

Writing and editing practices in the Linear B documents

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Errors made by the scribes who used the Linear B writing system in the administration of the Mycenaean palaces of Late Bronze Age Greece (c.1400-1200 BCE) have received considerable attention, from studies seeking to identify these errors in order to better understand the Mycenaean Greek language (Chadwick 1958; Ilievski 1965) to those analysing different types of errors and their underlying graphic, linguistic, or psycholinguistic motivations in order to explore the processes by which the scribes created their texts (Perpillou 1977; Maurice 1985; Consani 2003). The identification of scribes' corrections of their own (or, occasionally, others') errors has always been crucial to these discussions, largely because corrected errors are generally those which can be most securely identified: for instance, the change of *e-pi-ki-to-ja* to *e-pi-ki-to-ni-ja* clearly shows the initial omission of the *-ni-* (KN L 693.2).

Previous studies have rarely, however, focused specifically on the motivations behind the corrections themselves, or on instances of scribes altering their documents for reasons other than correcting a mistake – both of which, unlike errors, demonstrate a conscious decision-making process on the part of the writer. This poster will go beyond the usual focus on errors and their correction to explore the wide variety of reasons underlying the edits made by the Mycenaean scribes to their written texts, including instances of scribes updating information (e.g. altering the quantities of items recorded: cf. Pape *et al.* 2014); ensuring a clearer layout (e.g. moving entries to align them with the preceding/following ones); or simply following a personal preference for a particular orthography, textual format or sign-form (e.g. a non-Greek woman's name spelt as both *e-pa-sa-na-ti* and *i-pa-sa-na-ti* has been changed from the former to the latter spelling on PY Eo 274.4). I shall discuss the ways in which analysing this aspect of the scribes' writing practices can further our understanding of both the Linear B writing system and how its writers chose to employ it in their creation of administrative documents.

References

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