Linear B studies and Mycenaean philology is a rather new discipline, established in the early 1950s with the decipherment of Linear B by Michael Ventris assisted by John Chadwick. The decipherment was a significant contribution to our understanding of early Greek history, language and script and contextualizing Aegean archaeology. The decipherment gave a huge new dynamic to entire generations of researchers in Indo-European philology and Greek language studies. Immediately after the decipherment, linguists and philologists on both sides of divided Europe conducted significant, detailed studies on all linguistic aspects of this new discovery. The results were published in journals throughout Europe and North America, or occasionally gathered in the acta from the mycenological congresses. Spain has had a strong academic tradition in the field ever since the decipherment, and the present volume demonstrates how this tradition has continued into the 21st century.

A young discipline like Mycenaean philology needs work tools for researchers and university students. The present volume is such a work tool, combining a grammar and text examples. It gathers the results of 50 years of scattered research and summarises them in a clear and comprehensive manner.

The volume follows in some part the monumental work of ‘Documents in Mycenaean Greek’ from 1956.1 The 1st part (p. 1–16) is a description of the current inscriptive evidence including the recently found Theban Linear B tablets, and a survey of the current existing work tools such as the various editions of the tablets and previous studies on Mycenaean grammar. Based on archaeology, the tablets are dated differently between the sites and even within a palace site. Thus c. 1425–1385 BC for the tablets of the ‘Room of the Chariot Tablets’ at Knossos, and 1300–1200 BC for the majority of the Knossos tablets. The Thebes tablets are dated to 1350–1300, while tablets from Mycenae and Pylos are dated to c. 1200 BC (p. 3–5).

The 2nd part (p. 17–82) is a comprehensive presentation of the Linear B script: how the script works with syllabograms in combination with ideograms (the volume uses both the term ideogram and logogram without any clear distinction, and it seems to reflect the various idiosyncrasies of the authors (p. 55). For the general reader: logogram=ideogram in this work). The charts of logograms and syllabograms are taken from the joint decisions taken by the international community of mycenologists in ‘Acta Mycenaea’ from 1972,2 and subsequent identifications of signs and phonetic values are discussed thoroughly. An example of this is syllabogram *56 it occurs at Knossos in *56-ra-ku-ja which is parallel to pa-ra-ku-ja (a colour term) but in the new Linear B tablets from Thebes, it occurs in *56-ru-we which is parallel to ko-ru-we. While there is still no general agreement on the phonetic value sign *56, the authors clearly favour the value

pa/phα (see p. 20, 24, 28–29, 31) over the value ko, which was suggested by Lejeune and Godart in 1995.¹

The Linear B script is briefly compared to the Linear A script, the Cypriot syllabic scripts and to alphabetical Greek. There is even a brief passage on the Phaistos disc. Here it would have been more interesting to compare the Linear B script to other Bronze Age script systems of the ancient Near East to assess its peculiarities.

The authors use well-chosen examples from alphabetical Greek, Latin and modern Spanish to illustrate phonetic and morphological developments in Linear A and B, which render their text more accessible to the students in Greek and Latin philology. An example is the discussion of the Minoan (?) relationship between /d/ and /l/ which can be seen in Odysseus/Ulisses, in Gr. dakruma and Lat. lacrima, and alphabetical Gr. labyrinthos alongside Mycenaean da-πυ-τι-το-jo. Another example is the Linear B logogram for wool, sign *145, which is in fact a combination of the two syllabograms, ma- and ru-. The same combined sign is used in Linear A, most probably also for wool, which suggests that the Minoan word for wool was *maru or *malu. This can be compared to mallós in alphabetical Greek, cf. mαλλoκe in Hesychius (p. 62).

The 3rd part on phonology (p. 83–140) is also comprehensive and reflects the field of expertise of one of the authors, Alberto Bernabé, who has made several contributions to the field, both alone and in collaboration with Adrados and Mendoza in their 1995 ‘Manual de Lingüística Indoeuropea’. The 4th part (p. 141–204) is dedicated to Mycenaean morphology. The authors demonstrate well how the Linear B script encounters difficulties when rendering Greek and how different strategies needed to be employed by Mycenaean scribes to overcome these difficulties. Each morphological element under discussion is illustrated with examples from Linear B.

The 5th part (p. 205–243) discusses syntax, and begins with a well-written essay about how to understand and analyse syntax in such lacunose and brief texts as the Linear B clay tablets, basically inventories and notes, which furthermore are ambiguous because of the defective spelling system. The authors compare Mycenaean syntax with modern newspapers and media, and note the common use of headings and subheadings, and discuss how they are used to rank information. There follows an extensive discussion about syntax in Linear B, longer than that found in other works, containing an impressive amount of illustrative examples and interesting reflections. Clearly, the authors perceive the inscriptions as functional texts and not merely as random gatherings of terms, logograms and numbers. While some basic syntactical elements are clearly absent, the various uses of the genitive case are noteworthy (genitives with prepositions, possessive genitives, genitives expressing membership, aim, relationship, location, material, partitive genitives, and genitives with temporal value) (p. 219–222). As for the dative, the nature of inventories means that this typically designates the receivers of goods. However, the scribes of the tablets also use datives to express an aim,

or with a locative value (pa-ki-ja-si), or a temporal value (we-te-i-we-te-i), and the Pylian inventories of furniture contain examples of an instrumental dative (p. 223–228).

The 6th part (p. 245–250) is a brief discussion of the position of the Mycenaean dialect within the dialectal landscape of Greek. Despite the important chronological differences mentioned above, the Mycenaean dialect (and script) is first of all significantly homogeneous throughout the sites. The authors review the scholarly discussion on 'mycénien normal' and 'mycénien special' (p. 246–247) and provide salient examples to show Mycenaean Greek's affinities with Attic-Ionic and Arcado-Cypriot.

The 7th part (p. 251–300) is a compilation of Linear B texts according to their editorial logic, starting from the Pylian Aa series of personnel to the Wv nodule from Midea but also organized thematically based on the major sectors of the economy such as textile production or animal breeding. The authors do not translate all the Linear B texts in this section, and this is understandable since it would have required considerable space, but it would perhaps have helped the interested reader to have at least a few translations of some of the more complex texts. However, the precise introduction to each thematic section compensates to a large extent for this absence of translations.

The final part (p. 301–348) is a useful glossary of Mycenaean words from the texts presented in part 7, combined with a valuable index of logograms and acrophonic abbreviations.

A general fine quality of this volume is its lack of dogma: it presents indeed the state of the art, and balances the pros and cons in the often heated scholarly debates among mycenologists. The volume is therefore a useful tool for students and scholars of Greek and Indo-European linguistics. In addition to another Spanish work, Aura Jorro’s ‘Diccionario Micénico’ I–II (1985–1993), we are here in possession of the right tools for teaching Linear B and integrating Mycenology within a broader discussion of Greek and Latin philology and the development of ancient scripts.

Copenhagen  

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Das hier zu besprechende schmale Buch Vancamps (im folgenden V.) soll – wie schon Gerard Boters 'The Textual Tradition of Plato's Republic' für die Politeia1 – eine Vorarbeit zu einer neuen kritischen Edition von Platons Dialog Menon darstellen.2 Wie V. selbst in seiner Einleitung erläutert, ist Richard Blucks Aus-