

ear A, for some similarities between Linear B and Linear A as scripts are still significant. However, the differences between LA and LB administrative systems are numerous, perhaps this was a result of a change in economic and political systems. Unlike in the Linear A system where sealings played a prominent role, in Linear B more weight is put on tablets, i.e. on written information. Thus Linear B administration relied less and less on sealings as a means of authentication, and used them mostly for primary records of transactions attached to the relevant commodities. Even supposedly common types, like the tablet, displayed significant differences in pinacology, epigraphy, content, and its role in the administrative cycle. This dilemma in choosing the most persuasive predecessor of Linear B can be easily solved if we abandon the assumption that there was a single source for the creation of both the script and the associated administrative system. The hypothesis that Cretan Hieroglyphic administrative system influenced Linear B administrative system – as distinct from the script – appears fairly plausible.

4. CREATION OF LINEAR B: SINGLE ACT OR A GRADUAL DEVELOPMENT?

4.1. THE SCRIPT

The differences between the origin of the script and the origin of the administrative system can also be appreciated when considering the pattern of the development of Linear B. I agree with those who argue that the creation of the script was mostly a single and deliberate act, undertaken following certain political decisions and executed by a limited number of individuals (Driessen & Schoep 1999). Since I adopt the view that the Linear B script was an adaptation of Linear A for the purpose of a new language, this process could not have been gradual, since it would have produced different results in different areas, for example different signs for the typically Greek phonetic combinations.

The need to record a new language imposes certain immediate requirements. The script could not have been transformed gradually, since from the outset most of the alterations would have been needed if the script was to record the new language successfully. As we do not have evidence that the Greek language was ever recorded in Linear A (but see Palaima 2003a), it is clear that the decision to use Linear B script required immediate alterations. This might have been done by a small group of individuals, either bilingual Greeks who could read Linear A, or Minoan scribes and

Mycenaean officials gathered together to perform the task. The adaptation of syllabograms could have been completed over a very short period, especially since the phonetic systems appear not to have been drastically different, as argued above. Once Linear A syllables were pronounced, it must have been immediately apparent whether they were suitable for the Greek language or not. Upon exhausting Minoan combinations, but not yet satisfying the needs of the Greek language, a number of new signs was introduced to accommodate the uniquely Greek phonetic combinations, which may not have existed in the Minoan language. A more steady development in the syllabary may be reflected by a group of invented Linear B signs that are not attested in the RCT (supposedly the earliest Linear B deposit). Their absence in the RCT may be due to chance, but it may also be that these signs were introduced at some later stage of Linear B. If they are indeed invented later, they may be understood as a result of sophisticating the syllabary. They may not have been necessary for the basic expressing of Greek, so were not introduced at the very outset of the creation of Linear B script.

As for non-syllabic signs, it was probably realised straight away that the Linear A signs for numbers would work well, so no alterations were needed (apart from the introduction of a new sign for numeral 1000). It could also immediately be recognised that the Linear A fraction system was superfluous, since in the Mycenaean exchange of goods a different metrical system may have been used, for which it was only needed to invent appropriate signs. Logograms were probably not all introduced at once, but only those that reflected the economic activities at the time of the creation of the script; others were introduced afterwards when the need arose. As for Linear A monograms, they might also have been found unsuitable at the outset, since they may have reflected the Minoan names for various commodities and thus would have been useless to the Mycenaeans who spoke a different language. Mycenaeans did not try to modify monograms, but abandoned them, with some exceptions (*me-ri* or *a-re-pa*), and introduced logograms in their place (the reason for the low correspondence between logograms in Haghia Triada and the RCT may be that commodities were often expressed by monograms in Linear A). One reason why the Mycenaeans did not adopt the system of monograms may be the length of words. Unlike in Linear B, the majority of Linear A words consist of two or three signs (Duhoux 1978), which were easily combined into a monogram (like *me-ri* or *a-re-pa* in Linear B).

People and Animals		Units of measurement (cont.)	Dry measure continued		Counted in Units		
100 A- HAN		113 Liquid	126 F- Cyperus + KU		150 Mc ?		206 Tn HEDRIA
101 A- HAN C		114 Weight	*54 MONTH		170 Cn ?		207 K TRIPOD
102 A- WOMAN		*21 Weight	127 Un Fruit?		171 G Sn ?		208 Tn BOWL
103 B- HAN ^B		*2 Weight	128 G- Safflower		172 U ? + KE		209 Uc Tn AMPHORA
104 Cn DEER		115 Weight	By liquid measure		173 Mn U ?		210 Uc STIRRUP JAR
105 Ca S- HORSE		116 Weight	130 F- OIL + WE		174 Gv Seeding?		211 K WATER BOWL?
105 ^B Ca HE + ASS		117 Weight	G- OIL + A		175 Gv FIG TREE		212 Uc Tn WATER JAR?
105 ^C Ca FOAL		118 TALENT	131 Fa U WINE		176 Gv OLIVE TREE		213 Uc COOKING BOWL
106 ^C C- RAM		*72 G- Bunch?	132 Un ?		177 U ?	Furniture	
108 ^C C- EWE		*74 S- Pair	133 Un Unguent		178 U ?	220 To FOOTSTOOL	
Cn SHEEP + TA		*15 Single	134 Un Linseed Oil?		179 U ?	Weapons	
*21 SHEEP		*91 Deficit	135 Fa Gg HONEY		180 U ?	230 R SPEAR	
*25 YEARLING?		By dry measure		Gg Amphora of Honey	181 U Thong?	231 R ARROW	
101 ^B C- HE - GOAT		120 F- F- WHEAT	140 J- BRONZE		182 U ?	232 To DOUBLE AXE?	
101 ^C C- SHE - GOAT		121 F- BARLEY	141 Kn GOLD		183 U ?	233 Ro SWORD	
*22 GOAT		122 F- U- OLIVES	142 Mc ?		184 U ?	Chariots	
108 ^C C- BOAR		f OLIVES + A	*53 Ma Linseed?		185 Ws ?	240 Sc WHEELED CHARIOT	
108 ^C C- SOW		f OLIVES + TI	*44 Ma ?		186 Wa ?	241 Sd WHEEL-LESS CHARIOT	
		*30 F- FIGS	*51 Ma An Aromatic		187 Xa cf 130?	242 Sf CHARIOT FRAME	
		*65 F- FLOUR	*53 Hp SAFFRON		188 * 61?	243 So WHEEL	
*83 C- FIG		123 G- Un CONDIMENT	143 Lo ?		Vessels		245 So WHEEL + TE
109 ^C C- OX/SULL		G- Coriander	*81 Ma An Aromatic		200 K To BOILING PAN?		
109 ^C C- COW		*70 G- Coriander	*53 Hp SAFFRON		201 To TRIPOD		
C- OX + SI		*51 G- Sesame	143 Lo ?		202 To JAR		
*23 C- OX		*81 G- Cumin	By weight or in units		203 To WINE JAR?		
Units of measurement		*9 G- Celery	*31 N- ?		204 To EWER		
110 Volume		*80 G- Fennel	145 L- O- WOOL		205 K To JUG		
111 Volume		124 G- Cyperus	146 H- ?				
112 Dry		125 F- Cyperus?					

Figure 41. Linear B logograms Palmer 1963.

4.2. ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM

Unlike the creation of the script, probably executed within a short period of time, the creation of a new administrative system is more complex, was influenced by more than one source, and continued to develop and change within the Linear B system itself. Thus, noticeable differences are observed between the RCT, other Knossian tablets and Mainland tablets, especially in the size of tablets: amount of lexical information on them, and the ratio between page-shaped and horizontally elongated tablets. Such diachronic transformations are not only observable in Linear B administration: we can trace similar changes from MM II Linear A at Phaistos to LM IB records in Haghia Triada.

Some alterations in the administrative system seem to have occurred at the time of the creation of Linear B. Thus, the earliest preserved Linear B deposits already make use of phorizontally elongated tablets (which are missing in LM IB Linear A) and show no trace of the prominent Linear A

sealings. On Linear B page-tablets at the very beginning we already find well-defined epigraphical features absent from Linear A: a columnar arrangement, regular use of ruled lines, the use of spacing and majuscules to stress a prominent information, etc. Since these features are so noticeable and regular, and not just occasional, it appears that the administrative system, as reflected in the RCT, already followed well established rules. This suggests, at least to me, that the RCT does not represent the earliest Linear B records, but is a step away from the initial period. On the other hand, some transitional features can still be noticed, implying that the RCT records could not be much later than this initial period, for example, the occasional use of flat-based nodules, which completely disappeared in later Linear B. The conclusion is that the RCT is close enough to Linear A to reflect particular transitional features, but distant enough to reflect a well-established administrative system distinct from the latest Linear A one (as is obvious from the comparison of the LM IB Linear A and the RCT records, which is in detailed presented in Tomas 2004).

5. THE LIKELY DATE AND PLACE FOR THE CREATION OF LINEAR B.

The earliest so far preserved Linear B inscriptions date from the LM II period or early LM IIIA1, as argued by Driessen (1990), but this period does not seem right for the creation of Linear B for two reasons. First, since the RCT administration is already so well-defined and distinct from Linear A, we must allow enough time to arrive at this stage: Linear B could not have been created in LM II, unless at its very beginning, and still have developed such an established form by the end of the period. Second, there is no prototype in LM II to be adapted, since the regular use of Linear A seems to cease at the end of the LM IB period. Furthermore, if a Cretan Hieroglyphic influence is to be acknowledged, we must seek a period closer to MM III, which again makes LM II a less convincing date for the creation of Linear B.

From this it follows that Linear B must have been created during LM IB (or very early LM II), and the historical circumstances in the LM IB period, as presented by Driessen and Macdonald (1997: 117), support this possibility. The results of their study show that Crete was likely to have been susceptible to foreign take-over during the LM IB period, since the stability of the Cretan society appears to have been precarious at the time. Thus, the decline of Minoan LM IB palaces was not solely a consequence of foreign invasion, but of a general decline in society, as evidenced by a number of features, as well as of internal strife which, as a result, facilitated the