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Linguistic idiosyncrasies and chronology of Linear B tablets from the Room of the Chariot Tablets and the North Entrance Passage at Knossos*

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Knossos Linear B tablets belong to different chronological periods, as studies in archaeology, epigraphy, palaeography, phylogenetic systematics, and prosopography have demonstrated.[1] In particular, these inquiries have proved that the documents in Mycenaean Greek from the *Room of the Chariot Tablets* [henceforth: RCT] and the *North Entrance Passage* [henceforth: NEP] are more archaic than the rest of the Knossos Linear B tablets. Although Mycenaean studies have not yet investigated fully the linguistic implications of such a diachronic perspective, early terminological and morphophonological research on RCT and NEP tablets has shown a connection between linguistic idiosyncrasies and Linear B chronology.[2] In this context, a diachronic analysis of linguistic idiosyncrasies, historically read as errors, abnormalities, or mere variant spellings,[3] can shed new light on their interpretation. This paper (i) applies the diachronic approach to a selection of idiosyncrasies from RCT and NEP tablets; (ii) explores how chronological gaps impact lin-

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[1] Driessen 1990; Firth & Skelton 2016a-c; Landenius Enegren 2008; Tomas 2017.

[2] Driessen 2000 preliminarily lists RCT peculiar words and spellings; Nosch 2022, and Pierini 2014 and 2018, analyse diachronically the complete dossier of particular Linear B morphophonological and vocabulary elements.

[3] Chadwick 1958.

guistic interpretations; (iii) argues that the selected idiosyncrasies are 'non-Greek' elements, archaic features not appearing in later Linear B texts, or Linear B innovations.

Knossos find-spots

The identification of the Knossos find-spots is problematic due to the unsystematic and contradictory nature of the primary sources.[4] After a first classification attempt,[5] a thorough palaeographical study singled out two particular Linear B tablet deposits for their idiosyncratic features, namely RCT and NEP.[6] Further in-depth palaeographical analyses, along with probative archaeological, epigraphical, and pinacological evidence demonstrated two key points.[7] First, RCT and NEP do not show strong links to other Knossos deposits.[8] Second, RCT is the earliest Linear B archive in Crete, possibly preceding mainland archives as well, and NEP is dated slightly later than the RCT but before all the other Knossos deposits. Corroborating this second point, the application of the phylogenetic systematics method to Mycenaean palaeography has confirmed the isolation of RCT and NEP.[9] Furthermore, follow-up inquires agree that tablets from RCT are the closest in shape and physical characteristics to the Linear A documents.[10] Finally, in terms of relative chronology, RCT is currently datable to LM II-IIIA1 and NEP to LM IIIA2, while the absolute chronology of the Bronze Age Aegean is yet difficult to establish.[11]

In addition to Jan Driessen's works mentioned above, the reconstruction of the Knossos find-spots also relies on two robustly argued works by Richard Firth.[12] Firth and Driessen's reconstructions differ regarding whether to consider NEP an agglomerate of different deposits or a single deposit, while they agree on acknowledging a strong relation between the sub-areas *Spiral Cornice Room* and *Area of the Bull Relief*.

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[4] Del Freo 2016.

[5] Palmer & Boardman 1963.

[6] Olivier 1967.

[7] Driessen 1990; 1999; 2000.

[8] Albeit with some *caveats*: Driessen 1999; Salgarella 2020.

[9] Firth & Skelton 2016a-c.

[10] Tomas 2017.

[11] Karnava 2005.

[12] Firth 1996-1997; 2000-2001.

Identifying the corpora and defining the dataset

According to the latest Knossos edition,[13] the tablets from section C of the Palace of Minos, i.e. the RCT, are 281. Possibly 282 if we add **V 52**, tentatively related to RCT.[14] However, the total number increases significantly when also including the "124"-related documents, given that this graphic style, typical of RCT tablets, is also found on tablets of unknown provenance.[15]

Here, we analyse morphophonological idiosyncrasies that appear on RCT tablets and no longer show up on tablets from later deposits. These idiosyncrasies and the RCT tablets recording them read as follow: **Ai 213**:]a_2-*ta*; **B(2) 101**: a_3-*te-re*; **Ce 50**: *a-qi-ru* and *ro-ru*; **Np (1) 49**: *ri-*65-no*; **Sc 103**: *ki-ra*$_2$*-i-jo*; **Sc 238**: *me-nu-wa*; **Vc 94**: *ki-je-u*; **Vc 201**: *ta-ra-sa-ta*; **V(2) 60**: *me-nu-wa* (and *a-ni-o-ko*); **V 118**: a_2-*ke-te-re*; **V 145**: *u-du-ru-wo*; **V 280**: *wo-de-wi-jo* and *i-ku-wo-i-pi*; **Xd 149**: *ri-u-no*. By broadening the inquiry to the "124"-related documents, we can also add **Xd 7702** to the dataset, which bears another attestation of *me-nu-wa*.

Other considerations ensue for NEP and NEP tablets due to two differences: the involvement of sub-areas and the slightly later chronology. As a result, the analysis of NEP tablets requires another approach since they do not show idiosyncrasies that are exclusive of NEP. However, NEP tablets do provide a peculiar example, which also has a strong connection with RCT tablets: sign **34* and the corresponding logogram LUNA. Additionally, we will show further examples of relevant connections between data from RCT and NEP tablets and their differences with later documents.

In the next sections, we will analyse the above-mentioned RCT and NEP selected idiosyncrasies. First, we will describe them according to the following criteria: (i) vowel alternations, (ii) consonant alternations, (iii) glide alternations, (iv) morphological alternations, (v) 'extra signs' inherited from Linear A, (vi) 'extra signs' that are Linear B innovations, (vii) *hapax*. Next, we will group these idiosyncrasies into the relevant typologies.

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[13] *KT*^{6}.

[14] Gulizio *et al.* 2001.

[15] Lists and classifications in Pierini 2020a.

Vowel alternations

The anthroponym *a-qi-ru* and the toponym *u-du-ru-wo* present variant spellings that show an *o* instead of the *u*, in the last and first syllable respectively. Specifically, (i) the anthroponym appears twice as *a-qi-ru* on the RCT tablet **Ce 50** and as *a-qi-ro* on **KN Da 1123**, a tablet from the East-West Corridor; (ii) the toponym appears as *u-du-ru-wo* (genitive) on the RCT tablet **V 145** and as *o-du-ru-we* (dat.-loc.) on **KN C 902**, a tablet from NEP (specifically, *Area of Bull Relief*).[16] In addition, the ethnic adjective *o-du-ru-wi-jo/-ja* appears on the NEP tablets **Ai 982** and **C 902** (both from the *Area of Bull Relief*) and on the Thebes jar **Z 839**.

Due to the *o/u* alternance, *a-qi-ru* is considered a Pre-Hellenic anthroponym.[17] We add that the RCT tablet attesting *a-qi-ru* also records *ro-ru*. Although *ro-ru* has no variant spellings,[18] the fact that it is an anthroponym and on the same tablet as *a-qi-ru* makes it plausible that *ro-ru* too is the *-u* spelling of a Pre-Hellenic name. Additionally, the fact that *ro-ru* is a disyllable and the first syllable ends in *-o* suggests that the dissimilation principle played a role in maintaining the final *-u*.

Consonant alternations

The RCT tablet **V(2) 280** records *i-ku-wo-i-pi*, an obscure noun most likely related to the word for 'horse.'[19] To show its uniqueness, let us compare *i-ku-wo-i-pi* with the other spellings for 'horse,' namely *i-qo*, which appears in all the other Linear B attestations, and the alphabetic Greek *hippos*.

The noun *hippos* stems from **ekwo-*,[20] an Indo-European [henceforth: IE] root showing an original cluster **kw*. As Michel Lejeune has observed,[21] Linear B does show evidence for a graphic differentiation between (i) labiovelars like **k*^{w} and original clusters like **kw*, and (ii) secondary clusters like **k+w*. As a result, in Linear B the signs of the

[16] On the NEP tablet **KN Co 910**, the spelling *o-*]*du-ru-wo* is reconstructed.

[17] Melena 1983, 260.

[18] In Knossos, **Ce 50** (RCT) records *ro-ru* twice, **Dq(2) 1234** (from the East-West Corridor) has]*ro-ru* with the "texts certainly complete at left" according to *CoMIK*, and **Fh 5443** (unknown provenance) shows *ro-ru*[without mention of missing elements in *CoMIK*; in Thebes, **Gp 179** shows a dotted and fragmentary *ro-ṛṵ*[.

[19] *DMic. s.v.*

[20] The root is reconstructed as **ekwo-* in *DELG s.v. hippos* and as **h*$_1$*ek̑u̯o-* in *EDG s.v. hippos.*

[21] Lejeune 1958.

q- series are to be found in words of the former group (e.g. *e-qe-ta* < **sek*^{w}), whereas the signs of the *k*-series followed by signs of the *w*-series are to be found in words of the latter group. This distribution also reflects the word formation and the morpheme boundary, as examples like the adjectives in **-went* (e.g. *o-da-ke-we-ta*/*o-da-ku-we-ta*) and the perfect participles in **-wos* (e.g. *te-tu-ko-wo-a*) illustrate.

Building on this, we highlight four observations. First, secondary clusters do not appear on RCT tablets and the earliest evidence for **k+w* comes from NEP tablets, which attest examples like *o-da-ku-we-ta* on **L 870** and *te-tu-ko-wo-a* on **L 871**. Second, the first certain attestation of the Mycenaean words for 'horse' outside RCT is on the NEP tablet **Ca 895**, which shows the spelling *i-qo*. Third, the RCT tablet **V(1) 56** records the anthroponym *e-qe-a-o*, tentatively related to **ekwo-*.[22] However, this interpretation is problematic due to the initial *e-* instead of *i-*, and other proposals have been put forward instead.[23] Fourth, on RCT tablets the signs of the *q*- series are attested in several anthroponyms and in one toponym,[24] but it is challenging to establish whether tablets from this deposit also provide evidence for signs of the *q*- series in vocabulary terms due to lack of context,[25] fragmentary status of the word,[26] and uncertain interpretation.[27]

In light of this succinct overview on chronology, labiovelars, and original and secondary **kw* clusters, two explanations are possible for *i-ku-wo-i-pi*. The first is that it is a peculiar spelling since original clusters **kw* are written with the *q*-signs. Hence, the common understanding that *i-ku-wo-i-pi* is an idiosyncrasy. However, another explanation

[22] Melena 2014, 40.

[23] *DMic. s.v.*

[24] **Og 1804** records the toponym *qa-ra-o*. The following tablets record anthroponyms with a sign of the *q*- series: **Ce 50**, **166**; **F(1) 51**, **148**, **153**; **Np 294**; **Sc 135**, **226**, **233**, **246**, **257**; **Uf(1) 121**; **Vc 54**, **173**, **181**, **290**, **303**; **Vd 7545**; **V 60**, **145**, **147**; **Xd 122**, **154**, **296**, **300**. Possibly **Sc 197** has to be added to this list, but the lack of context does not allow to identify the fragmentary *wo-no-qi-*[as an anthroponym.

[25] **Vc 123** records]*-qe-wa*, **Xd 307** *do-qi*[, and **Xd 309**]*pa-no*, *qa*[. These three cases show a fragmentary word that is also (almost) the only text on the tablet.

[26] **Uc 160**.3 reads qi[ ]V 1 Z 1 VIN S 1 V 3 Z 2. The fragmentary state of the tablet prevents us from establishing whether *qi*[is the beginning of an anthroponym or a vocabulary word. In the latter case, it might be a commodity.

[27] **V(1) 56** records *e-qe-a-o a-to-mo*, which lacks an agreed interpretation but is generally understood as an occupational name, with *e-qe-a-o* tentatively related to *e-qe-ta* 'follower' (<**sekw-*). **Xd 140**.2a records *pa-ze-qe*, perhaps to be read as the anthroponym *pa-ze* and the enclitic *-qe* 'and' (<**-kwe*), cf. *DMic. s.vv.*

is possible. We propose that *i-ku-wo-i-pi* closely reflects a differentiation of the IE phonetics that subsequently got lost, possibly due to the appearance of secondary clusters **k+w*. We argue this in view of the following considerations. First, the spelling *k*-sign+*w*-sign transcribes an original cluster **kw* on the RCT word *i-ku-wo-i-pi* and secondary clusters **k+w* from NEP tablets onwards. Moreover, secondary clusters **k+w* do not appear on RCT tablets and are only attested on later deposits, starting with NEP. Further, the earliest attestations of the *q*-signs to write the original clusters **kw* are found on NEP tablets, e.g. *i-qo* on **Ca 895**. Finally, the earliest attestations of secondary clusters **k+w* are located on NEP tablets as well. On this basis, we hypothesise that (i) the earliest Mycenaean attestations, namely RCT tablets, closely reflect the IE phonetics by maintaining the differentiation between labiovelars **k*^{w} (*q*-signs) and original clusters **kw* (*k*-signs+*w*-signs, e.g. *i-ku-wo-i-pi*); (ii) the original clusters **kw* are subsequently written by means of the *q*-signs, thus merging with labiovelars after the era of RCT tablets; (iii) the secondary clusters **k+w* appeared after the era of RCT tablets since these clusters are attested from NEP tablets on, and this might have propelled the fusion, at least in the writing practice, between labiovelars **k*^{w} and original clusters **kw* since the group *k*-sign+*w*-sign was used for the secondary clusters **k+w* by this point.

Glide alternations

The anthroponym *ki-je-u* appears on the RCT tablet **KN Vc 94**, while the variant spelling *ki-e-u* is attested in Pylos (**PY An 724**). Likewise, the anthroponym *me-nu-wa* appears as such on the RCT tablets **Sc 238** and **V(2) 60** and, in addition, on **Xd 7702**, which is by "124". This anthroponym also appears in Pylos, once with the spelling *me-nu-wa* and three times written as *me-nu-a*$_2$. The chronology of the variant spellings is consistent with the chronology of the evolution into *-h-* of **-y-* and **-w-*, which underwent changes at different stages of the Greek language. In fact, RCT tablets display the retention of **-y-* and **-w-* in intervocalic position by attesting the forms *ki-je-u* and *me-nu-wa*, whereas tablets from later deposits show that the evolution of intervocalic **-y-* and **-w-* into an aspiration *-h-* was an *in fieri* process during the Mycenaean era by attesting the forms *ki-e-u*, *me-nu-wa*, and *me-nu-a*$_2$.[28]

[28] Lejeune 1972a, 90 n.§81-1, in analysing the variant spellings *me-nu-wa* and *me-nu-a*$_2$, affirms:

Morphological alternations

The *o-stem* singular genitives in *-Xo* have long been considered scribal errors, namely haplographies. However, by crosschecking the chronology of Linear B tablets with linguistic data, a different perspective emerges.[29] Below, we highlight the main points.

The RCT tablet **V 280** record *wo-de-wi-jo*, which is followed by the genitive *me-no* and the expression means 'in the month of the rose.' Traditionally, *wo-de-wi-jo* is interpreted as a haplo*graphy* and *wo-de-wi-jo-jo me-no* on **KN Ga(4) 953** is used to corroborate the hypothesis. However, **Ga(4) 953** is a NEP tablet, thus it chronologically follows the RCT attestation of *wo-de-wi-jo*.

We summarize the linguistic considerations as follows. First, the ending **-osyo* might be heteromorphematic (i.e. **-os-yo*) or monomorphematic (i.e. **-o-syo*). Comparative data point toward the former possibility. Accordingly, the earliest stage **-os* is expected to be found in archaic places, like the earliest tablets of the Linear B corpus, and conservative names, such as toponyms, anthroponyms, month markers. If we assume the change **-os* > **-osyo*, a recharacterization propelled by the homophony and homography with the nominative case, we can also hypothesise that words already ending in *-yo* resisted (at least initially) the addition of a further *-yo*. Therefore, the *o*-stem singular genitives in *-Xo* are not scribal errors. Rather, they are either attestations of the earliest stage **-os* of the genitive ending or haplo*logies*.

Extra signs inherited from Linear A

Here we examine the variant spellings related to **65* and **34*, which Linear B inherited from Linear A.

Although the phonetic value of **65* is still debated, it is agreed that it is related to the sound *u*. Two RCT tablets support this connection by providing different spellings of one toponym: **Np(1) 49** records *ri-*65-no* and **Xd 149** *ri-u-no*. The toponym is also spelled *ri-jo-no* in later

"lorsqu'une voyelle de timbre *a* suit une syllabe de timbre *i* ou *u*, et que la semi-voyelle transitoire *y* ou *w* fait default, c'est le signe *-a_2-* (non le signe *-a-*) que l'on trouve presque toujours; il est tentant de supposer: que l'"aspiration' intervocalique était débile à date mycénienne; que, là où elle est notée (en l'espace, par *-a_2-*), elle exclut les semi-voyelles de transition; enfin que, inversement, là où les semi-voyelles de transition font default, la présence d'une 'aspiration' (même non notée) en est cause."

[29] Pierini 2018; 2020b with further references and details; Vine 2020 for a different perspective.

attestations, starting with the NEP tablet **C 902**, which also show the above-mentioned *o-du-ru-we*. Thus far, data about *ri-*65-no* confirm the considerations we provided about *a-qi-ru* and *u-du-ru-wo* (and those we will explore below, too).

The phonetic value of **34* is not established either, despite the strong points in José Luis Melena's interpretation *hai*.[30] A former proposal by Mabel Lang, Yves Duhoux, and Cornelis Ruijgh reads **34* as *lu*.[31] In particular, Ruijgh hypothesises a relationship between (i) alphabetic Greek λύγαια and a meaning related to sleeves for the textile terms *a-*34-ka* and **34-ka* in light of the gloss explaining λύγαια as 'the little circles around the hands,'[32] and (ii) the Pre-Hellenic word λυκάβας 'month' and the use of **34* as the logogram indicating the 'month,' i.e. LUNA.

Here, we highlight a datum that has gone unnoticed thus far, namely the close link between **34* and NEP tablets. First, *a-*34-ka* only appears on **Ld(2) 786** and **787**, both from NEP and by Hand 114, and **34-ka* only on **Ld(2) 8192**, of unknown provenance but by Hand 114.[33] Secondly, ten out of the 13 tablets attesting LUNA are from NEP.

Data from RCT corroborate the link between **34* and the earliest stages of the Mycenaean language as reflected on the earliest Linear B tablets. Here, **34* appears on **Sc(2) 235** in the anthroponym *po-*34-wi-do*, on **Sc(3) 255** in *po-*34*[, probably another attestation of the anthroponym, and on **Xd 328** in the fragmentary word]*pa-*34-so*[.

The meagre number of Knossos attestations for **34* and LUNA outside RCT and NEP substantiates the hypothesis that **34* is a Linear A inherited element, the use of which becomes increasingly restricted. Future research assessing the phonetic value of **34* has to address the impact of Knossos data and diachrony on its interpretation.

Extra signs that are Linear B innovations

Linear B created 'doublets' and 'complexes' signs,[34] perhaps to address phonetic differences not expressed in the Linear A script. The RCT examples are a_2, a_3, and ra_2, and, given the focus on the sound *a*, the un-

[30] MELENA 2013.

[31] DUHOUX 1983; LANG in PALMER 1969; RUIJGH 1979.

[32] Hesychius λ 1324 L.-Cunn.

[33] See NOSCH, this volume, for the relationship between Knossos deposits and textile terms.

[34] See LEJEUNE 1972b, for a distinction between 'doublets' and 'complexes.'

derlying question is whether the abundance of *a*-signs in Linear A (see below) may have influenced the process, at least in its earliest stages.

The RCT tablet **B(2) 101** shows the 'doublet' a_3 in a_3-*te-re* 'inlayer,' an occupational noun also appearing on a Pylos tablet without spelling variations. This Linear B innovation seems to be consistent throughout the Mycenaean archives. The RCT tablet **Sc 103** shows the 'complex' sign ra_2 in the anthroponym *ki-*ra_2*-i-jo*, which also appears once in Pylos as *ki-ri-ja-i-jo*. Here, the chronological gap highlights a development on the cluster pronunciation (and graphic rendition).[35]

The 'doublet' a_2 appears on the RCT tablets **Ai 213**, in the fragmentary word]a_2-*ta*, and **V 188**, in a_2-*ke-te-re* 'restorer?.' Although a_2 is commonly read *ha*, recent analyses evidence two elements:[36] etymological connections with a cluster of *s/j/w* + vocalized resonant (*m̥, n̥, l̥, r̥* > *ă*), and links with Linear B geographical and chronological elements. The former point is consistent with the absence of a_2 in spellings that are considered 'exceptions' or given alternative etymological explanations, like *a-ni-o-ko* 'charioteer' from the RCT tablet **V(2) 60**. It is a compound of *a-ni-ja* 'reins' and ἔχω 'to hold,' and *a-ni-ja* stems from a root with a long vowel (and not a vocalized resonant): **ānsia*.[37]

Hapax

Finally, the RCT tablet **Vc (7) 201** attests the anthroponym *ta-ra-sa-ta*, its only occurrence in the Mycenaean corpus. We observe that its origin is uncertain and that the individuals recorded on RCT tablets are unrelated to the other Knossos anthroponyms according to statistical analyses.[38] Further, *ta-ra-sa-ta* shows a consistency of the vocalism *a*, which is not a common sound in Proto-Indo-European [henceforth: PIE] as we will see below, and this can reflect its non-Greek origin or pronunciation.

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[35] García Ramón 1984, for ra_2 and *ri-ja* as *allegro* and *lento* variants of the same cluster.

[36] Nosch 2022; Pierini 2014.

[37] *DELG*; *EDG s.vv.*; in light of the RCT spelling, Vine 2020 suggests that the "aspiration-anticipation" is post-Mycenaean.

[38] Landenius Enegren 2008.

Categorising the idiosyncrasies: non-Greek elements, archaisms, innovations

This survey on the linguistic idiosyncrasies from RCT and NEP tablets illustrates that these elements are external influences on the Linear B phonetics, archaisms that later deposits no longer show, or Linear B innovations. Accordingly, we group these idiosyncrasies into three typologies: (i) non-Greek elements, e.g. 'Minoan' words or sounds; (ii) archaisms, e.g. PIE features, unattested in later deposits; (iii) Linear B innovations, i.e. new Linear B signs for specific sounds.

In analysing the non-Greek elements from RCT tablets *a-qi-ru*, *ro-ru*, *u-du-ru-wo*, *ri-*65-no* and *ri-u-no*, and *ta-ra-sa-ta*, we observe that the alternation between *u* and *o* is not only found in comparing Linear A and Linear B forms—such as Linear A QA-QA-RU and Linear B QA-QA-RU—but also within the Linear B corpus itself, specifically between tablets from RCT and later deposits. Alternations like *qa-qa-ru* and *qa-qa-ro* can reflect two scenarios: (i) Linear A -U encoded the actual sound U and Linear B adapted it to its own phonetics and declension by changing it with an *-o*; or (ii) the sound was the same, but in Linear A it is expressed through an *-u* and in Linear B through an *-o*. The Linear B alternation between *a-qi-ru* (from RCT) and *a-qi-ro* (from a later deposit) might reflect a similar situation, i.e. that the *-u* ending in the former reflects Minoan phonetics or that the ending *-o* in the latter is a phonetic adaptation of a Minoan name to Mycenaean phonetics and declension. The final *-u* in *ro-ru* (from RCT) corroborates the hypothesis of a non-Greek anthroponym reflecting Minoan phonetics, if we accept that the first syllable in *-o* maintained the final *-u* in the disyllable due to dissimilation. The *u/o* alternation also takes place in initial and central positions, as the variant spellings of *u-du-ru-wo* and *ri-*65-no* show. RCT toponyms *u-du-ru-wo*, *ri-*65-no*, and *ri-u-no* appear as *o-]du-ru-wo* and *ri-jo-no* already on NEP tablets. Moreover, Ὄθρυς is a Cretan mount according to Hesychius (o 163 L.-Cunn.). Although the location of *u-du-ru-wo* is yet to be established, the gloss confirms that it was a Minoan site and the presence of *u-du-ru-wo* on RCT and NEP tablets but not in later Knossos deposits substantiates the hypothesis. Additionally, a diachronic reading of the Linear B data evidences that the Minoan centre lost its prominence once Mycenaeans took over on the island.

Although the language that Linear A encodes is still poorly under-

stood, prior research confirms that about 72% of signs have a shared phonetic value in Linear A and Linear B.[39] The application of these shared values to Linear A texts evidences 'abundance' of *a, i,* and *u* and 'scarcity' of *e* and *o*. Although the reconstruction of the vowel system is problematic in the Linear A script (or the language it encodes)[40] and in IE,[41] this datum and Linear B words like the RCT anthroponym *ta-ra-sa-ta* confirm the hypothesis of a non-IE origin of Minoan,[42] since the consistency of the vocalism *a*, not common and hard to reconstruct in PIE,[43] underline non-Greek origins or pronunciations.

Similar considerations ensue for **34*. In Knossos it mostly appears in RCT and NEP tablets and almost exclusively in NEP as a logogram. This decreased use in later tablets is also consistent with the different use of logograms in Linear A and Linear B, widespread in Linear A and with a more defined function as cataloguing element in Linear B. These data confirm the impact of chronology on the use of the sign. Additionally, they corroborate the interpretation of *34 as *lu* since (i) the proposal to relate *a-*34-ka* and **34-ka* to the sleeves makes sense semantically, phonetically, and chronologically;[44] and (ii) the interpretation of LUNA as a non-Greek word meaning 'month' and beginning with *lu* makes sense in the contexts of the NEP tablets with this logogram. In light of this analysis, it is even more interesting that **34-ke-u* on the Pylos tablet **Ta 709**.3 describes a tripod that is *ke-re-si-jo we-ke* 'of Cretan manufacture'—a Cretan influence on the spelling, too?[45]

RCT tablets evidence morphological and phonological archaisms. The *o*-stem singular genitive *wo-de-wi-jo* belongs to the former category and appears as such in RCT and as *wo-de-wi-jo-jo* on NEP tablets. Phonological archaisms are the RCT spellings *i-ku-wo-i-pi*, *ki-je-u*, and *me-nu-wa*. The *k-* and *w-* signs in *i-ku-wo-i-pi* render the original cluster **kw*, whereas in words from later deposits they render secondary clusters **k+w* and the *q*-series render the original cluster **kw*, which appears in *i-qo* and further 'horse'-related words. The anthroponyms *ki-je-u* and

[39] Palaima & Sikkenga 1999; Steele & Meißner 2017.

[40] Davis 2014.

[41] Villar 1993.

[42] Duhoux 1978.

[43] Kroonen 2012.

[44] Nosch, in this volume, connects Knossos textiles and deposits.

[45] On *ke-re-si-jo we-ke*, see Pierini & Rosamilia 2022; Russotti 2021.

me-nu-wa show the retention of *-y-* and *-w-* in intervocalic position, which will later evolve into an aspiration *-h-*, as the variant spellings *ki-e-u* and *me-nu-a*$_2$ on tablets from later deposits evidence.

Linear B innovations from RCT are the 'doublets' and 'complexes' of the *a*-series]*a*$_2$*-ta*, *a*$_2$*-ke-te-re*, *a*$_3$*-te-re*, and *ki-ra*$_2$*-i-jo*. Although the phonetic value of *a*$_2$ is debated, it is hard to deny the relationship between *a*$_2$ and the chronology of Mycenaean tablets. Different is the case of *a*$_3$ since its phonetic value is *ai* and, furthermore, *a*$_3$*-te-re* appears as such on RCT and later tablets too—thus showing consistency in the spelling, regardless of external elements. Finally, *ki-ra*$_2$*-i-jo* has a variant spelling *ki-ri-ja-i-jo* in Pylos, suggesting that the spelling (and, possibly, the pronunciation too) underwent changes.

Linguistic idiosyncrasies on the RCT tablets

Non-Greek Elements	Archaisms	Linear B Innovations
Alternations between RCT and later deposits, not only between LA and LB:	RCT wo-de-wi-**jo** *vs* Later *wo-de-wi-**jo-jo***	RCT]***a*$_2$***-ta* RCT ***a*$_2$***-ke-te-re*
LA *qa-qa-r**u*** *vs* LB *qa-qa-r**o*** RCT *a-qi-r**u*** *vs* Later *a-qi-r**o***	RCT i-**ku-wo**-i-pi *vs* Later i-**qo**	RCT ***a*$_3$***-te-re* and Later ***a*$_3$***-te-re*
RCT *ro-r**u*** RCT ***u**-du-ru-wo* *vs* Later ***o**-du-ru-we* and ***o**-du-ro-wi-jo*	RCT ki-**je**-u *vs* Later *ki-**e**-u*	RCT *ki-**ra*$_2$**-i-jo* and Later *ki-**ri-ja**-jo*
RCT *ri-***65**-no* and *ri-**u**-no vs* Later *ri-j**o**-no*	RCT me-nu-**wa** *vs* Later me-nu-**a$_2$**	
RCT *ta-ra-sa-ta* RCT *po-***34**-wi-do* and *pa-***34**-so*		
and		
NEP a-****34**-ka* and ****34**-ka* and **LUNA**		

Table 1. The new categorization of RCT linguistic idiosyncrasies.

Conclusion

This diachronic analysis of selected features throughout the Linear B corpus show that the so-called idiosyncrasies are not errors or abnormalities but, rather, elements that are consistent with the development

of the Greek language. In particular, the focus on RCT and NEP tablets allows us to identify the crucial steps of this evolution, given that RCT tablets bridge Linear A and Linear B attestations and NEP tablets bridge RCT documents with later Mycenaean text. This way, we obtain a coherent picture of linguistic changes, seamlessly connecting the most archaic non-Greek and PIE elements with the latest developments the Greek language underwent in the 2nd millennium BCE. From this perspective, a major implication of this work is that the linguistic material from RCT tablets represents a firm basis for establishing a relative chronology of the Mycenaean texts in particular and the Greek language as a whole. It is also important to note that the earliest stages in RCT and NEP tablets show a particularly vivid *milieu* for change to happen, given the truly unique combination of similarities and differences, and continuity and hiatus that the two deposits allow us to explore. This is especially relevant, considering the relatively short amount of time that separates Linear A from RCT, and the RCT from NEP. Such a diachronic approach can truly pave the way for ground-breaking research on the Greek language.

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