THE GROUPING OF PLACE-NAMES IN THE
KNOSOS TABLETS

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The majority of the place-names mentioned in the Knossos tablets cannot be identified, and it is therefore impossible to locate them exactly. The purpose of this enquiry is to investigate the purely internal evidence provided by the tablets themselves for connections between these places, and to attempt an interpretation of this evidence in the light of those identifications which can confidently be made.

The connections which can be established on the basis of internal evidence are of two kinds. A direct connection may be said to exist when two place-names occur on the same tablet. The strongest connection of this kind is between two places originally listed as a pair; the best example of this practice of listing place-names in pairs is provided by the Dn series. Next in importance is the juxtaposition of place-names in longer lists. The weakest sort of direct connection exists between place-names which occur in the same list but not adjacently.

There are also indirect connections, that is to say, those which make use of a third term. This may be another place-name; it will be seen below how indirect connections of this kind often reinforce the direct ones. It will also be necessary to consider indirect connections in which a personal name is the third term. Here most of the evidence is provided by the tablets listing sheep. A typical example of their formula is Da 1127: MI-RU-RO u-la-jo RAM 100 da-*22-to

The personal names which appear in the initial position, written in large characters, are generally taken to be those of the shepherds. Most of them are mentioned only once, and when they do recur it is impossible to be certain whether they are the same individuals,
or different men who happen to have the same name. For this reason the occurrence of the same shepherd's name at different places can never have more than a corroborative value for the establishment of a connection between those places. A list of shepherds' names which occur in connection with more than one place will be found in Appendix IV.

The individuals whose names appear in the second position in the sheep tablets are far less numerous than the shepherds, and the majority of them occur more than once, often at several different places. They are designated by Ventris and Chadwick as 'collectors', but it seems unlikely that this was their function, not only because the areas with which they are concerned overlap so much, but also because they are in many cases omitted. I prefer the hypothesis that they are the 'owners' of the animals. They often occur at so many different places that their value in establishing connections between these places is very limited, but they do provide a certain amount of support for existing connections.

In this investigation two questions must be kept distinct. The first, 'Is the internal evidence for association consistent?', can be answered from observation of the facts. The second question is whether the associations have any geographical significance. A well-supported association between two places, while it could not actually prove that they were in geographical proximity, would at least go far towards making probable the supposition that they were. What such evidence could not reveal would be how close to each other the places were; that could only be known in the case of identifiable places which could be exactly located. In the case of the Knossos material such identifiable places are relatively few: they are the fixed points to which the rest have somehow to be related.

The task is made more difficult by the fact that there are very few long lists, and it is nowhere possible to find among them an order which is observed as consistently as that of the 'Nine Towns' of Pylos. This is hardly surprising. At Pylos, where the nine towns seem to have been strung out along the coastline, an obvious order

1) *Documents in Mycenaean Greek*, 202.