

A TALE OF TWO FRAGMENTS: KN DI 8216 AND 8217¹

1. INTRODUCTION

The bulk of the Knossos Linear B material is held in the Heraklion Museum and most of the remainder was given by Sir Arthur Evans to the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, with a small number tablets given to the British Museum, London, and the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. However, there are a number of fragments which 'escaped the net'. This paper describes our investigation into the history of the two fragments, DI 8216 and 8217, which are now held by the British Museum.

2. FRAGMENT DI 8216

The British Museum records show that the fragment, DI 8216, was given to the museum by Major F. W. B. Willett of the Royal Sussex Regiment. The inventory number indicates that it was given in 1920.

DI 8216		BM (GR 1920.4-16.1) (215)
.A] LANA 3 M [
.B]18 <i>ki</i> OVIS ^m 25 [

At first sight this seems to be a straightforward donation of an artefact to a museum. However, Major Willett is not a name known to Linear B research workers. Therefore, the questions are: where did Willett obtain this small fragment of a clay tablet and why did he recognise that it would be of interest to the British Museum?

The first step in our investigation was to track down details of Major Willett. This was achieved, thanks to the help of Alan Readman, an acknowledged expert on the history of the Royal Sussex Regiment. Willett joined the Royal Sussex in 1897, served with the 1st Battalion in the Boer War and commanded the Depot in Chichester from March 1919, before retiring, as Lieutenant-Colonel (with a D.S.O.) in 1922. As Lieutenant Willett, he served in the 2nd Battalion when it was based in Crete. The battalion was sent to the island in May 1905 to assist in the suppression of the insurrection against the Cretan government by the followers of

¹ The authors would like to acknowledge a number of people who provided the information used in this investigation: Lesley Fitton of the British Museum; Julie Clements and Sue Sherratt of the Ashmolean Museum; Alan Readman, Assistant County Archivist, West Sussex Record Office; Mrs K. Carlton, Clerk of Bethersden Parish Council, Ashford, Kent; George Fraser, Keeper of the parish records for the Bethersden Parish Records Society; John B. Watts of the Bristol & Avon Family History Society.

Venizelos. They were stationed in Candia and at Canea and remained on the island until February 1907.²

Thus, Lieutenant Willett was on Crete during the latter part of the major excavations at Knossos. By 1905, the bulk of the major tablets, from the palace itself, had been given to the Heraklion Museum.³ However, there were new excavations in the areas of the Arsenal and Little Palace and there would also have been occasional fragments found around the excavated palace site.⁴ In addition, there would have been fragments of tablets stored at Knossos. Thus, we appear to have established the basis of a link between Lieutenant Willett and the fragment of a clay tablet from the excavations at Knossos. It will be shown, in SECTION 4, that it is possible to consolidate this link.

3. FRAGMENT DI 8217

Fragment, DI 8217, was given to the British Museum in 1947 by Mrs J. C. Cameron of Low Wood, Bethersden, Ashford, Kent, along with a fairly large collection of Cretan material, including a number of seals. The trustees report of the museum records that, 'All these objects belonged to her late husband, a friend of Arthur Evans, and are said to come from Crete'.⁵

DI(1) 8217

BM (GR 1947.9-26.52) (118)

.A]6 [

.B]1 M 1 [

.A Trace of sign at left, possibly]LANA.

As in the previous case, it is not possible to link the husband of the donor to someone known to researchers in Linear B. The trustees report notes that the Mr Cameron was a friend of Arthur Evans. However, there would have undoubtedly been many people who would have claimed acquaintance with Evans, therefore, it would be difficult to trace Cameron on that basis. In addition, such an acquaintanceship would not be sufficient basis for explaining why Cameron owned a significant collection of Cretan material.

In this case, the main lead in our investigation was the address of the donor. Thanks to the internet, we were able to obtain sufficient information to establish that our most probable source of help would be Bethersden Parish Council. Mrs Carlton, Clerk of the Parish Council, generously provided us with details from the parish records of births, marriages and deaths of the Cameron family between 1880 and 1935. From these records it was clear that the Cameron family had

² Personal communication from Mr A. Readman to RJF, 9 December, 1999. See also, *A History of the Royal Sussex Regiment: A History of the Old Belfast Regiment and the Regiment of Sussex 1701-1953*, G. D. Martineau (Moore & Tillyer, Chichester, no publication date given), pages 126 and 310.

³ R. J. Firth, «A Review of the Find-Places of the Linear B tablets from the Palace of Knossos», *Minos* 35-36, 2000-2001, pp. 79-82.

⁴ See the discussion on D 8151 in SECTION 6.

⁵ Email from Lesley Fitton to JLM, 14 March 2000.

moved to Low Wood, Bethersden between 1881 and 1885. John Duncan Cameron, who was named as the father of two children in the register of births, was listed as a 'Gent and JP' (Justice of the Peace, i.e. a lay magistrate). (It was noted, in particular, that the Camerons were not resident at Low Wood at the time of the 1881 census.)

However, these records did not include Mrs J. C. Cameron. The nearest to such initials was a Mr John Charles Schreiber Cameron of Shaftesbury Avenue, Piccadilly, London, who died in 1918, aged 48 years and whose ashes were buried in Bethersden. With the aid of a suitably vivid imagination (!), it was possible to imagine a link between a cosmopolitan resident of Shaftesbury Avenue and Cretan antiquities. However, it was not possible to see how such ideas could be pursued.

On the other hand, the parish records were leading us into the province of family history and that appeared to be an avenue that could be pursued. On this matter, we sought the advice of John Watts, who has spent many years researching genealogy. He was able to provide us with the 1881 census details of the Cameron family, who at that stage was living in Henhurst House, Woodchurch, Kent. The census records two large family groups living in Henhurst House. The first of these was headed by Amelia Schreiber and included 12 domestic servants. The second was headed by Captain John Duncan Cameron (JP) and included his wife and seven children. The children included six sons, ranging from Ewan, aged 12 years, to Kenneth, aged 9 months. From the Bethersden Parish Records, we know that this latter family moved to Low Wood, Bethersden, prior to the birth of their second daughter, in 1885.

In terms of our quest to track down the donor of D1 8217 to the British Museum, we now had a list of six male descendants of the Cameron family who potentially could have been acquainted with Arthur Evans and who could have acquired the Cretan antiquities.

4. CHRISTIAN DOLL'S DIARY

At the time, the search into the Cameron family history seemed to provide us with significant progress but we were in need of an extra injection of information. In practice, that was given to us from the diary of Christian Doll (which is held by the Ashmolean Museum). Christian Doll studied architecture; he was articled to the architect of the British School at Athens and went to Crete in 1905 to work for Arthur Evans.⁶ He maintained a fairly detailed diary during at least some of this period at Knossos. In particular, the diary contains some details of Doll's social life which was largely associated with meeting and dining with the British officers stationed at Candia. The following are extracts from a few consecutive days in March 1906 which illustrate this.

⁶ J. A. MacGillivray, *The Minotaur: Sir Arthur Evans and the Archaeology of the Minoan Myth*, London 2000, p. 232.

Tuesday March 6

'Two officers of Fusiliers came & I had to show them over the excavations. Asked to dine at the Camp on Saturday. Got ride home in a cab. Found Dr Karo having tea here & Major Masters came in later.'

Thursday March 8

'Very tired when I got back to Candia in the evening. Major C. J. Lloyd Davidson & Capt. Roe of the Inniskilling Fusiliers called but I was out.'

Friday March 9

'Found letter from Hutton asking me to dine at the Camp with Sussex Regiment. Went and did not return till 12.30 am.'

Saturday March 10

'Dined with the Inniskilling at the Lower Camp.'

These few extracts not only demonstrate the close contact between Doll and the British officers but also that the officers were being given escorted tours of the Knossos excavations.

For present purposes, our main interest is in an extract from the diary entry of 1 January 1907,

'Arranged dinner on return to Candia and later on received Capt. Cameron & Willett. Lovely Day.'

This diary is interesting for a number of reasons. Firstly, it completes the link between the excavations at Knossos and Major Willett who donated the Linear B fragment to the British Museum. Secondly, it also provides us with the name of a Captain Cameron who is similarly linked to Knossos. Thirdly, it has the potential to suggest that the Willett and Cameron who were received by Christian Doll on January 1907 were the same people who collected the Cretan artefacts, which were given to the British Museum in 1920 and 1947, respectively. In order to prove this latter point, we need to demonstrate that the family home of this Capt. Cameron was Low Wood, Bethersden.

5. CAPTAIN JAMES SAUMAREZ CAMERON

The first step in this new investigation was, once again, to call on the help of Alan Readman. He provided us with the name of a James Saumarez Cameron who would have served with Willett on Crete. Cameron joined the 1st Battalion, Royal Sussex Regiment as 2nd Lieutenant on 29 May 1895 and was promoted to Lieutenant on 7 October 1897. He served in South Africa throughout the Boer War and on 21 March 1903 he was promoted to Captain to the 2nd Battalion. Cameron was with the 3rd (Special reserve) Battalion in England prior to the First World War but went over to France with the 2nd Battalion and was wounded twice in 1914 and 1915. The latest reference that we have is as Brevet-Lieutenant-Colonel with the 2nd Battalion in 1920.

The next step was look back to our family history details of the Cameron family at Bethersden and Henhurst. These do indeed show a James S. Cameron, who was 7 years old in 1881. Thus, this James S. Cameron would have been 21

in 1895, which is a plausible age for joining the Royal Sussex Regiment. However, this stops short of proof. In order to establish the final link, we asked specifically if there was evidence of James Saumarez Cameron living at Low Wood, Bethersden.

This final link in the chain was provided for us by George Fraser, the Keeper of the Bethersden Parish Records. His initial search was not successful, although he did have a recollection that he had seen the name Saumarez within his records. However, seven months later, Mr Fraser came upon the name and remembered our enquiry! The following are extracts from his press cuttings (probably from *The Kentish Express*).

Nov 1914

Captain J. D. Cameron of Low Wood Bethersden has received intimation from the War Office that his son, Captain J. S. Cameron of the Royal Sussex Regiment, has been wounded in the fighting at Aisne. Born in 1874 Captain James Saumarez Cameron joined the Royal Sussex at the age of 21, receiving promotion to the rank of Captain in 1903. He served in the South African War, taking part in the operations in the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony. He has the Queen's medal with three clasps and the King's medal with two. The Chairman of the Ashford Petty Sessional Bench [i.e. J. D. Cameron, who was a Justice of the Peace] has also had a brother, Lieut.-Colonel E. C. Cameron of the Royal Field Artillery, wounded in action, he having been temporarily invalided home.

.... 1915

Captain James S. Cameron, 2nd Royal Sussex Regiment, son of Captain J. D. Cameron, JP of Low Wood, Bethersden was dangerously wounded on the 21st of July, receiving three shrapnel wounds in the back. He is at present in a Red Cross hospital at Rouen and hopes are expressed of his recovery.

These press-cuttings provide the proof that demonstrates that the James Cameron of Low Wood, Bethersden is the same Captain James Cameron who spent a social evening with Captain Willett and Christian Doll in Candia in early January 1907. In this way, we have been able to demonstrate a clear link between the two British Museum fragments of Linear B tablets and officers of the British battalions stationed at Candia between 1905 and 1907.

6. CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

Before concluding, it is worthwhile, firstly, considering what the official position was on the removal of antiquities from and Crete and, secondly, bringing together notes on other Linear B inscriptions from the Evans' excavations which 'escaped the net'.

In his recent book, MacGillivray includes a useful discussion on the official stance on the removal of antiquities.⁷ He quotes an extract describing how one of the soldiers from a British battalion stole some antiquities from the Shrine of the Double Axes in the palace. This incident resulted in an increase in the rigour of

⁷ MacGillivray, *op. cit.*, pp. 225-226.

the Cretan authorities in enforcing their total restriction of the export of antiquities from the island. However, it is noted that such restrictions were only partially effective because customs searches excluded the contents of pockets. Evans applied to Hatzidakis for permission to export objects for his exhibition in Burlington House in 1903 and, whilst permission was granted for most objects, it was not given for the inscriptions.

However, in 1910, a number of Linear B inscription tablets were presented by A. Evans to British museums. These tablets were among the material given to him by the Cretan Assembly, which included a 'good representative series of the inscribed clay tablets from the Palace Archives.'⁸ Prior to these donations, casts had been made of these tablets and these were retained both by the Heraklion Museum (inventory numbers 1247-1257) and by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (inventory numbers 13.30.4-.15). Nine tablets were given to the Ashmolean Museum (inventory numbers 1910.211 to 219; according Bennett's *Concordance of Heraklion Museum Inventory numbers*, Heraklion Museum did not appear to have retained a cast of Mc 4455, although there is one in the Metropolitan of New York); two tablets were given the British Museum (inventory numbers 1910.4-23.1 and 2); and one tablet was given to Fitzwilliam Museum (inventory number accession GR.1.1911). In principle, the 1910 tablets should have had Heraklion M. Inv. numbers from their initial entry into Heraklion Museum in 1904/1905. In fact some items entered in to the Inventory are noted as 'given to Mr Evans', e.g. 1304 and 1305.

A number of other tablets were donated to the Ashmolean Museum, in 1938 and 1941;⁹ in these cases, we have no record of casts being held in the Heraklion Museum, and most probably these tablets never passed through the Heraklion Museum. These records were not part of the material presented by the Cretan Assembly, but a further series of objects which the Greek Government presented to Evans at the conclusion of the excavations at Knossos and which included for instance fragments from the *Taureador Fresco*.¹⁰ Only a cast of the representative tablet K 872 exists and this was donated to the Ashmolean in 1938, whereas the original remained at Youlbury and was probably given to the Museum later on (it was only given a number in the sixties).

The earliest known missing tablets were KT 288-336 and KT 374-393, which probably went missing prior to the start of the 1901 season of excavations.

⁸ A. Brown, *Arthur Evans and the Palace of Minos*, Oxford 1986, p. 14; cf. also *Ashmolean Museum. Summary Guide*, Oxford 1912, pp. 52ff.: I.39 Cretan Scripts ('they were presented, through Sir A. Evans, by Cretan Government').

⁹ They came from the private collection kept by Evans at Youlbury, cf. S. L. Horwitz, *The Find of a Lifetime. Sir Arthur Evans and the Discovery of Knossos*. New York 1981, p. 242, donated in 1938, when his health began to fail (see J. Evans, *Time and Chance*, London 1943, p. 393), and arranged in the Ashmolean by M. Money-Couts in the following year; the last scraps from this collection went into the Museum after the death of Evans in 1941. A hilarious episode involving the collection cases at Youlbury is described by D. Powell, *The Villa Ariadne*, Athens 1982, p. 48.

¹⁰ A. Brown, *loc. cit.*

Fifteen of these tablets were later recovered in the Giamalakis collection.¹¹ During the 1901 season, tablets were stolen by a workman called Aristides, and were later purchased by the Museum at Athens.¹² However, in both cases, these represent significant numbers of tablets and tablets which were recorded by Evans in his *Handlist*.

However, the later tablets which ‘escaped the net’ were isolated fragments which Evans considered too minor to include in his *Handlist*. It is worthwhile giving particular attention to the note on D 8151, which was found by Mr M. S. Thompson in 1911 and given to the Department of Archaeology at University College, London. Mr Thompson records that he was staying with Evans at the Villa Ariadne and he found the fragment during a tour of the excavated site. He assumed that the fragment had been washed out after recent rainfall. Evans told Thompson that he could keep the tablet.¹³

D 8333 is now in the Manchester Museum.¹⁴ It was obtained by Vincent R. d’A. Desborough. In a letter to John Chadwick (dated 25.7.1964), he writes, ‘I am afraid that I know nothing of the history of this fragment —apparently I got it before the war, and gave it to an aunt who has now returned it to me. I imagine its origin is Knossos but whether I got it in Shoe Lane or in Crete I have not the faintest memory.’

Xf 8835¹⁵ is in a private collection in Great Britain and it is from the Arsenal which would date it to 1904, 1905. As far as we know this one also ‘travelled with’ an archaeologist, who gave it to its present owner.

Dv 8836 is now in the Liverpool University, Archaeological Museum (Accession no. C591). It was given to the university by R. W. Hutchinson, who had been Curator at Knossos from 1934-47, prior to becoming a lecturer in Classical Archaeology from 1948-49. Killen and Mee¹⁶ note that it is assumed that Hutchinson acquired the tablet during his period at Knossos.

In summary, if we set to one side the large groups of tablets which went missing and later appeared in the Giamalakis collection or in the Athens

¹¹ R. J. Firth, «Evans’ Missing Batch of Linear B Tablets», *Minos* 35-36, 2000-2001, pp. 291-313.

¹² J. Chadwick, «Further Linear B Tablets from Knossos», *BSA* 57, 1962, pp. 46-74. The letters by D. Mackenzie concerning the ‘Aristides affair’ are now published in N. Momigliano, *Duncan Mackenzie. A Cautious Canny Highlander & the Palace of Minos at Knossos*, London 1999, pp. 155-159.

¹³ J. Chadwick, *ibidem*, p. 53. A portrait of Maurice S. Thompson mentioning his early visit to Crete and Arthur Evans in R. Hood, *Faces of Archaeology in Greece*, Oxford 1998, pp. 109-114, with a reference to his unpublished *Memoirs*, where undoubtedly he noted down the details of his visit to Knossos in 1911.

¹⁴ J. Chadwick, *Nestor* 1st October 1964, p. 353.

¹⁵ J. T. Killen, «Another Fragment of Linear B Tablet from Knossos», *Kadmos* 33, pp. 14-15, plate 2.

¹⁶ J. T. Killen and C. Mee, «A Fragment of Linear B Tablet from Knossos in the Liverpool University Archaeological Museum», *Kadmos* 33, pp. 15-17, plate 3.

Museum, then we are left with a relatively small number of fragments which 'escaped the net' and which are now all housed in museum collections in England. Four of these fragments were each brought to England by archaeologists. Two fragments were brought to England by Captains Willett and Cameron. There were many visitors to Knossos almost from the start of excavations in 1900. It is evident, from the lack of fragments in other European countries, that souvenir pieces of minor inscriptions were not given liberally to all visitors. However, it is equally clear that minor fragments of inscription could be obtained by people who formed close associations with Knossos. In the case of archaeologists, it might reasonably be assumed that, because of the interest in Linear B, their 'souvenirs' have now all been given to museums and catalogued. In the case of officers in the British battalions, it is possible that there are 'souvenirs' still stored in dusty attics because their present owners do not recognise the academic value of fragments of burnt clay writing tablets.

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