CONCLUSION

The results of the analyses conducted in this book show that the study of the origin of Linear B should not be limited to a single set of data. Our understanding of the issue improves if we distinguish the origin of the script from the origin of the administrative system. From this two-sided perspective, the transition from Linear A to Linear B script and the development of Linear B administrative system can be summarised as follows.

Linear B script was developed from Linear A. As for the Linear B administrative system at least one type of document, the page-shaped tablet, also appears to have been adopted from Linear A (although with pronounced pinacological and epigraphical differences), as well as the modus of recording the transactions (i.e. the sequence sign group + logogram + number). Although the link with Linear A is undeniable, it is easily shown that Linear B went through a number of changes:

Immediate changes. Through regular trade contacts with the Minoans, or upon their arrival to Crete, Mycenaeans became aware of the usefulness of a script in conducting administrative transactions. A decision was made to apply the script in their own administrative affairs, though it was soon realised that the Greek language was not easily recorded in Linear A. The script needed to be modified, possibly in a way described above. Apart from the script, administrative documents needed to be adapted. For some reason, the Mycenaeans found the Minoan sealing system unnecessary, though they adapted those sealings that could be used to label commodities. The horizontally elongated tablet was introduced as a prominent type of document for primary transactions. The creation of the script was a deliberate and conscious act, and the described changes in types of documents may have followed immediately thereafter.

Gradual development. The next phase we have is the RCT. We see a development in methods of recording information, particularly in a much improved epigraphy. Some Linear A features remain unused, especially in the domain of sealing practice. The RCT experimented with flat-based nodules, which indicates that the Linear A practice of authenticating documents on perishable material may have been retained for a while – though later on we do not have any evidence for it. The number of preserved sealings is much smaller than in Linear A, reflecting the general unpopularity of sealing practice in Linear B, which is later limited mostly to those sealings attached to commodities. The practice of *simili*-joins is significant in the RCT, but absent from later Linear B records and may be regarded as a specifically

RCT feature (and perhaps a transitional feature which was unneeded in later Linear B. First sets of documents make their appearance, coupled with the formulaic organisation of the data. Page-shaped tablets become larger and the first elongated page –shaped tablet occurs (KN V 280). A link with Cretan Hieroglyphic has been explored through the practice of cutting horizontally elongated tablets for the purpose of rearranging information; the evidence, however, remains inconclusive. The CH-LB link is more persuasive through the use or (re)introduction of the elongated tablet and some types of sealings.

In the subsequent Knossian records, there is a greater number of elongated page-shaped tablets. Possible examples of a three-tiered system of recording occur. The first labels attached to baskets containing tablets appear as well. As for the sealing-types, some features indicate a possible legacy of Cretan Hieroglyphic administration (irregular string nodules and combination nodules), not at all with Linear A.

On the latest Mainland Linear B records, there is clear evidence of the three-tiered system of recording. Sealings contain more textual information, and in Pylos more labels pressed against baskets with tablets are found, mostly in the Archives Complex (Chadwick 1958,1968). There is a larger number of page-shaped tablets, with a larger amount of lexical information on them. The syntax becomes more complex.

As shown in this brief summary, once created, the Linear B script remained more or less the same for two centuries or more, while the administrative system underwent numerous adjustments, changes and innovations. Whereas for the script itself it is easier to claim that it originated from Linear A, Linear B administrative system involves several layers, not all of which are connected to Linear A. Certain features show the influences of Cretan Hieroglyphic administration, rather than of Linear A. It appears therefore that the origin and the development of Linear B administrative system had three constituents:

1. The influence from Linear A, as visible from the adoption of page-shaped tablets and, at least temporarily, some types of sealings;
2. The influence from the Cretan Hieroglyphic administrative system, as visible from a possible adoption of elongated tablets and some types of Cretan Hieroglyphic sealings;
3. The internal development of Linear B administrative system, as visible from the features that progressed from the RCT, to the rest of Knossos, and then to the Mainland records: the abandonment of Linear A sealings that were employed in the transitional RCT (flat-based nodules); the general decrease in the use of sealings, along with the increase in the textual information on them; the enlargement of page-shaped tablets (only one elongated page-shaped tablet in the RCT

(KN V 280), but numerous in the rest of Knossos and the Mainland); the introduction of a three-tiered system, the introduction of sets of documents; and the improvement of epigraphical features (columnar arrangement, regularly present ruled lines, etc.).

Whereas the creation of the Linear B script was a singular event, the development of the administrative system for which it was used was a longer process, and had more than one source. Since one of these other sources may be identified within Cretan Hieroglyphic, the origins of Linear B should be sought on Crete, most probably in the LM IB or early LM II period.

Figure 42. Sir Arthur Evans, the first discoverer of Linear B script