

The Palace of Nestor at Pylos in Western Messenia

Volume IV
The Inscribed
Documents
Part 1,
Documents 1–616

By Emmett L. Bennett Jr.(†), José L. Melena,
Dimitri Nakassis, Jean-Pierre Olivier(†),
and Thomas G. Palaima

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IN WESTERN MESSENIA

VOLUME IV

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PART 1, DOCUMENTS 1–616

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and with a preface by
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PUBLISHED FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI BY



LOCKWOOD PRESS

2025

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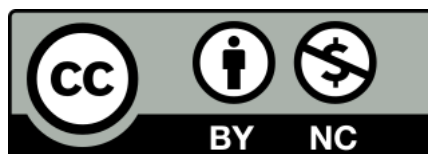
ISBN 978-1-957454-82-5

Library of Congress Control Number: 2024043906

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Typeset and Layout by José L. Melena and Dimitri Nakassis

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This free ebook is made available thanks to a grant from the Packard Humanities Institute.

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FOREWORD

Carl W. Blegen charged Emmett L. Bennett Jr. with the task of editing the inscribed tablets found in the Palace of Nestor at Pylos. Professor Bennett did his best to edit all the material until his failing eyes eventually prevented him from completing this commitment. He subsequently asked José L. Melena to assume the task of finishing the work, since Melena had devoted himself to the reconstruction of the texts in the National Archaeological Museum in Athens by eliminating the uncatalogued minor fragments (*akatagrapha*) still extant in drawers.

As coauthor with Bennett of an edition of the transliterated Linear B tablets from Pylos (*The Pylos Tablets Transcribed*) and the person responsible for dealing with the unedited fragments from 1965 onward, it was natural that Jean-Pierre Olivier became associated with the production of this book. He agreed but asked for a fresh examination of the tablets and eventually revised a preliminary transcription of the texts against the tablets themselves jointly with Melena in 1998. At the same time he checked the bulk of the joins achieved by Melena. Olivier's corrections and comments on the second version, dated November 1998, were duly incorporated into the text. Versions were produced and circulated in the meantime to be used as working tools (the third was dated June 1999), but the corrected version by Melena and Olivier was dated to 2002. Following an impasse in the project, Olivier inexplicably changed his plans and chose to join a breakaway project determined to produce a corpus independent of Blegen's and Cincinnati's designs. Shortly before he died, Olivier published a new transcription jointly with Maurizio Del Freo. Nevertheless, his name is duly retained in the authorship of the present edition and some of his and Del Freo's new readings are also incorporated here.

Many of the delays from which this project has suffered originated from the difficulty of obtaining high quality photographs of the current state of the tablets after their reconstruction, and of producing facsimile drawings as normally required for an *editio maior*. The first of these obstacles was solved thanks to a project of RTI photography organized by Dimitri Nakassis and Kevin Pluta. An entire set of definitive photographs has been produced. The second obstacle has been made superfluous by the publication of an unauthorized edition of the Pylos tablets that includes excellent drawings by the expert hand of Louis Godart.

This book is being presented in the Pylos series under the auspices of the Department of Classics of the University of Cincinnati. We warmly thank its members and the Semple Fund of the Department of Classics for approving a publication that entails considerable expense.

Last but not least, the final hurdle was to find a hospitable publisher. That was accomplished when Lockwood Press of Columbus, Georgia, assumed the task of printing a difficult original. We are deeply indebted to Director Billie Jean Collins for her patient support.

To all who contributed to bringing this book into print and circulation, we offer our most sincere thanks.

THE AUTHORS

PREFACE

In a postscript to his foreword to *The Palace of Nestor at Pylos in Western Messenia* III, dated February 1974, John Caskey, Blegen's student, then his successor as director of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens and professor at the University of Cincinnati, would write:¹

Carl Blegen died in Athens on the twenty-fourth of August, 1971. He had seen and verified all the manuscripts which make up the text of this book and had reviewed all the illustrations. The volume comes directly from his hand: another task finished ... like many before.

Blegen was truly devoted to publishing. He understood that dissemination of results is an archaeologist's highest priority, and he could claim many successes: in addition to preliminary reports, dozens of scholarly articles and chapters, and three volumes of *The Palace of Nestor at Pylos in Western Messenia*, Blegen sent to press monographs about prehistoric settlements at Korakou (1921) and Zygouries (1928), the cemetery at Prosymna (1937), and Troy (1950–1958), the latter published in seven monumental volumes.² The very few projects left unfinished in 1971, at the time of his death, have subsequently been brought to completion by others.³

Blegen was indeed fortunate to find a home at the University of Cincinnati in 1927 and to have had William and Louise Taft Semple as sponsors. The Department of Classics that the Semples built has remained committed to his legacy until the present day. In Cincinnati and in Athens Blegen left rich archives.⁴

The foreword to this volume describes the history of the massive undertaking now brought to completion in fulfillment of a promise made by José L. Melena to Emmett Bennett Jr., when it became clear that he would himself not be able to finish *The Palace of Nestor at Pylos in Western Messenia* IV: *The Inscribed Documents*. The Department of Classics of the University of Cincinnati is in his debt, and is also indebted to Dimitri Nakassis for bringing this volume to press.

Bennett and Blegen both understood the urgency of making accurate editions of the inscribed documents from the Palace of Nestor available to scholars worldwide. Blegen's anxiety is clear. On December 1, 1953, he wrote to Bennett that "the main purpose of the accelerated publication is to put the texts as speedily and economically as possible into the hands of those studying the language."⁵

On January 9, 1957, Blegen wrote to John Chadwick:⁶

I had a year ago last October given the Pylos tablets of 1955 to Emmett Bennett to publish. Upon receipt of your letter I wrote to him asking how he was getting on. I have only just today received his reply, which is not very encouraging, as he has apparently been busy with other matters. I will try to bring some pressure to bear on him in the hope of accelerating this publication; for I agree with you that the inscriptions of 1955 ought to be made accessible as soon as possible to all those devoting themselves to this field of study.

The preceding passage is also a good reminder that scholarship never lives in a vacuum. Bennett had academic and familial responsibilities, as did Blegen, and, even as he was writing to Chadwick, Mrs. Blegen was recovering from a cerebral hemorrhage.

1 *PofN* III, p. xii.

2 "Bibliography of Carl William Blegen," *Hesperia* 35, 1966, pp. 287–294.

3 Among these are Petrakis 2002; Caskey and Blegen 1975.

4 For those curated by the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, see <https://www.ascsa.edu.gr/index.php/archives/blegen-finding-aid>, and <https://www.ascsa.edu.gr/archives/pylos-excavations-finding-aid>. For those in Cincinnati, see <https://classics.uc.edu/images/archives/pylosfinding-aidweb.pdf>.

5 Carl W. Blegen Correspondence, no. 590, Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati Archives.

6 Carl W. Blegen Correspondence, no. 533, Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati Archives.

THE PALACE OF NESTOR IV

Bennett never forgot Cincinnati, and, like Blegen, never ceased to be devoted to Linear B and Pylos. In his old age, he was a frequent visitor to the University of Cincinnati, it being his *alma mater*; he had spent much of his youth in Clifton, the neighborhood around it. Bennett was a graduate student in the Department of Classics when photographs of the 1939 Pylos tablets first reached Cincinnati. Well into his 70s, he volunteered during the 1990s as a field walker for the Pylos Regional Archaeological Project, always interested in the territory ruled by King Nestor. Later he returned to Chora to help reorganize the storage of finds from Blegen's excavations.

The Palace of Nestor IV has been long in coming, but is better for the delay. Its production draws on the research and accomplishments of three generations of scholars. Bennett himself had spent his entire career providing scholars with tools needed for decipherment, and then for reconstructing the Mycenaean economy and society through analysis of the Linear B texts. His contributions were foundational, paving the way for the volume you hold in your hands.⁷ We now also have the means to illustrate its text with excellent photographs provided by Dimitri Nakassis and his colleagues. *The Palace of Nestor IV* is, we think, a work in which both Blegen and Bennett would have exulted. We take great pleasure in dedicating it to their memories.

Although the publication of *The Pylos of Nestor IV* marks the end of Blegen's vision, it is not the end of Cincinnati's commitment to the study of prehistoric scripts. Our department has been home since the 1990s to *Nestor*, the monthly newsletter and bibliography of Greek prehistory founded by Bennett in 1957. Bennett's papers have lately arrived at his *alma mater* in accordance with his wishes. They and the records of other pioneers in the field of Linear B studies will be in Cincinnati a treasured resource for all who study Mycenaean civilization.

Pylos
November 1, 2024

SHARON R. STOCKER
JACK L. DAVIS

⁷ Bennett's contributions are listed in Olivier and Palaima 1988, pp. 13–18.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Hellenic National Archaeological Museum has for many years facilitated the completion of the physical study of the Linear B tablets from Pylos. Work at the National Museum was continuously funded for José L. Melena by the Ministry of Education of Spain (Dirección General de Investigación Científica y Técnica, Research Program PB-91/0341; Dirección General de Enseñanza Superior, Research Programs PB-94/0464, 97/0627) and the Consejería de Educación, Universidades e Investigación, Basque Government (Research Programs PGV 8921, 92/33, 94/04). We gratefully acknowledge the support of Katie Demakopoulou, Demetra Kokkevi-Fotiou, Lena Papazoglou-Manioudaki, Eleni Tsivilika, Metaxia Tsipopoulou, Olga Tzahou-Alexandri, Maria Vlassopoulou-Karydi, Katerina Voutsas, and Io Zervoudaki, as well as that of Kostas Pantazis and Maria Kontaki, for this aspect of this project.

Photography of the tablets was directed by Dimitri Nakassis and Kevin Pluta (permit ΥΠΙΛΘΠΙΑ-ΓΔΑΠΚ/EAM/14699/6950/748), with the assistance of Alana Acuff, Jami Craig, John Klausmeyer, James Newhard, Hembo Pagi, and Jill Seagard. Financial support for photography was provided by grants or awards from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Institute for Aegean Prehistory, the Institute of Classical Studies (University of London), the Loeb Classical Library Foundation, the Program in Aegean Scripts and Prehistory (PASP) at the University of Texas at Austin, the University of Colorado Boulder and its Research and Innovation Office, the College of Charleston, and the University of Toronto. For this part of the project, we gratefully acknowledge the invaluable assistance of Ioanna Damanaki at the American School of Classical Studies at Athens (ASCSA), and the steadfast support of the National Archaeological Museum in Athens and its staff, in particular Katerina Konstanti, Eleni Konstantinidi-Syvridi, Maria Kontaki, Kostas Nikolentzos, Kostas Paschalidis, and most especially Katerina Voutsas. Additionally we warmly thank Evaggelia Militsi-Kechagia, Director of the Ephorate of Messenia.

Ruth Palmer examined the Pylos archives at the ASCSA on our behalf, and we are also grateful to Natalia Vogeikoff-Brogan for assistance with additional archival research. We thank Andrew Reinhard for valuable editorial assistance, John Bennet for sage advice, and Carlos Varias for reading a draft of the entire text of this volume and commenting on it.

Colleagues in the Department of Classics at the University of Cincinnati have also facilitated the completion of this edition. These include Jack L. Davis, Sharon R. Stocker, Carol Hershenson, Jeff Kramer, and Phoebe Acheson.

Support for many years of study of the Pylos tablets by Thomas Palaima and the PASP INSTAP archivist Garrett Bruner came from three main sources: the Institute for Aegean Prehistory and the Raymond F. Dickson Centennial and the Robert M. Armstrong Centennial professorships of the Department of Classics of the University of Texas at Austin.

Finally, we express our appreciation to the University of Colorado Boulder and the Louise Taft Semple Fund of the Department of Classics of the University of Cincinnati for supporting the production and publication of the present work.

INTRODUCTION

HISTORY OF THE TEXT

The first full set of inscriptions from Pylos was published in 1951, prior to the decipherment of Linear B, as transcriptions in *PT I*.¹ These inscriptions form the second largest group of written documents in the Mycenaean Greek script, Linear B. However, at that stage, the Pylos tablets were referred to as written in a Minoan writing system because of their similarity to the tablets in the same script found at the beginning of the century at Knossos on Crete. In *PT I*, Emmett L. Bennett Jr. presented to those interested in deciphering Linear B the whole of the available evidence from Pylos, rather than the select few tablets that had been published hitherto. Nevertheless, these transcriptions represented only the basic essentials of the contents of the documents. While anticipating their final publication in the present form, Bennett perforce omitted much that would have been of great value in interpreting the texts. Among the more serious omissions were photographs, drawings, careful descriptions of the tablets, and a detailed account of their discovery. Also omitted were studies of the various forms of the signs, and of their uses, of the formation and uses of sign groups, and so on. Nonetheless there were great advantages arising from this early publication. By making the evidence available to all who were interested in the Linear B script, Bennett brought to bear the resources of archaeologists, philologists, linguists, historians, mathematicians, and cryptanalysts on the problem of decipherment, in the hope that, through their combined efforts, a more rapid advance to a solution might be gained.

Transcriptions represented the best readings of each text based on repeated collation with the photographs. But since photographs, excellent as they were, could not take the place of the tablets themselves, these transcriptions included a number of misreadings, and Bennett himself warned that they should be used with caution. Wherever a reading was seriously in doubt it was underdotted. The fact that the repertory of signs found on the tablets from Pylos was in most ways the same as the signs in the Linear B script from Knossos was immediately recognized. *PT I* was a landmark in other ways. Bennett included lists of signs classified according to their use, as a first and necessary step toward discovering their meaning. Bennett also made a careful differentiation of signs according to their likely functions in the transcribed tablets. The three main categories were: (1) signs used in sign-groups (i.e., syllabograms); (2) logograms (referred to as ideographic signs); and (3) numerals, punctuation, and other marks.

An ordering for the syllabograms was adopted in order to compile an index of the sign-groups. In doing this, Bennett naturally adopted the forms of syllabograms that were characteristic of Pylos rather than those more characteristic of the writing from Knossos. As can be observed from the first ten signs, he laid the signs out exclusively according to their shapes from simple to more complex. That practice stripped the presentation of any hint of preliminary guesswork about the values of the signs.

This new order for the signs used as syllables then was based on the shapes of the characters. Within a primary division into a few basic shapes (upright, triangular, rectangular, and curvilinear) it proceeded generally from simple to complex. The logograms were arranged so far as possible on the basis of their apparent meaning, relying as a first step on the more pictorial signs for organizational structure.

In *PT I* (pp. xi–xii), the documents were presented under a preliminary classification, which was based on the apparent contents of the texts. The principal guides for establishing the classification were the logograms that occurred on almost all of the tablets. The system adopted for identifying the tablets, which in itself already offered a key to the classification, used sequences of capital and small

1 The first part of this history is closely based on the introduction to *PT I*. The transcriptions in *PT I* were in Bennett's standardized Linear B characters; they were not presented to the reader until p. 82, and then in a table consisting only of the drawn characters without any numbers assigned to them.

letters and Arabic numerals, of which typical examples are Aa01, Cn04, and Eb25. The initial capital letters designated the main categories that had been differentiated, in an order conforming to that of the logograms, as they were given in the list in *PTI*, p. 82. Subdivisions of the major series were indicated by the small letters; and the final Arabic numerals gave the consecutive number of each tablet within its group. Tablets that might have been classified under more than one heading were recorded only once, in the category to which the greater or apparently more important part of the text referred. The classification was tentative and, although some changes proved to be necessary, it has been of great value in the study of the texts, since it brought together tablets of similar and related subject matter.

The chief categories were the following:

A	Tablets whose principal logograms were the so-called ‘Man’ and ‘Woman’ signs.
C	Tablets whose principal logograms had been thought to represent cattle and other animals, domestic or wild.
E, F	Tablets whose principal logograms represented certain commodities measured by a particular set of measures. (These logograms were listed in the third line of the ‘ideographic signs’ of <i>PT I</i> , p. 82. The dry metrograms are listed in the last three columns.)
G	Tablets whose principal logograms belonged to a similar and related, but different, set of measures. (These were shown in the fourth line of the same list.)
J, K, M	Tablets whose principal logograms represented commodities measured by a third set of measures not related to the measures of categories E, F, and G. (These were shown in the fifth line of the same list.)
N, O, P	Tablets characterized by various logograms whose meanings had not been determined. (These were shown in the sixth and seventh lines of the list.)
S	Tablets with logograms related to those of the ‘Chariot’ tablets at Knossos.
U	Tablets on which logograms of several of the above classes are associated.
V	Tablets without logograms.
W	Tablets apparently impressed as labels on basketry.
X	Tablets and inscribed fragments too incomplete for classification.

An index of the sign-groups was designed to facilitate the investigation of their uses and meanings, by gathering together all instances in which each sign-group occurs, and calling attention to sets of similar sign-groups that might be variant forms of a single word or name. This index included references to sign-groups completed or restored in the course of studying the texts. Bennett warned also that in these documents restoration of signs that were completely missing or illegible in the texts was, of course, most perilous, since it depended at that stage upon the analogies provided by the regularity of the bookkeeping methods of the scribes (whom we might call more neutrally tablet-writers), rather than upon an understanding of the linguistic or phonetic meaning of signs or groups of signs in the texts of the tablets. The restorations were, therefore, not included in the texts, which were designed to present only those signs that could be identified with reasonable certainty. Restored signs were, however, given in the index to show where other examples of known sign groups *might* have been written. See, for example, sign groups found on table Eo01 in the first column of *PTI*, p. 106.

The hand-drawn signs of this edition were photographically copied from a series of transcriptions made by Bennett, probably in 1949, with the newly available Multilith process. Bennett, at the age of twenty-two, had started copying the texts from Ano Englianios in the summer of 1940, about the time that Carl W. Blegen suggested that he should work seriously toward a preliminary publication. In the spring of 1940 the first prints of photos taken by Alison Frantz were received in Cincinnati.² These were prints ca. 5 × 8 cm, and therefore noticeably smaller than the actual tablets. Nevertheless,

² Papalexandrou and Mauzy 2003; Vogeikoff-Brogan 2019.

INTRODUCTION

the photos were well focused, and with a magnifying glass they could be easily read, wherever the text was not damaged. For some of these photos, a print at a larger scale, even approaching actual size, was received.

In 1950 Bennett supervised the unpacking of the tablets in the National Museum in Athens after their storage during WWII. This process included identification of the tablets and at least some checking of the readings. Since at that stage he had a set of the Multilith copies, he made corrections on them whenever he could.

The best possible understanding of an inscription calls for the examination of the inscription itself, although photographs, drawings, and other copies must more often serve.³ The drawings and copies of the Mycenaean inscriptions of Pylos, found at Ano Englianos from 1939 to 1954 and published in *PT II*, benefited from the opportunity given to Bennett to examine the tablets at length on two occasions, in 1950 (prior to the publication of *PT I*) and again in 1953/1954 in the National Museum in Athens. There he spread the tablets out on long tables, classified and arranged them, joined broken fragments, copied and corrected the copies of the texts, and studied the script and the hands of the scribes. In the case of the tablets found in 1954, Bennett saw a few of these within minutes of their discovery while briefly a member of the excavation staff at Ano Englianos. For the rest, he relied upon the copies of Michael Ventris, who had examined the tablets in the museum and had generously and quickly sent him copies (which included readings of erasures and edges not visible on the photographs) together with a few conjectured restorations.

The photographs that were the basis of the drawings, and were continually used to check the copies, were those taken by Frantz. It was regretted that these excellent photographs could not be published at that time, and it was hoped that “the drawings may prove not entirely inadequate substitutes.”⁴

The drawings that formed the bulk of *PT II* were made by tracing in India ink the lines of the stylus as they appeared in the prints of the photographs at the actual size of the tablet. They were then bleached, examined and corrected. They were printed at the reduced scale of 2:3, in the hope that the smaller hands would still be legible (fortunately the smaller hands are also more inclined to neatness). It was intended that the drawings would reproduce the disposition of the text upon the tablets, and reproduce fairly accurately the shapes of the signs in the actual handwriting of the scribes, although the imperfect condition of the tablets and the breadth or indistinctness of some of the less careful strokes and possible inaccuracies in tracing could have distorted some of the signs. There were some signs that did not show up clearly enough on the photographs to be traced, although they could be seen on the tablets, and there were other lines that autopsy later showed were not parts of signs but had been traced nevertheless. The representations of lacunae, of broken edges, and of abraded surfaces were not uniform, and were more often than not omitted when the multiplicity of details might have been confusing. Thus these drawings could not be regarded as the final authority.

The copies printed in *PT II* were intended to replace those in *PT I*, since many new fragments had already been joined to older pieces, completing or adding to their texts. The copies now followed more closely the normal epigraphic conventions, and they showed restorations, which the formulaic nature of the accounts makes possible. This practice was justified in the presence of the drawings, which served as a check upon the shape and extent of the lacunae. Many signs that were shown in the copies and appeared either as broken traces or not at all in the drawings were read through the photographs and autopsy, particularly where a break had followed the line of the sign, and the traces of the stylus could be seen in the broken edge.

In the process of preparing *PT II*, it also proved expedient to revise the system of tablet numeration, so that now the inscriptions were numbered using the unique inventory number written upon the tablet, by which they may still be recognized in the Museum. This replaced the system of arbitrary numeration of *PT I*. The classification was retained, however, as still being of value. The system of prefixing tablets with two letters to identify the general subject matter of the tablet (capital letters) and the ‘set’ to which particular tablets belonged (small letters) as determined by the contents of the

3 *PT II*, p. xiii. Our account here of Bennett’s work on the tablets in 1953/1954 is drawn virtually *verbatim* from Bennett’s introduction in *PT II*.

4 *PT II*, p. xiii.

tablets, which could now be 'read' with some certainty, was maintained. Some of the inscriptions were reclassified, either because of joins or because of better understanding of their contents. The series Kn was eliminated to avoid confusion with the abbreviation for Knossos (KN); the series Be (one tablet, since reclassified as Ae 995), Cc, Es, Ja, Jo, La, Sh, Ta, and Tn were newly established. The drawings were printed in approximate numerical order, along with their inventory numbers. The copies were printed in classified order. The inventory and classification incorporated concordances with the older numeration.

The listing of the vocabulary was completely redone, as it was necessary to renumber all of the references to inscriptions, and since it was decided to include the transcriptions according to the decipherment of Michael Ventris. This vocabulary supplemented and replaced the Pylos part in *A Minoan Linear B Index*.⁵

The vocabulary was again arranged in the order of the list of phonetic signs that was established in *PT I*.⁶ Identifying numbers were added to the list published in *A Minoan Linear B Index*, and most of Ventris's values were accepted for the transcriptions in the vocabulary, with few exceptions. Words that occurred in inscriptions from other sites were appropriately marked with KN, MY, or TH (for Knossos, Mycenae and Thebes, respectively). Words restored in the copies were given there only in their restored form; the incomplete fragments were not included, as they had been in the earlier vocabulary. Words conjecturally completed, or supposed to be misspelled, were noted twice, however.

The order of the list of logograms ('ideographic signs') in use at Pylos (*PT II*, p. 202 and used in the index of ideographic signs) was slightly revised; identifying numbers and suggested values were added. These were adapted from a list provided by Ventris, as they were to appear in *Documents in Mycenaean Greek*.⁷ Signs were given only one number, so that phonetic signs used logographically retained the same number, preceded by an asterisk.⁸ More certain values were given in capitals, while less certain values were in small letters and questioned. While Bennett was not entirely convinced of the correctness of every value, he considered them to be reasonably accurate enough to be used as given values, until, with continuing study, corrections became necessary.

In October 1955, Blegen provided Bennett with the photographs taken by Frantz of the majority of the tablets found in the Palace of Nestor at Pylos in the spring of that year, together with pertinent information about the circumstances of their discovery, and gave him permission to prepare them for publication. For that, a set of tentative texts in transcription, not free from errors, was distributed as widely as possible among scholars known to be interested in the Mycenaean tablets, although a few modifications eventually appeared in the final manuscript of *OOT*. On 20 February 1958, a complete set of photographs of the 1955 Pylos tablets came into the hands of Bennett, with eight fresh fragments of inscriptions.

Since all of these tablets formed a consistent group of texts, and since their inventory numbers followed directly after those of the season of 1954, which were included in *PT II*, the publication *OOT* was essentially a continuation of *PT II*. However, photographs and transcriptions were offered for the first time, and there was a commentary on the texts in general and on some of the individual texts.

The yield of subsequent campaigns of excavation was published annually by Mabel Lang, along with drawings and usually photographs, also by Frantz and by Lang, from the 1957 excavations onward.⁹

While visiting the Institute for Research in the Humanities in Madison in the summer of 1966, Jean-Pierre Olivier suggested that he might undertake the preparation of a new transcription of the Pylos tablets, taking account of the new texts and readings that had accumulated since the earlier publications. The subsequent steps are conveniently described in the preface of the resultant work,

⁵ Bennett 1953.

⁶ *PT II*, p. 201.

⁷ Ventris and Chadwick 1956.

⁸ This despite the fact that in the three clearest cases *21, *22, and *85, the signs clearly functioned as the 'generic,' i.e., ungendered, class of animal: sheep, goat, pig.

⁹ Lang 1958, 1959, 1960, 1961, 1962, 1963 (one fragment from 1962, Xn 1446, was not included for unknown reasons), 1965.

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PTT, and need not be repeated here (the previous reconstruction is reviewed below). *PTT* arranged the transliterated texts according to their classificatory prefixes. These texts were a substantial improvement, because repeated autopsy of the originals resulted in the elimination of many false readings. *PTT* represented, therefore, an important contribution toward the establishment of a definitive text, although it is now, of course, superseded by *PTT2nd* (same text as *ARN* with some slight changes), *PT3rd*, and especially by the present edition.

In 1986 Bennett went to Athens with the objective of preparing a set of drawings of all the Pylos texts for this corpus. He soon discovered that his eyes and hands were unequal to the task. As a result he spent some months in the spring of 1987 working on the tablets in the National Museum, checking the transcriptions once more, and, with the help of a few visitors, finding several better readings in some places, absolutely new readings in others, including an inscription that had not been noticed on the upper edge of one tablet, and even one new bit of a tablet. There were also some new joins, and several new quasi-joins. Some of these new or corrected texts were published in the Proceedings of the 1990 Colloquium in Athens.¹⁰

Three tablet fragments and some alleged fragments of inscriptions have been found more recently.¹¹

THE EXCAVATION OF THE TABLETS¹²

An appreciation for the condition of the tablets and the problems associated with their removal can be captured by repeating here the description of William McDonald, who excavated the tablets from the Archive Room in 1939:¹³

During the remainder of the 1939 preliminary campaign at Pylos small groups of broken tablets were laboriously cleared with delicate tools, left in place for a few hours to dry in the sun, photographed, sketched, numbered and gingerly removed. [...] The trench where the first tablets had been found, only inches below the modern surface, was gradually widened. Everywhere in an area of a few square feet they lay, broken and topsy-turvy. And even the fragments were in a truly “delicate condition,” permeated with moisture and riddled with rootlets. Their outline was barely distinguishable from the surrounding soil of which they had been made and to which only by a miracle they had not quite returned. [...] Actually, the written surface could not be seen in the excavation stage, since a hard white lime accretion completely covered the surface. The inscribed content and the similarity to the Cretan Linear B writing system had at first to be inferred for all of them from the very first fragment found. It was so near the surface that it had partially dried and, therefore, held together when a workman noticed its rounded upper edge and picked it up. Before he could be prevented, he had drawn his hand across the surface. That one stroke revealed the written symbols and also came perilously near to obliterating them.

After they had dried out in the sun for a few hours, however, a group of tablets could safely be removed, packed in cotton wool and taken to the excavation house in modern Pylos. Dr. Hill, Blegen’s closest associate then, had constructed wire drying racks. In a few days the tablets were rock hard and could be safely handled; but they were still illegible. It was only then that Blegen, cautious as always, allowed a few to be carefully scraped until the writing could be made out. So it could finally be safely inferred that all were inscribed, and telegrams were sent off to Athens and Cincinnati to announce the news.¹⁴

¹⁰ Bennett 1992.

¹¹ Shelmerdine and Bennet 1995; Cooper 2017, pp. 83–84; Judson et al. 2019.

¹² The text in this section and the following two sections is based on Bennett 1964b.

¹³ Alsop 1964, p. 28: “Professor Blegen told me, and his eyes shone at the memory. ‘It was the time of the spring rains [4 April 1939]. The ground was very damp, and the tablets were soggy and horribly delicate. W.A. McDonald, who was with us that year, and I spent day after day on our hands and knees, getting out the tablets one by one. When we dried them on wire screens, they became almost as hard as pottery; but still, each tablet had to be cleaned, inch by inch, with toothpicks. We didn’t dare use acid then as we do now. It was a chore, I can tell you—and we enjoyed every minute of it.’” See also Kourouniotis and Blegen 1939, pp. 564–566.

¹⁴ McDonald and Thomas 1990, pp. 236–237. See also Blegen in *PT II*, pp. vii–viii: “During the excavation it was frequently noticed that tablets which lay facing upwards were likely to have their texts fairly well preserved, while

It was the practice of the excavators to include sketch plans, along with the record of their discovery, mapping the positions of tablets and groups of tablets in their day books as they were uncovered, prior to removal. On these sketches were also noted the numbers given to the tablets in the sequence that they were taken out of the ground and wrapped for safe transport to the excavation house. For the first tablets the excavators also recorded, in the day books, brief descriptions of the tablet (or fragments) assigned to each number. Later, when it was clear that large numbers of tablets were to be found, this description was kept separately, compiled as a record of the contents of the numbered packages as they were spread out for drying and hardening.

Even during the first examination in the drying trays some joins were found and made, and these were recorded with the description of the joined pieces before the finds were taken to Athens. The pieces were cleaned, marked with their identifying numbers, joined, and photographed in the workrooms of the National Museum.¹⁵ In combination, the sketches, the photographs of many groups of tablets still in situ, the records of their discovery, the descriptions of the fragments, and the photographs eventually taken of each inscribed piece are sufficient to locate with remarkable precision the spot from which almost every separate bit was unearthed.

THE CLASSIFICATION AND NUMBERING OF THE DOCUMENTS

It is appropriate now to explain the different methods of numbering and renumbering the tablets and their fragments, for the published results have not avoided some confusion. In the initial assignment of numbers in 1939, as the tablets and fragments were taken out of the ground, there were 620 numbers assigned in sequence. The number 621 was then given to all pieces that turned up in baskets of sherds during the final packing up of finds at the excavation house. Of these 620 numbers, however, a few were assigned to 'tablet fragments' that later turned out to be sherds or stones, and a very few numbers were inadvertently skipped. More important is the fact that, in many instances, two or more fragments (and in the case of 615 at least 14 substantial pieces and 60 tiny bits) were listed together under the same number, when their position in the ground, or their general similarity, had suggested the possibility of them being parts of the same tablet, or when minute bits were put with larger ones for convenience. In most cases of this sort the first record will indicate the number of fragments under one number, but, very occasionally, they were identified as, for example, 119a and 119b.

In the National Museum, the tablets and fragments were sufficiently dry for further cleaning. Even before that, however, photographs and casts were made of a few of the better pieces, and these are represented by the illustrations of the first report published in the *Illustrated London News*, June 3, 1939. The numbers were now marked on each piece. Where several bits had been included under a single number each was given, at this time, a fractional number (except for the minute bits without any indication of inscription). Thus number 9 consisted of two similar fragments. These were identified and marked as 9.1 and 9.2. Photographs were then taken of the texts, generally keeping together the pieces belonging to one number. At the same time the systematic search for joins continued and, as these were found, new photographs were taken of the joined tablets. A set of prints of these photographs was soon available in Cincinnati, where under Blegen's direction the texts were copied and their study begun. In these copies and in the lists and indexes, the tablets were identified by their numbers; those that were listed under a single number included the additional fractional number. Those that had been joined were first identified with some inconsistency (e.g., identification in the form of 39 + 43, or listing 461 + 462 + 160 as 462), but later uniformly by the lowest number, whole or fractional, among its constituent fragments. Thus the present An 209 was known as 207.1 and the present An 207 as 207.2.

those that had fallen with face down were often badly worn away by tiny roots that had penetrated into the glyphs and ultimately eaten away their edges."

¹⁵ Blegen in *PTI*, p. vii: "The original inventory numbers were transferred from attached labels and wrappings to the tablets themselves and recorded by Dr. B. H. Hill, who was ably assisted by Miss Margaret MacVeagh (Mrs. Samuel Thorne)."

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With the development of a scheme of classification in *PT I*, the inventory number was kept on the copies in the form, An 13-207.1 for example (now An 209), while in the index of sign-groups and often more generally, for convenience, An 13 was used. A concordance was given by Bennett (1947) in his unpublished dissertation, where the classification was set down in a definitive form. With continuing discoveries of joins and with better acquaintance with the contents of the texts, both the inventory numbers and the classified numbers were gradually revised. Multilithed worksheets showing only the classification with the copied texts were prepared in 1949; much of the contents of these were directly reproduced in *PT I* (1951). Any differences, in text or in classification, including gaps in the sequence, arose from the examination of the texts in 1950. At that time, Bennett compared texts and copies in the museum, and discovered a few more possible joins and a number of bits inscribed but not yet recorded. These new joins and inscriptions were photographed. Thus, from this collation the worksheets were revised to produce the text of *PT I*.

The excavators continued these procedures in 1952 but with slight modification. Almost all of the joins of the 1952 fragments with themselves and with the 1939 tablets were made before photographs were taken. Records of the source of constituent parts were kept, but photographs of uninscribed bits, or of groups of fragments catalogued under one find-number, were unfortunately not taken. The photographs themselves, like the tablets, were marked with definitive inventory numbers (continuing from 621, the last of the 1939 series of whole numbers). These replaced the original find-numbers (which were in the form [1952] S3 [for trench S3], 1–, M [for Megaron], 1–, etc.). A concordance of these numbers was kept, together with the record of the constituent elements of those tablets joined from several pieces. In the fall of 1953 the texts were again examined, a few further joins made, and a few minor but inscribed fragments were given numbers and photographed.

Following the joining of 1952 fragments to 1939 tablets, some new higher inventory numbers had been allocated, introducing some anomalies to the “lowest constituent” system, which otherwise continued to be used. As already noted, the published texts in *PT I* were known by their classification numbers, although these classification numbers had not been marked on the tablets. An attempt was made to extend the classification system to the new texts and to those newly joined, but difficulties soon became apparent and made it advisable to establish the system that is now in use. Within this system, the 1939 inventory numbers that had not been eliminated by joins were assigned (without fractional parts and without regard for the ‘lowest constituent’ principle) to tablets having that number, or some fraction of it, as a constituent. Where this procedure would have given the same number to two texts, as, for example, 71.1 and 71.2 (where each was unjoined), the extra fragment was assigned a number in the series beginning with 1000 (i.e., a number just beyond the numbers assigned to 1952 and 1953 tablets). In this way, 71.1 became Ea 71 and 71.2 became Wa 1008. These numbers (without the classificatory prefix) were marked on the tablets. The numeration thus established was necessarily an incomplete series, especially between 1 and 621 because of the joins that had been made. The texts thus renumbered, with their classification indicated by the prefixes established in *PT I*, were published in *PT II*, with a concordance to the numbers in *PT I*.

A concordance of the numbers assigned to tablets at the various stages in their study and publication has been kept. The record of cleaning, examining, joining, and photographing in the National Museum in Athens has also been kept, and an index of the photographs of Pylos tablets taken at that time is available at the American School of Classical Studies at Athens. The photographs themselves, enlarged to actual size and uniformly mounted, were available in Madison, Wisconsin, and transferred in 1989 to the Program in Aegean Scripts and Prehistory (PASP) in Austin, now transferred to Cincinnati, while other copies of all or some are available in Cincinnati, Athens, and elsewhere. A minor function of these records, indexes, and concordances is the verification of the times at which tablets or fragments have been seen, cleaned, photographed, copied, read, or deciphered for the first time.

In subsequent campaigns the same system has been followed: a new series of find-numbers has been assigned for each year, or whenever necessary for different parts of the site. When the tablets are cleaned, photographed, and joined, inventory numbers are assigned, with the classified prefixes added in the publication of the new texts, continuing the established series. New joins between fragments and inscriptions already entered into the inventory series lost their higher inventory

number. Anomalies are inevitable, but were kept to a minimum; the assignment of new numbers was carefully recorded in the inventory lists and concordances.

For the numeration to have been maintained more consistently based on the lowest component possible, some drastic changes would have been necessary, entailing some changes to the references to previously well-studied records (e.g., Jn 431, 829). To avoid such a detrimental outcome, it has been decided to retain the known numbers for the benefit of continuity in the scholarly literature.

THE FIND SPOTS

The likelihood of finding inscribed clay documents in almost any part of a Mycenaean palace is apparent from the success of the excavators of the Palace of Nestor in finding at least some tablets in every campaign from 1939 to 1961 as new sections were gradually uncovered. However, the majority of the Pylos tablets derive from the deposits in Archives Room 8, excavated in 1939, and the immediately adjacent areas, namely, the Annex Room 7 to the southeast and the Inner Propylon Room 2 to the northeast, both excavated in 1952. The number of texts found in this Archives Complex indicate that these rooms were the offices of an important sector of the management of the palatial economy, where the information processed by those who wrote the records on clay in cooperation with other officials and interested parties would have been filed.

The care of the excavators and their zeal in recording the positions in which the tablets and fragments were found make it possible to map the distribution of those tablets. We are particularly interested in the position of those tablets that remained undisturbed on the floors and benches of these rooms from the time of the destruction of the palace until their excavation. Such a map of the distribution can potentially show the associations of various series of texts, and, by suggesting the original positions and groupings of the documents before the catastrophe, can illustrate the administrative procedures of the persons who, with the assistance of these written documents, controlled the economy of the palace.

Elsewhere in the palace it is generally the case that tablets are few and scattered, sometimes with clear indications of a fall from an upper story. For these tablets, the indication that they were found in a particular room will usually provide as much information about their context at the time of the palace's destruction as we can expect. But even here, there is information in the excavators' notebooks that permits a greater precision.

We will begin by considering the Archives Complex and discussing the discovery of the tablets and the evidence for their distribution. In the 1939 season, the tablets originally numbered 1–621 came entirely from Archives Room 8 itself, including the areas around the doorways to this room and the upper layers of the chasm. The term 'chasm' is used here to refer to the disturbed area once occupied by the boundary walls and foundation blocks of the Archives Complex that were robbed out after the conclusion of the Bronze Age.¹⁶ To these may be added the tablets now numbered 1000–1173 (except for two tablets: Xa 184, found in Room 65, and Fr 343, found near Room 41). In the 1952 season, the tablets were mostly from the Annex (Room 7), with some from the southwest end of the Inner Propylon (Room 2) and from the chasm. The find spots are included in the minor apparatus for each component (fragment) of the tablets, but some general remarks are given below.

For convenience of reference and uniformity with other publications about the Palace of Nestor, we will identify rooms using the definitive numeration system adopted for the palace. These replaced the original designations consisting partly of name, partly of number, which were used in the excavation notebooks and to some extent in preliminary publications. According to this system, the Archives Room is Room 8, its Annex is Room 7 and the Inner Propylon is Room 2. We may be pardoned for retaining the chasm as a descriptive term. There are indeed similar robbing trenches elsewhere in the palace, but in this context the reference is to the positions once occupied by the boundary walls of the Archives Room and the Annex, particularly that wall on the northeast side separating them from the Propylon, Rooms 1 and 2. In the 1952 season and later, there were also tablets found in the robbed-out section of the outer walls of the two rooms.

16 A recent attempt to identify the chasm as a chthonic shrine of the Early Iron Age is entirely unfounded: see Davis 2017.

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For the convenience of reference in plotting the positions of the tablets on the floors of these rooms, Bennett introduced a scheme dividing the rooms into meter squares, with the origin of the grid near the west corner of Room 8, the Archives Room, and the squares numbered from that origin. The palace was built on a northwest–southeast axis and it was convenient to set out the squares on this orientation; the plan indicates the location of these major squares with reference to the walls, doorways, the bench and the chasm (see Figure 1). For more precise determination of positions of tablets, each square was further divided into ten-centimeter squares numbered from 00 in the west corner, to 09 in the north corner, to 99 in the east corner. The south corner of square 23 then has the reference 2390. Thus, the first two digits of the index indicate the square meter unit, the second two the ten-centimeter square. This system transfers easily to an XY coordinate system. The first and third digits of the original designation comprise the X coordinate and the second and fourth digits comprise the Y coordinate.¹⁷ Bennett elaborated this basic system in two ways. First, if the tablet was found on the bench, then the four digit number is followed by a ‘B.’ Second, the four digit number is preceded by the room number (followed by a decimal point), such that our example above becomes 8.2390. If the fragment was found in disturbed earth, usually in the chasm itself, then the prefix is an ‘x’ rather than a room number. Any fragments that survived that upheaval may have been thrown back with loose earth at some distance from their original resting place. Therefore, their actual find spots will be of less significance for the grouping of the tablets, and for the reconstruction of the filing system of the scribal office.

In this publication, it is useful to develop the notation further. In Bennett’s work, if fragments were recorded in the excavation notebooks as being from a general area, he gave them specific representative

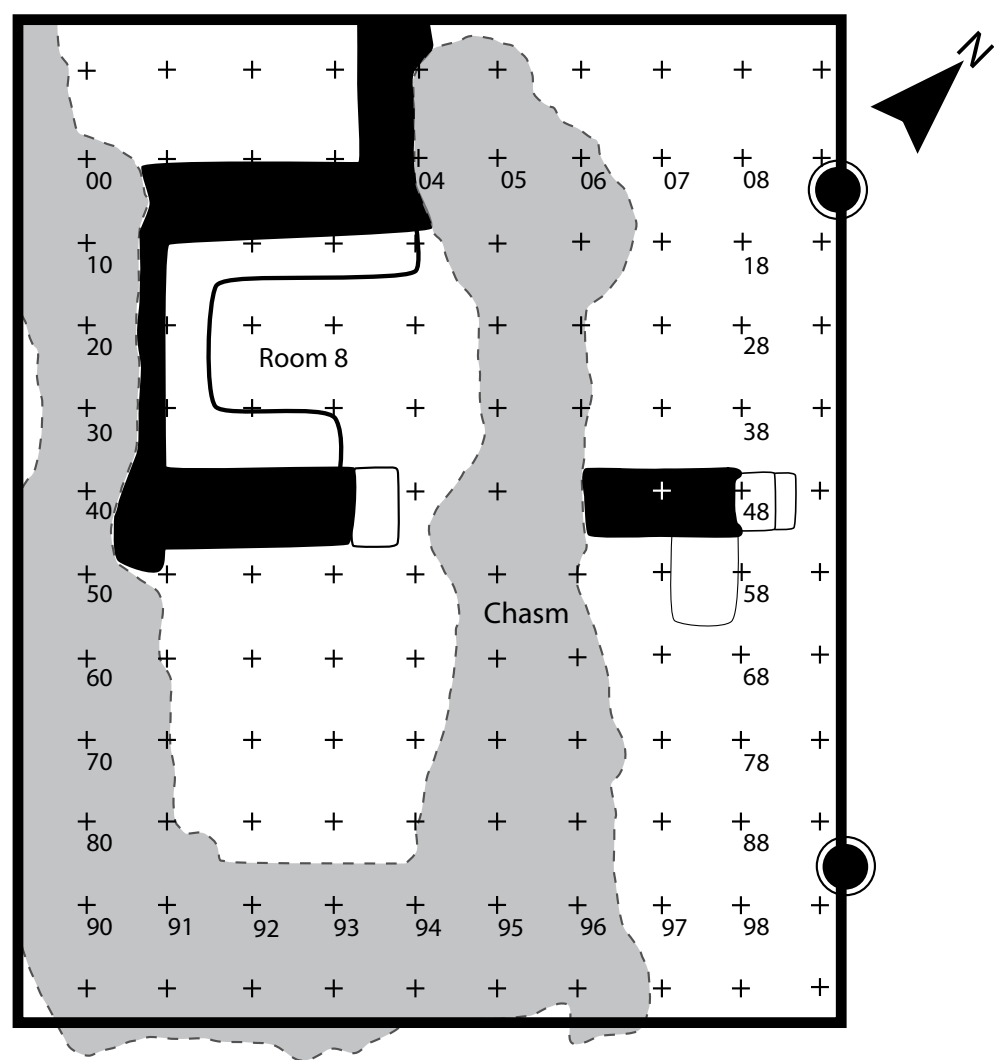


Figure 1. The find spot grid of the Archives Complex. After Pluta 1998, p. 238 fig. 6. Drawing D. Nakassis.

17 Pluta 1998, p. 233.

find spots. However, in this presentation, if tablets are recorded as being from a general area, they are listed as being from the appropriate one-metre square, e.g., 7.53. Indeed one key advantage of Bennett's method of recording find spots is that it is sufficiently flexible to allow three levels of recording: 7.5345 records the detailed find spot; 7.53 records that the tablet was found somewhere within a particular square-meter unit; 7. records that the tablet was found somewhere in Room 7.

Although this method of grid referencing is capable of defining a find spot to the nearest 10 cm, this is usually more precise than is allowed by the evidence that we have available to us. In practice, the accuracy of the find spots for tablets found on the floor of the rooms is judged to be roughly ± 20 cm. The accuracy of find spots of fragments from the chasm is usually substantially lower and, fortunately, also of less interest, because these fragments were displaced when the walls were robbed out. For these reasons, for the pieces from the chasm, we will simply quote the find spot as the square from the one-meter grid, e.g., x.25.

Tablets that were obviously disturbed by the robbing out of the walls, but which were found in the soil above floor level, are also marked as location x., even though they were not found in the chasm itself. Finally, in the cases where we can identify specific stretches of the chasm but not the particular grid square, we denote the southwestern part of the chasm as 'x0', the chasm between Room 7 and Room 1 as 'x1' and the chasm between Room 8 and Room 2 as 'x2'.

The determination of the find spots assigned to each of the original inventory numbers was first made in 1961, but this has now been thoroughly reexamined and revised by Richard Firth for this publication, based on the excavators' notebooks. Although the find spots assigned here have been determined as carefully as possible, they should be regarded only as a guide if the precise find spot is critically important to an argument.¹⁸ Firth¹⁹ used the plan by Pluta because it was the most accurate plan that he had. It was not superseded by the plan given by Cynthia W. Shelmerdine,²⁰ because that plan does not include the chasm (the position of the walls and the bench is not controversial). For locations beyond the Archive Complex, Thomas Palaima's account in *The Scribes of Pylos* is the best resource.²¹

Most of the tablets from these two rooms in the Archive Complex seem to have been found in the positions in which they fell (probably from shelves against the walls) with some breakage and scattering, at the time of the fire that destroyed the palace.²² The varying colors of some fragments of the same tablet illustrate the action of the fire that baked the clay of the tablets. They lay within a layer of dark gray ashy earth about 0.10 m thick. Above this is a layer of light reddish hard earth (the crude brick of the higher walls, burned and decomposed), mixed with small stones and pieces of brick, about 0.10 m thick. Above this is topsoil, disturbed by the plow. The tablets generally are the same color as the earth in which they lay.

The remainder of the tablets, mostly thoroughly broken, had been disturbed long after the destruction of the palace, when the stones of many of the walls were quarried. This digging disturbed those tablets that were lying on the floors near the walls, since robbing trenches extended well below floor level. The tablets were removed with the earth, and, whether noticed or not by the quarriers, thrown back in when the trenches were again filled.

We may reasonably expect that virtually every fragment that was adequately fired has been recovered from the undisturbed deposit. We may count ourselves fortunate that some have survived the formation of the chasm; it is not possible to estimate how many originally lay in the disturbed area.

The scattering of fragments of individual tablets and of groups of tablets varies considerably and may be indicative of the fates they suffered, and the extent to which they were originally kept in groups corresponding to the classification that has now been established. The study of these distributions, and the correlation of different groups (especially the association of labels, nodules, and alleged box-hinges with tablets), is of great importance.

18 Bennett gives an account of the progression of the excavation relative to this grid in Bennett 1964b. In the same paper he also discusses in some detail the inscriptions from the Archive Complex that were excavated after 1952.

19 Firth 2017.

20 Shelmerdine 2001 (=Shelmerdine 1997). Shelmerdine's (2001) fig. 4 on p. 338 offers a Minnesota Archaeological Researches in the Western Peloponnese plan without the chasm, but Nelson 2017, p. 397 plan XII shows the chasm.

21 Palaima 1988, pp. 135–169.

22 Bennett 1958b.

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Of the fragments found outside the Archives Complex, there are two that one would expect from their appearance and content to have been found in the Archives Room complex. These are Eb 636 (found in 1952 in Room 6 in a light red brick fill) and Sa 1313 (found in 1957 in Room 98, in red brick earth). Possible explanations for their apparently anomalous find positions include the incomplete transport of tablets from workrooms or storerooms to the central Archives Complex, the possible misinterpretation of the records, a confusion in the records by the scribes, an erroneous labeling or a misinterpretation of a correct label by the excavators, or an unwitting redeposition by the excavators in the course of backfilling the trenches of an earlier season.²³

In this edition, in the apparatus below each text, the find spots of texts found outside the area of the Archives Rooms, Rooms 7 and 8, are indicated generally by the room or area, according to the numeration of rooms in Blegen's final published plan of the palace. A more exact location may be ascertained in the sketch maps included in Palaima 1988, where the find spots of these tablets have been carefully analyzed. These findings will be summarized here, beginning with the Megaron, Room 6. Here, and in the vestibule, Room 5, were found tablets 622–638 and 994 (with 640 probably from the same source; it was recovered from a basket of sherds that had lost its label).²⁴ Archaeological observations suggested that these tablets fell from above,²⁵ but not necessarily from an upper room. The overwhelming majority of these tablets were written by Hand 93 (Class iv). In September 1999, in a lecture at the Program in Aegean Scripts and Prehistory, University of Texas at Austin, José L. Melena suggested that the tablets from the Megaron recovered by George E. Mylonas were not contemporary with the tablets in the archives, but survivals of scribal activity at Pylos from an earlier phase than the final destruction of the palace. Such a view could be reinforced by the rather primitive character of the tablets themselves both on pinacological and paleographic grounds.²⁶ Later on Christina Skelton suggested that these were written in LH IIIA, and thus predate the building of the final phase of the palace.²⁷ If these tablet fragments are indeed earlier in date, the most likely explanation is that they were included as a temper within the building materials.²⁸

In 1953, tablet Tn 996 was recovered in Room 20, a pantry full of pots, and there was evidence that it had fallen from above, perhaps from the elevated shelving in this room where it had been placed as a record of activity with vessels in this pottery storeroom.²⁹ The illegible 997 (now identified as a sherd of Adriatic ware) came from the area near rooms 55 and 57, where Dimitrios Theocharis uncovered Ae 995.³⁰

OOT (pp. 11–12) recorded the find spots of the tablets found elsewhere in the palace in 1939, 1954, and 1955. One significant error was made: the tablet Fr 1184 was wrongly placed; it actually came from the chasm of the Archives Room.³¹ Changes to the room numerations after 1958 also necessitated revisions to the find spots in *OOT*:

From Room 32 came 1194, 1198–1200 (found in 1954).³²

From Room 38 came 1201–1214 (found in 1955), with the exception of 1209 and 1211 (Room 41), and 1212 (doorway between Rooms 38 and 43). Probably from Room 38 was also the fragment found in 1956 that joined 1206; probably from (but certainly near) Room 41 came 343 (found in 1939).³³

23 Palaima (1988, p. 93) explains that the Sa 'wheel' tablets are also associated with basket transport labels and so it is likely that the tablets were composed in the Northeastern Building where the actual items were inspected. These tablets were then transported to the Archives Complex. See the Sh series for a likely parallel. We should not endorse the view that there was a mix-up in the 1957 season concerning this one fragment of a tablet. Scribes, like Hand 2, were working in different locations. See Palaima and Wright 1985.

24 Palaima 1988, pp. 137–139. On the find spot of La 994, see the apparatus in Part 2.

25 *PofNI*, p. 91.

26 Melena 2002a, esp. p. 367.

27 Skelton 2010.

28 See too the discussion of Davis et al. (2024, pp. 537–540) and Egan (2015, pp. 105–107). See recently LaFayette Hogue 2023, for the nonexistence of an upper balcony.

29 Palaima 1988, pp. 139–141. Cf. Hruby 2006, pp. 62–66, 128–129.

30 Palaima 1988, p. 169.

31 Bennett 1964b, p. 251.

32 Palaima 1988, pp. 145–147. LaFayette 2011, pp. 172–175.

33 Palaima 1988, pp. 147–151. LaFayette 2011, pp. 186–193. Her identification of tablet 55–60 as a temper is not endorsed here.

THE PALACE OF NESTOR IV

From the oil magazine Room 23, came 1215–1246 and 1249 (now classified as illegible).³⁴

From the adjacent oil magazine Room 24, came 1247 and 1437.³⁵

From Court 63 came 1250–1252.

From the doorway between Rooms 71 and 72 came 1253–1257.³⁶

The year 1956 produced only seven fragments, of which Qa 1259 (anticipating the discovery of the bulk of the Qa series in 1957) came from surface soil in Court 47, while 1258 and 1261 came from the same region (in Court 47 and Ramp 91 respectively), but were found among sherds rather than in situ. The remainder have equally undistinguished find spots.

In 1957, the bulk of the tablets, together with some of the nodules 1325–1334, were found in Room 99,³⁷ and the other nodules were found in Room 98.³⁸ However, Sa 1313, which by its content ought to have been found in the Archives Room Annex (Room 7) or the chasm beside it, is recorded also as having been found in Room 98. Four pieces, 1283–1284, 1322, and 1337, came from Room 99 and the area to the west, one from Room 97 (1336) and one from Room 103, near a sunken larnax (1338).

In 1958, only Fr 1355 came from the open area west of Room 103, while the nodules came from the Wine Magazine, Room 105.³⁹

For 1959, we may quote Lang's section of the *AJA* report:⁴⁰

Of the thirty inscribed pieces here presented, all but three were found in black earth just below the surface along a narrow five meter strip in an olive grove just under the south edge of the palace hill.... Their original location was presumably in a room to the southeast of the great hall [Room 65] of the southwest wing of the palace.... Wr 1374 and Xa 1389 were found several meters to the east of the others; Za 1392 was found in a drain or water channel to the northeast of the palace.

Lang's contribution to the *AJA* report for 1960 continues the account of this group of texts:⁴¹

Found in disturbed surface earth just below the southwest edge of the palace hill, the two seasons' fragments, between which no joins were found, represent only chance remains of what must have been fairly extensive archives in the Southwest Building; the greater part of these records must have been pulled out by the stone-robbers and washed or plowed away. The few pieces which were found at some distance from the main concentration but still on the southwest edge of the hill are also apparently different in content: Xb 1419–1420 (several meters to the west); Wr 1415–1416 Xa 1418 Xn 1421–1422 (several meters to the east). There are two exceptions: Mn 1409, which almost certainly belongs by form and content to the main group, was found several meters to the east; Un 1414, which differs in form and content from the main concentration, was found in it. Most of the fragments found in 1960 (1393–1413, 1417) were found in the area between the find-spots of the other 1959 tablets and of Wr 1374.

Again Lang's contribution to the *AJA* report for 1962 continues the account of the discovery of texts:⁴²

Five of the following eight fragments were found with the sherds and plaster from the 1939 excavations. [...] These five fragments came from the Archives Room, and two actually join tablets from the 1939 lot (Ma 216 Na 527 Eb 1440 Xb 1444 Xn 1445).

Two of the three fragments excavated in 1962 (Qa 1441 Xa 1443) were found in disturbed earth [...] Qa 1441 was found to the southeast of the Archives Room more than 50 meters from the large group of Qa tablets in the Northeast (1957); no tablets with this ideogram were found in

34 Palaima 1988, pp. 141–145. LaFayette 2011, pp. 134–146.

35 Palaima 1988, pp. 166–168. LaFayette 2011, pp. 146–153.

36 Palaima 1988, p. 152.

37 Palaima 1988, pp. 155, 157–159.

38 Palaima 1988, pp. 152–157.

39 Palaima 1988, pp. 159–162.

40 Lang 1960, p. 160.

41 Lang 1961, pp. 158–159.

42 Lang 1963, pp. 160–161.

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the Archives Room. Xa 1443 was found in a water channel 60 meters northeast of the Palace and therefore remote from whatever building preserved the tablet by burning. Un 1442 was found in further cleaning of the Northeast Building where many tablets came to light in 1957.

A further fragment 1446, now joined to On 300, was excavated in 1962 but not published. In the final campaign of 1964:⁴³

Two tablet fragments found among the sherds from Room 99 were seen after cleaning to belong to two incomplete tablets published in 1958 (*AJA* 62, pp. 184–185, 191). One of the new fragments joins together the two parts of Ub 1318; the other gives the upper left corner of Xc 1339.

THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE DOCUMENTS

The reconstitution of the tablets recovered in 1939 was done (after careful and painstaking cleaning by hand with fiber brushes and wooden toothpicks) entirely by Andreas Mavraganis of Ancient Corinth.⁴⁴ In the minor apparatus of the tablets concerned, his contribution to the joining work is noted by means of his initials (AM) followed by the date ('39) with a cross-reference to the photograph of the join.

Beginning in 1940 in Cincinnati, when Bennett was first given charge of transcribing the tablets found at Pylos in 1939, he observed (through the photographs) the good results obtained by this skilled mender, who had already made most of the possible joins. Yet he was fortunate enough, as he copied and constantly reexamined and compared the photographs, to discover some further possible joins, with the help of the sometimes formulaic regularities of the texts he was copying. These possibilities were reported to the mender, and some of them were successfully executed, and new photographs of the joined tablets sent to Bennett in Cincinnati. (Others, of course, were reported as impossible or improbable.)

Bennett contributed further to reconstitution during an examination of the texts in 1950, which led to finding a few more possible joins. All of these were included in *PT I*. Since there are photographs of the 1950 joins, these joins have been recorded in the minor apparatus by "(ELB '50)."

In the fall of 1953, the Pylos texts were examined again by Bennett and a few further joins were made, which were photographed by Frantz in 1954: these joins are referenced in the minor apparatus as "(ELB '53)."

The reconstitution of the tablets recovered in 1952 was done by Triantaphyllos Kontogeorgis, of the National Archaeological Museum in Athens.⁴⁵ In the minor apparatus of the 1952 tablets his contribution to the joining is noted by means of his initials (TK) followed by the date ('52) with a cross-reference to the photograph of the join.

After the publication of *PT II*, joins made by Lang while reporting and editing the pieces excavated in successive years are referenced by quoting the relevant *AJA* report.

Olivier made an important contribution to the work on joins, amounting to 244 joins, concerning not only edited pieces, but also other components. This research was carried out between December 1966 and May 1969, with the main study being done during the period from December 1966 to February 1967, when all the texts were carefully revised in advance of the completion of *PTT*. The new joins were set out in a series of unpublished reports:

"Raccords de fragments dans les tablettes de Pylos (déc. 1966 - fév. 1967)"	[163 joins]
"Raccords de fragments dans les tablettes de Pylos (mai 1968)"	[22 joins]
"Liste complète des raccords de fragments dans les tablettes de Pylos (déc. 1968)"	[32 joins]

⁴³ Lang 1965, p. 98.

⁴⁴ Kourouniotis and Blegen 1939, p. 566; but for the name cf. Blegen (*PT I*, p. vii): "When dried and hardened the tablets were conveyed in 1939 to the National Museum at Athens, where they were cleaned and mended, so far as possible, by Andreas Mavraganis, a technician trained in the American School's excavations at Corinth."

⁴⁵ Blegen (*PT II*, pp. ix–x): "At the end of the campaign the inscribed material recovered in 1952 was conveyed to the National Museum in Athens. During the following autumn and winter all the tablets and fragments were cleaned and mended by Triantaphyllos Kontogeorgis, technician of the Museum's staff."

“Raccords de fragments dans les tablettes de Pylos (janvier 1969)”	[3 joins]
“Raccords de fragments dans les tablettes de Pylos (mars 1969)”	[11 joins]
“Raccords de fragments dans les tablettes de Pylos (mai 1969)”	[13 joins]

Many of Olivier’s joins did not affect the text at all. But of those that did, it is hard to tell whether those results are more satisfying when they completed a text as it might well have been restored, or when they added an unpredictable continuation or conclusion. The apparatus of *PTT* recorded the joining of two published texts only. The addition of unpublished fragments, not only those that were part of the interior or the *verso* of the tablet and so did not affect the text, but fragments from the inscribed surfaces, were indicated only in the Concordance. Furthermore, a new arrangement of the ca. 2000 unpublished components (*‘akatagrapha’*) was also completed by Olivier, by means of adhesive labels bearing the component number or other excavation enumeration. In the minor apparatus of this publication, the results of Olivier’s contribution are included as cross-references to the *PTT* apparatus if the join concerns previously published pieces; otherwise they are indicated by means of the initials JPO followed by reference to the date of the report, e.g., ’66–’67, ’69 (March).

Louis Godart achieved about ten joins of tablets in March 1973.⁴⁶ Since we have the photographs of the tablets as they were in 1969 and of the now-joined pieces (EfA negatives 2066.26.27.30 and 2067.25.28), it is easy to identify his joins, but it has not been possible to obtain a list of the alleged quasi-joins, which therefore remain unassigned.

From 1989 onward, a plan of reconstitution was systematically carried out by Melena along the lines described elsewhere.⁴⁷ The results amount to more than 600 joins and have sometimes entailed drastic changes in classification and ascription to hands, as well as improvements in the readings. In the minor apparatus his contribution is noted by reference to the final publication in *Minos*.

Under every record the inventory numbers of fragments now joined are recorded, and it should be noted that fragments originally given the same inventory number have now been separated or joined to two or more tablets. Fragments without inventory numbers are recorded as f.

As a result of these efforts over the years to reconstruct the Pylos documents, the total number of extant records is now only 900.

THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE SCRIBES

During the period 1939–1952, Bennett devised a conventionalized signary for representing the Linear B inscriptions and worked with painstaking care at both editing and analyzing the Mycenaean texts. His doctoral dissertation in 1947 analyzed the script and laid the groundwork for future study of scribal hands.⁴⁸

In order to produce the best state of scribal identifications, a new full study of the hands of the scribes was needed. A notice of the hand(s) involved in the writing of every record has been added to the heading of the entry for each tablet. Occasional comments on the hands of individual tablets are made in the apparatus. Since Palaima 1988 included tables of writing styles, such tables of forms that identify the hands have not been included here.⁴⁹ Moreover, Godart has recently resumed the study of the hands as a result of his unauthorized edition of the Pylos tablets, and all of his new ascriptions have been examined in the course of completing our definitive edition.⁵⁰ We have also taken into account the more conservative reassessment of Pylian paleography in *PTT2nd* by Olivier, Bennett’s collaborator in making the initial assignments found in *PTT*.

It is initially presumed that the text of a single tablet was inscribed by one person. Exceptions are always noted in the apparatus, wherever they have been detected.

46 Sacconi 1983, p. 415; see also Killen 1976.

47 Melena 1995a, 1995b, 1997a, 1997b, 1998a, 1998b, 2002a, 2002b, 2005.

48 Bennett 1958a. A preliminary exposition was made in Bennett 1947, pp. 22–47; drawings of forms of signs, figs. 3–19; lists of tablets assigned to hands, pp. 175–178.

49 Palaima 1988, pp. 225–277.

50 Godart 2021.

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STYLUS

It is initially assumed that texts forming parts of a single set or document, as deduced from a similarity of contents and indicated by a similar classification, were written by a single person. This assumption may only be maintained, however, when they are apparently of similar ductus (seen ordinarily in the characteristic forms of a limited number of syllabic and logographic signs) and other scribal characteristics. Such a group of texts (or a single text) may be called a 'Stylus.' A 'Stylus' is identified by its 'eponym text,' e.g., 'Stylus S74' (or 'S74') refers to tablet En 74. The Stylus designation was originally devised by Bennett and retained by Palaima so that clusters of texts that were then identified as belonging to the same scribal hand could be easily detached, if further paleographical work so warranted, without requiring the reinvention of another scribal hand for the other assigned tablets (see below under 'Ascription'). Tablets that share the same formatting, disposition of written text, subject matter and/or find context and clearly form a group, but do not have the requisite number of distinctive signs to be securely identified as a hand, may and *should* be identified as a Stylus group and assigned, if possible, to one of the four main classes of writing styles identifiable in the Pylos corpus. The constituent texts of such a stylus are listed in the index of hands. However, in order to conform to the practices of the editions of Linear B texts from other administrative centers, the 'stylus' arrangement has been complemented by the concept of 'set,' i.e., the grouping of tablets that are to be read together as component parts of a single document (the end result of a particular record-keeping duty or assignment, whether fully completed by the tablet-writer or not).

ASCRPTION

Other texts that seem related both in contents and ductus may be 'ascribed' to a stylus or set. But it is not assumed that the individual texts thus ascribed to a single stylus would, except for the relationship of their contents, form a group of texts identifiable as a stylus or set.

If eventual reexamination requires the dissociation of the texts now included in a stylus or ascribed to it, only the eponym text and those still associated with it will retain their present designation. Those separated may then be ascribed to other styli or identified as new styli.

A number of very fragmentary texts have been included in some styli. The assumption that they are written by the same person may be no more than the corollary of the assumption that they belong to the same series. An inspection of the transcribed text is sufficient to indicate the precariousness of their ascription, in addition to their classification.

HAND

A number of styli have been identified as showing distinct contrast in ductus and other scribal characteristics. For example, Stylus S74 (i.e., En 74, etc.) and Stylus S149 (i.e., Eb 149, etc.), although recording nearly identical information, show significant contrasts in the shapes of many signs, as well as in formulas, and they may confidently be regarded as written by different persons; while Stylus S28 (i.e., Ea 28, etc.), recording similar information, shows in the shapes of some signs significant differences from each of these, and may confidently be regarded as written by a third person. A stylus thus distinguished by apparently significant contrasts has been called a 'hand' and has been assigned a not entirely arbitrary number, given that the main tablet-writers from the final destruction horizon at Pylos may be grouped into three paleographical classes organized by the type-scribe for each class. Scribes are then arranged, insofar as possible, in ascending numerical sequence according to their decreasing degree of resemblance to the type-scribe. Hand 2, for example, varies from Hand 1 consistently in four or five features, but Hand 6 varies in considerably more features. Paleographically, and, as it would not seem, archaeologically earlier tablets were assigned to Hand 91 and Class iv.⁵¹ Now Hand 13 has been designated as H 93 in order to indicate that these tablets, too, may come from an earlier archaeological context and have a style that sets them apart from

51 Palaima 1988, pp. 111–113; on Hands 1 and 2, see Palaima 1974.

Class i–iii tablets. As discussed above under ‘Stylus’ and ‘Ascription,’ a number of styli (or stylus groups) may be grouped together as by the same hand.

If the identification of hands were made without doubt and error, stylus and hand (or scribe/tablet-writer) might be treated as synonymous. But if one is examining the basis of the assignment of texts to particular hands, or hopes to base an argument upon the hand in which a text is written, the distinction should be kept in mind.

In general it is desirable that the styli or texts chosen as hands are those best represented in the preserved texts. However, some styli that include only a very few texts have been distinguished as hands on the basis of unusual ductus, or unique forms of a limited number of signs, whereas other remarkable styli may have been neglected. As the total number of signs read in the texts of a stylus increases, the number of different signs will increase, the number of recognisable traits characteristic of the individual will increase, our knowledge of how widely the shapes and forms of the signs may have varied within their writing will increase, and the confidence with which we can distinguish stylus from stylus and hand from hand will increase.⁵²

NUCLEUS

Since future study may require a different ascription of texts to styli and to hands and sets, two styli now thought to be properly associated with a single hand may be recognized as belonging to two different people. In that case the stylus identified as the ‘nucleus’ of a hand should retain its identification with that hand; the stylus now ascribed to the hand should either be ascribed to a different hand, or may become the nucleus of a new hand.

In the absence of clues from content, the confidence with which styli or tablets may be associated with a hand is less than the confidence with which texts may be included in a stylus. Even in instances where the evidence of ductus is abundant, a serious lack of confidence may arise. For example, taken by themselves, Stylus S74 (i.e., En 74, etc.) and Stylus S310 (i.e., Jn 310, etc.) seem to differ consistently in the shapes of some signs, enough to justify an assumption that they were written by two different persons, although they are evidently very similar in their treatment of most signs. However, when by apparently reasonable ascriptions additional styli and texts are associated with each of them, the texts included in the resulting hands plus ascriptions display such a range of variation that the distinction between them seems much less significant than that between their nuclei. Generally we may be neither more nor less confident of the association of an ascribed stylus and the nucleus of a hand, than of the association of two styli ascribed to the same hand.

Many texts are not assigned to a stylus or to a hand and set because they are simply too brief or fragmentary. Many others, including some individual texts and some that can be brought together as styli, are again relatively brief or fragmentary. Although they may include some unique and distinctive forms, which seem to set them apart from the hands and other styli, they have not been identified as hands.

Some larger, as well as smaller, texts and styli have not yet been ascribed to a hand for the reason that they might with equal justification be ascribed to either of two (or more) hands.

In sum, it is better to err on the side of caution and to ensure that our assignments are as well-supported as they can be, rather than to create scribes/tablet-writers who do not exist.

CLASS

Although such texts and styli as these do not provide sufficient evidence for ascription to a single stylus or hand, they may be associated with a group of hands. These texts and styli have, therefore, been divided into ‘classes.’ Those assigned to Class i (or ‘Ci’) generally show the traits characteristic of Hand 1 or similar hands; those to Class ii, of Hand 21 or similar hands; those of Class iii, of Hand 41 or similar hands. But several small texts might with equal justification be thought to resemble

52 Olivier (1967, pp. 39–40) laid down the rule that thirty (relatively complex) signs are needed for reasonably secure scribal identification. We continue to be guided by this reasonable principle. For a detailed exemplar of the principles of scribal identification, see Palaima 1995.

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both Hands 21 and 41; these are assigned instinctively on the basis of long familiarity with the tablets. Class iv is reserved for tablets that have a style of writing that is paleographically earlier. Hand 91 and now Hand 93 are also included in that class. There is very little that can be said with confidence about the hands of texts and styli assigned only to the classes. It is worth noting that the concept of classes originally arose from Bennett’s doctoral thesis.⁵³

THE MAKING OF THE RECORDS

TABLET-MAKERS

Of the 900 tablets from Pylos, 102 produced papillary-line prints suitable for the meticulous and laudably cautious investigative methods of Karl-Erik Sjöquist.⁵⁴ In terms of final identification, 49 tablets are assigned to 10 different prints.

Table 1. Identified palmprints at Pylos.

Palmprint	Pattern type	Total no. of tablets	Series (Scribal identification)	No. of tablets	Find Spot
Energetikós	4	35	Ab (H21)	7	Archives Complex
			Ea (H43)	14	Archives Complex
			Eb (H41)	13	Archives Complex
			Eo (H41)	1	Archives Complex
Mikrós	1	3	Ea (H43)	3	Archives Complex
Anonymos I	3	2	Ea (H43)	1	Archives Complex
			Eb (H41)	1	Archives Complex
Dokimastikós	5	3	Qa (H14/15)	3	Room 99
Anonymos II	2	1	Fr (H2)	1	Room 38
Anonymos III	1	1	Fr (—)	1	Room 23
Anonymos IV	1	1	An (H12)	1	Room 99
Anonymos V	1	1	Fr (H18)	1	Room 23
Anonymos VI	1	1	Va (Cii)	1	Room 99
Anonymos VII	1 and 2	1	Ad (H23)	1	Archives Complex

No prints have been identified on page-shaped tablets, other than the isolated An 1281 from Room 99. Nor have any been identified on labels or nodules.

Within the context of the data provided by the identification of palmprints, Palaima has considered the status of the scribes, and whether they manufactured their own tablets.⁵⁵

TABLETS

The material of the tablets, of the labels affixed to basketry, and of the nodules with the impressions of seals and sometimes written characters, is clay. It is not the carefully prepared clay of fine decorated pottery, but it is like that of plain storage vessels. In some broken sections one can see many small water-washed grains or pebbles. Even with a low-powered magnifying glass many of these show a great variety of colors: whites, reds, blacks, and more.

The elemental composition of the clay of the administrative documents from Pylos was examined using X-ray fluorescence (XRF). This analysis was conducted by Billy B. Wilemon Jr. under the

53 Bennett 1947. Classes were maintained in *PTT* and Palaima 1988. They are important when assessing how tablet-writers might have acquired their writing skills and how they relate to one another in the Pylos corpus.
54 Sjöquist and Åström 1985.
55 Palaima 1985.

supervision of Michael Galaty.⁵⁶ This nondestructive scientific technique creates an X-ray beam that displaces electrons from their orbital shells and, by measuring the energy that is shed in the process, identifies the element of each atom affected by the beam. Although such an analysis has just begun, it can already be noted that there is significant variability among the tablets and nodules. It is unlikely that it will be possible to identify specific sources of clay based on these elemental data. It would, however, seem reasonable to guess that tablets in the same set would have been written with clay from the same batch, and so it might be possible using these scientific techniques to assess whether there are anomalies in the allocation of tablets and fragments to sets. On the other hand, it would be feasible to identify outliers, i.e., tablets whose composition varies significantly from the corpus as a whole, or from subsets of that corpus. Of course, it will be especially meaningful if outliers are internally consistent in other respects, such as common find spots, subject matter, or scribal hand.

The physical properties of the Linear B documents from Pylos were studied by Julie Hruby and Dimitri Nakassis, who have been analyzing the clay and fabric of the tablets using standard macroscopic protocols.⁵⁷ The result of their research is an analysis of the clay fabrics used to make the Pylos tablets, comprising standardized descriptions of the color of the clay and the color, size, composition, and commonness of inclusions, as well as determining whether the tablet was broken before or after firing.

Table 2. Physical properties of selected styli and tablets.

Tablets Hand/Stylus	Clay	Tablet Maker(s)	Inclusions
H1 S240	fine		
H1 S644	very fine		slightly micaceous
H2 S310	a layer of fine clay on a core of coarser clay		
Ja 749	fine		
H2 S641	very fine		
H4 S60	very fine		
H11 (Es 650)			many and some irregularities
H14/15 S1412			small, white
H14/15 S1295	fine	Dokimastikós	
H25 S20 (Vn 20)			light-colored
H32 S1318	very fine		
H41 S149	very fine	Energetikós Anonymos I	few or none
H43 S28	gritty, granular texture	Anonymos I Energetikós Mikrós	visible
H45 S79	fine		

Before it is fired (or dried), clay is of course plastic. When it has been hardened, it retains the traces of what was done to it in its plastic state. If, for example, a long, narrow tablet has been broken in half, one can see in the broken surfaces that it was made by flattening out a circle of clay, and rolling it up, as if it were a croissant, and then giving it its proper shape. And in some such tablets one can see both ends of a hole running longitudinally through the tablet. The hole is usually the impression of a twisted string of grass. In some holes, it is possible to see a loose bit of ash that has survived from the grass. What is the purpose of these strings? The tablets are fragile, and if

⁵⁶ Wilemon 2017.
⁵⁷ Hruby and Nakassis 2024. See also Judson 2023.

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several together are broken it would be difficult to match the subjects on the left-hand half with the predicates on the right-hand half. But with a string the two parts of a broken tablets would have stayed together; this would be a useful thing if, for example, a tray of clay records were sent from one town to the next.

The types of armature used included straw, string, grasses, pine needles, and vegetal stalks. Botanical structures could be analyzed by obtaining silicone casts from different types. At present, some indications regarding armatures are recorded in the following table:

Table 3. Armatures used in selected styli.

Hand/Stylus	Armature	Tablet-maker
H23 S290	straw or cord	
H26 S287	straw or string	
H41 S149	straw or cord	Energetikós

The clay is most plastic while the tablet is being made, and it is likely to preserve some impressions from the palms or fingers of the tablet-maker (or ‘kneader’), even though the smoothing of the surface to be inscribed was always done carefully. However, there is a further potential ‘signature’ of the tablet-maker in the three-dimensional shape of the tablet (visible particularly on the back where ends have been folded back to make rectangular shapes) and in the degree of tapering toward the ends. Similar traces of manufacture occur in the clay labels: on the face there are more frequently finger impressions, and on the backs are the impressions of reeds (which can be either thick or thin depending on the texture of the wickerwork). For the nodules there are various shapes, suitable for different purposes, and within them are the traces of strings, thick or thin, plain or knotted, by which the nodules were attached to objects. We should add that while the most obvious variations of style in making and shaping tablets may be observed at each site, there is a fundamental uniformity common to all sites. Tablets formed of rolled circles of clay occur everywhere, as do strings and the folded ends on the backs of the large tablets.

Some clay coils as by-products from the tablet-making process are extant, one in Room 8 and several (a ‘dozen’) in Room 23.⁵⁸ There are also some clay anepigraphical bureaucratic remnants, such as plain nodules.⁵⁹

RECORD KEEPING

The system of record keeping in the Palace of Nestor is characterized by the controlling influence of a main archive (and archivist: Hand 1) upon scribal work in various areas inside and outside the palace proper.⁶⁰ Records of single transactions or items of interest to the palatial administration were made in workshops and storerooms (series Fr, Sa, Sh, Ta, Tn) or at least outside the main Archives Complex (series Aa, Ab, Ad, Cc, Ea, Eb, Ma, Na). They were then, if sufficiently important, brought to the central archives for short-term storage and eventual processing that included compilation and summarizing on longer page-shaped tablets (An, Cn, En, Jn, Ep) as well as correction and revision (Hand 1 added or changed information on tablets by Hand 41 [Ed 411], Hand 43 [An 261], and Hand 21 [Cn 595, 599, 655]) and labeling for transport or filing (Wa 114 [Hand 1] labeled the Aa tablets of Hand 4; Wa 784 [Hand 41] labeled the Ea tablets of Hand 43).⁶¹ The documents of higher archival

58 *PofNI*, pp. 99, 136–137, pl. 276.1–7 (Room 23) and 9 (Room 8).
59 *PofNI*, pl. 275.12, 14, 20–23.
60 This section is based on Palaima 1985, pp. 100–101. For descriptions of the scribal system at Pylos and the nature of the activity in the central archives, see Palaima 1984 and 2011. Note that the archive at Pylos is an archive in the sense that it is “a centralized system-dominant location for the collection, processing, and storage of written documents” (Palaima 2003, p. 156), but not an archive in the sense of a location for the long-term storage of records, or as Palaima himself puts it (2003, p. 169), no Linear B deposit “satisfies a definition of ‘archives’ which stresses the historical value of stored records and the process of intentional transference of records from the contexts in which their information was originally valid to a different environment for long-term preservation.”
61 We should note here that handling and reworking of texts seem to have gone on fairly regularly. The central archives were active, not static. Hand 1 must have corrected and cut tablets while they were still of nearly the same

status tend to be the work of the chief scribes of the three paleographical classes (Hands 1, 2, 21, and 41), who, as we can see from their extant tablets, were entrusted with a wider range of record-keeping responsibilities and probably would have trained and supervised subordinate scribes.

Unfortunately, the palmprint research does not shed light on these indications of complex relationships among scribes, and because of the limited nature of the evidence (49 assigned tablets), it does not even bear upon those cases where the physical characteristics of the tablets themselves provide firm proof of scribal interaction. For example, neither Ed 411 nor Ad 684 produced identifiable impressions sufficient for Sjöquist's analysis. Yet these are two tablets that, there is sound reason to believe, were manufactured for one scribe's set of tablets (Ed 411 [Hand 41], Ad 684 [Aa set of Hand 4]) and eventually were used by another scribe (Ed 411 [Hand 1], Ad 684 [Hand 23]).

The clay tablets were fashioned specifically to be suited to the scribe's current record-keeping task. Within the corpus of a given scribe's work, sets of tablets, and sometimes even groups of tablets within sets, show a marked variety in size, shape, and method of construction, usually directly related to the requirements of space and format dictated by a given assignment.⁶² Very rarely do we come across examples of much wasted space on tablets or—except when a scribe is beginning a long series and trying to establish the formula, format, and necessary size and shape of the tablets—instances of crowded writing. The former occurrences are generally associated with lesser known and perhaps less well-trained scribes (see, e.g., Gn 428, Gn 720, Tn 316). One tablet, Na 1357, even preserves traces of the most skilled scribe so far identified (Hand 1) adjusting the size of the still moist tablet by squeezing the lower edge in order to accommodate two extra, no doubt at first unforeseen, lines of information.

INCIDENTAL ASPECTS OF THE PROCESS OF WRITING

We will consider here three incidental aspects of writing that often accompany inscriptions. First, and inevitably, there are erasures. The simplest erasures are done by writing over the old sign, thus obscuring it, while leaving some traces of the original. Most erasures are rubbing-outs, done in the course of inscribing, either with a finger tip, a fingernail, or with a tool. Each of these leaves its characteristic mark. A finger mark is blurred, a fingernail leaves ridges, a blade is smooth. Often, however, an addition or an erasure and correction is made after some hours or perhaps days. These erasures will generally be rougher, lines shallower, curves less fluid because the tablet will have dried. When one finds an added bit of text on a surface obviously less plastic it will not be possible to estimate how much time elapsed between the original and the correction, since the drying out and the loss of plasticity is rather slow. In fact, as an experiment on modern clay, John Chadwick and Bennett once (in 1964) wet a tablet Bennett had made six or seven years before, erased some signs, and drew some others.

Second, there are accidents due to unconscious causes. Whenever a string happens to lie very near the writing surface, that surface is likely to crack and destroy what is written above it, or the string may even catch the stylus and spoil the sign. In one case, Bennett observed that a rather large pebble inclusion had diverted the stylus from the shape of the line with which the scribe was writing, causing him to misread the sign initially.

Third, there are the tools with which one inscribes. For the initial smoothing there may be the hand, and probably also some kind of stick, or perhaps cloth. For erasing there are fingers, and fingernails, and also some blade-like tools. One type of blade has left several clear impressions of its shape. For ruling, a pointed stylus might suffice, but since the rule is generally wider and deeper and straighter than the lines of a sign, a blade seems to have been preferred. For the signs themselves, which sometimes include rather tight curves, a pin-shaped stylus was probable, but Godart has experimented with a blade-shaped stylus (like a lancet) with impressive results, and the experiment has also been carried out by others with excellent results. Nevertheless it is certainly the case that

physical consistency as when first written by other scribes. The Sh tablets may have been curved by being placed and transported in a wicker tray or basket while still moist. They also retain the finger impressions where the scribe held the tablets on their upper and lower sides.

62 See the discussions of Hand 1 (especially S74), Hand 2 (especially S149), Hand 21 (especially S4) and Hand 41 (especially S149) in Palaima 1988; see Palaima 1974 on Hands 1 and 2.

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Figure 2. Writing styli from Thebes (cf. Piteros et al. 1990, p. 106 fig. 2). Photograph D. Nakassis, 2024. Courtesy of the Thebes Museum. ©Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports/Organization for the Management and Development of Cultural Resources.



Figure 3. A writing stylus from Mycenae (II 10407). L. 12.46; max Th. 0.55 cm. Photograph courtesy of the Hellenic National Archaeological Museum. ©Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports/Organization for the Management and Development of Cultural Resources.



Figure 4. A plasticine cast of PY Cr 591, showing the impressions of a writing stylus. Cast made by Maria Kontaki, photograph D. Nakassis, 2024. Courtesy of the Hellenic National Archaeological Museum. ©Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports/Organization for the Management and Development of Cultural Resources.

a pin- or needle-shaped tool was frequently used. This is evident from the instances in which it was not drawn along the surface, but pressed into a tablet, or even directly through it. In this edition these marks are called “PUNCTS.” They surely have some significance, of course, although it is uncertain that they were intended to convey information. We may even doubt whether a Mycenaean reader of the tablet would have noticed them. They are more frequent at the ends or sides of texts, and probably they had a practical significance for the writer, as if he were thereby saying, “There, that item is finished.” They may have also been the result of periodically cleaning the point of accumulated clay. Ideally, all these tools would have been combined into a single multipurpose implement, but that is surely impractical. No writing implement seems to have survived at Pylos.⁶³ Obviously seals may also count as tools, as well as the brushes with which stirrup jars were inscribed.

63 Hofstra 2000, p. 241: “So far no implements of the type resembling long bone pins with very sharp points, such as those found at Mycenae and Tiryns and suggested to be writing styli, have been recovered at Pylos, despite the well-preserved archives here.”



Figure 5. Photograph of PY Sh 736 (above) and 740 (below) as a diptych. This image encouraged Palaima to study these tablets in the museum and led eventually to the discovery of ‘contiguities.’ Photograph J. L. Melena, 1990. Courtesy of the Hellenic National Archaeological Museum. ©Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports/Organization for the Management and Development of Cultural Resources.

A handful of such writing implements are known from the sites of Thebes, Mycenae and Tiryns (see Figures 2, 3). However, it is also possible to have an idea of a writing stylus from two impressions on the still wet clay of a tablet. On a peculiar tablet from Pylos dealing with deer, Cr 591, we suggest that a stylus was accidentally pressed against its surface. A cast from the impressions (Figure 4) gives the body and perhaps a section close to the tip and allows a comparison with the extant styli from the aforementioned sites. The writing implement suggested from these impressions is similar to the styli recovered at Thebes and Tiryns, a long, slender body ending in a lancet (quite different from the pointed implements from Mycenae).

THE DRYING OF THE TABLETS

What was done with the tablets when their texts were completed? Though one needs some light to inscribe tablets, they (like pots) should not be put out in the sun to dry, but in a room with natural light and some air circulation. It is quite certain there was a door between Rooms 2 and 8: although this is at variance with Blegen’s plan of the palace, the presence of this opening was established by Palaima and Wright,⁶⁴ following Bennett.⁶⁵

When the inscribing was finished, the tablet was still plastic (clay could be kept from drying by covering it with a wet cloth, as possibly in the case of Nn 228).⁶⁶ So we can imagine that some tablets were laid out separately on shelves to dry. But many, we believe, were immediately put in trays, which were good at keeping the tablets out of the sun but ventilated. The very first observation by Bennett of incidental markings, in Iraklion in 1950, was of some small parallel indentations on the backs (hardly ever on the fronts) of several tablets. His first guess was that they were the marks of the claws of burrowing animals. But in fact they are the marks of parallel bent reeds from wickerwork. If one puts a layer of tablets that are still plastic on the bottom of a tray or basket, face up, and another layer or two on top, the weight of the upper tablets will press the lower ones against the reeds, and create such marks.

Many long, narrow shaped tablets taper in three dimensions toward the end. Therefore the right end of a tablet is often noticeably thinner than the left or middle. But the inscribed surface was formed on a flat surface and then smoothed. So when it is placed face up on a flat surface, its right end is unsupported, above the level of the flat surface. If the clay is still fairly wet, it will soon sag, until it comes to rest on whatever is below it. Imagine a basket or tray full of new, fairly thin, long tapering tablets. The upper tablets will sag, and twist, and turn to rest wherever they can be supported. It is in such twisted forms that many survive. Palaima has described in some detail a

⁶⁴ Palaima and Wright 1985.

⁶⁵ Bennett 1964b.

⁶⁶ Cf. Palaima 1988, p. 40 and n. 52.

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Figure 6. Back of a Wa label from Pylos. Cast and photograph J. L. Melena. Courtesy of the Hellenic National Archaeological Museum. ©Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports/Organization for the Management and Development of Cultural Resources.

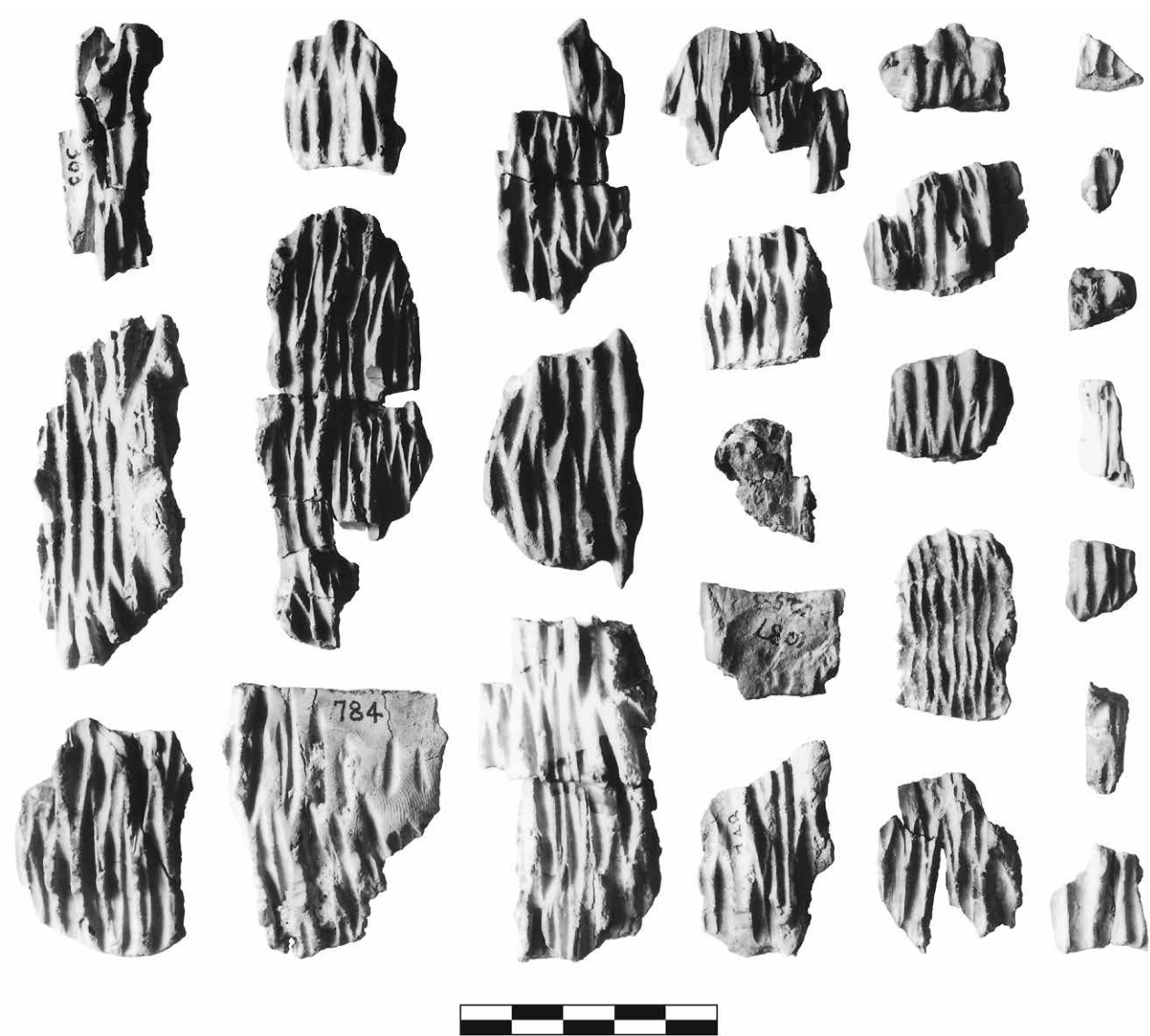


Figure 7. Backs of the labels from Pylos. Photograph Alison Frantz, no. 16, Fall 1950. Courtesy of the Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati.

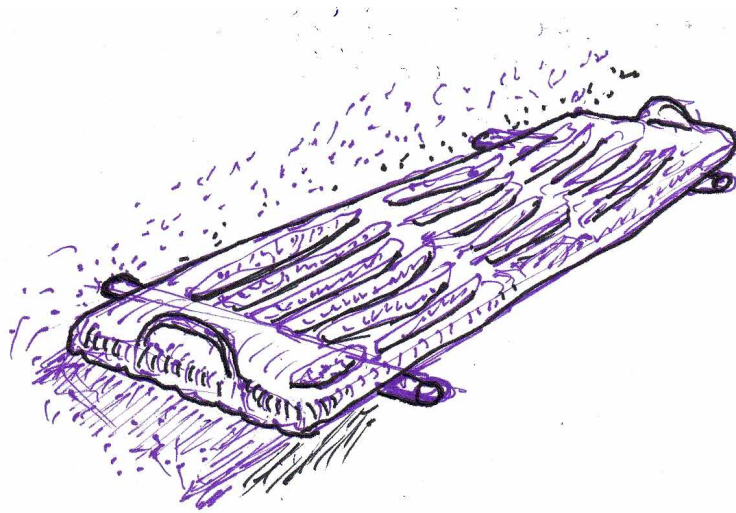


Figure 8. Sketch of a tray with tablets used as a shelf on wall pegs. Drawing J. L. Melena.

particular example of this phenomenon: the Sh tablets, especially Sh 736 and 740 (see Figure 5).⁶⁷ Apart from the bending, the continuity of the breaks confirm that these tablets were stored together. This document is a totalling record of the Sh tablets dealing with corslets, which is the first word written, of two types, one ‘new’ and the other ‘of the previous year.’ Palaima took the existence of these two different types as a basis for reconstructing the arrangement of the Sh tablets on a tray.

LABELS

Since all the extant labels have backs marked by wickerwork (see Figures 6, 7), it is clear that they were once pressed onto flat, not curved, surfaces. This fact suggests the presence of flat trays rather than rounded baskets (like the Homeric *ταρσός*, “flat basket for drying cheeses” *Od.* 9.219). They were plain woven at right angles, without twisting. “The simplest weave, randing, was done with a single rod passed behind one stake and in front of the next, and thus corresponds in effect to tabby weave. Slewing (sluing) is similar to randing, save that two or more rods were woven at the same time.”⁶⁸ These wickerwork flat trays were sometimes labeled with a bit of clay forced into the wickerwork, and inscribed with some indication of the contents. They then could be stored on wickerwork shelves resting on pegs protruding from the wall (see Figure 8),⁶⁹ or the tablets could readily be transported on the tray to another location where scribes were working.

In principle, further studies of the basketry on the backs of these labels might allow some determination of the botanical source of the twigs used in twining and the structure of the basketry itself.

NODULES

As was demonstrated in 1990,⁷⁰ the triangular inscribed nodules classified as Wr (formerly termed ‘sealings’) were used in Mycenaean bureaucracies to convey information that was to be written down on a tablet. When studying the Thebes nodules, it was easy to ascertain how these nodules were manufactured. The procedure was subsequently checked against the nodules from Mycenae, Midea, and Pylos (see Figure 9).

⁶⁷ Palaima 1996.

⁶⁸ Hodges 1964, pp. 146–147.

⁶⁹ As the *e-to-ki-ja* (/ent^hoik^hi^hja/ ‘in-wall [pegs]’) recorded on Vn 46.6 and 879.3. Since the walls of Rooms 8 and 7 were robbed in antiquity, it cannot be ascertained if these pegs could have been integrated in the *xylothesia*, as described by Nelson 2017, pp. 329–345.

⁷⁰ Piteros et al. 1990.

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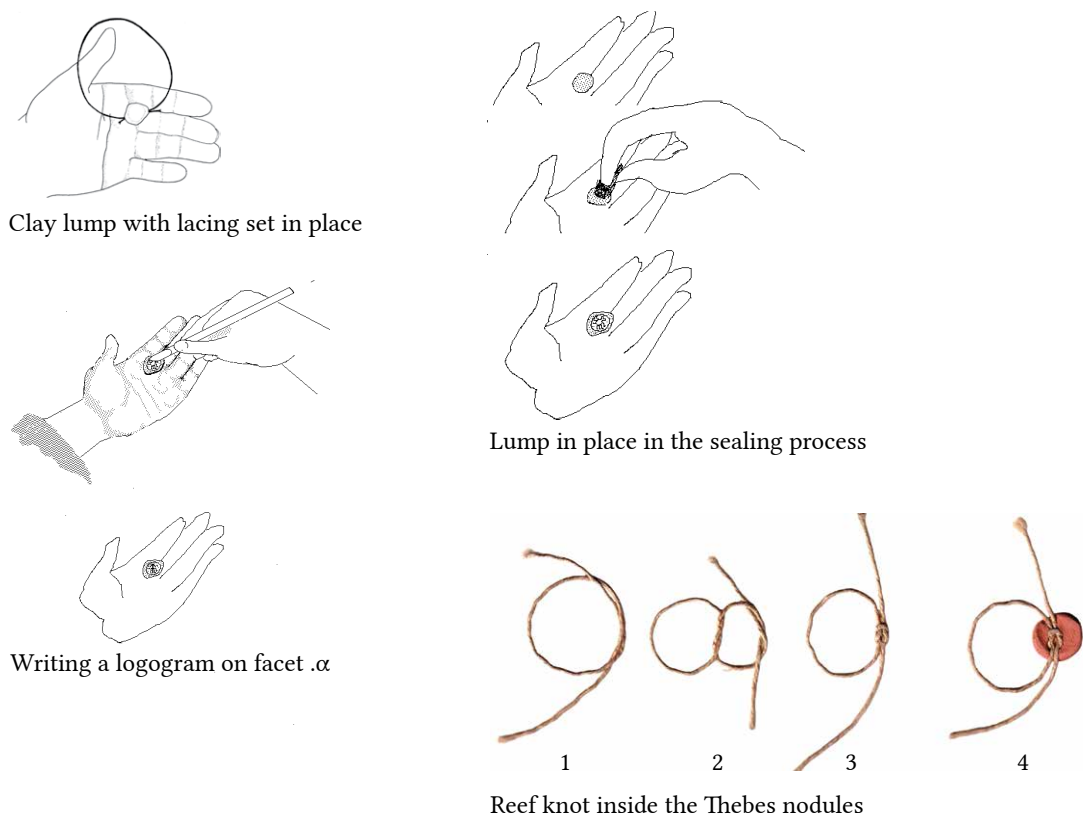


Figure 9. Illustration of nodule construction, impression and inscription. Drawings and photographs J. L. Melena.

A lump of clay enclosing a peculiar, lacing knot of a leather leash rather than a cord or string was placed at the base of the index and middle finger of the left hand. After pressing a seal onto the lump, the artifact acquired its peculiar triangular form of the facet .β between the palmar border and the right base of the index finger and the facet .γ between the palmar border and the left base of the middle finger. The interdigital groove creates the crest interfacets.

Plasticine casts obtained from the Thebes nodules have shown that the inner lacing of these nodules were in fact reef knots.⁷¹ The same practice was probably used with the knots inside the nodules from Pylos.

The nodules from Pylos deserved a thorough interdisciplinary study, the results of which have been incorporated in this edition.⁷²

THE DATE AND THE TRACES OF THE FINAL CATASTROPHE

The recent attempt to date the destruction of the Palace of Nestor and its Main Archive of Linear B documents to 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 generally accepted by Aegean prehistorians, is baseless.⁷³ That proposal has already been duly countered.⁷⁴ The established date can be contrasted with the date of destruction of other Mycenaean sites yielding Linear B documentation.⁷⁵

71 Ashley 1944, p. 220: “The reef knot or square knot consists of two half knots, one left and one right, one being tied on top of the other, and either being tied first.... The reef knot is unique in that it may be tied and tightened with both ends. It is universally used for parcels, rolls and bundles. At sea it is always employed in reefing and furling sails and stopping clothes for drying. But under no circumstances should it ever be tied as a bend, for if tied with two ends of unequal size, or if one end is stiffer or smoother than the other, the knot is almost bound to spill. Except for its true purpose of binding it is a knot to be shunned.” See also for parallels Wendrich 1996, 2008.

72 *Tonplomben*. For a study of the Pylian nodules, inscribed and uninscribed, and their contexts, see Shelmerdine 2012.

73 ARN. Note that its introduction is signed by Godart alone.

74 Davis et al. 2024.

75 Jung and Kardamaki 2022; and especially Vitale et al. 2022, on the chronology of two significant destruction horizons of the palace.

If an earthquake struck the palace,⁷⁶ when the walls were shaken any tablets lying on shelves would have fallen sooner or later. Some did not break, but those that did often had their pieces scattered, some falling face up and some face down. Some pieces could have ricocheted and slid far enough to come to the other side of the room. If trays or baskets full of tablets fell, they would have scattered less widely, and related groups would be found together on the ground. When the fire came, the combustibles on the floor would have been joined by burning timber from above. Oxygen supply was variable depending on whatever opening was present. In short, this was not the controlled firing of a pottery kiln, but a chaotic event. As a result some tablets were hardly baked at all, while some, by accident, were well baked. With the varying conditions of firing came many different textures and colors, sometimes characteristic of particular clays (since color depends also on the physico-chemical properties of the clay), but most often determined by an abundance or lack of oxygen (i.e., the prevalence of reducing or oxidizing conditions during the firing), and on the maximum temperature reached.

On most tablets there is a difference in color between front and back. The rule is that the face lying on the floor is dark, and the upper face is lighter. In many tablets one can see a square or rectangle of dark gray on a surface of light gray. This is the fire shadow of another tablet lying on top, and cutting off the flow of oxygen.

Another remarkable effect of the firing is an expansion or contraction of the clay. When two scattered fragments of a single tablet are rejoined, one is usually of a different color from the other, and often of a different size. Measurement of these differences could help in the determination of relative firing temperatures.⁷⁷

PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORDING OF THE DOCUMENTS

ÉDOUARD GILLIÉRON. After Blegen had concluded the excavation in 1939 he brought to Cincinnati some photographs by Édouard Gilliéron, the gifted son of the Swiss artist Émile Gilliéron, who started working with Arthur Evans at Knossos, restoring the frescoes. The firm É. Gilliéron and Son at 43 Skoufa Street, Athens, was producing copies of archaeological items (e.g., Galvanoplastic copies of Mycenaean and Cretan [Minoan] Antiquities), formed using exact moldings. This long-standing experience in castings was applied to a few of the well-preserved tablets that were found in the first season, making impressions of their surfaces and producing plaster casts (this application to Linear B tablets was not new, as the plaster casts from some Knossos tablets made at the suggestion of Evans would have been produced by the Gilliérons). Undoubtedly these casts constitute the collection of reproductions until recently on display in the Chora Museum. Gilliéron made photographs of both the casts and the plaster impressions, available to Bennett. Most of the photos by Gilliéron were published (Table 4).

Table 4. Publications of Gilliéron’s photographs of Pylos tablets.

Tablet	Place of publication
Un 2	<i>ILN</i> June 3, 1939, p. 980, upper left (to which a fragment has since been added)
Aa 98	<i>ILN</i> June 3, 1939, p. 980, lower left
An 5	<i>ILN</i> June 3, 1939, p. 980, right
Cn 131	Kourouniotis and Blegen 1939, p. 565, fig. 8
Eb 317	Kourouniotis and Blegen 1939, p. 567, fig. 9
Eq 213	Kourouniotis and Blegen 1939, p. 568, fig. 10; Mylonas 1948, p. 218, fig. 6
Vn 20	Kourouniotis and Blegen 1939, p. 567, fig. 11
Vn 130	ASCSA 1947

76 Hruby 2016.
77 Roberts 1963; Tite 1969.

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ALISON FRANTZ. “All the tablets and fragments were then photographed through facilities offered by the staff of the Agora excavations in Athens. The photographs were taken with her usual notable skill by Miss M. Alison Frantz, using 35 mm film. One set of prints was given to Dr. Kourouniotis and one set reached America in 1940.”⁷⁸

These 26 films are identified by letters (a–z) of the records by component numbers; a concordance is needed to locate a specific tablet. The 1939 negatives were on nitrate stock and liable to combust spontaneously. In 1970, all these negatives in America were destroyed as a result of a grotesque misunderstanding of instructions given by John L. Caskey. The Gilliéron negatives in Cincinnati were also destroyed for the same reason.

In 1950 Frantz photographed again some documents and joins in four films numerically identified by year (50.1, 50.2, 50.3, and 50.4). Such a system was retained thenceforth (varying numbers and letters). The Frantz 35 mm 1950 negatives of the tablets are still extant at Cincinnati. In 1953, Frantz rephotographed all the tablets for the publication of *PT II*; although the negatives were accidentally destroyed, the prints are available in Cincinnati.⁷⁹

In 1952, there were 10 films, identified 52.01–52.10. In 1954, there were two films, which included joins made by Bennett in 1953 (54a–54b) and another for fragments (54cf). In 1955, Frantz took three films (55A–55C) and perhaps part of another one (55d). In 1957, there were three films (57A–C) and perhaps part of another one (57D), and, finally in 1958, four films (58.1–58.3 and 58.5).

MABEL LANG. From 1959 until the final campaign of 1964, photographing of the scanty yield of tablet fragments was achieved by Lang, who also studied them as a second part of *AJA* reports. The negatives are kept at Cincinnati.

ÉMILE SERAFIS. In 1969, photographic coverage of the Linear B records from Pylos was accomplished by a professional photographer, Émile (Aimilios) Serafis, whose negatives are kept at the American School of Classical Studies at Athens. There were 521 (515+6) photographs of the tablets, many with several often-related tablets in a single photograph, arranged by classificatory prefixes valid at the time of taking (May 1969); a concordance is needed to find the image of a specific tablet.

Numbers are indicated in the RECONSTRUCTION under every record. Photographs 516–521 are general views of drawers containing fragments.

JOSÉ L. MELENA. A set of black and white photographs along with color slides showing the progress of joining was kept as a working tool for reconstruction. These photographs are not intended for publication.

KOSTAS XENIKAKIS. Renowned professional archaeological photographer Kostas Xenikakis produced (in 2008) a set of color photographs of the Linear B records from Pylos for the recent edition produced by Godart and Anna Sacconi (*ARN*).

DIMITRI NAKASSIS and KEVIN PLUTA. Charged with the photographic part of the present corpus as *PofNIV*, Nakassis and Pluta opted for using Reflectance Transformation Imaging (RTI) technology.⁸⁰

The photographs included in this edition are derived from the raw captures of the images taken by Nakassis and Pluta (scale 1:1). A selection of images, typically three, were provided to two archaeological illustrators, John Klausmeyer and Jill Seagard, to clean the background. Because these photographs were taken for RTI models, they are identical, differing only with respect to the angle of illumination. This fact allowed for the production of composite images that combine the characteristics of multiple images. For example, raking light defines the edges of inscribed signs, whereas frontal illumination casts fewer shadows. Only slight changes were made to the images’

⁷⁸ Blegen in *PT I*, pp. vii–viii.

⁷⁹ Blegen in *PT II*, p. x: “We are likewise greatly indebted to Miss Alison Frantz of the Agora Excavations, who in April, 1953, photographed all the tablets, whole and fragmentary, and under whose direction Nikos Restakes, chief technician of the photographic workshop of the Agora Excavations made a full set of prints at actual size.”

⁸⁰ Nakassis and Pluta 2017; Nakassis et al. 2020.

tonal range and color balance, in order to preserve their fidelity.⁸¹ In a few cases these photographs are supplemented by older images, when a piece of the tablet is now lost.

FACSIMILE DRAWINGS

The artisanal way of making facsimiles was described by Blegen himself: "It is from these prints that the drawings of the texts that are published in this volume were made. All the characters were overdrawn in India ink on the photographs; each print was then bleached, and in this way the documents have been reproduced in the actual handwriting of the original scribe."⁸²

Bennett, who produced the drawings, also stated that "the drawings which form the bulk of this volume were made by tracing in India ink the lines of the stylus as they appeared in the prints of the photographs at the actual size of the tablet. They were then bleached and examined and corrected. They are here printed at the reduced scale of 2:3, and it is hoped that the smaller hands will still be legible."⁸³

These drawings can be consulted in *PT II*. It was planned for the present edition to include drawn images of the inscriptions produced by vectorized drawings in order to achieve some degree of objectivity. Delays in the production of the present publication, on the one hand, and the recent publication of a corpus of drawings made by Godart with corrections by Olivier (*ARN*), on the other, made it wise here to abandon the inclusion of drawings, since published photographs are clear enough to be used in attempting to resolve any controversy.

CONVENTIONS

In view of the large number of joins that have been made, joins of previously published pieces are not indicated in the record headings, in order to avoid cumbersome references, but they appear in the minor apparatus.

From the first publication, even from the moment of their discovery in the earth, it has been recognized that some fragments that cannot be physically joined must belong to the same tablet. When the relation of the parts is uncertain, the notice of such probable joins or 'quasi-joins' is left to the apparatus. Thus, a composite text is listed under the number of the first fragment (i.e., without the number of the other fragment following after the sign "[+]"). In some cases, when there is certainty that a fragment belongs to a document, but it is not possible to fix its position, the text is printed under the main record as a *fragmentum separatum*, and comments on its possible or probable place are included in the apparatus. A few such quasi-joins that had been suggested in earlier publications are now thought to be too uncertain to repeat, and some have been disproved. However, we have sufficient confidence in the remaining quasi-joins that we can cite their texts simply using their first number. The sign $\oplus$ indicates 'simili-joins,' joins between pieces of the same tablet that were intentionally cut by the scribe to form separate documents.⁸⁴

In preparing this edition of the Pylos tablets we have attempted to follow the 'Wingspread Convention' and, for matters that it was not intended to prescribe, we hope not to have ventured too far from the practice of our colleagues.⁸⁵ However, we have found it necessary to depart from the letter of this convention in some respects, while maintaining the clarity and objectivity of our transcriptions. A well-preserved text does not present a problem. But it is difficult to represent the actual state of a damaged text unambiguously, with a limited number of ambiguous signs and rules of transcription. It is impossible in many places to deduce from the transcription what defect or doubt exists in the tablet. The faults of the system of transcription, and of our use of it, and the frequency

81 In one case (Fn 50), modern signs that were scratched into plaster with the intention of supplementing missing sections of text were digitally removed.

82 *PT II*, p. x.

83 *PT II*, pp. xiii–xiv.

84 See Driessen 1987, pp. 152–154.

85 The 'Wingspread Convention,' through the general use of which it was hoped that the transcription of Linear B texts would conform as closely as possible to that of the Leiden system for editing Greek and Latin texts of all kinds, is published in Bennett 1964a, pp. 253–262.

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of our subjective judgments will be very evident to those who collate the transcription with the actual documents or their photographs. The notes that follow describe our principal modifications of and additions to the 'Wingspread Convention,' which were already present in *PTT*.

In addition, a number of deviations from the norms of transcription employed in *PTT* will be noticed, and it may be helpful to summarize them here. Most are intended to reduce certain ambiguities we have noticed in *PTT* texts, and we are reasonably convinced that they are necessary.

FACES

In 1962, a standard identification of the six faces of an ordinary tablet was introduced and illustrated.⁸⁶ To make clear the relationships and orientations of the various faces wherever they are complex, without potentially verbose descriptions in the apparatus, we have marked the four corners of the *recto* with capital Φ , X, Ψ , and Ω , and the corresponding points of the other faces with lower case letters, although the rotation of the record is also indicated by means of $\uparrow$, $\downarrow$, and $\searrow$ or $\nearrow$ preceding the *verso* text.

There may be some ambiguity in the term *recto*. Before they are inscribed most tablets have one surface especially smoothed for writing, while retaining the traces of their manufacture. But this 'original' *recto* is not always the *recto* of the text. The single inscribed surface of most tablets needs no identification; for other tablets *recto* is generally the face with the principal, or else the first-inscribed, text. A note in the apparatus is necessary for inscribed tablets whose 'original' *recto* has not survived, or for those, palimpsest or not, which have two unrelated inscriptions.

ERASURES

To detect the presence of erasures is not difficult. Often it is only too easy because what was erased can still be read. But it is usually a very subjective judgement whether the erasure was done in the course of inscribing the actual text that survives, or whether the text of a complete tablet was erased to prepare the tablet for a new, or unrelated, text. Only the latter case ought to be identified as a palimpsest. In both cases we believe that the text erased should not appear in the midst of the principal text. Erasures, and any erased but legible text, are noted in the apparatus, while apparent palimpsestic texts are printed separately, with a *recto originalis* or *verso originalis* included in the line number.

Doubled square brackets [] are generally used to delimit the area of an erasure, and so far as the actual text goes are equivalent to the notation *vacat*. Legible traces within such an area are transcribed, but since illegible traces are not invariably noted, vacant space between [and] may have been either inscribed or uninscribed. Single brackets [] within double brackets [] refer to the illegibility of the erased text only, and may be left open within the brackets []. But even when an erased area obviously continued past a break the double brackets are closed within the preserved area, thus [] [].

Notations within brackets sometimes indicate the presence of marks that seem to have been written signs, but are now illegible, and sometimes indicate text that can, from parallel passages, be conjectured to have existed. From comparison of drawings or photographs it is possible to choose the correct interpretation. In their absence there is a great potential for misinterpretation. On the other hand, whatever is within [and] is necessarily hypothetical, and a question mark within [and] is both redundant and very hard to interpret. We find these hypothetical question marks to be ambiguous, and cannot decide whether the text restored before it is one of several possible restorations, or is perhaps misspelled, or whether it is being suggested that there was no text there at all. Therefore we have eliminated every question mark from the transcribed texts.

The notation *qs* (*quantum sufficit*) was devised to give some indication of the probable presence of a quantity in a lacuna after a logogram. We have generally avoided writing it after a logogram that is itself in lacuna, except where it will be useful for a rough estimate of the space it might occupy.

⁸⁶ Nestor 1962, p. 201.

Within the square brackets [and], the word-dividers that might be restored have not been represented, except by spaces between the words.

Our practice is to confine the use not only of the parentheses (), but also of angle brackets < > and braces { }, to the apparatus.

We find that a dot within brackets [•], used to indicate the presence of illegible remnants of a sign, is sometimes written and sometimes not. We were tempted not to include them in the transcription of a text, but have not consistently followed that practice. Nevertheless, dots within square brackets do not indicate spaces for signs that might or might not have been written. Rather they are used only for signs for which there remain distinct though illegible traces, and only where there is some trace of every sign originally in the space between [and]. Each dot represents the trace of a certain individual sign.

Dashes and estimates of the number of signs missing are not recorded in the text. As a corollary of this rule, vacant space left in the transcription between [and] cannot be assumed to have been inscribed or uninscribed. However, it is the claim that there existed a sign (not represented by a dot) inscribed before every sequence of]-, and after every sequence of -[. In only one case is it asserted that something was inscribed to the left of], i.e., in a damaged compound logogram; e.g., •]f implies that there was written OVIS^f or a similar sign.

Control or check marks are represented by x.

DIVIDER

The word-divider is generally represented by a comma. A special set of half-square brackets ı ı is used for the cases where the space for a word-divider is illegible, though the signs on either side of it are legible, and the space is sufficient. Not every case of a damaged area between legible signs is marked by ı ı, only those where a word-division might be expected. Though it would be possible to represent the restoration of the word-divider by printing ı , ı , the simple presence of ı ı may generally be taken to imply the probability of that restoration.

Division of words in the Linear B texts is also indicated by a greater space between sign-groups than between the signs of a sign-group, or by a change in the size of signs from one word to the next. A space between words is the only indication given of these types of word-division.

No representation is given in the transcribed text of the relative sizes of the signs. There is no doubt that differences in the size of signs were significant, as a brief examination of the tablets, photographs, or tracings will show. But a convention that will accurately reflect several different significant sizes, and ignore miniaturizations caused simply by lack of room, will not be simple enough for general use, and, in the present publication, the reader has the photograph available.

In the Linear B texts the division of words is generally carefully observed, but there do exist texts in which word-divisions (which we may infer from parallel examples) are not indicated by the scribe in any way, and there may be undivided sign-groups that are too long for a single word, which we do not know how to divide for lack of parallel texts. In such cases, the word-division that we expect is indicated by blank space.

Hyphens are used between the signs of a sign-group or word, and in effect represent the absence of a word-divider, of a difference in the sizes of the signs, or of a noticeable space between adjacent signs. When it is assumed that words are divided between two lines of text, a hyphen follows the first part and a hyphen precedes the second part.

A hyphen separating a transcribed sign from the square bracket marking the edge of a lacuna, e.g.,]-po, indicates that there is epigraphic evidence (that is, the trace of a sign) before po for a sign, now illegible, which was part of the same sign-group. The absence of a hyphen between a transcribed sign and the bracket, e.g., e-ke[, indicates that there is no epigraphic evidence whether the sign-group was continued or not (that is, there is no trace either of another sign or of a word-divider, and no space between the sign and the lacuna). A space left between a transcribed sign and a bracket, e.g.,] a-pu, indicates that there is epigraphic evidence (that is, blank space where a word divider or an adjacent sign of the sign-group would have appeared) that the sign-group was complete. To save space, however, the half-square brackets showing the possibility of a word-divider are put close to the signs on either side.

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NUMERALS

The agreement of the Arabic and Linear B systems of writing numbers in their decimal scheme and in their practice of writing, from left to right of larger to smaller elements of composite numbers, allows the direct and unambiguous transcription of complete and well-preserved Linear B numerals. However, the difference between the Linear B scheme of representing the digits by the repetition of the distinctive decimal signs for 1, 10, 100, etc., and the Arabic scheme of representing the several digits by distinctive signs regardless of their decimal value, makes the representation of incomplete and doubtful Linear B numerals more difficult and ambiguous than the transcription of doubtful Linear B syllabograms or logograms.

In the transcription, digits that are neither dotted nor adjacent to any bracket may be taken as reasonably certain and complete readings. The most general indication of uncertainty is the dotting of a digit. The uncertainty indicated by a dotted digit may indicate a question about whether there is any numeral in the text at all, a question about the identity of the numeral (i.e., how many times the sign is repeated), or it may be simply a warning that the numeral is nearly illegible, while in some limited instances it may indicate the possibility that some part of a numeral originally written may have been lost in a lacuna. For example, in 236 there might be the possibility that the apparent two hundreds are portions of a poorly preserved *we*; there might be the possibility that the upper part of the text was broken away and that in the present lacuna a fourth ten was originally written; and there might be the possibility that the sixth unit was deliberately but imperfectly erased. In any case a dotted digit is the best possible estimate of the reading of the original text from the preserved traces. Any indication of alternative readings appears in the apparatus.

A more particular indication of uncertainty is provided by the use of the square brackets []. A digit, dotted or undotted, adjacent to (but outside of) a square bracket records what can be read next to a lacuna. That is, unless otherwise noted in the apparatus, the digit transcribed may accurately represent the original text (if in fact there was no text in the lacuna), while it is also possible that the original numeral may have been larger (if some of the repetitions of the Linear B sign were lost in the lacuna). E.g., 2[may represent an original 2, or any numeral from 3 through 9. Similarly]2 may represent any original numeral from 2 through 9, and in addition there may have been any number of tens, hundreds, or other numerals before whatever number of units was originally written. Similarly 30[may represent original numbers 30 through 99, and 400[original numbers 400 through 999.

An undotted digit adjacent to the bracket indicates that the numeral is well-preserved and legible except for the uncertainty of its identity caused by the lacuna, while a dotted digit adjacent to a bracket would be uncertain in itself, even if the lacuna were not present.

Numerals within the square brackets [] are, of course, restorations made likely by their contexts. But the frequent special case of a numeral, adjacent to a lacuna, which can be restored in part or even completely on epigraphical grounds is indicated by putting the digit within half-square brackets, e.g.,]3., .3[or .3.. In these cases, the number of repetitions of the Linear B sign, actually preserved and legible, is recorded in the apparatus, and the minimum that can be estimated to have been in the original text, on the basis of the arrangement of the preserved elements, is shown between the brackets. For example, the transcription .4[, with a note in the apparatus that only two units are preserved, may indicate that the two preserved units are one above the other, with the break in the surface of the tablet occurring immediately to their right. Such an arrangement is only in the rarest instances used for the numeral 2, and almost as rarely is it part of the numerals 3 or 9. But it is normally part of the arrangement of all numerals from 4 through 8. Therefore .4[is written as the minimum that may be restored on the basis of the preserved units and their arrangement.

LINES

Ordinarily Linear B texts, unless they are of the frequent single entry type, are divided by horizontal rulings into the necessary number of lines. When a tablet or line is divided by a rule for part of its length, the subdivisions are identified as .A, .B, etc. (or for a numbered line, e.g., .3A, .3B,

etc.) beginning at the top, whether or not the text was inscribed or intended to be read in that order. The text of an undivided portion of such a line is written on the line of the lowest subdivision, and the length and position of the partial rulings are not indicated. The line numbers .1, .2, and the upper case .A, .B, indicate the presence of a ruling.

When a tablet or line is not divided by a ruling, but a (generally smaller) part of the text appears in an upper row of signs, the upper part of the tablet is identified as .a, and the upper part of a line as, e.g., .3a. Generally this sort of arrangement was used to accommodate a text longer than the tablet or line it was to occupy, or it was done to insert a sign or a word into a text already written. When, however, in an unruled space several lines of text are inscribed, obviously in the normal order, these lines are identified as .a, .b, and .c.

We have been a little more generous than previously in identifying lines .a, and have where necessary combined them with .A's and .B's. These situations could be described in the apparatus; but if this kind of line numbering is not found to be confusing, it is more economical.

For the better approximation of the original arrangement of the text in its transcription, even those additions of words or of final signs of words that were originally written in this way, but could easily have been transcribed in the regular line of a printed text, have been treated like every other case of an unruled text. Only in the apparatus is the practice followed of enclosing a superior sign or word inside the marks ' '.

The subdivision of a line with or without a ruling, and the grouping of whole lines where in special circumstances the ruling between them is only partial, has not been emphasized by the use of the brace {, but it appears with the line numeration .a, and does not indicate at what points in the text the ruling begins or ends.

The line occupying the uppermost space of a tablet has generally been identified as .1, whether it was actually the first in a well-preserved tablet, or only the first legible or partly legible line of a fragment. But an uninscribed margin left by drawing a rule for the top of the first line of text, or a similar narrow margin left at the end, narrower often than a normal line space, is neither assigned a number nor noted in the transcription, but is indicated in the minor apparatus under *Format*. However, a similar narrow space ruled in the midst of a text (apparently to separate paragraphs or sections of a text) is numbered as an ordinary line, and transcribed as *angustum*. An uninscribed area wider than a normal line space at the top or bottom is not given a number, nor noted as *prior*, or *reliqua pars sine regulis*, but the characteristics are duly recorded in the minor apparatus under *Format*.

MARGINS

The concept of margin is far from clear. Whereas there is little doubt concerning the upper margin, which was not intended to be written in, the lower margin can embrace several distinct entities:

- a) a narrow space not intended to be written in, analogous to the upper margin discussed above;
- b) an unruled, large space usually transcribed as *reliqua pars sine regulis* in former editions;
- c) a canonical space of similar size as the remaining ruled entries of the document in question, but left unwritten. In such a case, we encounter two possibilities:
 - 1) that the unwritten space closes the record after another written space, i.e., functioning as an actual margin; or
 - 2) that the space left unwritten follows another empty space or other spaces left unwritten. In this case, although we are not dealing with a functional margin, it has been conventionally transcribed as a margin instead of as another line in the series (with a reference in the minor apparatus to the corresponding line number in former editions). However, in long, narrow tablets with entire median rule and having only one entry on line .1, the empty line .2 has been preserved as a line and not taken as a margin (with the exception of Ta 710, where it could have functioned as a margin).

As a rule, uninscribed narrow margins above and below the text are simply not noted, but indicated in the minor apparatus under *Format*.

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PARAGRAPHS

In the Pylos texts there are several instances where a change of subject, or a paragraph, is indicated by ruling a narrow space, so narrow that if it were inscribed the signs would have to be less than half the normal height of the rest of the text. These narrow lines were made deliberately, and are as significant as the indentation at the beginning of a modern paragraph. We have indicated their presence in texts with the word *angustum*. To preserve a closer relationship between the printed transcription and the disposition of the text on the tablet, a series of *vacat* lines have been substituted for the several instances of the space-saving *vacant*. Instead of, e.g., *vacant 4 versus*, simple *vacat* and the line numbers given permit the calculation of the extent of the uninscribed space. *Vacat* may be abbreviated as *vac*.

MUTILA

In earlier editions, in two cases a line number is given to a space that may never have existed, which may have been cut off, or, if it did exist, has now been destroyed. Such spaces were represented by the line number .0, and by the last line number of the text, whenever they were accompanied by the notation *supra* or *infra mutila*. These line numbers were assigned only when the broken edge preserves evidence of a ruling, with no traces of inscription on any small surface preserved beyond the rule.

We have had great difficulty in finding consistent interpretations of the terms *supra mutila* (which is often used with, or in place of, the line number .0) and *infra mutila* in the texts, either within a numbered line or not. If a line that might have been inscribed is so mutilated that square brackets ([]) are inappropriate, it should be marked *mutila*. The terms *supra* and *infra mutila* should describe conditions of the tablet where it is uncertain whether or not there could have been a line missing; they are best relegated to the minor apparatus.

Areas that are now illegible, but that retain evident traces of an original inscription, are marked *vestigia* or *vest*.

Areas broken away or damaged within a line are represented as the space between square brackets [and]. It was not stated in the 'Wingspread Convention,' though it had been the general practice in transcription, that at the broken edge of a line only] at the left or [at the right would be written, even when the preserved end of the tablet permitted an estimate of the amount of text missing. This good rule seems inconvenient only when, if it is strictly followed, a broken area must be indicated, although it is obvious that it could not have contained any text.

A complete line missing in the middle or the beginning of a text is marked *deest*.

NODULES

Among the nodules from different locations in the Palace of Nestor, which are grouped as series Wr at Pylos, we have found inconsistencies in the identification of facets (normally *alpha*, *beta*, *gamma*, though *delta*, too, might be justified in one or two instances). Scribal habits for making nodules are almost uniform (see above, pp. xxxvi–xxxvii) but there is a type of large nodule that is different from more typical triangular nodules. *Alpha* is reserved for the sealed facet, whether it is inscribed or not (and whether or not it was inscribed first or last). For a few nodules, we have found the unimpressed surface treated as a single field, not divided into two facets, and in those cases have used the identification *betagamma*.

TRANSCRIPTIONS

The list of syllabograms and their transcriptions, adopted at the Wingspread Colloquium, was modified by the Colloquia of Cambridge⁸⁷ and of Salamanca.⁸⁸ Slight modifications were suggested as resolutions of the Signary Committee at the Colloquium of Copenhagen.⁸⁹

New transcriptions of several of the logograms have been adopted, a few have been eliminated and a few added. We designate occurrences of *141 in its full form as AUR and occurrences of *141 in somewhat simplified form, both minuscule and jammed up against the upper rule of a line of text, as AUR^b to indicate the variant in shape only.⁹⁰ A complete table of the signs and their transcriptions will be provided in an appendix to the second part of this volume.

ARRANGEMENTS

For this edition the texts have been arranged in their numerical order. An arrangement by classified series in the alphabetical order will be provided as an index to the second part of this volume, with the texts within the series following their numbers strictly (this does not allow for the grouping of sets within the series, nor for the recognition of the internal order of a document consisting of several tablets). The only exception is that fragments thought to be part of a single tablet, e.g., Aa 775 [+] 956, are now included under the leading number of the main piece, and the general concordance shows the eliminated numbers between parentheses () or square brackets []. The list of components and former numbers is shown as a table under every document.

CLASSIFICATION

Certain changes have been made to the classification of individual texts, so that some familiar documents may appear with unexpected prefixes. The changes made are mainly the result of new joins, but we do not intend to include a full review of how a rather miscellaneous collection has been classified. The primary function of this classification system is still to bring together texts of possibly related contents for study, as indicated by the logogram or logograms appearing in them. At the same time, some further division has been made in order to recognize a few sets by their assignment to different subseries. The most notable changes in classification given in *PTT* were the adoption of a new series Aq (for the set of the old Sn 64), of a series Cr (for the CERV of the old Cn 591), and of a series Ed (for the set of the old Eb 236). Other series that were previously used have been now abandoned, i.e., Ec, Sb, Sn, Xb, and Xc, and their members distributed among other series. A good many individual texts have also been transferred from one series to another, generally as a result of the discovery and joining of further fragments to make a more easily identifiable text. In the present edition the new series Bn, Mo, Wn and Wo are introduced. Reclassification is noted in the apparatus along with a reference to former prefixes. Document prefixes are set in italics when the scribal identification is uncertain.

The extant series are the following:⁹¹

SERIES Aa

Texts of the series Aa are characterized by the presence of the logogram *102 MUL, and related formulas, and belong to a group of long, narrow tablets. Within the series there are two sets, distinguished most easily by hand and appearance of the tablets, and happily occurring in separate sequences, the one in texts Aa(1) 60–98 (Hand 4), the other in texts Aa(2) 240–1182 (Hand 1). The two sets may also be distinguished by their find spots. Those of the set Aa(1) 60–98 remained almost entirely on the northwest bench of the Archives Room 8. Those of the set Aa(2) 240–1182 are

⁸⁷ Palmer and Chadwick 1966, pp. 7–8.

⁸⁸ Ruipérez 1972, pp. xvi–xvii.

⁸⁹ Nosch and Enegren 2017, pp. 836–838.

⁹⁰ See Bennet et al. 2024, pp. 586–587.

⁹¹ The following text is an update of the notes in *PTT*.

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scattered more widely from the middle of Room 8 to the middle of the Annex Room 7, with several fragments in the chasm. The number of fragments of the set Aa(1) 60–98 that have been lost should therefore be small, while the number of fragments and of whole tablets lost from the set of Aa(2) 240–1182 may be considerably larger.

Texts of the series Aa are also characterized by their close correspondence with the texts of the series Ab and Ad, in the repertory of names for both Ab and Ad, and partially in the quantities recorded in the Ab texts (see Tables 5 and 6). The correspondences in quantities in the Aa and Ab texts permit the approximate restoration of missing quantities. Texts of the series Ab are distinguished from those of Aa by the addition of the logograms GRA and NI, and by their hand; texts of the series Ad by the substitution of the logogram VIR, and by their hand. In addition, in both Ab and Ad texts, the word *pu-ro* is prefixed, where it is appropriate, to the names occurring in the Aa texts.

Table 5. Set of Aa 60 with corresponding Ab and Ad tablets.

Aa	Ab	Ad	
60	—	—	
61	—	664	
62	—	308	cf. Aa 764
63	—	668	
76	—	678	
85	—	290	cf. Aa 717, 815
89	—	—	cf. Aa 240
93	—	295	
94	—	—	
95	—	289	
96	—	697	
98	—	669	

Table 6. Set of Aa 240 with corresponding Ab and Ad tablets.

Aa	Ab	Ad	
240	—	677	cf. Aa 89
313	417	663	
354	372	680	cf. An 292.3
506	562	{ 390 679	
662	{ 745 746	671	
695	560	357	
699	190	684	
701	515	315	cf. Ad 326
717	1099	—	cf. Aa 85, 815
752	355	—	cf. Aa 779
762	217	318	
764	789	—	cf. Aa 62
770	194	675	
772	379	670	
775	277	685	

Table 6, *continued*

Aa		Ab	Ad	
777	{ {	899	—	
		563	691	cf. An 199.1
		1100		
779		355	—	cf. Aa 752
783		553	676	
785		388	—	
786		554	688	
788		—	679	cf. An 292.2
792		189	683	cf. An 292.4
795		558	691	
798		382	—	cf. Aa 1180
804		—	690	
807		586	686	
815		564	666	cf. Aa 85, 717
854	{	563	—	
		1100	691	
891		578	694	
955		575	—	
1180		573	{ 380	
				689 cf. Aa 798
1182		—	—	

An 292 is to be associated with the Aa(2) texts by its hand as well as by its text.

The labels Wa(1) 114 and 1008 are probably to be associated with the Aa(2) texts rather than the Ab texts. In hand they agree with the set Aa(2) 240–1182, but in their find spots they are closely associated with the set of Aa(1) 60–98.

SERIES Ab

Texts of the series Ab are characterized by the presence of the logograms *102 MUL, *120 GRA, and NI, and related formulas (TA, DA), and belong to a group of long, narrow tablets. They are all of a single hand (Hand 21). With a few exceptions these tablets were deposited on the floor near the end of the southeastern bench in the Archives Room 8.

Generally each tablet is divided at the right end into the lines .A, .B by a ruling beginning to the right of *ko-wa* and its number. There are indications in Ab 554 and 586 that the ruling was drawn before *ko-wa*, *ko-wa*, and their numbers were inscribed. There are also indications in Ab 189, 217, 379, 515, 586, and perhaps in 388, 558, that TA and DA were inscribed before GRA, T, and their numbers. The equality of the numbers following GRA and NI, and their regular relationship to the numbers following MUL, *ko-wa*, *ko-wa*, and to the presence of TA and DA, permit calculation and restoration of missing numbers. For other texts with equal quantities of GRA and NI, see the series Fg, and perhaps An 128. Texts of the series Ab are also characterized by their close correspondence to the texts of the series Aa and Ad (see Table 7), in the repertory of names for Ad, and both for the names and partially for the quantities for Aa (but only of the set Aa(2) 240–1182). Texts of the series Aa are distinguished from those of Ab by the absence of the logograms GRA and NI, and by the regular omission of the *pu-ro* frequently prefixed in Ab, and by their hands; texts of the series Ad are distinguished by the presence of the logogram VIR, and by their hand.

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Table 7. Ab tablets with corresponding Aa and Ad tablets.

Aa	Ab	Ad	
—	186	—	
792	189	683	cf. An 292.4
699	190	684	
770	194	675	
—	210	671	
762	217	318	
775	277	685	
{ 752	355	—	
779			
—	356	667	
354	372	680	cf. An 292.3
772	379	670	
798	382	—	cf. Ab 573
785	388	—	
313	417	663	
701	515	315	cf. Ad 326
783	553	676	
786	554	688	
—	555	—	
795	558	691	
695	560	357	
506	562	{ 390	
		679	
{ 777	563	691	cf. An 199.1
854			
815	564	666	cf. Ab 1099, Aa 85
1180	573	{ 380	
		689	cf. Ab 382
955	575	—	
891	578	694	
807	586	686	
662	745	671	cf. Ab 746
662	746	671	cf. Ab 745
764	789	—	cf. Aa 62
777	899	691	
717	1099	—	cf. Ab 564, Aa 85
{ 777	1100	691	cf. An 199.1
854			

The tablets originally classified as Xa 1107, 1444 (not ascribed to Hand) are now also reclassified as Ab.

SERIES Ac

Texts of the series Ac are characterized by the presence of the logogram *100 VIR, and belong to a group of long, narrow tablets. They are distinguished from the Ad texts by their hand (Hand 20) and by their repertory of names, which belong to the set of Jn(1) 829. Deficits (*o-pe-ro*) of people are recorded. All come from Room 99.

SERIES Ad

Texts of the series Ad are characterized by the presence of the logogram *100 VIR and the word *ko-wo*, and belong to a group of long, narrow tablets. They are of a single hand (Hand 23).

The majority were deposited just within the Archives Annex Room 7, and near the door between 7 and 8, with the minority in the center of the Archives Room 8; a few were scattered. Word division is frequently neglected; where there is sufficient indication in parallel texts, division has been introduced. Texts of the series Ad are also characterized by their correspondence, in the repertory of names, to texts of the series Aa and Ab (see Table 8).

Table 8. Ad tablets with corresponding Aa and Ab tablets.

Aa	Ab	Ad	
95	—	289	
85	—	290	cf. Aa 717, Ad 666
93	—	295	
62	—	308	cf. Aa 764
701	515	315	cf. Ad 326
762	217	318	
—	—	326	
695	560	357	
1180	573	380	cf. Ad 689, Aa 798
506	562	390	
313	417	663	
61	—	664	
815	564	666	cf. Ad 290, Aa 717
—	356	667	
63	—	668	
98	—	669	
772	379	670	
—	210	} } 671	
662	745		
	746		
94	—	672	
770	194	675	
783	553	676	
240	—	677	cf. Aa 89
76	—	678	
506	562	} 679	
788	—		cf. An 292.2
354	372	680	cf. An 292.3
792	189	683	cf. An 292.4

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Aa	Ab	Ad	
699	190	684	
775	277	685	
807	586	686	
786	554	688	
1180	573	689	cf. Ad 380, Aa 798
804	—	690	
795	558		
854	563	691	cf. An 199.1
	1100		
777	899		
891	578	694	
96	—	697	
—	—	921	

SERIES Ae

Texts of the series Ae are characterized by the presence of one of the logograms *100 VIR and *101 MUL, or of the word ko-wo, and belong to a group of long, narrow tablets. The series might be further subdivided to distinguish several sets of documents, in which the differences in formula, in hand, and in find spots correspond to some extent. Although the majority (set Ae [1]) are assigned to a single hand (Hand 42), and come from the Archives Room 8, Ae 629 and 634 are of another hand (Class iv Hand 93), and come from Room 6. Ae 995 is from the area of Rooms 55–57 and of another hand (Class iv Hand 91), while Ae 765 (with the same text as Ae 574 from Room 8) is from the Annex Room 7 and differs also in hand (Hand 1).

SERIES An

Texts of the series An are characterized by the presence of one of the logograms *100 VIR and *101 MUL, and belong to a group of page-shaped tablets. The series might be further subdivided to distinguish several sets of documents. Conspicuous among these would be the set An(3) of which An 657 may be the first document. An 1281 and 1282 are from Room 99. The remainder are principally from Room 8, with some from Room 7 and the chasm.

SERIES Aq

Texts of the series Aq are two long page-shaped tablets 64 and 218 that most probably form a diptych, i.e., they are to be viewed as a single record. Therefore, although only one of these contains the characteristic logogram *100 VIR, they are associated also by the logographic use of the phonogram ZE, by the formulas of the text, by their find spots in the Archives Room 8, and by their hand (Hand 21).

SERIES Bn

The isolated text of this newly identified series is characterized by the presence of the logogram *100 VIR, which for the purposes of classification takes precedence over the greater number of logograms for *122 OLIV and *121 HORD.

SERIES Cc

Texts of the series Cc are characterized by the presence of logograms representing livestock, and

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belong to a group of long, narrow tablets, written in the same hand (Hand 21). The find spots are concentrated in Room 99 and its surroundings; Cc 660 and 665 were found in Room 7.

SERIES Cn

Texts of the series Cn are characterized by the presence of logograms representing livestock (various forms of *106 OVIS, *107 CAP, *108 SUS, and *109 BOS), and related formulas. Some of the texts may be further grouped into sets marked by the recurrence of formulas and names. A grouping by hand largely, but not entirely, coincides with the grouping by documentary sets. These tablets come mostly from the Rooms 8 and 7, with a few from Room 2, and from the chasm. Cn 1286 and 1287 come from Room 99.

SERIES Cr

Texts of the series Cr are characterized by the presence of the logogram *104 CERV and belong to a group of page-shaped tablets. Cr 591 in Hand 2 is from the Archives Room 8, and 868 in Hand 1 from Room 2.

SERIES Ea

Texts of the series Ea are characterized by the presence of the logogram *120 GRA, and by a set of related formulas. They are distinguished from the similar set comprising Eb and Eo tablets by their format and by the names recorded and by greater diversity of the data recorded. The information on tablets in the Ea set is more heterogeneous than that of other landholding texts at Pylos. They could not have been regularized into the same kind of rigid formulaic patterns as most of the Eb and Eo tablets. The Ea tablets seem all to be of a single hand (Hand 43). The majority are long, narrow tablets, each with a single entry. Generally the first word is written on a larger scale. In about half of the tablets, part of the text is written above the line (without a ruling, i.e., in line .a) for lack of space on the line. In about two-thirds of these texts what is written above clearly completes the text before the logogram; in about a third, however, it seems rather to be parallel to the qualification of the first word, which is normally written immediately after the first word. The Ea tablets come from two separate parts of the Archives Complex. Tablets from the smaller group are fairly evenly scattered in Room 8, on and between the benches, with none near the chasm or the door to Room 7. The other group is closely concentrated near the middle of the northeastern wall of Room 7, and thus adjacent to the chasm. Very few Ea tablets have been recovered from the chasm, but we may probably assign those that have to this second group.

SERIES Eb

Texts of the series Eb are characterized by the presence of the logogram *120 GRA, and by a set of related formulas. They are written by the same scribe who wrote the Eo tablets (Hand 41). They are distinguished from the Ea, En, and Ep texts by their hand and their format, and from the Eo texts by their formulas. They belong to a group of long, narrow tablets. A single rule divides them into two lines. In more than half the tablets where the quantity is preserved, the rule stops before the logogram, which is written on a larger scale fitting the undivided space. In these texts the lines are numbered .A, .B. Where the ruling divides the whole tablet, the logogram and quantity are written in the second line at the initial scale. In these texts the lines are numbered .1, .2. Fragments which might be either .A, .B or .1, .2 are arbitrarily numbered .A, .B. In either case the text normally begins in .A or .1, and continues in .B or .2. The contents, exact or approximate, of almost every Eb text is assembled, though with slightly different formulas, in a corresponding Ep text, written by a different scribe. By no means have all of the Eb texts that correspond to the entries in the Ep texts survived. Where the correspondence with an Ep entry is clear, the reference is noted; they often serve to justify restoration, with appropriate change of formulas. The majority of the Eb tablets were found scattered on the floor in the middle of the Archives Room 8. Several tablets and fragments come from

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Room 2; one (Eb 747) is isolated in Room 7; a few fragments in Room 7 were near the concentration of Ea tablets and Wa 784. Many other fragments were found in the Chasm, concentrated between Rooms 8 and 2. One fragment (Eb 636) apparently comes from Room 6. Parts of Eb 502 come from Rooms 8 and 2; parts of Eb 818 come from Rooms 8 and 7.

SERIES Ed

Texts of the series Ed are characterized by the presence of the logogram *120 GRA and by related formulas. They come from the floor of the Archives Room 8 (in the area of the Eb tablets). All are of the same hand (Hand 1), except for the first hand of Ed 411.1 (Hand 41).

SERIES En

Texts of the series En are characterized by the presence of the logogram *120 GRA, and by a set of related formulas. They and the Ep tablets are written by a single hand (Hand 1). They are distinguished from the Ea, Eb, and Eo texts by their hand and format, and from the Ep texts by their formulas. The subject matter, exact or approximate, of the En texts is found, though with slightly different formulas, in the Eo texts, written by a different scribe. The text corresponding to each Eo text is normally disposed in a separate paragraph. Reference is made to the corresponding Eo texts, which often serve to justify restoration, with appropriate change of formulas. En texts were found on and near the end of the northwest bench of the Archives Room 8 (En 74), in the doorway to Room 7 (467, 609), and near the middle of Room 7 (659).

SERIES Eo

Texts of the series Eo are characterized by the presence of the logogram *120 GRA, and by a set of related formulas. They are all written by a single scribe, who also wrote the Eb tablets (Hand 41). They are distinguished from the Ea, En, and Ep texts by their hand and format, and from the Eb texts by their formulas (or, rarely, by their correspondence to En texts). The subject matter, exact or approximate, of the Eo texts is found assembled, though with slightly different formulas, in the En texts, written by a different scribe. Reference is made to the corresponding En texts, which often serve to justify restoration, with appropriate change of formulas. The Eo tablets were found near the end of the northwest bench of the Archives Room 8, with some tablets and fragments from the chasm.

SERIES Ep

Texts of the series Ep are characterized by the presence of the logogram *120 GRA, and a set of related formulas. They are written by the same scribe who wrote the En tablets (Hand 1). They are distinguished from the Ea, Eb, and Eo texts by their hand and format, and from the En texts by their formulas. The substance, exact or approximate, of many, but not of all, of the entries in the Ep texts is found, though with slightly different formulas, in the Eb texts, written by a different scribe. By no means do all of the Eb texts correspond to entries in the Ep texts. Where the correspondence to an Eb text is clear, the reference is noted; they often serve to justify restoration, with appropriate change of formulas. Ep tablets were found near the end of the northwest bench of the Archives Room 8 (Ep 212, 301), and near the doorway of Room 7.

SERIES Eq

Texts of the series Eq are characterized by the presence of the logogram *120 GRA, and belong to the group of page-shaped tablets. All are written by the scribe of the En and Ep tablets (Hand 1). They were found in Room 8.

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SERIES Er

Texts of the series Er are characterized by the presence of the logogram *120 GRA, by a common hand (Hand 24) and format. Er 312 comes from the middle of Room 8; Er 880 from Room 2 and the chasm.

SERIES Es

Texts of the series Es are characterized by the presence of the logogram *120 GRA, and by related formulas, and by a set of names. The names occur in a fixed order, which serves to justify restoration, and with roughly proportionate quantities. Except for Es 650, the Es tablets were written by the scribe of the En and Ep tablets (Hand 1). All of the Es tablets were found in Room 7.

SERIES Fa

Texts of the series Fa written in Hand 42 are characterized by the presence of logograms *121 HORD and *123 CYP+O for commodities, measured by dry measure (i.e., τ, v). The logogram *123 represents cyperus, *121 conventionally represents barley. The texts are written on long, narrow tablets.⁹² They were found in Archives Room 8 and the chasm.

SERIES Fg

Texts of the series Fg are characterized by the presence of the logograms *120 GRA and NI (representing commodities, measured by dry measure: τ, v) with equal quantities. NI represents figs, *120 conventionally represents wheat.⁹³ This combination reflects part of the formula of the Ab texts. Fg 253–374 were found in Room 8, and 374 within the area of the Ab tablets; Fg 828 was found in Room 7. Tablet 368, formerly Fg, has been reclassified as Ab.

SERIES Fn

Texts of the series Fn are characterized by the presence of the logogram *121 HORD (measured by dry measure: τ, v), and belong to a group of page-shaped tablets. Except for Fn 187 in Hand 2, and Fn 50 and 324, they are all apparently from a single scribe (Hand 45). Fn 41, 50, and 79 came from the bench in the Archives Room 8, the rest from the floor of Room 8, from Room 2 and from the chasm.

SERIES Fr

Texts of the series Fr are characterized by the presence of the logogram *130 OLE (a commodity, olive oil, measured by liquid measure: s, v, z), and related formulas. There is a considerable variety of hands represented and consequently different sets of records. The find spots are equally varied, and include Rooms 23, 32, 38, 41, 43(?), Court 63, and Rooms 71/72, and 103.

SERIES Gn

Texts of the series Gn are characterized by the presence of the logogram *131 VIN, wine, measured by liquid measure: s, v. Gn 428 was found in Room 8, Gn 720 in Room 7.

⁹² See Palmer 2008.

⁹³ See Palmer 2008.

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SERIES Ja

Texts of the series Ja are characterized by the presence of the logogram *140 AES (representing a commodity, bronze, measured by weight: L, M, N, P) and related formulas and belong to a group of long, narrow tablets. Ja 749 was found in the chasm, Ja 1288 in Room 99.

SERIES Jn

Texts of the series Jn are characterized by the presence of the logogram *140 AES (representing a commodity, bronze, measured by weight: L, M, N), and related formulas and belong to a group of page-shaped tablets. The majority are written by a single scribe (Hand 2, set Jn[1]); Jn(2) 658 and 706 are by Hand 21. Since totals of the several items are often written, restoration of missing numerals might be possible, except that there are too many apparent errors in the sums preserved. The majority of the Jn tablets come from the Archives Room 8, between the benches (310–601), and in the northeastern half of Room 7 (605–750, 832, 845, 927–944) with some fragments from the chasm. Jn 829 comes from the northern bench of Room 8. Jn 881 comes from Room 2. Perhaps also to be classified as Jn are: Xn 1072, 1171, 1172.

SERIES Jo

The unique text of the series Jo is characterized by the presence of the logogram *141 AUR, gold, measured by weight: M, N, P. It was found in Room 8.

SERIES La

Texts of the series La are characterized by the presence of the logogram *159 TELA (and *145 LANA, *160, *166) and related formulas. They were found in Room 6, except for 1393–1394, which came from beneath the southwestern edge of the hill: they probably represent a remnant of an earlier deposit.

In addition, the fragmentary texts Ae 629, 634, characterized by the logogram MUL, are similar in find spot, color, and hand.

SERIES Ma

Texts of the series Ma are characterized by the presence of a set of six logograms, *146, RI, KE, *152, O, ME, with quantities normally occurring in approximately the same proportions in each text. They are all written by a single hand (Hand 2).

The formula to which the quantities generally conform may be expressed as:

$$*146 \text{ x, RI } M \text{ x, KE } M \text{ 2x/7, } *152 \text{ 3x/7, O } M \text{ 3x/14, ME 300x/14.}$$

The quantities of each of the six items can be approximately determined based on multiplying and/or dividing the numbers of *146 and of RI M. But these numbers are not always exact: several values thus predicted do not correspond to the actual quantities preserved, and, therefore, some missing values may also have differed from the prediction. Nevertheless, the theoretical values may be shown in the lacunae and cited in the apparatus. This formula does not apply to entries marked as *o-pe-ro*, but does generally apply to the principal entry and to those marked by *o-u di-do-si*, *di-do-si*, and *a-pu-do-si*. These quantities of six items are recorded on each of the Ma tablets for a particular place name drawn from a canonical list of important sites also recorded on tablets Jn 829, Vn 20, Cn 608. If we use the list of place names as it occurs on tablet Jn 829, the hypothetical order of the Ma tablets is as we give it here (Table 9, see also Table 10). This does not mean, however, that the information recorded on the Ma tablets was compiled and meant to be read in the same order.

Table 9. Ma tablets ordered in accordance with Jn 829.

Number	Ma	Place name
1	225	<i>pi-[*]82</i>
2	90	<i>me-ta-pa</i>
3	120	<i>pe-to-no</i>
4	221	<i>pa-ki-ja-pi</i>
5	124	<i>a-pu₂-we</i>
6	222	<i>a-ke-re-wa</i>
7B	365	<i>ro-u-so</i>
8	346	<i>ka-ra-do-ro</i>
9	193	<i>ri-jo</i>
10	123	<i>ti-mi-to-a-ke-e</i>
11	216	<i>ra-wa-ra-ta₂</i>
12	378	<i>sa-ma-ra</i>
13	397?	<i>a-[•]-ta₂</i> [a-si-ja-ti-ja in Jn 829]
14	333	<i>e-ra-te-re-we</i>
15	393	<i>za-ma-e-wi-ja</i>
16		[e-re-i in Jn 829]

Table 10. Ma tablets ordered in accordance with Vn 20, Cn 608, and Vn 19, with a comparison of quantities recorded.

Number	Ma tablet	Place name	[*] 146	<i>ka-ke-we</i>	Vn 20	Cn 608	Vn 19
1	225	<i>pi-[*]82</i>	28	1	50	3	?
2	90	<i>me-ta-pa</i>	28	1	50	3	?
3	120	<i>pe-to-no</i>	63	2	100	6	200
4	221	<i>pa-ki-ja-pi</i>	22	1	35	2	80[
5	124	<i>a-pu₂-we</i>	23	1	35	2	60
6	222	<i>a-ke-re-wa</i>	23		30	2	40
7A	[in Cn 608/Vn 20]	<i>e-ra-te-i/e-ra-to</i>			50	3	?
8	346	<i>ka-ra-do-ro</i>	18		40	2	?
9	193	<i>ri-jo</i>	17	4	20	2	?

The Ma series also includes the places *si-re-wa* (Ma 126), *a-te-re-wi-ja* (Ma 244) and *e-sa-re-wi-ja* (Ma 330). They were found in a linear scatter beginning at the end of the northwest bench of the Archives Room 8, and extending toward the end of the southeast bench.⁹⁴

SERIES Mb

Texts of the series Mb are characterized by the presence of the logogram ^{*}146, and belong to a group of long, narrow tablets. The overwhelming majority were written by the same hand (Hand 14/15), and were found below the southwestern edge of the hill.

SERIES Mn

Texts of the series Mn are page-shaped tablets characterized by the presence of the logogram ^{*}146. There are at least two groups: Mn(1) 162 and 456 seem to be written by one hand (Hand 2), and

94 Firth 2006.

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come from the Archives Room 8. Mn(2) 1367–1412 are written by another hand (Hand 14/15), and come from below the southwestern edge of the hill.

SERIES Mo

The single text of the series Mo (formerly Mm and Mn) is a page-shaped tablet characterized by the presence of several of the logograms of the Ma set. Since Mo 11 lacks the logogram *146, it has been separated from the series Mn, although it is written in the same hand as the set Mn(1), namely Hand 2. Mo 11 was found on the southeast bench in Room 8.

SERIES Na

Texts of the series Na are characterized by the presence of the logographic syllabogram SA, and by related formulas, and belong to a group of long, narrow tablets. The majority were written by a single hand (Hand 1, set [1]). The proportion of tablets cut at one (or both) ends is high, but no simili-joins have been found yet.⁹⁵ Na 561 and 1027 are now Ci S561. The rule that divides many tablets into lines .A and .B normally begins to the right of the first logogram and number. The text written in .A and .B is most often a single item, written and to be read in the order B-A, or else it is a pair of items, one in .A, one in .B. The texts apparently belong to a single set of documents, and may be considered as closely related to the Ng texts, and to the Nn texts. The Na tablets were found in the Archives Room 8, spread from above the northwest bench to the doorway to Room 7, with a few fragments just inside Room 7 (three tablets join fragments from both rooms, Na 923, 924, 928), and with others from the chasm. Perhaps also to be classified Na are: Xa 400, 432, 463 (see also Ua 407).

SERIES Ng

Texts of the series Ng are characterized by the presence of the logographic syllabogram SA. The quantities reported are high, such that they might be totals of the items reported in the Na texts. They are of the same hand (Hand 1), and were found in the middle of the Archives Room 8, among the Na tablets.

SERIES Nn

Texts of the series Nn are page-shaped tablets characterized by the presence of the logographic syllabogram SA. They come from the Archives Room 8, with fragments from the chasm.

SERIES Ob

The texts of the series Ob are characterized by the presence of the ligatured logogram *166+ WE and are written in the same hand. They were found below the southwestern edge of the hill.

SERIES On

The unique text of the series On is a page-shaped tablet characterized by the presence of the logogram *154. All the constituent fragments were found in the Archives Room 8.

SERIES Pa

Texts of the series Pa are characterized by the presence of the logogram *169 and related formulas and belong to a group of long, narrow tablets. They are assigned to two stylus groups of Class ii and Class iii, and come from on or near the southwest bench of the Archives Room 8.

⁹⁵ On simili-joins, see above, p. xl.

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SERIES Pn

The unique text of the series Pn is characterized by the presence of the logogram *169. Pn 30 was found on the southwest bench of the Archives Room 8 and it is assigned to Hand 2.

SERIES Qa

Texts of the series Qa are characterized by the presence of the logogram *189, and belong to a group of long, narrow tablets. Set Qa(1) is assigned to Hand 14/15. The closely similar Qa(2) 1289 1300 1305 tablets are assigned to Hand 33. With the exception of Qa 1441, they come from Room 99.

SERIES Sa

Texts of the series Sa are characterized by the presence of the logogram representing the wheel of a chariot, *243 ROTA, and related formulas, and belong to a group of long, narrow tablets. Except for Sa 22 (which is characterized by the presence of the logogram *105 EQU and might well be assigned to another related series if it were not unique), they all seem to be part of a single set of documents, and were written by the same person (Hand 26). Sa 22 (set [2]) was found on the inner corner of the southeast bench, and 287–488 (set [1]) nearby on the floor of Room 8. With the exception of Sa 1313 (Room 98), the remainder were found concentrated near the central part of the northeast wall of the Annex Room 7, and in the chasm. Connected with the Sa tablets by content, and perhaps written by the same scribe, is Wa 1148.

SERIES Sh

Texts of the series Sh are characterized by the presence of the logogram *163 ARM and related formulas, and belong to a group of long, narrow tablets. They are written by a single stylus group Class ii S733, and were found in a cluster in the northwestern part of the Annex Room 7.⁹⁶ Of the labels found in the same place, Wa(3) 732 may be associated by text and by hand with the Sh tablets.

SERIES Ta

Texts of the series Ta are characterized by the presence of logograms representing vessels, and related formulas, and recording seating and placement implements such as tables, *thronoi*, and footstools.⁹⁷ They belong to a group of long, narrow tablets. They are obviously parts of a single set of documents, and were written by a single scribe (Hand 2). The Ta tablets were found in the east corner of the Annex Room 7 with fragments in the immediately adjacent part of the chasm.

SERIES Tn

Texts of the series Tn are characterized by the presence of logograms representing vessels, and belong to a group of page-shaped tablets. There is little else to connect the two texts of this series. Tn 316 was found in the middle of the Archives Room 8 and Tn 996 in Room 20.

SERIES Ua

Texts of the series Ua are characterized by a miscellany of logograms, and belong to a group of long, narrow tablets. Most are of the type in which a variety of logograms is gathered into one text, but place is also given here to those with syllabograms used logographically. Ua(1) 9–25 were found on the southeast bench of the Archives Room 8 and Ua 434 on the floor immediately adjacent to the bench. These four tablets were written in the same hand (Hand 42). Ua 639 is from Room 91, Ua 1252

⁹⁶ Palaima 1996.

⁹⁷ On items inventories in the Ta series and the identification of sitting stools and footstools, see Palaima 2023.

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came from Court 63, and Ua 1413 and 1419 were found below the southwestern edge of the hill. Ua 407 could be the right end of a peculiar Na tablet.

SERIES Ub

The four texts of the series Ub are characterized by the presence of the logographic syllabogram *E*, and related formulas. Ub 1315 is assigned to Hand 31; the other three Ub tablets (set [1]) are written by Hand 32. All four tablets come from Room 99.

SERIES Un

Texts of the series Un are characterized by a miscellany of logograms, and belong to a group of page-shaped tablets. Two different types, which might have been put into separate series, are combined here. In the one, the logograms are generally syllabograms used logographically, and thus they may have an affinity with the texts of series Va and Vn, if these syllabograms are acrophonic abbreviations of words rather than conventional logograms. These are Un 219, 1193, 1314, 1319, 1320. In the other type, which constitute the majority of texts, the gathering of a variety of logograms of all sorts into one text relates to the specific purpose of the text, for example, recording collections of different types of objects, animate and inanimate. The contents of these texts may in some instances ally them with texts of other series. No notable subseries can be pointed out, nor is any uniformity of hand to be expected. Most tablets are from the Archives Room 8, Annex Room 7, the chasm, and Room 2, but 1319–1320 are from Room 99, 1322 is from Room 92, and 1414 and 1426 were found below the southwestern edge of the hill.

SERIES Va

Texts of the series Va are characterized by the absence of logograms in their accounting, and belong to a group of long, narrow tablets. Naturally their contents may in some instances clearly ally them with texts of other series. No notable subseries can be pointed out, nor is any uniformity of hand to be expected, but the set Va(1) written by Hand 42 has been isolated. Va 15–482 come from the Archives Room 8; 1323–1324 come from Room 99.

SERIES Vn

Texts of the series Vn are page-shaped tablets characterized by the absence of logograms in their accounting. Naturally their contents may in some instances ally them with texts of other series. No significant subseries can be noted, nor is any uniformity of hand to be expected, but at least two sets, Vn(1) and Vn(2), are now distinguishable based on stylus groups. They come mostly from the Archives Room 8, with parts of Vn 851 (Hand 12) from either side of the chasm. Vn 1339 and 1341 come from Room 99.

SERIES Wa

Texts of the series Wa are inscribed on clay labels originally pressed into the wickerwork surface of trays (not baskets). They are characterized by the impression of that wickerwork on the *verso* (see Figures 6–7), and by a generally uneven face on the *recto*. The *recto* is an excellent source of fingerprints, since the labels are pressed onto the wickerwork with fingers and the fingerprints on the *recto* surface are rarely removed by smoothing. These labels are naturally fragile. Though they are classed here together, in order to understand their record-keeping purposes, it is not difficult to associate most of them with sets of tablets whose purpose, focus, or subject these clay labels originally identified. We may suppose that the tablets were contained in some of the trays identified by these labels. The labels accordingly may have been inscribed by several different persons, though not necessarily by the scribes of the tablets they refer to. The identification of their hands is made

difficult by the distortion that results from the irregular surface and the awkwardness of writing on a wickerwork artifact.

SERIES Wo

Texts of the series Wo are inscribed on flat, small lumps of clay formed in the palm, and do not bear the impression of any seal. They therefore can be distinguished in form and function from the Wp and Wr series.

SERIES Wp

Texts of the series Wp are inscribed on lumps of clay formed around a big string or knot, and bear the impression of a seal, as well as abundant fingerprints. The face of the lump of clay bearing the seal impression is regularly identified as α . The act of impressing the seal on face α naturally creates two other irregular facets, more or less defined by the impression of the fingertips. Evidence for the identity of the hands is multiplied by the presence of generally clear fingerprints, but it is reduced by the shortness of the texts, and by the difficulty of writing and reading on the uneven surfaces of the impressed lumps.

The seals whose impressions are preserved are identified as in *Corpus der minoischen und mykenischen Siegel (CMS)*, with additional reference to *Tonplomben*:

No. 324 - Wp 1327

No. 179 - Wp 1415 (Suppl. 1)

SERIES Wr

Texts of the series Wr are inscribed on lumps of clay formed around a string or knot, and these generally bear the impression of a seal, as well as abundant fingerprints. Technically they should be termed nodules, since they represent a distinctive type of document, well-attested at other Mycenaean centers. The face of the nodule containing the sealing is regularly identified as α . The remaining surface normally contains two smaller facets, more or less defined by the concavity of the space formed by the bases of two fingers and the left palm. These are labeled β and γ . Apparently without exception, when an inscription appears over a seal-impression, the seal-design and the signs share the same orientation. Except as noted (in Wr 1359, 1360, 1457), the seal design and the text are inscribed on α and both appear right side up when the sealed lump is rotated around its long, or string axis, that is, generally the horizontal axis. Rotation or the order of writing of the facets is indicated by means of $\rightarrow$, $\downarrow$. The direction of the string that runs through the lump of clay in relationship to the initial writing position is indicated by means of $\Leftrightarrow$. Evidence for the identity of the hands is multiplied by the presence of generally clear fingerprints, and of distinctive seal impressions, but it is reduced by the shortness of the texts, and by the difficulty of writing and reading on the uneven surfaces of the lumps.⁹⁸

The seals whose impressions are preserved are identified as in *CMS*, with additional reference to *Tonplomben*:

No. 308 - Wr 1457

No. 312 - Wr 1326, 1330

No. 317 - Wr 1329

No. 318 - Wr 1328

No. 319 - Wr 1325

No. 329 - Wr 1331, 1332, 1333, 1334, 1458, 1459

No. 361 - Wr 1361

No. 363 - Wr 1358, 1359, 1360

No. 370 - Wr 1374

No. 382 - Wr 1137

No. 180 - Wr 1416 (Suppl. 1)

⁹⁸ On the paleography and administrative functions of inscribed nodules, see Palaima 2000a, 2000b.

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SERIES Xa

Texts of the series Xa are fragments of tablets of the generally long, narrow shape without preserved logograms. It has proven impossible to classify them precisely without engaging in unacceptable guesswork. Also the evidence provided by format and/or scribal hand is ambiguous. Three sets are now identified according to their Class. Texts formerly classified Xb and Xc are incorporated here. The distinction of fragments of long, narrow tablets from those of page-shaped tablets (in series Xn) has been retained.

SERIES Xn

Texts of the series Xn are those without logograms preserved, from fragmentary page-shaped tablets, as well as from those whose shape is uncertain. It is now impossible to classify these Xn texts more precisely without engaging in unacceptable guesswork. In the tablets of the Xn series not only are we missing a logogram, but words are incomplete, the scribal hand is uncertain, or the format is unclear. However, three sets are now identified according to their Class.

LEMMATIZED INFORMATION

Below the critical apparatus a minor apparatus is appended to every document, where general information concerning the record is provided in a matrix, whose complete arrangement includes the following:

Dimensions: These indicate the three dimensions of the tablet. Some measurements were included by Palaima 1988, but every measurement has now been checked against the records in the National Archaeological Museum.

In the case of quasi-joins, the measurements recorded try to reflect the original size of the document, although particular dimensions of every constituent piece are also registered.

The measurements are given in centimeters in the following order: vertical dimension (height), horizontal dimension (length) and distance from *recto* to *verso* surface (thickness). Enclosure in parentheses means that a tablet is incomplete in a dimension. Braces { } are used for an estimate of reconstructed size.

Condition: Here some comments are given on physical condition, including evidence of being broken on top (*supra mutila*) and/or bottom (*infra mutila*). Where appropriate, we have indicated where tablets are fragile or crumbly.

Fabric: Fabric includes such things as fineness or coarseness of clay, inclusions of pebbles, or indications of very wet pliable clay (as in the Fr set). The systematic analyses of Hruby are not included here, but will be published separately.⁹⁹

Format: This section may include information such as shape, unusual thickness or thinness and inclusion of a 'string' (usually twisted grass-like fibers).¹⁰⁰ In addition it is noted whether the tablet was a palimpsest (see the discussion of palimpsests on p. xli), with a separate treatment of erasures made in the course of writing the actual text. Any discussion of ruling is included here (including repetitions of ruling for palimpsestic texts), and also the relationship in orientation of *recto*, *verso*, and *latera*, and consideration of margins (top and bottom), and finally cuts (some cuts were made before the ruling, but most were made after).

In the course of his work, Bennett made use of some additional format classes for specific series of texts (Table 11). These categories, never published by Bennett, are indicated where appropriate.

⁹⁹ For preliminary reports of this project, see Nakassis et al. 2020; Hruby and Nakassis 2024.

¹⁰⁰ The evidence for strings consists of holes in broken sections where several centimeters of the string's impression can be seen and in broken ends where the string was so close to the surface that the surface has cracked. At Pylos there is ample evidence of twistedness, similar to that very evident in nodules; however nodules are more fragile, and so are broken more frequently and exhibit the structure of their strings.

Table 11. Format classes as defined by Bennett.

Series	Notation	Meaning
Aa	AaM	cigar shaped set (1)
	AaQ	contains a professional designation on an .a line
Ea	EaP	shows in an .a line <i>pa-ro da-mo (ko-to-na)</i>
	EaQ	contains a professional designation on an .a line
Eb	EbA	.A, .B tablet (partial median ruling)
	Eb1	.1, .2 tablet (complete median ruling)
	Eb1*	Eb1, but with an additional third line
	EbO	.1, .2 tablet, but only one entry
	EbC	lower space bigger than upper space
	Eb-	other (i.e., fragments whose format cannot be determined)
Na	NaM	.A, .B tablet (partial median ruling)

Hand: For texts written by two different hands, the reader will find indications of which hand wrote which parts. (These were previously often scattered among the comments on readings.) Scholarly differences of opinion are also noted.

Fingerprints: For convenience, this is treated as a generic heading including mainly palmprints. Included are a few observations by Bennett, but comments are largely based on the analysis of palmprints by Sjöquist and Åström (1985). Palmprints are identified either by the name offered by Sjöquist and Åström, or by presence of “patterns” or “traces.”

Color: The color perceived by a human being depends on the spectrum of the light emitted by the source that illuminates an object, on the spectrum of the light reflected by the object itself, and on the spectral response of the observer. Palaima (1988) included measurements of colors of tablets, using as an absolute reference the Munsell Soil Color Charts (1975 edition), and keeping the order of prevalence of the hues. The ambiance and lighting were not similar in examining all the specimens; in fact, on different days Palaima was placed in different rooms, some of which had windows letting in natural light, while others were windowless. In rooms with natural light, the light coming in varied by time of day and weather conditions. In all rooms artificial light could come from various sources.

Munsell colors were chosen because researchers using Munsell color designations can be tested for their own peculiar ways of seeing color. Although individual measurements of color vary due to a variety of factors, standard color descriptions continue to be used by archaeologists and soil scientists to provide consistent assignments; recent work suggests that lighting conditions are less problematic than had been assumed.¹⁰¹ As is well known, even color photographs are adjustable in their brilliance, saturation, tint, hues, contrast and brightness, warmth and tone.

Palaima did try to record the range of colors that might appear on tablet surfaces depending on the firing conditions as we have discussed them. There is a good deal of published experimental work that suggests that the use of color charts yields meaningfully increased consistency in color descriptions. The bigger problem is that the color of the tablets is highly variable, and well-preserved tablets only have their surface available for observation. An objective color measurement by spectrophotometer was not attempted for this edition. In addition to the observations of Palaima (1988), we include indications of differences in the blackness of *recto* and *verso* (showing which side was up), and of some of the conspicuous instances where the fire shadow of another tablet or object is recorded. The Munsell colors newly assigned by Hruby are not included here, but will be published separately.¹⁰²

101 Turk and Young 2020.
102 See discussion in Hruby and Nakassis 2024.

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Classification: changes in classification are indicated by ‘Reclassified’ and the former series is also provided.

Comparanda: in this section we primarily refer to other texts that are related (in physical form, format, scribal attribution, or content) to the document in question, including possible joins or quasi-joins. Additional comments about archaeological context are also occasionally included here.

Correspondence: in this section we provide cross-references to the direct correspondences between the entries of texts in the Eb, En, Eo, and Ep series. For ease of reference, we also present these correspondences in tabular form (Tables 12–14).¹⁰³

Table 12. Correspondences between En and Eo texts.

Tertiary Series (En)	Secondary Series (Eo)
609.1	—
609.2	—
609.3	211.1
609.4	211, abstraction of .2–.5
609.5	211.2
609.6	211.3
609.7	211.4
609.8	211.5
[609.9	<i>angustum</i>]
609.10	224.1
609.11	224, abstraction of .2–.8
609.12	224.2
609.13	224.3
609.14	224.4
609.15	224.5
609.16	224.6
609.17	224.7
609.18	224.8
[609.19	cut, to leave an <i>angustum</i>]
74.1	276.1
74.2	276, abstraction of .2–.8
74.3	276.2
74.4	276.3
74.5	276.4
74.6	276.5
74.7	276.6
74.8	276.7
74.9	276.8
[74.10	<i>angustum</i>]
74.11	247.1
74.12	247, abstraction of .2–.7
74.13	247.4

103 After Bennett 1983, pp. 43–44.

Table 12, *continued*

Tertiary Series (En)	Secondary Series (Eo)
74.14	247.5
74.15	247.6
74.16	247.7
74.17	247.2
74.18	247.3
[74.19	<i>angustum</i>]
74.20	160.1
74.21	160, abstraction of .2–.4
74.22	160.2
74.23	160.3
74.24	160.4
[	cut, leaving no <i>angustum</i>]
659.1	441.1
659.2	444, abstraction of .2–.5 (or –.6)
659.3	444.2
659.4	444.3
659.5	444.4 (or .6, or .4 and .6)
659.6	444.5
[659.7	<i>angustum</i>]
659.8	351.1
659.9	351, abstraction of .2
659.10	351.2
[659.11	<i>angustum</i>]
659.12	471.1
659.13	471, abstraction and text of .2
[659.14	<i>angustum</i>]
659.15	281.1
659.16	281, abstraction and text of .2
659.17	<i>angustum</i>]
659.18	269 <i>recto</i>
659.19	269, abstraction and text of <i>latus superius</i>
[	cut, leaving no <i>angustum</i>]
467.1	278
[467.2	<i>angustum</i>]
467.3	268
[467.4	<i>angustum</i>]
467.5	371
[467.6	cut, to leave an <i>angustum</i>]

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Table 13. Correspondences between Ep and Eb texts.

Tertiary series (Ep)	Primary Series (Eb)
301.1	818
301.2	846
301.3	369
301.4	747
301.5	903
301.6	874
[301.7	<i>angustum</i>]
301.8	496
301.9	566
301.10	893
301.11	501
301.12	377
301.13	499
301.14	895
[301.15	cut, to leave an <i>angustum</i>]
613.1–.2	495
613.3	862
613.4–.5	149
613.6	177
613.7	152
613.8	842
613.9	156
613.10	159
613.11	173.1
613.12	173.2
613.13	839
613.14	364
613.15	502
613.16	905
613.17	900
613.18	(502?)
613.19	—
613.20	(1347?)
[	cut, leaving no <i>angustum</i>]
705.1	866
705.2	890
705.3	169
705.4	—
705.5	835
705.6	—
705.7	—
705.8	—
705.9	884

Table 13, *continued*

Tertiary series (Ep)	Primary Series (Eb)
705.10	464
[	cut, leaving no <i>angustum</i>]
212.1	916
212.2	—
212.3	913
212.4	347
212.5	1345
212.6	858
212.7	976
212.8	915
212.9	498
212.10	1174
[	cut, leaving no <i>angustum</i>]
539.1	—
539.2	1440
539.3	885
539.4	—
539.5	—
539.6	859
539.7	—
539.8	1176
539.9	954
539.10	1187
539.11	1188
539.12	1186
539.13	477 and 472
539.14	473
[	cut, leaving no <i>angustum</i>]
704.1	294
704.2	416
704.3	339
704.4	321
704.5–.6	297
705.7–.8	338
[	cut in a curve, to leave the right end of .8 as an <i>angustum</i>]

Table 14. Elements of the primary series finding no correspondence in the tertiary series.

Primary Series (Eb)
156.2
871

Prior Publication: This is intended to make it easy to refer to classifications changed from previous editions, especially *PTT*, *PT II*, *PT I*, or changes in number. In addition, there are references to the

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publications of the *CMS* and also to interpretative works that make useful suggestions for an improvement of the text.

NAM: Every inscribed artifact at the National Archaeological Museum (NAM) bears an inventory number prefixed by the Greek letter Π; nodules also bear a *sphragida* (σφρ.) number. Tablets now on display in the museum are also indicated as such.

Find spots and number of fragments: Each fragment that constitutes the document is recorded in tabular form, listed in the numerical order of their components. For each fragment, the following data are included: under *Formerly*, previous classifications (“new” here indicates a fragment recuperated from the *akatagrapha* by Melena); under *Year/Comp.*, the year of excavation and the number of the component; under *A. F. Photo* or *M. L. Photo* the relevant photograph (by Frantz, and later by Lang or Serafis), under *Find Spots*, the archaeological find spot; and under *Joined*, a reference indicating when and by whom it was joined to the document.

The complete documentation of the find spots thus illustrates the scatter of fragments. Within Room 8, fragments found on the bench will have a suffix B. Thus, for example, fragment a of Aa 60 has a find spot of 8.1322B. Room coordinates with x. were found in the chasm or in disturbed earth.

At the bottom of the table, references to photographs of the tablets by K. Xenikakis and K. Voutsas are also given.

ABBREVIATIONS

Titles of journals, series, and standard reference works are abbreviated according to the *American Journal of Archaeology*.

1. EDITIONS

PTI E. L. Bennett Jr., *The Pylos Tablets: A Preliminary Transcription*, with a foreword by C. W. Blegen, Princeton 1951.

PTII E. L. Bennett Jr., *The Pylos Tablets: Texts of the Inscriptions Found, 1939–1954*, with a foreword by C. W. Blegen, Princeton 1955.

OOT E. L. Bennett Jr., *The Olive Oil Tablets of Pylos: Texts of Inscriptions Found, 1955* (Minos Supplement 2), Salamanca 1958.

PTT E. L. Bennett Jr. and J.-P. Olivier, *The Pylos Tablets Transcribed*, 2 vols., Rome 1973 and 1976.

PTTI *Part I: Texts and Notes.*

PTTII *Part II: Hands, Concordances, Indices.*

Tonplomben W. Müller, J.-P. Olivier, I. Pini and A. Sakellariou, *Die Tonplomben aus dem Nestorpalast von Pylos*, ed. I. Pini, Mainz 1997.

ARN L. Godart and A. Sacconi, *Les archives du roi Nestor: Corpus des inscriptions en linéaire B de Pylos. Volume I: Séries Aa–Fr, Volume II: Séries Gn–Xn (Pasiphae XIII [2019] and XIV [2020])*, Pisa and Rome 2020.

PTT2nd J.-P. Olivier(†) and M. Del Freo, *The Pylos Tablets Transcribed*, 2nd ed., Padova 2020.

PT3rd J. L. Melena with the collaboration of Richard J. Firth, *The Pylos Tablets, Third Edition in Transliteration*, Vitoria 2021.

2. MONOGRAPHS

PofNI C. W. Blegen and M. Rawson, *The Palace of Nestor at Pylos in Western Messenia. Volume I: The Buildings and Their Contents*, Princeton 1966.

PofNIII C. W. Blegen, M. Rawson, W. D. Taylour, and W. P. Donovan, *The Palace of Nestor at Pylos in Western Messenia. Volume III: Acropolis and Lower Town, Tholoi, Grave Circles and Chamber Tombs, Discoveries Outside the Citadel*, Princeton 1973.

3. NOTEBOOKS

CWB 1952 = Carl W. Blegen, Pylos Notebook, 1952, ASCSA Pylos Excavations Archive.

CWB 1954 = Carl W. Blegen, Pylos Notebook, 1954, ASCSA Pylos Excavations Archive.

GEM 1952 = George E. Mylonas, Pylos Notebook, 1952, ASCSA Pylos Excavations Archive.

MR 1955 = Marion Rawson, Pylos Notebook, 1955, ASCSA Pylos Excavations Archive.

MR 1956 = Marion Rawson, Pylos Notebook, 1956, ASCSA Pylos Excavations Archive.

MR 1957 = Marion Rawson, Pylos Notebook, 1957, ASCSA Pylos Excavations Archive.

WAMcD 1939 = William A. McDonald, Pylos Notebook, 1939, ASCSA Pylos Excavations Archive.

WDT 1955 = William D. Taylour, Pylos Notebook, 1955, ASCSA Pylos Excavations Archive.

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4. ABBREVIATIONS FOR PEOPLE

Excavation supervisors and tablet menders:

AM	Andreas Mavraganis	TK	Triantaphyllos Kontogeorgis
CWB	Carl W. Blegen	WAMcD	William A. McDonald
ELB	Emmett L. Bennett Jr.	WDT	William D. Taylour
GEM	George E. Mylonas		
JLM	José Luis Melena	Photographers:	
JPO	Jean-Pierre Olivier	A. F.	Alison Frantz
LG	Louis Godart	D. N.	Dimitri Nakassis
MR	Marion Rawson	E. S.	Émile (Aimilios) Serafis
MV	Michael Ventris	K. V.	Katerina Voutsas
		M. L.	Mabel Lang

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