

COMMENTARY

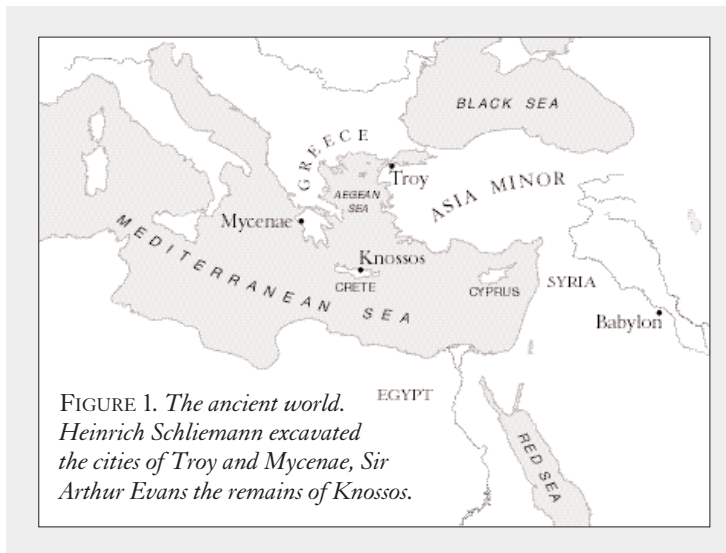
# We Need To Free Ourselves from British Archaeological Frauds

What we call archaeology, paleontology, and Classical scholarship today, are nothing but completely shameless, and arbitrary, and obscene frauds, which have been run out of Cambridge and Oxford Universities for many centuries—certainly well back into the Seventeenth century, but earlier as well.

Almost all of what you consider as undisputed fact related to Classical archaeology and related areas and prehistory, is not only *not* undisputed fact, but *it's largely completely arbitrary fiction, with no support whatsoever.* And if I were to take on to illustrate that as such, I could spend all day doing it. So, I'm just going to try to use one example—the story of British archaeological cant concerning “Minoan” civilization on the island of Crete, and the decipherment of the writing known as Linear B which overturned it—which, to my mind at least, locks up the case very concretely.

But I want first to mention briefly some examples of fraudulent scholarship in the treatment of the work of the great Greek historian Herodotus (c. 484-425 B.C.), especially as it was indications in Herodotus which pointed Lyndon LaRouche toward recognizing the existence of a very high, prehistoric maritime culture spanning the broader Indian Ocean area.

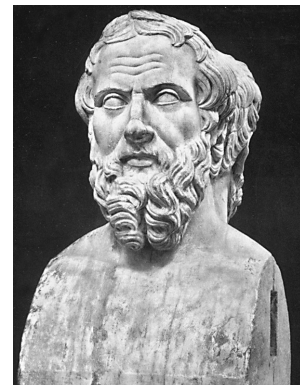
*This article is adapted from a presentation to the Presidents' Day conference of the Schiller Institute/International Caucus of Labor Committees, Feb. 14, 1999.*



This maritime culture extended all the way from at least the island of Sumatra, the westernmost island of Indonesia, to the east coast of Africa, and the arc above, which goes through present-day Oman, Yemen, up through what we now call the Persian Gulf, the south coast of Iran, what we now call Pakistan, and at least halfway down the west coast of India, in the period as early as perhaps 8000-10,000 B.C., perhaps much earlier—which is much earlier than the British would allow. And all of this is completely denied, or ignored, or obscured by the reigning British academic authorities.

### Slandering Herodotus

Many, although not all historians of the British schools, have disputed or even ridiculed the historical veracity of Herodotus's history of the Persian Wars. I think the actual, unstated basis of their objection, in fact, is that they object to any portrayal of the struggle between republicanism and oligarchism, which has dominated world history since the Ionian Revolt against the Persian-Babylonian empire (c. 500 B.C.) described by



*The historian Herodotus*

Herodotus. They object even more to the fact that the republican forces, here a few badly outnumbered Greeks, defeated the Persian-Babylonian world empire, which had gathered

a huge multi-national army to smash Greece, in the Persian Wars of the early Fifth century B.C. So, Herodotus, as the principal source on the Persian Wars, is telling a story which oligarchists would rather not hear. That seems to have been as true in the ancient world as today: it was the oligarchist Plutarch (A.D. c. 46-120) who wrote that Herodotus, the “father of history,” should instead be called the “father of lies.”

The leading oligarchs of Plutarch's time consciously traced their own lineage to the oligarchs of the Babylonian Empire. So do the British royals and leading aristocrats of today. They also know that the Achaemenid Persian Empire which tried to crush Greece and freedom in those days, was nothing but a dispensable armed force, nothing but “muscle,” for the Babylonian usurers who were the real rulers. The Babylonians used Persian military “muscle” the way the British have used American “muscle” in their recent wars against Iraq and Yugoslavia.

Thus, British-dominated historians carp at Herodotus's numbering the multinational (i.e., NATO-like) horde

which Xerxes threw against Greece in the Second Persian War (480-479 B.C.) at 1,700,000 men. Why? Why did none of Herodotus's contemporaries apparently point out his colossal blunder?—a ten-fold overestimation, according to some modern Britons. But, as far as I know, Herodotus's contemporaries used similar figures. Did Xenophon similarly vastly inflate the numbers of the Persian horde, led by a rival to the Emperor, in which he himself travelled across Asia Minor in 401 B.C.? And similarly inflate the numbers of the much larger horde which defended the then-Persian capital of Babylon against it?

In like manner, until it was recently rediscovered, Herodotus's account of the canal Xerxes dug for his invasion fleet, inland of Mount Athos, was considered by some to be another fantastic exaggeration, and proof of the author's unreliability. But the rediscovered canal has exactly the dimensions given by Herodotus.

Here's a final instance: Herodotus personally verified the existence of the *Pelasgian* language-culture, an important pre-Hellenic people already attested by Homer, and attested in other clear ways. They were significant in the mediation of Egyptian culture to the early Greeks. But today, many writers of the British school will only permit the use of the name "Pelasgian" between quotation-marks.

One reason for the British distaste for

the Pelasgians is that most ancient Greek and Latin authorities, Herodotus among them, agreed that the Etruscans of Italy originated from an expedition of Pelasgians sent from Anatolia. The old Roman imperialists destroyed virtually every monument they could find of the superior Etruscan culture; today's British imperialists must content themselves by making a complete hash of Etruscan studies. The Etruscans wrote in the same alphabet we use today; anyone can easily learn to pronounce their numerous surviving writings, and yet officially, their language and origins remain a total mystery, thanks to British-inspired obscurantism.

The late Barry Fell, author of *America B.C.*, was probably on the mark here. He interpreted the Linear A writing of Crete as an Anatolian language similar to Hittite, and then interpreted surviving Etruscan writings as that same, hitherto unknown, Anatolian language—just written in a different script. The Pelasgian presence in Crete has been known since Homer, and is attested by Pelasgian place-names found there. "Gortyn" in Crete, is likely the same place-name as Croton in Italy.

Perhaps, as you will see later, the reason archaeologist Arthur Evans was able to make so little sense of his Cretan excavations of what he called "Minoan" civilization, is that he was actually excavating ruins of a people the British arbitrarily deny to have

existed: the Pelasgians.

These are merely a few illustrative examples. Let's move on to the meat of the story.

### Schliemann and the Homeric Epics

At the time the great German scientist Heinrich Schliemann was born in 1822, the British considered that the Homeric epics, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*—and there's no dispute about this, because Cambridge publishes something every few years to give the official line—were pure fantasy. They said correctly—and there was a reason for this—that half of Homer's cities in Greece, were unknown to the Classical Greeks at the time of Plato; but they also said that there was no such place as Troy, there was no such thing as a Trojan War, it was all a big fairy tale.

Schliemann, as a young man, became captivated by these epics and learned Greek predominantly in order to have a complete mastery of the two epics. He became convinced of what today is scientifically provable, which is that far from being fairy tales, *these are the most accurate historical records we have, and probably ever will have, in key features of minimally Greece and the surrounding areas of the Mediterranean between 1700 B.C. or so, and 1200 B.C., which was roughly the time of the Trojan War.*

So Schliemann devoted his life to digging up Troy, and uncovering this city which had been the scene of this famous battle. He realized that he was not going to get foundation grants to do it, so he devoted most of his first forty-six years to becoming a multimillionaire by various ventures, including building railroads in America and Russia, smuggling arms to the Russians during the Crimean War while the British were trying to prevent him from doing so, and various other basically good deeds which were also remunerative. He also became a U.S. citizen during this period.

So, eventually, he got the money, and he excavated Troy. And, lo and behold! Troy was there, when and where Homer had described it. And it was one of these many discoveries

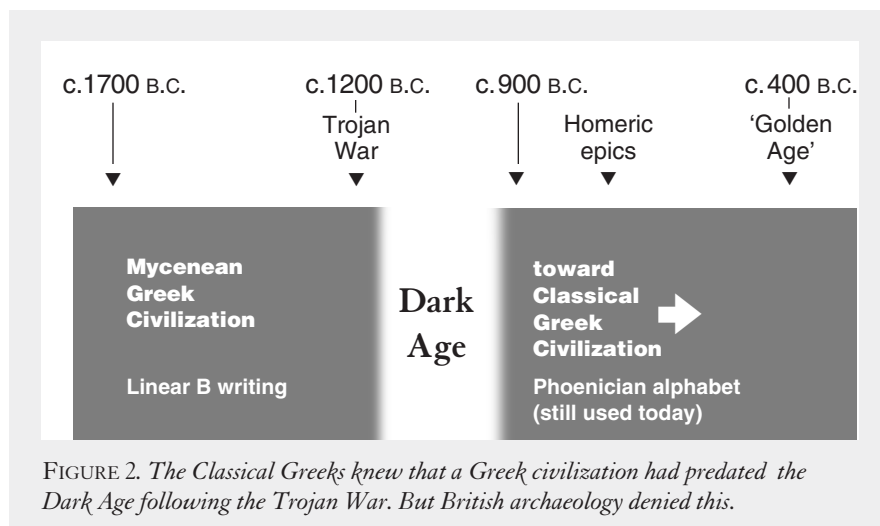
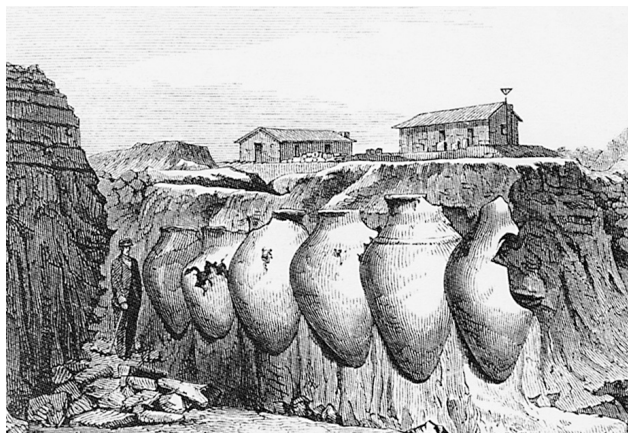
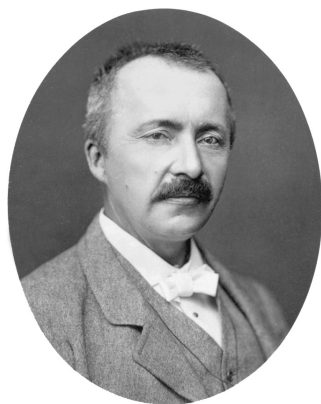


FIGURE 2. *The Classical Greeks knew that a Greek civilization had predated the Dark Age following the Trojan War. But British archaeology denied this.*



**Left:** *Colossal storage jars (“pithoi”), unearthed by Schliemann at Troy, June 1873 (illustration from Schliemann’s “Ilios”).*

**Bottom:** *The Lion Gate, entrance to King Agamemnon’s citadel at Mycenae, discovered by Schliemann in 1876.*



*Heinrich Schliemann*

where there really is no counter-position, because Homer had said in numerous places—he had given sightings, saying if you stand on Mount Olympus and you look here, and you stand and look here—he had given all kinds of sightings for the location of Troy. And there, where his sightings said it should be, indeed it was! [SEE Figure 1]

Now, all the British could do was to try to criticize Schliemann for disregarding later, higher layers of the city—because it had been inhabited until very recently, actually—to get down to the layer which he thought represented the Troy of the Trojan War.

So this completely overturned everything of British archaeology, even though the British ran archaeology and they continue to run archaeology and Classical studies, not just in Britain but in all countries. The whole thing had been blown up.



[www.arttoday.com](http://www.arttoday.com)

And before they could recover from that, Schliemann determined to dig up the capital of King Agamemnon, the “king of men,” the leader of the Greek, or what Homer called Achaean armies, in the Trojan War, in the town of Mycenae.

Unlike Troy, Mycenae was a known location in the Peloponnesus in Greece, although it had long ceased to be a city, or even a town. And Schliemann dug it up, and came up with what he said were the grave masks of King Agamemnon and his wife, Clytemnestra, along with a huge amount of other material, showing clearly a Greek culture which had long preceded the period the British allotted to Greek culture.

The historical view held by the Classical Greeks was something like

this: That there had been a Greece of high culture, with writing—a distinct kind of writing from any used today—until about 1200 B.C., the time of the Trojan War [SEE Figure 2]. Then, there had been a fall-off into a Dark Age, until, say, about 900 B.C., when there had been a revival of Greece, among other things with a new alphabet, and with a new political system—totally new. The two political systems were completely distinct. And that then, Homer had taken existing poems about the actual Trojan War, many of them written at that time, and composed them into a great, unified masterwork, but composed of true historical elements, in maybe 900 or 700 B.C., something like that. That was always the Greek Classical view.

But the British view was, that there were no Greeks before 900 B.C.—or roughly so.

#### ‘Crete of a Hundred Towns’

So after digging up Mycenae, proving that, Schliemann dug up Tiryns, another of Homer’s ancient capitals. He made other excavations as well, and he finally determined to excavate Knossos, the fabled capital of Crete—what Homer called “Crete of a Hundred Towns”—which was supposed to be the most highly-populated, in some sense the most highly-developed part of this earlier phase of Greek culture, which because of Schliemann’s discovery is called Mycenaean Greece.

So Schliemann went to the island of Crete. He tried to purchase the site of Knossos, the castle, from a Turk. But the sale never worked out, and Schliemann died on Christmas Day, 1890, under somewhat dubious circumstances. According to Lyndon LaRouche, Schliemann’s son was actually murdered, which is not surprising. Many of the most significant Classical scholars, who had discovered things inconvenient to the British, have died under questionable circumstances shortly thereafter.

Immediately thereafter, an Englishman named Arthur Evans purchased Knossos, beginning the purchase in



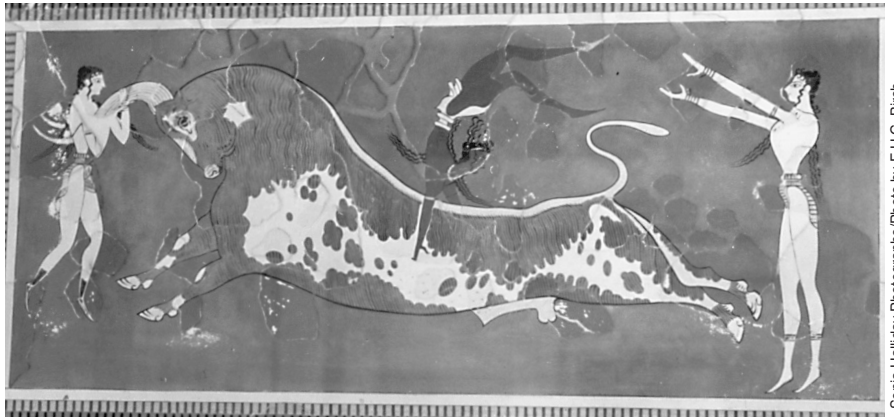
1893, and concluding it in 1900. (Earlier, Evans had been arrested by Austrian authorities for complicity in an insurrection in the Balkans, while claiming to be studying ethnology and archaeology there.)

And, for about a quarter-century, Arthur Evans sat on this piece of real estate, fencing it off—you could only come in as his personal guest or his employee. He discovered mounds of writing. His dream was to decipher the writing. To make sure that nobody else did, most of it was not shown to any other scientist until after his death.

He restored a part of what he called the “Palace of King Minos.” It’s sort of a Disneyland of Crete. He admitted that his restoration didn’t coincide with what he had found there in the first place. He wrote three books—three large books—about his finds, and more or less invented what he called “Minoan civilization,” which I think is a term which should be ruled illegal, because he didn’t know the culture of the people who lived there, he didn’t know their language, he didn’t know where they came from, and he didn’t know what they did. He had a lot of suppositions which were unprovable.

The main thing he had, which you’ve all seen, is pictures of young women jumping over bulls—or what *may be* pictures of young women jumping over bulls, or it may not. And this he did indeed find. And he established, to his satisfaction, that Minoan civilization was a very high civilization, and had spread out to surrounding areas, civilizing the Greeks. I mean, he couldn’t be clear himself whether these Minoans were themselves Greeks or not. But they supposedly civilized the Greeks. And he would prove his case: Whenever anybody saw a picture of a bull, they would say “Ah! Minoan culture!” They were spreading out and civilizing other people.

He named the whole thing after King Minos, a legendary king of Knossos in Crete, who demanded seven Athenian maidens and seven youths for human sacrifice every year, until Theseus shut the thing down. So he named it “Minoan” after this King Minos; but he totally disagreed that human sacrifice



“Bull-leaping” wall fresco, Palace of Knossos, Crete.

Sonia Halliday Photographs/Photo by F.H.C. Birch

or anything of this sort had taken place there. His King Minos was a very gentle old man, and full of cultural gifts.

And so it goes. Because the British control the field, this is hegemonic. And you’ll read about Minoan this and Minoan that, and Minoan influence in all kinds of books. But if you ask the author of the books, “Well, what is Minoan? What language did they speak? What was their astronomy?,” nobody knows anything. They only know they had young ladies jump over bulls, which in itself is questionable.

So the whole thing is a fraud.

### The Labyrinth

Recently, I was given a wonderful book by a recently deceased German geologist, Hans Georg Wunderlich, who was very suspicious of this Knossos/Crete

story. Even today, apparently, there are sort of barriers around the place. I mean, Wunderlich wasn’t allowed, even as a scientist, to root around in there. But he took the standard five-dollar tour, or whatever it is.

The layout of the palace is like a labyrinth. In fact, it actually *is* a labyrinth—because there’s a definite meaning to what a labyrinth is. So, Wunderlich took the tour, and as a geologist, the first thing he noted, was that every single thing—all the walls and all the floors in this entire rather large complex—were made of gypsum. But gypsum, as those of you who are geologists presumably know, is not a stone you can use to build a dwelling place in which people can live, because just by walking to and fro daily to the front door, you’ll wear a trough into it until your whole



Ashmolean Museum, Oxford

**Above:** Sir Arthur Evans, excavation site, Knossos. **Right:** Above-ground “Verandah of the Royal Guard,” Palace of Knossos.



Sonia Halliday Photographs

house wears away. It can't be used as a dwelling place for the living—or rather, it can't be used as a *dwelling* place, to put it more generally.

There are other peculiar things about what is exhibited today as the Palace of King Minos at Knossos. One is what for some reason Evans decided to christen “the Queen’s apartment.” It’s completely underground. She obviously was not a heavy reader, because the only light that comes in, is when the door is open. And there is room for a bed in there. But the room is full of these huge *pithoi*, which are huge Greek storage vessels, usually for wine, several dozen of these. So, apparently, the Queen slept in a room with tons of olive oil or wine or something or other, for some reason.

Furthermore, most of these *pithoi*, or jugs, stop two or three inches before the ceiling. So there was no way to get in there and get a dipper in and get anything out—which made their use as storage vessels questionable.

In fact, some of them were walled off in niches in the wall. So Wunderlich, who has a bit of a sense of humor, said that when they sent the maid down for wine, they would have to send a mason to take the wall apart so that she could get into the jug to get the wine out.

So this wasn't much of a palace.

But it *was* a labyrinth. And what was a labyrinth? Labyrinths were known from Egypt, like the labyrinth of Hawara described by Herodotus. A labyrinth was not simply what we usually think of as a puzzle. The labyrinths were Egyptian buildings for the dead, with long series of rooms, such as you would expect to find in your image of a “labyrinth.” But they were all paired, one room below ground, one room above ground.

The room below ground was devoted to the remains of a high official, or a sacred crocodile in this case. Not a pharaoh—they were buried separately. And the corresponding room above ground, which was immediately above it, was devoted to worship of the spirit of the entity which was buried below. So that's what a labyrinth was. And that does describe Knossos: You had matched rooms above and below,

in a labyrinthine pattern.

Now, it's clear that these *pithoi* were actually used for burial of people, not for storage of olive oil or anything of that sort.

When Evans excavated, he found them all completely empty of anything whatsoever. But what he failed to notice—living on this site for twenty-six years—was that the reason the natives never approached what he called the “Palace of Minos,” was because you had to climb over piles of human bones to approach the place. They were meters high—especially at the exits. Evans may have thought they were garbage from the kitchens.

What had happened, was that you'd had several millennia of grave robberies. The grave robbers had emptied the *pithoi* and other burial places. They didn't want to be caught in this dastardly place. They carried the remains outside. They took the gold face masks and jewelry and other things they had come for, and left the bones. So the place was surrounded by a tumulus of human bones in every direction—which Arthur Evans failed to notice. And so he made up this whole myth about Minoan culture. So as I say, the whole term should be outlawed.

### Decipherment of Linear B

When Schliemann discovered Troy, the whole game was up. The British should have stopped then. They should have said: “Well, we've done our best in archaeology and paleontology for a few centuries, it hasn't worked out, everything has been completely wrong, and we're going to devote ourselves to other pursuits, like gardening.”

But, they didn't. In Knossos, Arthur Evans found what are called two types of writing. He really found two languages expressed in the same alphabet. It's not an alphabet which was used after the period of the Dark Ages. It's a syllabic alphabet, presumably from the Near East. And he could not decipher either of the kinds of writing. One was called Linear A and the other was called Linear B.

Subsequently, examples of Linear B, although not Linear A, were found all

over Greece. So, by the time of shortly after World War II, Britain, which was in charge of these things, was full of examples of Linear B writing. And there was a big race on—just like with DNA—as to who could be the first to decipher Linear B.

Linear A was considered more problematic, because since it wasn't found in Greece, it was apparently the language of whatever non-Greeks lived at Knossos. And there was great confusion about that, because Evans had been unable to turn up anything significant. But Linear B clearly expressed the language spoken in Greece—in *all parts of Greece*—from something like 1700 B.C., or perhaps earlier, to 1200 B.C.

So, who could decipher it? Everybody was trying. The problem was, as usual, the rules of the game. The rules of the game of Oxford and Cambridge were, again, that there were no Greeks in Greece in this period; whoever was there, they definitely were not Greeks. And that what Linear B must represent—this was the official line of Oxford and Cambridge—was a “mixture of different languages.”

Now, it's absurd. Nobody speaks a mixture of different languages—aside from extreme inebriation or other conditions. And nobody writes a mixture of languages.

But the Oxford prescription for deciphering Linear B, was that you must decipher it as a “mixture of languages.” And they had the names of the languages: Lydian, Phrygian, and two or three others spoken in ancient Asia Minor. Unfortunately, they didn't know any of those languages. They just knew the names of them. They knew that they had existed at some point, but nobody could speak them, or anything. So you were supposed to decipher this unknown text, into four or five completely unknown languages. It's quite a challenge.

Michael Ventris was a Greek-born British subject who had been a cryptographer during World War II. He was a BBC announcer, he was an architect, he was a very talented man. And presumably because of his cryptographic, or crypto-analytic experience, which was

very relevant, he undertook a very, very laborious effort to decipher Linear B, based on this thesis of this mixture of what are called generally Anatolian languages.

And then he wrote in his book—he got to write one book on this subject—he wrote in his book, “It occurred to me one evening, what if it were Greek?” And very soon, he had deciphered all the Linear B in his house. And then he sent out for everything else and deciphered it all—it was all Greek!

Lo and behold! But this was obvious from the start, if you followed the story. Lo and behold, these people were Greeks speaking Greek. They just had a different alphabet.

So he got to publish one book which laid it all out. And again, it’s one of those things which nobody can dispute, because mostly what it turned out they had was tax records. You know, “Farmer Georgios has a cow named Blackie.” I mean, that’s typical of the kind of thing they mostly had. Nobody could dispute it. It was completely beyond question.

But the British were furious. *Immediately after writing his book, but before it could be published, he was hit by a truck in London and killed.* I believe he was in his forties. So that was it for him.

In the course of his book, which I read, he said: We have to revise our whole view of Greek etymology—what word comes from what? Because before the decipherment, we had the Greek of 900 B.C. and after, let’s say roughly, and not anything before that time, and now we have all this. So many well-meaning guesses at what word comes from what, turn out to be wrong when you see what people really said back in 1500 B.C. or so. And he did a little of that in his book.

Now, I have several Greek etymological dictionaries. I have the one that’s supposed to be the leading—I paid a fortune for it—the leading current one, as far as I know, dated 1982, out of Germany. As far as I can see, there’s not one mention of Ventris or what’s called Mycenaean Greek in the entire book,



Left: Linear B tablet found at Knossos.

Bottom: Syllabic grid developed by Michael Ventris for the decipherment of Linear B script.

Ashmolean Museum, Oxford



Michael Ventris

Courtesy of the Estate of Mrs. L.E. Ventris

from beginning to end. And the reason is, because the British are British. (Actually it’s a German, not an English book, but it’s *British* scholarship.) They just don’t want this to have happened. They say “Well, it happened, but we’d rather it hadn’t happened. So, forget it!”

### Murder at Oxford

Just to give you a final example—this I included in a short version of a book review I wrote for *Fidelio* some months ago—the kind of people you’re reading when you read British Classical scholars, are the kind of person I’m going to describe. It’s just that in this case, it’s a documented incident.

There’s an Oxford professor—he probably still is the head of the Classics

LINEAR SCRIPT B SYLLABIC GRID					WORK NOTE 15
(2ND STATE)					
DIAGNOSIS OF CONSONANT AND VOWEL EQUATIONS					ATHENS, 28 SEPT 51
IN THE INFLEXIONAL MATERIAL FROM PYLOS:					
THESE 51 SIGNS MAKE UP 90% OF ALL SIGNS OCCURRING IN THE PYLOS SIGNGROUP WORKS. APPENDED FIGURES GIVE EACH SIGN'S OVERALL FREQUENCY PER MILE IN THE PYLOS INDEX.	These signs don't occur before - $\beta$ -	These signs occur less commonly or not at all before - $\beta$ -			
	More often feminine than masculine?	More often masculine than feminine?		More often feminine than masculine?	
	Normally form the genitive singular by adding - $\tau$	Normally form the genitive singular by adding - $\beta$			
	vowel 1	vowel 2	vowel 3	vowel 4	vowel 5
	30.3				37.2
14.8	32.5	21.2	28.1	18.8	
19.6	17.5			13.7	
17.0	28.6		0.4		
17.7	10.3		4.1	10.2	
7.4	20.5		14.8	14.4	
4.1	44.0				
6.1	6.1		15.9	15.2	
	33.1		32.3	2.6	
22.2		38.2	3.5	2.2	
31.2	33.8	34.4	8.3	0.7	
17.0			37.7	24.0	
	9.4	14.2			
5.0					
12.6					

Department—who recently wrote in his autobiography, that he had gained his position by murdering his rival. This is in his autobiography! He’s the head of the department. He has been knighted—he is *Sir* Kenneth Dover! I don’t know when the knighting came in relation to the murder.

But he is *Sir* Kenneth because of his



services to the study of Greek. And he wrote in his autobiography, that he had murdered his competitor. What he said briefly was—this is all true, believe it or not—is that “I saw he really wasn’t good for Oxford. But just to have invited him over for tea and shot him in the head, I couldn’t do it, because I would have had to face the Coroner’s Jury, and I cannot tell a lie. So therefore, I didn’t do that.

“Instead, I invited him over and got him drunk, and he told me an embarrassing personal secret”—which he neglects to repeat in the book—“and soon, the man began to get anonymous letters, first a few, then more and more. Then things appeared on bulletin boards throughout Oxford,” referring to this thing, whatever it was. And then he says, one day the guy killed himself with an overdose of sleeping pills and alcohol.

And this Sir Kenneth Dover says, “I got up that morning, the sun was shining, I felt perfect. I knew Oxford was embarked on the right path,” with him as head of the Classics Department, which he may still be today.

### The Real Mesopotamia

Briefly, just to reference prehistoric Indian Ocean cultures:

There’s great difficulty created by British fixations on Semitic studies. For example, in many different ways, according to which cult you listen to, the rights of the royal family are based on their descent from various Semites. Queen Elizabeth is officially supposed to be a descendant of King David. The British Israelite Society, of which we know many members, actually, including leading members, has a much more far-going thesis, which is that the people claiming to be Jews today are actually not Jews at all. That all the Jews left Israel and went to Britain at some time, and that the present British are the Jews, and the Jews are impostors, or something.

The British are fixated on Mesopotamia, the area between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers in present-day Iraq, as being the origin of civilization—*by virtue of being the origin of oligarchic civilization*. This was an oli-

garchic, very perverted civilization, and the British want to claim that all civilization arose, quite recently in fact, from the oligarchic civilization of Mesopotamia, particularly what’s commonly called Babylonia.

You run into all kinds of problems with British scholarship because of this narrow fixation. On the other hand, however, it caused them to foster extensive research into Babylonian (Akkadian) and other Semitic writings. So, around 1875, it began to be apparent, especially to continental European scholars, that the Babylonian alphabet or syllabary—it was not an alphabet like ours—was radically inappropriate for the writing of the Babylonian language. It couldn’t have been devised for writing Babylonian, but must have been devised for writing some other language, and adapted with great difficulty for the writing of Babylonian.

And then this other language was discovered, which was called Sumerian. The Sumerians had invented the Babylonian style of writing to represent their own very different language, for which it was much more appropriate. It was a completely different language.

And what gradually became apparent, although there were tremendous fights about this in the period of 1875 through 1925, was that the Babylonians—that is, the Semites, or the Mesopotamians generally—had been uncivilized, had not lived in cities, had not had the use of writing, had not had much of any modern technology, until a foreign people appeared called the Sumerians, who initially appeared right at the northern end of the Persian Gulf, where their main centers remained, even though they spread out from there. And from these foreign people, the Semites got writing and all forms of culture—astronomy, arithmetic, you name it. Now, the last Sumerians, really, died out certainly by 2500 B.C. After that—in fact, up until several hundred years before Christ—the language was not a living language, there were no more identifiable Sumerians, certainly not in the cities.

But until into the First millennium B.C., however, in the Babylonian court,

arguments were presented in the Sumerian language, which was a foreign language completely different from any language which anybody knew. You had to hire somebody who spoke this language to represent you in court. The decisions were written in this language. Everything was done in this foreign language—medical education, astronomical, scientific, mathematical—all were done in the Sumerian language, which was a foreign language far more different from the Semitic languages than Latin is from English, where you once had a comparable sort of phenomenon.

So, a vastly superior culture had come and civilized many of the Semites of the area, and then had gradually, over the millennia, been submerged among them and could no longer be identified—although the language was carried on for many centuries, for these kinds of ceremonial reasons. So, this was a fascinating business which came to light over this period.

The reason I’m mentioning this, is that this Sumerian language comes from the same language family as that of the ancient Dravidian culture of the Indus Valley, of Harappa and Mohenjodaryo, which preceded the arrival of the Indo-Aryans, the speakers of what became Sanskrit, into India from the central Asian plateau. And the whole thesis is, that at a time which I can’t date, but certainly well before 4000 B.C., there was a single, ocean-going culture, which preceded the shared culture of the Indus Valley and Sumerian riparian (river-side) cities. A maritime culture, which went from Sumatra, as the terminus of the current which leads from south of Ceylon eastward, which spread across the Indian Ocean area, as far as the east coast of Africa. And there was one unified culture speaking one unified language many millennia ago; a maritime culture which had outposts in various locations.

This was very much older than the supposed “origin” of civilization in oligarchic Mesopotamia. All of which is wholly antithetical, heretical actually, to the accepted canon of British archaeological authorities.

—Tony Papert