

News

Further summaries of papers read at the meetings of the American Philological Association and Archæological Institute of America, 28-30 December, 1958.

H. L. Thomas (Univ. of Missouri), "Troy, Macedonia, and the North" — The northern material at Troy VIIb (knobbed pottery and moulds for socketed and shaft-hole axes) have often been derived from Hungary, while the somewhat earlier northern elements from Vardino and Vardarophtsa in Macedonia (fluted pottery and bowls with turban rims) have been traced to a "Lausitz" source. As recently as 1950, Childe speaks of kindred settlers at Troy and in Macedonia and traces them to the Middle and Upper Danubian Basin. Careful analysis of the Troadic and Macedonian materials, however, suggests that they derive from two different sources. Recent excavations and the publication of material excavated long ago in Yugoslavia and Rumania support this view. The Macedonian pottery finds its best analogies in Bosnia and Slavonia, while the Troy VIIb wares are at home both in eastern Hungary and Rumania. In both regions these analogies date to the end of the Middle Bronze or the beginning of the Late Bronze. Many theories have been advanced to explain the presence of these northern elements on the fringes of the Aegean. The old Lausitz theory restated by Richthofen in 1940, the more recent theory of a northwest Balkan origin advanced by Milošević in 1949, and the conception of a flight of Hungarian Bronze Age peoples before a Tumulus invasion postulated by Mozsolics in 1957 fail to explain all the facts, although each of these theories has some basis in the archaeological finds. It is here proposed as a working hypothesis that a southward push of Lausitz peoples dislodged the peoples of Slavonia and Bosnia, who then migrated not only southward into Macedonia, but also eastward into Rumania, to judge from recent finds. In Rumania they displaced local peoples who migrated across Thrace to Troy, where the latter arrived somewhat later than the group which invaded Macedonia, as is indicated by both Macedonian and Trojan chronology.

J. L. Benson (Univ. of Mississippi), "The Griffin in the Minoan-Mycenaean World" — An investigation of Bronze Age griffins may assist in an understanding of the religious concepts of that period. The monuments show militant and pacific griffins. The militant griffin is sometimes predatory, alone or with a lion, and sometimes fights lions. Pacific griffins comprise those in a heraldic mirror view, single standing or couchant griffins and single griffins in relation to a human (or divine) being. In heraldic groups, griffins and lions seem to a certain extent to be interchangeable. In such groups these beasts are closely associated in a formal pose with the Priest-King and the Snake Goddess (Goddess of the Palace Cult). Lions -- but not griffins -- are shared as attributes with the Mistress of the Animals. Representations of her with lions and

other animals are generally characterized by a certain informality of pose. A polytheistic rather than a monotheistic interpretation of Minoan-Mycenaean religion is suggested by this analysis of the monuments and the pacific griffin seems to be specifically a symbol of the Snake Goddess and the regal-clerical guidance of civilization. The militant griffin, if taken as the antithesis of the pacific griffin, symbolizes negative forces in connection with the palace cult. These results are based on representations whose genuineness is beyond doubt.

S. Levin (Washington Univ.), "The problem of verifying the Linear B decipherment" — The Ventris-Chadwick decipherment has been accepted too enthusiastically by most scholars and rejected too flatly by a few critics. The most important tablet for testing it is PY Ta641, because of the detailed drawings of tripods and jugs. A sober consideration of such evidence proves that Ventris' phonetic values work for several of the Linear B characters, yielding authentic words of Greek or some related language. But his phonetic values for other characters on the tablet produce no satisfactory sense. From other tablets with clear drawings a few more items of the decipherment can be verified; yet the greater part of the grid remains unconfirmed. Ventris' values have turned out right most often where they coincide with the values that the same characters had in the Cypriote syllabary of the Classical period. These are not enough to support the rest of the grid, which he put together by guesswork, sometimes shrewd but often arbitrary. Those who accept the grid whole, along with the loose and unverified rules of spelling, have found only a few tablets utterly baffling; for wherever the text goes against their previous assumptions, they resolve it by assuming a scribal error. Actually so little of the Linear B corpus is securely deciphered that we have no sentences and very few constructions altogether. What we can depend on, however, makes it probable that in some major features the language differed from Greek and agreed with Indo-Iranian. It was a mistake to expect that a language not yet used for any important literature would exhibit nearly the same structure as the known Greek language from Homer on. The experiment that Ventris proposed has really established just a small but precious part of his decipherment. Confusion, not progress, comes from treating the rest as valid.

T. P. Howe (Univ. of Michigan), "Linear B and Hesiod's Breadwinners" — Homer, the excavations, and Linear B documents so far, all indicate that the Mycenaeans subsisted mainly on meat, vegetables, and perhaps a little porridge, but very little, if at all, on bread. This is proven (a) by literary references, (b) by the absence of equipment like granaries and bake-ovens. (c) In Linear B records defining divisions of employment, there is a notable absence of reference to a large male labor force such as would be required for large scale agricultural work; and (d) these records also indicate that the Mycenaean rate of sowing was "absurdly low." In contrast not only are large inventories of livestock recorded, but Linear B also reveals that the oldest usage of the word nomós signified 'pasture', agora 'a collecting place for sheep'

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and agoraios 'of mixed livestock', indicating how deeply flocks were the Mycenaean's source of wealth and of life. The incoming Dorians, flock-breeding nomads, upset that economy, for Greek grazing-land was insufficient to support the new-comers and the subsequent increase in population. Periodic colonization abroad afforded only temporary relief from meat-hunger. A shift from meat to more cereal and, eventually, more bread as the main dietary staple was the answer to survival, and this was gradually accomplished by intensified cultivation of grain on small-scale independent farms. Extensive sheep-herding by a few men, horticulture by a few more slaves, female particularly, was no longer enough. It is no wonder then that Hesiod evaluates the Races of Man in due proportion to the ease with which they obtained their food: in his Paradise on earth and in the after-life the food produces itself, while the new burdens of his own Age leave free men prematurely gray and enslaved to the Calendar. Thus, when viewed in the light of the developing agriculture, Hesiod's Works and Days is not merely "a compendium of time-honored agricultural instruction," but a manual for the new economy, for the inexperienced tillers of the soil who were beginning to practice independent farming full-time and in great numbers. Thus the Works and Days is a creative work of the same cultural magnitude as the more celebrated Theogony: the latter as the great poem which defined the new Olympian stage of religion, and the former as the great poem which instructed in the new stage of agrarian economy. Both together functioned equally as immense cultural forces in the stabilization and integration of Early Greek Classical civilization.

G. P. Goold (Univ. of Manitoba), "Homer and the Greek Dialects" — This paper argues that the Ionians and Aeolians are in origin identical with the Achaeans of the Mycenaean Age, and that the Homeric dialect is not an amalgamation of separately derived elements but contains only chronologically different forms of a single dialect. Recent research suggests that many of the features typical of Ionic and Aeolic are late, and that, when these are discounted, the two dialects differ from Achaean only in characteristics which can be attributed to the influence of the Dorian invasion. Thus the Ionians and Aeolians are descendants of the Achaeans of the Mycenaean Age, a little tarred maybe with the Dorian brush. There are indications that Linear B was never used for early Greek epic and that the hexameter existed in Mycenaean times. Invasions of Dorians (the earliest of these sacked Knossos) later affected the original Achaean speech, which in Greece north of the Peloponnese became what may be termed Proto-Aeolic: the language of minstrelsy underwent similar change. When Proto-Aeolic subsequently crystallized into Ionic and Aeolic, the former, the vernacular of the bards of the time, naturally predominated in the further development of the epic; but old Achaean vocabulary (Homer's Arcado-Cyprian words) and Proto-Aeolic morphology (Homer's Aeolic elements) were kept and cherished for metrical or formulaic considerations. Thus the Homeric tradition, like the hexameter which dictated its form

and the bards who gave it utterance, can trace a single and unbroken ancestry back to the Mycenaean Age, its rich and varied dialect forms being an intrinsic part of that tradition and reflecting the linguistic evolution through which it passed.

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At a conference of East European Classical Philologists in Erfurt, 16-18 December, 1958, one of the themes discussed was "Minoica and Homer." Papers were offered by A. Bartoněk and V. Georgiev.

At Innsbruck University L. R. Palmer delivered four lectures, 15-17 December, 1958: "Einführung in die Probleme der mykenischen Sprache, Interpretation ausgewählter Linear-B-Texte, Neue religiöse Texte aus Pylos, Die Indogermanisierung des griechischen Raumes."

The University of Rome has instituted a Centro di Studi Micenei, which is preparing an Inventario del lessico miceneo, and an Edizione dei documenti micenei, for academic use.

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