

## 1. AN OUTLINE OF THE MAIN PROBLEMS

The question of the origin of Linear B has been discussed since the first discoveries of the script (especially in Palaima(1988a) which inspired me to write this book). Arthur Evans (who discovered the first Linear B tablets in Knossos in 1900) offered early theories on the subject, but his views were subsequently shown to be incorrect, especially after the decipherment of the script. Even though modern scholars are far from having the final say on the topic, we are now sure that Linear B was not an advanced form of Linear A introduced as a result of a dynastic revolution, but still used for the same language, as was proposed by Evans (1909). Due to a lack of knowledge of the language(s) involved, Evans' views were in the first half of the 20th century supported by some other leading scholars in the field of Aegean archaeology. For example, Myres saw the creation of Linear B as a drastic reform of the local Linear A variants in the signary, proposing that the larger number of signs in Linear B did not indicate a different language, but "a more refined distinction between sounds"(Myres in Evans 1952). Pugliese Carratelli (1945) explained the introduction of Linear B as a spelling reform, with the languages of the two scripts remaining the same. The hypothesis that Linear A and B recorded the same language was disproved once Linear B was deciphered. Even before the decipherment Kober 1946; 1948) argued that Linear A and B did not represent the same language, since the inflection patterns obvious in Linear B could not be traced in Linear A.

	A	B	C	D	E	F
Case I	𐀓𐀔𐀕𐀖	𐀓𐀔𐀕𐀖	𐀓𐀔𐀕𐀖	𐀓𐀔𐀕𐀖	𐀓𐀔𐀕𐀖	𐀓𐀔𐀕𐀖
II	𐀓𐀔𐀕𐀗	𐀓𐀔𐀕𐀗	𐀓𐀔𐀕𐀗	𐀓𐀔𐀕𐀗	𐀓𐀔𐀕𐀗	𐀓𐀔𐀕𐀗
III	𐀓𐀔𐀕𐀘	𐀓𐀔𐀕𐀘	𐀓𐀔𐀕𐀘	𐀓𐀔𐀕𐀘	𐀓𐀔𐀕𐀘	𐀓𐀔𐀕𐀘

Figure 2. Examples of inflection detected by Alice Kober in Linear B prior to the decipherment of the script. Column B shows the following cases: case I (ko-no-si-ja), case II ( ko-no-si-jo), case III(ko-no-so).

Once the decipherment of Linear B demonstrated that the two languages were not identical, the main focus of studies of the creation of Linear B

shifted to other questions, such as the place and period of creation. The decipherment made it obvious that Linear B was adapted from Linear A in order to express a different language, and that this adaptation was connected to intensified contacts between the people from Crete and the Mainland Greek-speakers. However, it remained unclear whether the creation of Linear B was executed by Minoan scribes, or whether it was the work of Mycenaeans acquainted with Linear A. We will see below that the recent studies of this question support the idea of collaboration between the Minoan and Mycenaean scribes in creation of Linear B.

Over the past few decades, the number of studies devoted to the problem has significantly increased, as can be seen from the overview below. Unfortunately, more than a hundred years after its discovery, some aspects of the origin of Linear B are still unresolved. We will see that the majority of scholars have felt that the most pressing questions are where and when Linear B was created, whereas a few have pondered the question of how. Perhaps the question of the process did not provoke as much controversy between scholars due to a general consensus that the Linear B script was an adaptation of Linear A; the details of that procedure seemed less pressing compared with the questions of when and where the adaptation occurred. Palaima (1988a) tried to bridge this gap by giving a detailed analysis of the process of creation: which Linear A signs were abandoned and why, which new signs were introduced and why, etc.

The overview below will show, furthermore, that most contributions to the problem are concerned with the origin of the script itself. However, it is sometimes forgotten that the term Linear B does not only refer to the script, but also to the administrative system for which the script was used. Once these two components are distinguished, resolving the origin of Linear B becomes a more demanding task and may reveal another source along with the traditionally acknowledged Linear A. Despite Evans' misinterpretation of the relationship between Linear A and B, one of his ideas on the origin of Linear B may still have some merit – the influence of Cretan Hieroglyphic, an issue which is more thoroughly considered throughout this book.

## **2. AN OVERVIEW OF THEORIES ON THE ORIGIN OF LINEAR B**

### **2.1. WHY WAS LINEAR B CREATED?**

This is probably the least debatable question concerning the origin of Linear B, so only a brief overview is provided. Most scholars believe that Linear B was introduced for the purpose of facilitating economic transac-