7920 is cut at the left and begins *pte-re]-wa*, cf. Se 879, 890, 891, 892; similarly 5729 can be restored as *pte]-re-wa- / wi].* 1048 reading] *po-ni-ki-ja* [is doubtfully assigned by Olivier to this hand, but cf. Se 882 *po-]ni-ki-ja* *241 [and *po-ni-ke-a* in Se 880.¹⁴

984 however is more interesting, since Olivier, in view of the hand, prefers the reading *de-de-me-na* to *ke-ke-me-na*, as proposed by Bennett, *Language* 36 (1960), p. 141. Thus we can tentatively restore the text thus:

.1 *e-re-]pa-te, de-de-me-na,* [

.2]*zo-wa, e-pi-zo-ta, ke-ra, de-de-'me-na'* [*241

e-re-pa-te occurs in Se 1028 . 1; *zo-*[in line 2 of the same tablet is therefore likely to be *zo-[wa*, and this confirms the word as complete in 984. If we construe the two words in the first line together, we shall be confronted with the problem of how anything can be described as "bound with ivory"; possibly, since ivory is not a flexible material, this might indicate the use of ivory in bands, giving the appearance of binding; or rings of ivory might be mounted on a shaft. In any case the process described by *de-de-me-na* may be decorative rather than functional, since silver binding on wheels is mentioned at Pylos (*a-ku-ro de-de-me-no* Sa 287). Elsewhere the

¹² 905, (X) 967 (?), (X) 979, (X) 1030, 1039, 7057, 7058.

¹³ The most satisfactory part of this story is the demonstration that *da-mo-ko-ro* is a title; see J. P. Olivier, *Le damokoro: un fonctionnaire mycénien* (in the press).

¹⁴ Olivier notes that the text of this tablet other than the ideogram might be by a different hand, which would account for the different spelling; cf. *po-ni-ki-ja* Se 965, Hand 127.

instrumental construed with a passive participle seems to be placed before it, so it would seem unlikely that *e-re-pa-te* belongs with another word now lost, and that a second instrumental followed. There does not appear to be a word on the tablet following *de-de-me-na*.

The same problem recurs in line 2. Here the arrangement of the text makes it certain that no further word follows; the remainder of the tablet was almost certainly occupied by *241 and the numeral. Thus *de-de-me-na* here must either be construed with *ke-ra* or be absolute, the material being left unspecified. If *ke-ra* is instrumental or dative, we have to explain the form; we should have expected **ke-ra-e* or **ke-ra-i*, there is no exact parallel.¹⁵ We can suppose a scribal error; or a form in diphthongal *-rai* written *-ra*, but this is highly improbable in view of the lack of vowel contraction and the possible presence of intervocalic *-h-*. Perhaps therefore we should regard *keras* as accusative denoting a part of the chariot frame, rather than a material. But the whole line still remains obscure.

It is clear that despite the importance of hands for establishing sets two or more scribes may have contributed to a single set. If two scribes wrote a single tablet, as has been shown in a few instances, then we must be prepared to admit two hands within the limits of a single set. A very clear example of this is the Knossos Fs set, which (omitting 32, now missing, and 723, an intruder) was entirely written by Hand 139, except for Fs 3. This has exactly the same formula, and cannot be separated from the rest, but the scribe is plainly different.

A more complex example can be found in the Knossos So series. The tablets numbered from 4429 to 4449 all deal with wheels and have similar formulas; but of these, nine are attributed to Hand 130, seven and possibly two more to Hand 131. Neither of these scribes appears to have written tablets dealing with any other subject. But still inside this set we have one tablet (4435) doubtfully attributed to Hand 128, whose main work concerns chariot-frames (Sd, Sf, Sg); and 4447 doubtfully attributed to Hand 129, whose activity is similar. This latter tablet is in any case distinguished from the rest of the set by its smaller format. But since what evidence we have shows that it was found with the others in the Arsenal, there is no reason to exclude it.

We have still not exhausted the list of possible characteristics leading to a grouping. Another possibility is offered by the physical characteristics of a tablet: its dimensions, its shape, whether squared at the ends, cut, rounded or tapered; the height of the signs, division into lines, etc. There were under the control of the scribe (if we assume that the same man usually made the tablet as inscribed it), and sets can be shown to have generally similar dimensions and shapes. This was probably for convenience in filing as much as anything. A scribe who wished to add to a file a tablet giving a summation would generally make a tablet to fit the file, and we can even see this happening where several tablets were necessary to avoid including in the file a tablet much larger than the rest; for this will explain the case of the four PY Eb tablets with aberrant formulas and a different hand referred to before.¹⁶

Moreover there are the physical characteristics due not to the scribe, but to accidental circumstances: the colour of the clay and the condition of the surface. These are less reliable, since there are excellent examples of fragments now joined to make up a tablet which differ markedly in colour and condition. But it is frequently true that a set has been exposed to similar conditions when it was burnt, and

¹⁵ *di-pa-e* PY Ta 641.2 is dual.

¹⁶ See above, note 1, p. 11.

consequently presents a uniform appearance. Many of the Knossos tablets from the excavation of the Arsenal in 1904 have a characteristically cracked surface. But Olivier has again provided an excellent example of the value of this as a criterion.

The Knossos D1 series is, with a few exceptions which deserve to be studied, the work of Hand 118, whose activity is virtually restricted to this series, since most of the remaining tablets attributed to him should now be added to D1. But within this series Olivier has called attention to a sub-group, represented by 11 tablets or fragments, which are distinguished by their colour and condition: "couleur rouge clair tirant sur le beige, surface légèrement craquelée, alors que les autres sont franchement noires et lisses."¹⁷ The value of this observation is confirmed by the text of these tablets: all bear, or may have borne, the place-name *e-ko-so*; none have a "collector's" name or refer to wool production; the use of WE as an ideogram is restricted to this group. Hence we can conclude that *e-ko-so* was the location of a special kind of sheep-rearing establishment which was not expected to produce wool.

Whether chemical analysis will show up differences in the clay of the tablets found at a single site is not yet known. It seems unlikely that this will be significant, unless tablets can be shown to have been transported from one site to another after being inscribed. In view of their fragility when sun-dried, this seems unlikely. Information was presumably recorded for transit (if at all) on some perishable but more convenient material.

I turn now to a question which has been raised by Olivier's work, but I must make it clear that the interpretation of the evidence which I shall offer is my own, and he takes no responsibility for it. Moreover, I am not entirely convinced that my interpretation is the only one possible, though I think it the most probable.

The starting point for this discussion is furnished by the find-spot: the so-called "Room of the Chariot Tablets", a small area in the complex of rooms south of the Throne Room. The whole deposit was found in a small compass, thus presumably indicating that it had not fallen from an upper storey. Remains of a wooden chest and sealings add a little to our picture of the room. The tablets were found at an early stage of the excavation in 1900, and bear numbers in *Scripta Minoa* II ranging from 48 to 337; Ai 338, allegedly from the Court of the Altar, is possibly a stray from this group. On the other hand 48 is plainly a member of the main Fp set which was found in the Clay Chest, and is either a stray somehow transported after the destruction or, more likely I fear, has been misreported by Evans as coming from the Room of the Chariot Tablets. There are two tablets within this range which possibly do not belong to the group under discussion despite their common find-spot: V 52, which Olivier leaves unassigned to hand; it is certainly not by Hand 124, but has affinities with 101; and U 96, an obscure fragment which cannot be assigned to a hand.

All the other tablets from this room have been assigned by Olivier to a single class, designated Hand 124, because they show a remarkable uniformity of script. At the same time this class is not the work of a single scribe; Olivier distinguishes as many as nineteen groups within this class, and he believes that at least eight of these represent different writers. Thus Hand 124 must be regarded as a composite hand, including perhaps ten or more writers, all of whom employ the same characteristic style.

¹⁷ *Les Scribes de Cnossos* (thesis submitted to the University of Brussels), p. 56.

The sign *ka* is always made with the cross inside the circle composed of curved lines; the degree of curvature, however, varies, and the direction of the curve, which is usually right-handed (i.e. each stroke is curved like Linear B *we*), is sometimes reversed so that each stroke resembles rather the letter S. This sign alone might afford an indication of the plurality of the scribes. On the other hand the sign *so* shows not only a highly individual outline, but differs little between the different members of the class. The sign *me* almost always has two bars on its tail; *nu* has regularly two semicircles between the uprights with a dot at their centre, and so on. The similarities between the scribes of this class are far more marked than in the case of the scribes belonging to any other office at Knossos. Thus the minimum hypothesis required to explain these facts is that the official in charge of this office demanded a very high degree of conformity from his subordinates.

There are remarkably few syllabic signs not represented in this hand, and some of the omissions may be significant: *18 is missing, though both *17 = *za* and *19 are present; *35 is absent, *34 present. But these and the other omissions can equally well be due to accident. The ideographic range is also very large and includes: *VIR*, *MUL*, *BOS*, *OVIS*, *CAP*, *EQU*, *HORD*, *GRA*, *125, *VIN*, *AMPH*, *LANX*, *SIT*, *CROC*, *162 (corslet), *166, *240 (chariot), *249.

But the most outstanding feature of these tablets taken all together is their extremely laconic style and lack of information. The sheep records (D) are terse enough, and some other series are remarkably bald; but one of the main series of tablets of this group has as its formula simply a man's name with or without the numeral 1 (Vc). We might perhaps frame a hypothesis to explain these. They could have been used for drawing lots; if so, several different drawings are represented, for the same names recur twice with nothing to distinguish them; and unbaked tablets must have been too fragile to shake up in a helmet (cf. *Il.* 7.175 ff.). Or we can suppose that the fact about these men which was being recorded was apparent from the file in which the tablets were placed and was entered on its label. They would thus be parallel to the longer lists of men's names in the V series which can be shown to have no introductory word or formula at their head.¹⁸

A noteworthy feature of the Vc series, which can be much augmented by fragments now unclassified but attributable on grounds of find-spot or hand, is the method of manufacture. It is clear that the tablets were made 10 cm. or more long, and then cut up into several pieces. That the cutting took place after writing is suggested by (X) 216 which is broken at the right, but cut at the left, beginning with a clear numeral 1; this will have belonged to the previous piece, which has been cut off in the wrong place.¹⁹ This may also explain the Vd series, also belonging to this class, which could be simply Vc tablets which have been marked off for division, but not actually divided.

It is important to establish whether or not this group is sufficiently closely connected with the remainder of the archives to prove that it formed part of them. This problem has been discussed by L. R. Palmer,²⁰ but needs to be investigated in more detail.

It is clear that there are frequent "cross-references" between tablets of the group; both in the Vc and Sc series there are pairs of tablets bearing the same name, and

¹⁸ E.g. V 503, but certain examples are rare; V 479 has a heading on the verso; V 147 belongs to the group under discussion.

¹⁹ Cf. *KT*³, p. 191, note on X 216.

²⁰ *Find Places*, p. 77.

names from these series also reappear on page-shaped tablets of this group. Thus Palmer finds it significant that *me-nu-wa* (Sc 238) reappears in V 60. 3, a tablet which he describes as "headed *a-ni-o-ko* 'chariot-drivers'", although this word is in fact an annotation in small script added to the first name on the list, and may not be intended to refer to them all.²¹

References to tablets outside this group, however, are rare. Palmer points to *ma-ti-ko* (Vc 295) which recurs on V 831.4 (N. Entrance Passage) and *ka-pa-ri-jo* (V 60.2; Vc 72; V 77.1) also found on U 4478.14 (Arsenal); and the names *a-ka-i-jo* and *a-no-go-ta* which appear as "collectors" on sheep tablets. In fact about a dozen of the personal names in this group appear as shepherds in the D series. The question is whether the repetition of the name guarantees reference to the same person; since names of this group are found also at Pylos, Mycenae and even Thebes, they are clearly drawn from a common stock, and we should need more evidence to prove that the *a-no-go-ta* of Vc 173 was the official of Ak 615.1, Ap 633.2 and Dv 440 rather than the shepherd of Da 1289.

There is also one more specific cross-reference. V 145.2 reads: *u-wo-ge-ne* | *u-du-ru-wo* which bears a striking resemblance to Ce 902.6 (N. Entrance Passage) *o-du-ru-we* | *u-wo-ge-we*. *o-du-ru-we* is apparently a place-name in Ce 902; if therefore *u-wo-ge-ne/we* were a man's name we should have a repetition of the same name at the same place, granting the variation in spelling of *u-du-ru-wo* and *o-du-ru-we*; the termination may represent genitive and dative. But there is no evidence that *u-wo-ge-we* is a name; Palmer, noting that at other places on this tablet we have an official *ko-re-te*, interpreted it as *u-oq²ewes* "overseers". Thus even if *u-wo-ge-ne* is a variant of this word, it might still be a common noun denoting a title, and the variation in the place-name would be accounted for by the alternatives "magistrate of" and "magistrate at".²² Thus the reference is not as specific as appears at first sight, and its evidential value is weak.

It is hard to resist the conclusion that this group is not closely related to the remainder of the archives, though it refers to towns in Crete and uses many well-known Mycenaean names. Such isolation might be explained chronologically, if this deposit belonged to a different date from the rest; but a much simpler explanation is available.

It is obvious that the literate members of the Palace staff, numbering in all probability at least 70, must have been taught to read and write. Thus we can be sure that somewhere there must have been a scribal school where the next generation of clerks and officials learnt their craft. They would doubtless have practised by making tablets and inscribing them in such a way that they would at first sight be indistinguishable from the normal records. But they would record fictitious names and facts; they would bear signs of incompetent writing; and might well lack the specific references which characterise real records. I believe that if we examine the group in this light we shall find further evidence of their fictitious nature.

One of the remarkable features of the Sc series is the frequency of erasure, and theories have been framed to account for this, especially as it seems particularly to affect the corslet ideogram (*162).²³ Nor are the other series belonging to this class

²¹ Palmer, l.c.; cf. *Documents*, p. 380.

²² Cf. PY Jo 438.19, 27: *e-re-e* (locative) *po-ro-ko-re-te*, *e-ra-te-re-wa-o* (genitive) *ko-re-te*.

²³ *Documents*, p. 380. Other erasures are visible in So 235, 245 (o over *162?), 251, etc. Cases of signs apparently omitted on first writing and added as an afterthought: Sc 230 (*jo*), 258. a (*ra, ko*), 266 (*qe*).

immune to erasure; X 105, Vc 181 and Np 270 all show signs of erasure and re-writing. It is difficult to show that erasure is more frequent than normal except in the case of the corslet ideogram, since this is a common feature in all tablets. More significant therefore is the case of X 114, which thanks to Olivier is now virtually complete.

This was inscribed on the face:

pa-ze, a-mi-ni-so, pe-da, wa-tu

all above a line which is more than half way down the tablet. The whole surface is covered with fingerprints. The verso shows signs of deletion at the left; its text is identical with the recto, but the arrangement is different. The first word *pa-ze* is in large signs occupying the full height of the tablet; the remainder is in smaller script in two registers but without a dividing line: *a-mi-ni-so* above; *pe-da, wa-tu*, underneath. The signs in fact overlap; e.g. the top of *pe* extends above the base of *a*, the top of *tu* curls up beside the upright of *ni*. None the less, in the limited space available the words are more neatly disposed. This observation can be extended to the individual signs. Although the hands are very similar, they are clearly not the same. The writing on the recto is certainly inferior to that on the verso; that on the verso is regular and elegant, that on the recto is a little clumsy and ill-formed. The last sign on the recto, *tu*, has its base well above the line. I can only conclude that the recto is the work of a pupil, and the verso is a fair copy by the instructor; hence the fingerprints, the analysis of which might prove interesting.

Another remarkable fact about this tablet is the absence of a numeral. *Pa-ze* is presumably a man's name (cf. *pa-za-ti* a name on KN D1 948); *a-mi-ni-so* is perhaps locative "at Amnisos", and *peda wastu* might mean "into the town". But it is hard to see the meaning of the whole phrase, harder still to see why it was repeated on the verso, unless this was in fact a writing exercise.

Now there is another tablet in this group which repeats on the verso the text of the recto with some modifications: C 50. The text consists of four entries each followed by *OVIS* and a numeral: the entries are identical except for the numerals and a brief note added to the first entry in small signs spaced between the large ones.

The figures on the recto are normally arranged;²⁴ but of the four numbers on the verso, three are abnormal: 190 has 90 written as 50 + 40 instead of 30 + 30 + 30; 144 has the 4 written below the 100 and before 40; 133 (if this is the correct reading) has the 3 below 130. Moreover, the writing of a word in small signs between the larger signs of another word is an oddity which is rarely found elsewhere.²⁵

Further study will no doubt increase the number of peculiarities to be found in tablets of this group. It is evident that it represents a highly individual office headed by a strong personality, whose idiosyncrasies are imitated by his staff; yet it is not a specialised department, such as that operating in the Arsenal, as is evident from the range of subjects covered. I suggest therefore as a provisional hypothesis that the tablets from the „Room of the Chariot Tablets” be regarded as practice documents

²⁴ The only departure from normal arrangement is that the 2 of 32 in the second line has longer strokes than usual.

²⁵ Cf. F 5079 + 8259, assigned by Olivier to a hand of this group (124).

and that deductions drawn from them be treated as suspect pending further investigation.²⁰

To sum up, the way is now open for a revision of our tablet-categories, and much new information can be expected from their regrouping. Study of the Knossos documents on these lines is now proceeding at Cambridge, and we should welcome the collaboration of any others who are interested in following this line of research.

²⁰ This will affect, inter alia, my estimate of the size of the chariot force maintained by Knossos; cf. *Decipherment*, pp. 108—109.

