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LINEAR A AND LINEAR B

SALGARELLA (E.) *Aegean Linear Script(s). Rethinking the Relationship Between Linear A and Linear B*. Pp. xx + 416, b/w & colour ills, maps. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020. Cased, £90, US $120. ISBN: 978-1-108-47938-7.

doi:10.1017/S0009840X21002614

The decipherment of Linear A is a holy grail in the study of Aegean scripts; this book is not a decipherment. It is, however, one of the most significant contributions to understanding the relationship between the Linear A and the Linear B scripts since Arthur Evans first explored this topic over a century ago (A. Evans, *Scripta Minoa* [1909]). Nor is it a narrow study focused solely on the 'mechanics' of both scripts; it also draws out the socio-cultural implications of its conclusions, thus contributing to the debate about the nature of social change on Crete in the fifteenth to fourteenth centuries BCE.

S.'s study is arranged in five chapters, supported by an extensive bibliography, a general index and an index of signs cited. There is also an online complement in the form of two full appendices that offer detailed documentation of the palaeography of Linear A at eight Cretan sites (I) and the equivalent for what is generally accepted to be the earliest-known Linear B, that from the Room of the Chariot Tablets at Knossos (II).

In her admirably concise and focused first chapter, 'Introduction and Theoretical Framework', S. first presents an overview of the distribution in space and time of Linear A and Linear B documents, before moving on to explore the script's *structure* (how the different components functioned) and *palaeography* (the different ways in which signs were formed), which constitute the two key areas for S.'s analysis in subsequent chapters. S. then situates past interpretations of the relationship between Linear A and Linear B within the larger debate surrounding the cultural relations between Bronze Age Crete and mainland Greece, which became polarised with the decipherment of Linear B in 1952 and the realisation that it recorded Greek. The decipherment definitively separated the two scripts, a position that S. argues against later in the volume. The post-Evans and post-decipherment frameworks (culture, language, script, historical interpretation) are summarised in a figure (p. 24), one of many throughout the book that helpfully clarify S.'s argument. There follows an analysis of the components of a writing system: a graphic system (script and numerical notation), a linguistic system (script and language) and a metrological system (numerical notation, with agreed mathematical values), also helpfully presented in a diagram (p. 31). Based on this theoretical discussion, S. evaluates the similarities and differences between Linear A and B, including an assessment of the (generally current) view, shared by S., that Linear A and B signs of similar form shared similar phonetic values. This leads to a 'first assessment' that the two scripts are essentially similar, while they are deployed within different administrative systems (p. 41). The rest of the book can be read as an extended and detailed examination of the unity of the two scripts.

In her next two chapters, 'What Does Linear A Look Like?' and 'What Does Linear B Look Like?', S. examines first the structure (pp. 51–150), then the palaeography (pp. 150–77), of Linear A, then of Linear B (pp. 210–33; 233–82). She introduces each chapter with an overview of the nature of the evidence: only administrative documents are compared to ensure equivalence, leaving aside a few non-administrative Linear A texts. Linear A documents from eight sites (Haghia Triada, Zakros, Khania, Knossos, Phaistos, Mallia, Tylissos and Arkhanes) and Linear B from two Knossos deposits (the

The Classical Review 72.1 13–15 © The Author(s), 2021. Published by Cambridge University Press on behalf of The Classical Association

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009840X21002614 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Room of the Chariot Tablets and the North Entrance Passage/Northwest Insula) form the comparison, the discussion being fully supported by the online appendices. It emerges from these detailed presentations that Linear A simple signs tend to be multifunctional (phonetic, sematographic or supra-structural), while composite signs (of which there are a considerable number, whose structural principles S. thoroughly elucidates) tend to fulfil single functions. Significantly, the principles of sign combination, if not the specific composite signs, seem to be widely shared between sites. Palaeographically speaking, Linear A demonstrates relatively high intra-site variability, but low inter-site variability. While the Linear B deposits examined show many fewer examples of composite signs, those that exist share the same principles (synthetic juxtaposition and ligaturing) that are found in Linear A. Although some new signs are created in Linear B, those with Linear A predecessors often continue variant forms present in that script. S. also makes the point that sign forms in Linear A to Linear B do not always go from complex to simple, calling into question arguments about the potential chronological significance of sign variants.

In Chapter 4, 'Interpretative Models', S. brings the two separate analyses together and proposes that the evidence presented implies that Linear B is simply *one variant* (albeit slightly later chronologically, as now attested) of Linear A, proposing later in the chapter the term 'Aegean Linear Script' for both (p. 369). The proposed relationship is again helpfully schematised in a diagram (p. 285) and a table (p. 286). Since the two scripts seem each to show a core set of simple signs, plus a further, script-specific set, S. argues that the 'B' subset reflects the need to record Greek and then seeks to determine whether the 'A-specific' set of simple signs might reflect the language behind Linear A. Ultimately this cannot be proven, since we do not understand that language, but further confirmation of the notion is provided by a comparison with the Cretan Hieroglyphic sign repertoire. In most cases this seems not to be the source of signs in the 'A' subset; rather most parallels with Cretan Hieroglyphic appear to be predecessors to Linear A 'core' signs.

The palaeographical examination that follows further demonstrates that the transition from Linear A to B is unlikely to have taken place through a single, standard variant (the tacitly assumed conventional view), but, because sign-variants that already exist in Linear A also appear in the earliest Linear B, the process proceeded without standardisation, essentially 'within' the same script (figure on p. 357). Moreover, the pattern of shared variants suggests to S. that the forms of Linear A closest palaeographically to that of the earliest Linear B are those attested on the north coast, particularly those of Khania and Zakros, not the Haghia Triada and Phaistos variants. (An issue here is the paucity of evidence from Knossos, as S. recognises [p. 376]; even closer parallels *may* have existed there.) A controversial point (p. 332) is the existence at Zakros of three potential ancestors of Linear B *o*-series signs, unfortunately all *hapax legomena*. S. concludes that her analysis demonstrates the essential unity of the two scripts, stating that Linear A and Linear B (p. 369) are 'one and the very same script, two sides of the same coin, and not two entirely separate entities', preferring the term 'Aegean Linear Script' for this overall entity. Emergent Linear B maintained the overall structural and palaeographical characteristics in a process of 'soft adaptation' in the northern part of Crete.

In her short concluding chapter S summarises her argument and also offers a more subtle historical reconstruction of the transition from (what many would call) 'Minoan' to 'Mycenaean' Crete: more an amalgamation of traditions than an abrupt transition. Adapting this reviewer's assessment that 'Linear A was killed', S. suggests instead that it was 'never born' (p. 376).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009840X21002614 Published online by Cambridge University Press

There is much to commend here: meticulous and systematic documentation and analysis; clear exposition, aided by appropriate diagrams; and a subtle, open-minded interpretative framework going beyond a narrow focus on writing. One could quibble with the nature of the database: of the eight sites whose Linear B documents are analysed, only Haghia Triada exceeds 100 documents. Some attempt might have been made to evaluate the effect of a fragmentary dataset. A fundamental issue is that Linear A remains undeciphered; much will become crystal clear once that holy grail is acquired. S.'s volume, in the meantime, demonstrates how much can be achieved without a decipherment. It deserves to be read – with care – by anyone with an interest in Aegean scripts or in the invention, adaptation and development of writing systems in general.

University of Sheffield JOHN BENNET
d.j.bennet@sheffield.ac.uk

ASPECTS OF ANCIENT GREEK LINGUISTICS

LEIWO (M.), VIERROS (M.), DAHLGREN (S.) (edd.) *Papers on Ancient Greek Linguistics. Proceedings of the Ninth International Colloquium on Ancient Greek Linguistics (ICAGL 9), 30 August – 1 September 2018, Helsinki*. (Commentationes Humanarum Litterarum 139.) Pp. xii + 578, figs. Helsinki: The Finnish Society of Sciences and Letters, 2020. Paper, €35. ISBN: 978-951-653-443-8.
doi:10.1017/S0009840X21002900

The International Colloquia on Ancient Greek Linguistics (ICAGL), initiated in 1983, each have a central theme but are open to all areas of Greek linguistics; after merging in 2015 with another series of international conferences on Ancient Greek linguistics, they have become the regular venue for all scholars working in the field, without any restriction of approach. This means that a wide variety of topics and approaches are addressed, reflecting the current discussions in the discipline. This volume brings together contributions presented at the ninth ICAGL (Helsinki 2018). The central theme was language contact and the consideration of original documents. The organisers and editors, themselves actively involved in this perspective, emphasise this dimension. However, this does not reflect the majority of the contributions: sixteen contributions out of twenty-six (not twenty-nine as stated in the introduction) deal with Greek linguistics in general.

All the articles are in English, except two (in German and French). From an editorial point of view, the volume is provided with useful indexes (of ancient sources, names, places, subjects and words). The proceedings were published quickly (also online: http://scientiarum.fi/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/139-Commentationes-Humanarum-Litterarum.pdf). However, a list of works cited for the brief introduction is lacking, as are the abstracts of all the chapters (with one exception). Few readers will read the book from cover to cover, but the overall structure is neither very clear nor consistent: Part 1 is dedicated to 'Greek in Contact', Part 2 to 'Discourse Analysis' (surprisingly distinguished from pragmatics), Part 3 to 'Morphology and Syntax', Part 4 to 'Modality, Semantics, and Pragmatics' (three categories that cannot belong to the same level). Since a detailed

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https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009840X21002614 Published online by Cambridge University Press