

FIND-PLACES OF THE Wm NODULES FROM KNOSSOS

This brief note is a summary of information on the find-places of the Wm nodules found at Knossos. Much of this detail can be found elsewhere, however, in view of John Killen's interesting contribution to *Minos*, it is useful to consolidate the find-place information here.

Killen divides the Wm nodules into two groups:

- 1707, 8493, and 8499
- 1714, 1816 (=1714b), 1817 (=1714c), 5822, 5824, 5860, 8207, 8490

Group (i)

Killen does not discuss the group (i) nodules at length and essentially he defines them to be the nodules that are not in group (ii), which is the prime focus of his interest.

Fortunately, the find-places of the group (i) nodules are all known. Each of these nodules was found in a different find-place and, very probably, they were all found in different find-places from the nodules of group (ii).

Wm 1707 was found on 14 May 1900 in the Area of the Bull Relief, i.e. the North Entrance Passage (Firth 2002, p. 120).

Wm 8493 was found in the Room of the Chariot Tablets on ~17 April 1900 (Firth 2002 p. 107). It is generally agreed that there is little or no association between the inscriptions from the Room of the Chariot Tablets and those found elsewhere in the palace. This has supported the suggestion by Driessen (1990) that they may have been written at an earlier date.

Wm 8499 was found in *Western Magazine* XVIII on 16 March 1901 (Firth 2002, p. 125). This nodule was written by scribe 103, who was responsible for many of the inscriptions associated with the production of textiles at Knossos. This is significant because it implies that Wm 8499 was written at Knossos. In other words, it was not a nodule that was used to record the contents of a package that was being sent to Knossos.

Group (ii)

Evans recorded the finding the group (ii) nodules in his *Notebook* on 28 March 1902, as follows,¹

“In S. door of Hall of Colonnades & entrances of passages beyond more pieces of inscr. & seals. A new kind of round tablet —perhaps a kind of label [drawing, possibly of Wm 1714]. Parts of one or two examples with similar letters & number [signs for 30]. The insides show the impression of a cord

¹ Firth 2002, p. 138.

with prominent twisted strands. It had secured a package. Pieces of led dog seals as last years and several royal signet impressions with the goddess & cup [annotated drawings of R53, 55-57] ... Tablets from this passage list of men & [drawing of signs from E 1574]. The round tablets with the same numbers & inscr. & impression of exactly similar cord seems to show that they secured the same bale or package.”

It is important to note that there were many clay sealings found in this area (Popham & Gill 1995, pp. 20-21). These differ from the W_m nodules, because they carry seal impressions and do not have inscriptions. Nevertheless, they indicate a lot of activity in this area of the palace which was associated with the transfer of goods. Thus, although the group (ii) nodules might appear to be an isolated example because they are unusual within the corpus of inscriptions, their find-context is significant. In his notebooks, Evans refers to part of this area as «secretaries' bureau», which clearly conveys the impression that was apparent at the time of the excavation.

Evans is not explicit about precisely which nodules were found in this find-place. However, we know, from inspection, that the group (ii) nodules were made from the same type of clay and have the same physical characteristics (José Melena, priv. comm.). Thus, we can be reasonably confident that the nodules in group (ii) were manufactured around the same time, and had the same use and, therefore, were very probably found together.

We could also consider which W_m modules were found in the same container in the Heraklion Museum. In practice, all of the W_m inscriptions in the 5000-series were found together in Batch H, i.e. 5821 (=1816), 5822, 5824 and 5860.² There were also two pieces that were found in the Ashmolean, 6049 (=1817) and 6051 (=8207). In this case, their Museum Inventory Numbers (1941.180 and 1938.858) would imply that they were not together at the time when they were given inventory numbers and, quite probably, were received by the museum in different years (i.e. 1941 & 1938). However, these different dates are a consequence of the manner in which Evans' collection of Minoan material was brought together and donated to the Ashmolean Museum, rather than a reflection of find-places almost 40 years previously.

Finally, we should note that there are no joins to any of the W_m nodules. This could be taken to suggest that it was unlikely that these nodules were actually attached to bales at the time of the conflagration at the palace since, in that case, the broken fragments of the nodules would probably have been found in the same locations (José Melena, priv. comm.).

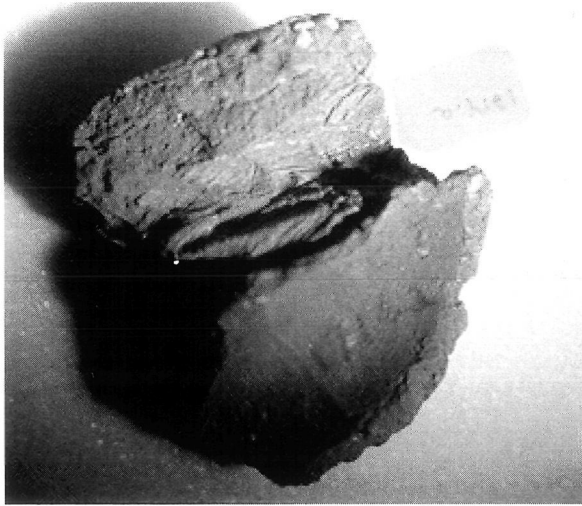
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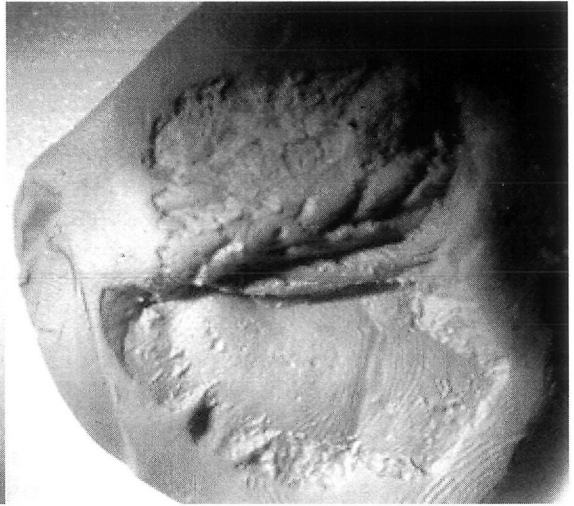
² See Firth & Melena 2002a.

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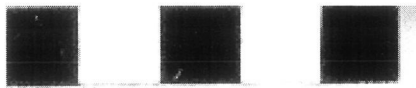
A. *Back of Wm 1714*



B. *Plasticine cast of back*



C. *Wm 1714 as it was held by the scribe*



D. *Wm 1714 (photo by J.-P. Olivier)*