

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-

tions of developing Mycenaean centres. Pope (1961 – 1962) argued that keeping the palace accounts was the only purpose of Linear B – when that purpose vanished with the destruction of the palaces, there was no longer a reason for the existence of the script. Hooker (1979), on the other hand, suggests that the script could also have been created for writing of continuous texts, perhaps those of a literary character, but for now there is absolutely no evidence in favour of this option.

Quite a different view was more recently expressed by Driessen and Schoep (Driessen & Schep 1999) who thought that the creation of Linear B was one of the means of imposing political domination over Crete and of enhancing social stratification. Linear B was thus employed as a mechanism of control by the political elite.

2.2. WHERE WAS LINEAR B CREATED?

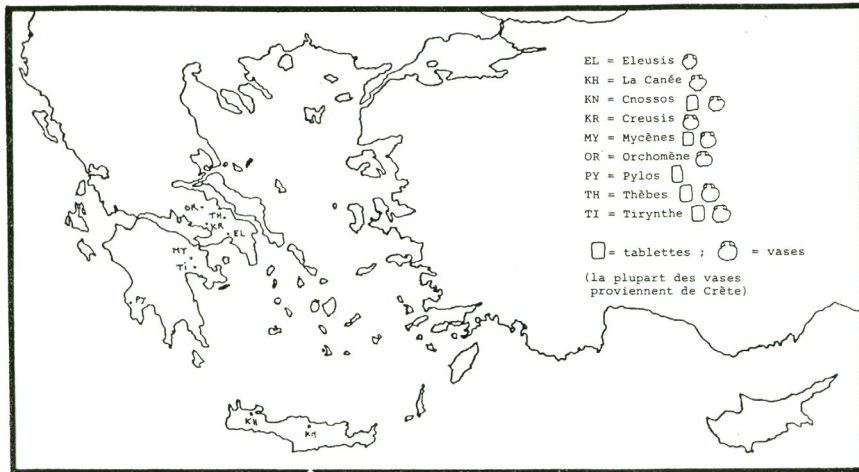


Figure 3. Sites on the island of Crete and on the Greek Mainland where Linear B inscriptions have been discovered.

The opinions here are divided into two main groups: those who believe that Linear B originated on Crete, and those who favour the Greek Mainland. A third candidate, the Cyclades, has also been proposed.

By assuming that Linear B was an advanced form of Linear A, Evans (1909) naturally concluded that the script originated on Crete. Nothing was obviously wrong with this idea at the time when Evans was writing, since Linear B documents on the Mainland were not known until their dis-

covery at Pylos in 1939 (Bennett 1955; Blegen & Rawson 1966). The first Linear B documents from Mycenae came to light in 1950 and 1952 (Bennett 1958, 1985), followed by Thebes in 1964, 1970, 1982, 1993-96 and 2005 (Spyropoulos & Chadwick 1975; Aravantinos 1999, 2008; Aravantinos, Godart & Sacconi 2001, 2002), Symenoglou 1973; 1975, Tiryns in 1966, 1971 and 1974 (Olivier 1988), Midea since the 1990s (Walberg 1992- 1993, 1996- 1997), and most recently at Dimini (Skafida, Karnava & Olivier 2012), Iklaina and Ayios Vasileos (linear B tablets from the last two mentioned sites have not yet been published, all sites with Linear B are listed in Marazzi 2009). In addition to these, stirrup jars with painted Linear B inscriptions have been discovered at several Mainland sites: Mycenae, Tiryns, Eleusis, Kreusis, Orchomenos, Midea and Thebes (van Alfen 2011).

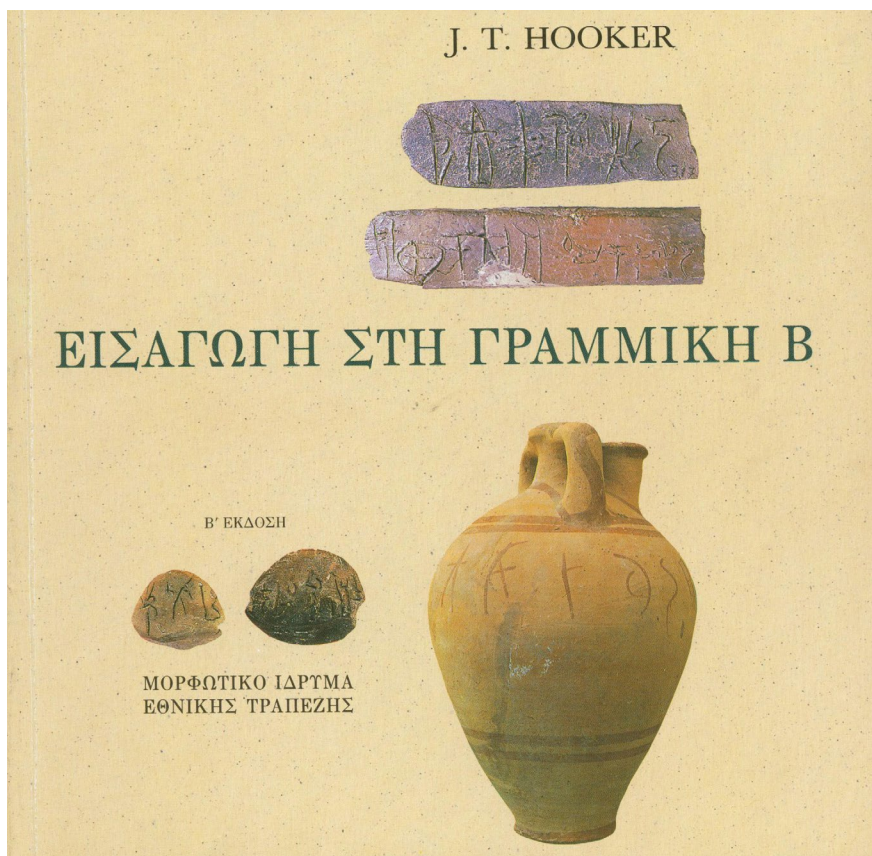


Figure 4. Types of objects inscribed in Linear B: elongated tablets on top, a stirrup jar on the bottom right, and the sealed objects on the bottom left front page of Hooker 1979).

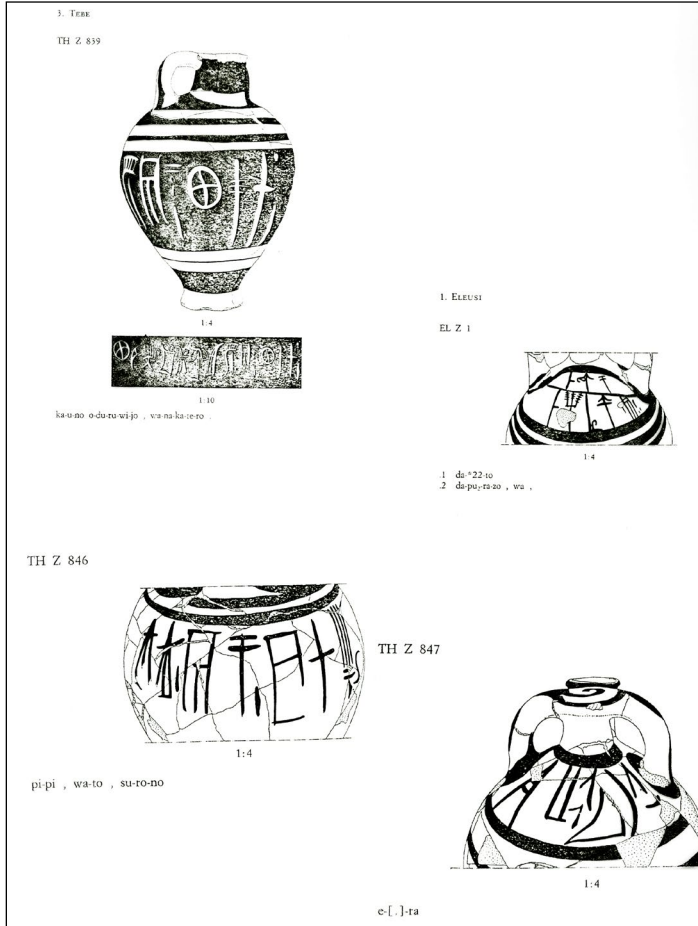


Figure 5. Several examples of Mycenaean stirrup jars with painted inscriptions in Linear B.

Even after the discovery of the Pylian archive, some scholars, like Caratelli, pursued the idea of a Cretan origin of Linear B, which consequently, they assumed, was exported to the Mainland. Later scholars supported the same line of thought, even after the script was deciphered and shown to have recorded Greek. Sacconi's argument was similar to that proposed by Peruzzi (Peruzzi 1960). She explained the phenomenon of the 'unità grafica continentale' as a result of the Mainland adoption, at a certain moment, of a particular Linear B graphic style from Crete, and not as a more spontaneous development of the script on the Mainland. Had the script evolved on the Mainland, Sacconi argues, the graphic style would have been more diverse; its unity shows that it was introduced there in an established form. (Sac-

coni 1976). That Linear B was created on Crete, more precisely at Knossos, was also supported by Heubeck, (Heubeck 1982) who, however, thought in terms of a much later date than that proposed by Olivier (see below). Pope (1961–1962) also initially argued for the Knossian origin of the script, mostly because of the graphic similarity of the signs of ink-written Linear A inscriptions on two MM III Knossian cups (KN Zc 6 and 7, see figures 6 and 7), and certain signs in Linear B. Slightly later, however, he found it more plausible that Linear B was “created on the mainland in the period of the earlier shaft graves when Minoan influence was first strongly felt.” (Pope 1964). Support for the Cretan or more specifically Knossian origin of Linear B has also been voiced by Driessen on the basis of the continuity from Minoan to Mycenaean administrative practice in the West Wing of the palace (for example, in the archives on the upper floor). According to Driessen, this continuity was a result of cooperation between Minoan and Mycenaean scribes, which obviously took place at Knossos, and indicates that Linear B was created in the Minoan milieu, rather than on the Greek Mainland (Driessen 1990: 130).



Figure 6. Two Knossian clay cups KN Zc 6 and 7 from the MMII period with painted Linear B inscription inside them (GORILA vol. IV).

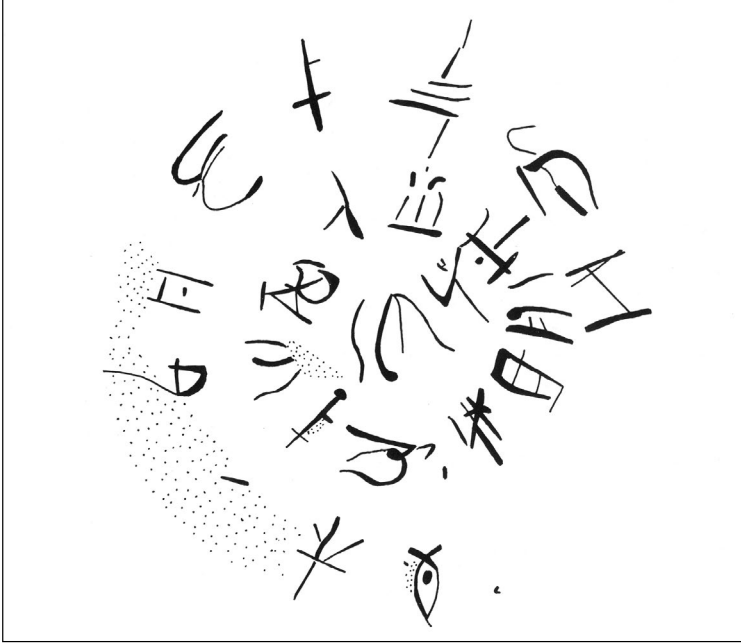


Figure 7. Text from inside one of the clay cups depicted on figure 6. (GORILA vol. IV).

As for the Mainland origin of Linear B, today the most ardent supporter of the theory is probably Godart,² although he initially believed that the script was created on Crete (Godart 1976: 32, 47). Not only did Godart later move to the ‘Mainland team’, but he even proposed a particular location where this creation occurred: Mycenae, as the cultural capital of the Mycenaean world (*ibid.*). (The view that Linear B was created in Mycenae has also been considered by Duhoux, but with some reservation.) Godart’s determined views of the script’s Mainland origin, and Olivier’s conviction that Linear B was created by Greeks on Crete, were published side by side in the 1979 volume of the *journal Studi Micenei ed Egeo-Anatolici*, giving the impression that by doing so the editors wanted to stress how divided opinions were on this matter (Godart 1979; Olivier 1979).

A combination of these two extremes was proposed by Hooker (1979: 71–73). He suggested that a Minoan script, related to that of the Haghia Triada

² The 1994 discovery of the Kafkania pebble inscribed in Linear B reinforced Godart’s conviction of the Mainland origin of Linear B. The pebble is dated to the end of MMIII period. (Godart 1999; 2002). However many authors doubt the authenticity of this pebble (e.g. Palaima 2002 – 2003 : 190, , n.7).

tablets, was introduced into the Mainland during the sixteenth century B.C. by Minoan scribes themselves. Immersed in the Greek environment, the script gradually started to modify (proto-B) and was steadily introduced to Crete, where it experienced its final adjustments in the fifteenth century in the light of political changes on the island. That the script was created by Minoan scribes brought to the Mainland was also suggested by Chadwick (1976: 106–107); he argued that these scribes abandoned their language and modified their script to write in Greek. A similar idea has been cautiously suggested by Driessen and Macdonald (1997: 117): that a Mycenaeanised Linear A (i.e. Linear B) was introduced to Crete by Minoans upon their return to the island after having abandoned it during the social unrest of LM I. The most recent view in support of the Mainland origin of Linear B came from Hallager. Since he believes that the Cretan Hieroglyphic played a decisive role on the creation of Linear B, Hallager (1997–1998) suggests that scribes of Cretan Hieroglyphic must have arrived to the Mainland and introduced their knowledge there during the early Neopalatial period before Linear A became dominant on Crete.

A quite different view has been offered by Palaima who saw the Cycladic islands as a mediator in transferring the script to the Mainland Greeks. He proposed that the creation of Linear B took place in the Cyclades in LM IB/LH II periods. (Palaima1982).

2.3 WHEN WAS LINEAR B CREATED?

The answer to the question of when Linear B was created depends on other, still unresolved chronological intricacies, such as the date of Linear B deposits at Knossos, or the date of the Mycenaean arrival to Crete (assuming that the script was created on the island).

Table 1: Proposed dates for the final destruction of the palace at Knossos.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Supporters</i>
LM II	Evans
End LM II – LM IIIA1	Boardman
LM IIIA1	Furumark, Godart & Tzedakis
Early LM IIIA2	Popham, Warren, Driessen, Cucuzza
LM IIIA2	Hood, Raison, Snodgrass, Hawke Smith
Early LM IIIB	Rehak & Younger
End LM IIIB1	Olivier
LM IIIB	Blegen, Hallager, Niemeier
End LM IIIB	Palmer

Figure 8. A table showing different suggestions for the date when the palace of Knossos was destroyed by fire which baked Linear B tablets – those would then be the dates when Linear B was in use at Knossos (the listed names are the authors who support the respective dates – a detailed bibliography can be found in Tomas 2004).

Hooker (1979: 46) suggests that by the time of their arrival to Crete,³ the Mycenaean must already have been literate – a thought provoked by the historical circumstances in the Aegean in the sixteenth and fifteenth centuries B.C. (i.e. noticeable Minoan influences), which would make it difficult to believe that the Mycenaean were not yet acquainted with writing. Hooker further points out that, if one accepts that the Mycenaean were illiterate at the time of their arrival to Crete (supposedly in LM II), it becomes difficult to explain the fact that in a mere fifty years they managed to create a script which was, according to him, much more advanced than Linear A despite at least two centuries of Minoan prior scribal tradition (Hooker 1979: 48. Goold and Pope expressed the same belief they found it hard to believe that the Mycenaean could have created a script stable enough to last unchanged for another two centuries on the Greek Mainland, all in the space of about fifty years of their presence at Knossos. (Goold & Pope 1955:V).

Hooker (1979: 36, n. 2) argued that the creation of Linear B was already under way during the period when the Haghia Triada tablets were written, something that had been previously suggested by Evans.⁴ As already said before, Pope tried to push the origin of Linear B to the MM III period on the basis of a comparison of some ornate and elaborate Linear B signs on two Linear A painted cups from Knossos (KN Zc 6 and 7), dated to MM III (Pope 1961 – 62). He suggested that examples of elaborate Linear A script like those attested on these two cups, rather than examples from Haghia Triada tablets, may have been a model for the creation of Linear B. According to Pope (1961 – 1962: 311), pinacological and epigraphical differences make the Haghia Triada documents an unsuitable parent to Linear B. However, Palaima undertook a detailed palaeographical analysis and found no justification for Pope’s argument. The fact that some Linear B signs are more elaborate than their Linear A counterparts on tablets, can be

³ This supposed event was in earlier literature placed at the beginning of the LM II period (for example, Ventris & Chadwick 1956, 38; Hooker, 1979, 41); for a concise overview of architectural, burial and pottery features which may indicate presence of the Mycenaean/Mainland tradition on Crete in LM II-III A1, see Haskell 1997, 188–189; Alberti 2004; Preston 1999; 2004; 2008, 314–316. A minority of scholars, however, argue that the Mycenaean arrived to Crete during the LM III A2–III B period, instead of LM II-III A1 (for a summary of both opinions, see Driessen & Farnoux 1997: 1–2). For other valuable contributions to the question, see Driessen & Macdonald, 1997; D’Agata & Moody 2005.

⁴ Evans had proposed the early half of the fifteenth century B. C. as the date of the introduction of linear B. He saw Linear B as the script of a ruling class which overlapped with a rival Linear A script, used at the same time in Haghia Triada and elsewhere on the island (Evans 1902 – 03: 53; 1921: 646).

explained, for example, by their creation from archetypal forms (Palaima 1988a : 331).

In considering the date of the creation of Linear B, Olivier (Olivier 1979: 45) tried to show that until the beginning of the sixteenth century B.C., Mycenaean society did not reach an economic level which required the use of a script. The *terminus post quem* he proposes is LH I. Olivier (*ibid.*) suggests that the script must have been created while Linear A was still in use, i.e. prior to the destructions around 1450 B.C. (LM IB). Furthermore, since Linear B appears to have been created from an archaic form of Linear A, that may have happened, according to Olivier (1979: 47), in a phase well before 1450 B.C., probably around 1600 B.C. (MM IIIB/LM IA). Graphic varieties indicate that the Linear B records which have been preserved at Knossos are considerably later than Linear B that was exported to the Mainland.

Godart (1979: 34–35) agrees with Olivier that the creation of Linear B coincided with the attainment of a certain economic level, which probably occurred three or four centuries before the destruction of the Mycenaean palaces (i.e. around 1600 B.C., as also proposed by Olivier (see above), but he does not agree, as we have seen above, on the place of its initial creation. Godart observes certain similarities between Cretan Hieroglyphic and Linear B documents, which further suggests to him that the creation of Linear B should be dated fairly early – the end of MH III (Godart, Kanta and Tzigounaki 1996: 597–598).

Duhoux (Duhoux 1985: 30, 31, 34) suggested a later date for the creation of Linear B: between (LM IA – LM II), possibly at Mycenae (Duhoux 1985: 30, 31, 34). This event, in his view, was preceded by a period when the Mycenaean on the Mainland were using Linear A scribes for their administration (a practice which could have started during MM IIIB). Heubeck (1982: 201) proposed an even later date for the transition from Linear A to Linear B: LM II or LM IIIA, but at Knossos, as a result of a change in population and new political circumstances. A compromise date is proposed by Driessen. According to him, the transition from Linear A to B was a result of cooperation between Minoan and Mycenaean scribes in the West Wing of Knossos (first proposed by Begg 1987: 184). This cooperation would have occurred in the intermediate period between Minoan and Mycenaean administration in this area. Driessen, to repeat, attributes the RCT deposit to this intermediate, LM II or early LM IIIA1 period (Driessen 1990: 130).

Hallager strongly disagrees with Driessen's interpretation that the RCT documents are earlier than the rest of the Knossian documents, therefore he does not support his view that the RCT would belong to such an intermedi-

ate period. According to him Linear B was created earlier, some time after the MM IIB destructions, and, as has already been quoted, not on Crete, but the Mainland.⁵

But, Rehak and Younger (2000: 288–29) argue a date similar to Driessen’s for the introduction of Linear B – LH II. It must be pointed out that the establishment of Linear B on the Mainland does not equal the beginning of administration. Rehak and Younger argue the existence of pre-LH II Mycenaean administration, reflected in sealstones, mostly from LH I–II context and imported from Crete, which have been found in the shaft graves in Mycenae and tholos tombs elsewhere. Thus they divide the Mycenaean administration into three phases: 1. LH I–II sealstones from the mentioned funerary contexts, 2. LH II development of Linear B (either on Crete or the Mainland), and 3. LH III documents. After the beginning of LH IIIA the number of seals rapidly decreased, which coincided with and was probably caused by the development of the Mainland palatial centres and the full exploitation of a script for the administrative purposes.

2.4. HOW WAS LINEAR B CREATED?

This question encompasses a range of sub-questions, such as:

1. What was the source for the creation of Linear B, i.e. according to which prototype was it modelled?
2. Who were the executors of this process?
3. Was this creation a sudden act which followed a resolution of a ruling body; or was it a gradual process, that was a result of a spontaneous development rather than an articulated decision?

As for the first questions, most scholars are confident that Linear B was developed from Linear A. A minority of scholars, however, have allowed for the possibility that Linear B was developed from a script other than Linear A, perhaps a common predecessor to both Linear A and Linear B. This idea is supported by the shape of some Linear B signs, which look more cursive and ornate than the most advanced Linear A signs from Hagia Triada. Due to a lack of evidence for the existence of some other script, Cretan Hieroglyphic has been proposed to have played the role of this common predecessor, although, as we will see below, the number of matching signs remains unsatisfactorily low.

⁵ Some other scholars disagree with Driessen’s dating of the RCT documents, for example Popham (1993: 177). According to Hallager, Linear B was created earlier, some time after the MM IIB destructions, and, as has already been quoted (see above), not on Crete, but the Greek Mainland.

When it comes to the second question, historical circumstances favour one of the options: that the Mycenaeans created the script in order to accommodate their language. A small number of scholars accepted a possibility that the Minoans executed this task, i.e. transformed their own script to satisfy the needs of a foreign language (see above). The compromise solution is that this was a collaborative effort.

Along with the first two questions, the third will also be more thoroughly addressed below. For now it suffices to summarise the two main streams of thoughts on how abrupt the creation of Linear B was: one sees it as a carefully planned and sudden act, and the other as a result of a gradual process.

3. DISTINGUISHING THE ORIGIN OF THE LINEAR B SCRIPT AND THE ORIGIN OF THE LINEAR B ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM

A more systematic study of the last set of questions (how was Linear B created?) is, I believe, crucial for better understanding of the origin of Linear B. However, any further analysis in this direction will demonstrate that a search for the origin of the script is intertwined with a study of the main purpose for which the script was created. Thus, the administrative system behind the script plays an important role in understanding the origin of Linear B. This is where the whole issue becomes more complex because it is easy to fall into a trap of assuming that the two originated from the same source. Further sections of this book focus on showing that it is difficult to maintain a self-assuming notion that both Linear B script and administrative system were modelled after a single prototype, and that the origin of Linear B becomes clearer if analysed from two different points: the origin of the script and the origin of the administrative system. Since Linear B is a name used to designate both, scholars typically conflate these two aspects.

A below analysis of both aspects will show that although Linear A remains the most convincing predecessor for the Linear B script, when it comes to the administrative system Linear A does not provide convincing parallels. Some of these parallels are, surprisingly, found in the Cretan Hieroglyphic administration, which, on the other hand, is not a plausible scriptural predecessor. Thus it is indeed wrong to assume, at least on the basis of current evidence, that Linear B in its origin relied on a single source.