



JOHN CHADWICK

## John Chadwick 1920–1998

IN THE 1970s A DISTINGUISHED British scholar was visiting one of the main museums in the United States. He could not find the object that he wanted to see, and giving his name as Professor Chadwick from England at the enquiry desk, he asked if he could be shown it. He was gratified, if a little surprised, at once to be given the red carpet treatment, in the form of a conducted tour of the entire museum by the Director himself. It was only when he was taking his leave, and the Director made a remark about the decipherment of Linear A, that he realised that an embarrassing mistake had been made. It was not him, the Revd Professor Henry Chadwick, FBA, at that time Dean of Christ Church, Oxford, that the museum thought they were welcoming, but a namesake (though not a relative) whom he knew and greatly admired: John Chadwick, also a Fellow of the Academy, and Perceval Maitland Laurence Reader in Classics at Cambridge University.

Even in the 1970s, John Chadwick's celebrity, not least abroad, was not a recent development. It had its origins in the 1950s and his association, when still in his early thirties, with one of the great intellectual achievements of the century: the decipherment by an even younger contemporary, Michael Ventris, of the Linear B script used in the late Second Millennium BC in Crete and the Greek mainland. It was a fame that did not fade: when Chadwick died on 24 November 1998, aged 78, obituaries appeared, not only in all the English broadsheets, but also in publications not normally given to noting the passing of Cambridge Classical philologists, among them the *New York Times* and *Der Spiegel*.

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We shall discuss later the collaboration with Ventris, and the creation of the new discipline of Mycenology which followed the decipherment. But we must first describe Chadwick's background and early life, and the acquisition of the skills which made him Ventris's ideal collaborator.

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John Chadwick was born in East Sheen, Surrey, on 21 May 1920, the younger son of Fred Chadwick and Margaret Pamela Bray. The family originally came from Southport in Lancashire, but John's grandmother, Ann Chadwick (*née* Ogden), moved to London with her three children Clara, Fred, and Thomas when her husband John died prematurely. Both Fred and Thomas started in very difficult circumstances and were obliged to leave school at a very early age to find work in the National Savings Bank (the Slavings Bank, as they called it). Their progress was, for the time, little short of miraculous; starting in the bottom division of the Civil Service, they ended at the top, Fred as Treasurer to the Forestry Commission, and Thomas as Sir Thomas Chadwick, KCVO, Chief Accountant to the Treasury.

Both John's father and uncle were members of the New Church, founded in 1788 by followers of Emanuel Swedenborg (1688–1772), the Swedish scientific and religious writer; and in the 1930s Fred ran a New Church Sunday school. Chadwick and his elder brother, Kenneth, who had a successful career with the merchant bankers Morgan Grenfell, also became members of the Church. In later life John attended Anglican services but he never lost his interest in Swedenborg. He served for more than fifty years as a member (and for some years Chairman) of the Swedenborg Society's Advisory and Revision Board, and spent much of the later part of this period preparing a lexicon of Swedenborg's neo-Latin. He also produced new translations of no fewer than eight of Swedenborg's books, six of them in his later years when retirement gave him time for it. He was President of the Swedenborg Society in 1987–8, and in recognition of his services to the Society was given the rare honour of Honorary Life Membership. It is perhaps typical of the man that what for others would have been a purely religious or spiritual involvement in him turned also into a scholarly endeavour. He was legitimately proud of his Swedenborg lexicon (1975–90), a unique example, as he rightly said, of a lexicon of eighteenth-century Latin.

Because of Fred's success in the Civil Service, John and his elder brother had the education which Fred had had to miss. They both started

at Colet Court, the preparatory school for St Paul's, and continued at St Paul's itself, which John entered in 1934 with a scholarship. He began Latin and Greek at Colet Court (indeed, he had learnt the Greek alphabet as early as the English one from his brother); and from his third year at St Paul's onwards, in the Middle and Upper Eighths, he specialised in classics. The school had a high academic reputation and classics was a flourishing subject. Among John's exact or near contemporaries were A. Geoffrey Woodhead, who became a Fellow of Corpus Christi in Cambridge, and (Sir) Kenneth Dover, who was first a Fellow of Balliol College, Oxford and then Professor of Greek at St Andrews before becoming President of Corpus Christi College, Oxford and President of the British Academy. Another contemporary was L. J. Cohen, who later studied at Oxford and became a distinguished philosopher and a Fellow of the Academy. Donald Nicol, who was slightly younger, went from St Paul's to Cambridge and eventually became Koraës Professor of Modern Greek and Byzantine History, Language and Literature at King's College, London and also a Fellow of the Academy. The competition was strong but by his final year John had advanced to second in his class. Geoffrey Woodhead, who knew him well, and who remained a lifelong friend, remembers him at school as pale and not very robust, but already with the single-minded devotion to his work which he was never to lose. It is quite possible that he had inherited this work ethic from his family, even if his generation was the first to turn it in an academic direction. Even as an undergraduate at Cambridge, as Chadwick himself later recorded, he 'did not take much part in activities other than work', except for singing as a tenor in the College Chapel choir and with the Cambridge University Musical Society under its conductor Boris Ord. But (nearly) all work did not make him a dull schoolboy; and Woodhead also recalls some academic humour: 'Perhaps the best example of it, at this early stage of his career, was the fragment (in English) of a spoof Greek drama entitled *The Bēnidai* ("Children of [G. E.] Bean [the Upper Eighth Greek master]") which he wrote and circulated in typescript, complete with learned *apparatus criticus*. My only memory of it now is that the Chorus was composed of Pauline Classics on a treadmill, like the Chorus of Allies in Aristophanes' *Babylonians*; but it was enjoyed by us all at the time.'

John had very high regard for George Bean, whom he afterwards described as 'our admirable Greek teacher'; he may have owed to him the breadth of his academic interests, because Bean, far from being content with straightforward classical literature, in later years learned Turkish

and became professor of Greek at Istanbul; he was well known for his indefatigable travels through Turkey and his publications of late Greek and Roman inscriptions; indeed he shared some of this epigraphical work with another pupil, John's friend, Geoffrey Woodhead. It is difficult now to imagine the thoroughness of the classical teaching imparted at St Paul's. There was of course serious analysis of texts and historical events, but there was also the laying of sound linguistic foundations. Not only were pupils required to learn by heart selected passages of Greek and Latin poetry and were regularly tested on this, but they also had to pass exams in Greek and Latin grammar, which were certainly far more advanced than those taken nowadays at university. For one subject at least, the study of Latin cases, the boys produced their own handbook, going back to the texts to find the best examples of usage. John Chadwick had a leading role in this enterprise; it was work which, as Woodhead noted, foreshadowed that of the later lexicographer. John's interest in language more generally also dates from his school days: he tried to teach himself Tibetan, but eventually decided that he needed the help of a native speaker, and none was available.

Later it was Bean who steered the young Chadwick in the direction of Cambridge, his own old university. In the autumn of 1939 John entered Corpus Christi College with a Major Scholarship, a closed Exhibition and a St Paul's leaving award. At the end of his first year, during which his studies were directed by H. D. P. (later Sir Desmond) Lee, he was awarded a First in the Classical Preliminary examination. But after the fall of France in 1940 he felt he could no longer remain a student and volunteered for the Royal Navy. He began as an Ordinary and later Able Seaman, and saw service in the Eastern Mediterranean on HMS *Coventry*. In 1942, however, somewhat to his surprise he was transferred to intelligence duties in Egypt, and in September of that year was promoted to Temporary Sub-Lieutenant (Special Branch), RNVSR. Most of his work initially consisted in deciphering Italian naval signals. He had been selected largely because of his knowledge of Latin which was deemed to be adequate preparation for dealing with Italian. Linguistic expertise was certainly needed: initially the group did not even have an Italian dictionary. The low-grade naval ciphers John was working on were mostly in a code named *Cifrario per Uso di Mare*, referred to affectionately by John and his colleagues as *Ouzo*. But transcripts of traffic in another code were also available in the office in Alexandria where he worked. These messages were prefixed by the one or other of the words GIOVE and DELFO. Strictly speaking, John ought not to have investi-

gated this material, since instructions had been received from headquarters at Bletchley that it should be left to them to deal with. John, however, persuaded his local superior that it could be useful, for purposes of comparison with the Ouzo material, if he did take an interest in it. Much of the material in GIOVE/DELFO was routine, and could readily be deciphered. But John also noticed a much longer and clearly more important message containing many more groups than the routine traffic. Working on this with the head of his section, he was able to translate enough of it to establish that the message concerned a British submarine which had been sunk near Taranto, and attempts being made by the Italians to salvage it. This was of major importance, since if successful the enemy might well recover a copy of the British submarine code. The facts were immediately reported to the Admiralty in London, which prompted an inquiry of Bletchley why the news had come from Alexandria and not the Home Station. As John learnt much later, there were some red faces in the naval section; and Bletchley came to know the name of John Chadwick long before they saw him in person. When he was back in Cambridge after the end of the war he was sent for a supervision to L. P(atrick) Wilkinson, the Latinist at King's College who had held an important post at Bletchley; to his amazement he was greeted with the words GIOVE, DELFO.

In John's life code-breaking was important for what followed, but another event also had consequences. When he was at Suez in 1942 as an ordinary seaman he met a somewhat older cousin, W. N(eville) Mann, who was an officer in the Army and later became a well-known physician. There was a further encounter in Bombay but meetings were difficult because officers 'were forbidden to associate off duty with "ratings" (Navy) and "other ranks" (Army) by "King's Regulations"'. Nevertheless the two, who previously had hardly known each other (there was a nine year age difference), found a number of things in common and in the middle of the war in the Mediterranean kept up a correspondence, although it was slow and desultory. It was at one of their meetings that the project was formulated to translate the non-surgical works of Hippocrates, the Greek medical writer. The editor of the Loeb (Greek and English) text, W. H. S. Jones, was a distinguished Hellenist, but he was not medically trained and, as Neville told his cousin, doctors found his translation unsatisfactory. John had acquired a Teubner text in Alexandria and that was their starting point: John brought to the task his knowledge of Greek and his cousin his medical expertise. In the end the work was mostly done in calmer times between 1947 and 1950, but D. Mervyn Jones remembers being shown at Bletchley a tentative

emendation in Hippocrates' text proposed by Chadwick. It impressed him as certainly right and made him aware that after the war he was likely to meet very strong competition in his project of an academic career as a classicist. *The Medical Works of Hippocrates*, by Chadwick and Mann, appeared in 1950 and was John's first publication. It was later adopted by the Penguin Classics series as their text; and it still remains in print, more than half a century later.

After the Italian surrender in September 1943 and after a short period of general duties John was sent back to England at the beginning of 1944 and began a Japanese language course at Bletchley Park. He completed it with distinction (he was one of two classical scholars who came top in the course) and was set to work with two Japanese experts at the translation of messages sent to Tokyo by the Japanese naval representatives in Stockholm and Berlin. Some of the most important of these were from the Naval Attaché in Berlin, who had access to secret reports prepared by the German navy. From his despatches Chadwick and his colleagues were able to obtain invaluable information about such matters as the new generation of U-boats that the Germans were building in 1945. The task was complicated not so much because of the difficulties of Japanese as such, but because of the subject matter: radar, night vision of pilots, espionage, railways, etc. required a knowledge of technical terms and realia which none of the group possessed; the fact that the texts were supplied in an inadequate transliteration in Latin letters made things worse. It was nevertheless a task which was successfully accomplished. To judge from his accounts of it, the young recruit never had any doubt of the importance of the work or of the fact that it was a privilege to be involved in it together with people far more expert than he was. It was impressed on him and his colleagues that the work had to be kept strictly confidential; the embargo on disclosure remained in place for many years. Until it was lifted, John never mentioned the obvious links between his war activities and his interest in decipherment, even if a number of people must have guessed it.

After the end of the war in 1945 Chadwick immediately returned to Cambridge to complete his degree. He was allowed to count his five years of war service as one academic year, and so was able to proceed at once to the second part of the course. This meant that after five years away, he, like the other returning ex-servicemen, had eight months from October to the end of May to get over the shock of his re-entry into civilian life, to relearn all that he had known before the war and to complete a new course in the same time as candidates who had not been away in the

armed forces. John had to prepare for exams in Classical Literature, History, and Philosophy as well as his chosen specialisation, Classical Linguistics. This latter he found particularly enjoyable; he had decided that that was what he wanted to do even before coming up in 1939 and in preparation had tried to learn some Sanskrit. He had carried a Sanskrit grammar with him all through the war years and acquired in India a copy of the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, parts of which he memorised and still remembered in the last years of his life. He was taught by the Professor of Comparative Philology, N. B. Jopson (1890–1969), an extraordinary polymath who could speak every European language and a few further east, including Arabic. Jopson was less interested in research, however, and his lectures on Indo-European linguistics, though certainly lively, were not strong on developments after 1911, when he had himself taken his BA. The discovery of Hittite and Tocharian, which had revolutionised Indo-European studies, had not impinged on him. These deficiencies, however, were amply compensated for by the other lecturer, the Professor of Sanskrit, Harold (later Sir Harold) Bailey (1899–1996). Chadwick afterwards described Bailey as in many ways his ideal of a scholar. He was deeply impressed by Bailey's immense learning, devotion to his subject and modesty, and wrote that 'while it was often difficult to follow (his lectures) because of our ignorance . . . they gave us a taste of what real scholarship meant'.

It is difficult to imagine what those eight months of frantic learning must have been like, but we gain some insights from the recollections of a contemporary (A. G. Woodhead). After the week's hard work, he recalls, everyone needed some relaxation, and many of the ex-servicemen occasionally patronised the local pubs. For John Chadwick, however, relaxation appeared to consist of the occasional bicycle ride and the odd chat over tea or cocoa. In order to save coal in a bitterly cold winter Woodhead and he worked in the same room and at tea time had short breaks. The chats were largely about classics. One small group met once a week in the evening in D. Mervyn Jones's room in Trinity to read classical poetry and then listen to music. The end of this period of hard work was predictable: in June 1946 Chadwick obtained a First in Part II, with distinction in his special subject. Indeed, there were many First Class performances in that year, and several other ex-servicemen also obtained distinctions.

After the examinations all candidates had to take decisions about their future careers, but for John Chadwick, now 26, finding a job was even more urgent (we are talking of course of a period when post-graduate studies were not a normal option, even for future academics). In the



summer of 1940 he had met Joan Hill, the daughter of a bank official and his wife who had given temporary lodging to his father when he was evacuated to Clevedon near Bristol in 1939. She was then a schoolgirl and they had become friends. Joan and he had kept in touch by letter during the war, but when they met again in 1945 she had grown up and the relationship deepened. They decided that they would marry when John finished his degree and got a regular job; in the event they waited until July 1947. It was a marriage between two very private persons who did not speak much about it or about personal matters in general, but it lasted 51 years, as John noted with pride; even the outsider could recognise the strong devotion that they felt for each other and for their son, Anthony, born in 1954.

The job which made the marriage possible had been offered to John even before he returned to Cambridge, because at Bletchley he had met one of the editors of the *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, Captain James M. Wyllie. In August 1946, two months after the end of his BA course, he joined the Clarendon Press, as Assistant to the Editor of the *OLD*. Training in lexicography was of course needed. It happened in a somewhat unconventional manner not at Oxford but in Scotland, where Wyllie had a house and did much of his work. After six weeks' instruction from Wyllie, John returned to Oxford, where he worked by himself, communicating as necessary with Wyllie, who would make periodic visits to Oxford to superintend operations there. The unofficial reason for this curious arrangement was to ensure that John did not fall under the control, and become part of the staff, of the other editor, Cyril Bailey, with whom Wyllie had extremely bad relations, and whom he was hoping to dislodge from his position, as he eventually succeeded in doing.

In spite of his increasing eccentricity and even bitterness (which eventually led to his resignation in 1954) Wyllie had a deep influence on John, to whom he transmitted the professional skills which he had learnt at the feet of Sir William Craigie, one of the editors of the *Oxford English Dictionary*. In later years John was a severe critic of those who attempted to discuss lexicographical matters without any training or actual experience. His own experience on the Latin dictionary had led him to the belief that a new dictionary had to start directly from the texts and not from previous dictionaries, as was normally done. As Wyllie used to say 'the new dictionary will contain errors, but they will be our own, not other people's'. Among Wyllie's maxims which John was fond of quoting were: 'always ask yourself what will be useful to the user of the dictionary' and 'the *hapax eiremenon* does exist, but it is much rarer than you think'. It

followed from the second precept that the lexicographer should start by assuming that any example of a word which is the lone representative of a special sense is probably wrongly interpreted; only when all other possible interpretations have been considered and rejected should an isolated example be allowed to prove a new sense. In fact lexicography remained one of the dominant passions in John's life. An early paper analysed the problems encountered by the regular user of Liddell–Scott–Jones, the Greek Lexicon. Later followed the Swedenborg lexicon and very extensive work for the Supplement to LSJ produced by P. G. W. Glare on behalf of a British Academy committee of which Chadwick was part from the beginning. The one of us who was on the same committee remembers him as certainly the most active of its members, always ready to check successive drafts, make corrections, etc.; it is largely due to him that the Supplement, published in 1996, includes up-to-date reference to Mycenaean and Cypriot vocabulary. Chadwick was still demonstrating the validity of Wyllie's advice at the end of his life, in *Lexicographica Graeca* (1996), his last book, which arose from his work for the Supplement to LSJ. Here, after a trenchant introduction setting out his views on lexicography, he discusses the meanings of a number of Greek words which he believed to have been wrongly interpreted, in some cases, because of a failure to see that an allegedly unique sense for the term is nothing of the kind. Though some of his revised definitions can be criticised, the book is full of good sense, and contains an immense amount that will be of lasting value. Yet *Lexicographica Graeca* is not the only evidence for Chadwick's continuing interest in lexicography in later life. He lectured on lexicography at Cambridge, and shortly before his death led a successful campaign to raise funds for the compilation of a new Intermediate Greek Lexicon, a project of which he himself had been the prime mover, and which is now progressing.

By 1951 Chadwick was becoming dissatisfied with his position as an employee of the Clarendon Press. He still was greatly interested in his work which, as he put it, was the opposite of drudgery, since 'every word presents its own problems and there is a succession of difficult choices to be made'. However, his salary was low, there were few prospects of advancement and the advantages of being in a university town were limited since there were few connections between OUP employees and the University. Wyllie, too, was becoming more and more obsessive and was increasingly difficult to work with. The arrival of a new assistant, Peter Glare, was welcome, but John had to do most of the training, since Wyllie was too involved in his quarrels with the senior members of OUP and of

the University on the one hand and in his own production of a series of pamphlets on subjects like 'God and Sex' on the other. Towards the end of the year John was interested to receive a letter from Professor Jopson which enclosed an advertisement for a post in Classical Philology at Cambridge and encouraged him to apply. He did not think that he stood much chance, but he applied all the same. As he wrote later, 'I had published nothing but my translation of Hippocrates, and my work on Latin was of course entirely unknown'. There followed a long silence but eventually he was astonished to receive the news that he had been appointed to a University Assistant Lectureship. There had been no interview (a practice which continued well into the 1960s), nor any chance to ask questions about the job; Chadwick assumed that Jopson had told the Appointments Committee that he was the best candidate and they had been content to take his word for it.

The appointment in Cambridge was from 1 October 1952 and its notification had arrived at the beginning of the year. Among the things John was due to lecture on was Greek dialects, and that worried him. He had heard a few lectures about the subject by A. J. Beattie, Jopson's assistant, whose appointment to the chair of Greek in Edinburgh had freed the Cambridge post, but that was six years earlier; in recent years he had concentrated on Latin. In his spare time therefore he started reading more about Greek dialects and taking notes. This meant that his mind was very much on the history of Greek when he saw in the *Radio Times* an announcement of a talk to be given on 1 July by a man called Michael Ventris about the Linear B script, then commonly referred to as Minoan Linear B. Even without his new appointment John would have certainly wanted to listen. The first clay tablets with a peculiar non-Greek script of the second millennium BC had been discovered by Sir Arthur Evans at Knossos in Crete in 1900, but though Sir Arthur had been able to distinguish the more frequent Linear B from the earlier Linear A, both scripts were thus far undeciphered. As undergraduates at Cambridge Chadwick and two friends (one was D. Mervyn Jones) had investigated the possibility of using their war-time code-breaking skills to decipher the script, but had rapidly concluded that the amount of material which had so far been published was totally inadequate for proper cryptographic analysis. In the 1940s only fifty or so Knossos tablets had been published together with a further four from Pylos on the Greek mainland, where they had first been discovered in 1939. Things changed with the publication in 1951 of E. L. Bennett's preliminary transcription of the Pylos tablets; moreover, in 1952 Sir John Myres, then 83, succeeded in completing Evans's *Scripta*

*Minoa II*, which made available a much larger corpus from Knossos. During his time at Oxford Chadwick had had several meetings with Myres to discuss Linear B, though he did not succeed in seeing any of the unpublished material. His normal dictionary work and his application to Cambridge had also prevented him from catching up with Bennett's 1951 publication and with *Scripta Minoa II* which had appeared in the spring. Even so, the broadcast was bound to be of interest and Chadwick listened carefully. Ventris claimed that it was possible to assign phonetic values to most of the signs of the Linear B tablets and that these were written in a form of Greek; if so, Greek would have been spoken in Crete and in the Peloponnese in the second millennium BC. It was a short broadcast and too little was said to enable the listener to make a judgement on it. If it was Greek, however, John needed to know about it for his forthcoming lectures. He went to see Sir John Myres to ask if he knew anything more about Ventris's work. Myres revealed that he was in touch with Ventris, and had received the regular bulletins, called *Work Notes*, which he had been circulating since 1950 to all those he knew were interested in the Minoan script problem. Chadwick was allowed to copy the provisional table of syllabic signs and to see some of the apparent Greek words; he went away to test the theory 'in the firm expectation' as he wrote later, 'that it would prove, like so many other abortive attempts, a mirage'.

To his astonishment, however, he found fragments of sense emerging from the tablets. There was much that was unintelligible, but, as his war-time experience had shown him, that was normal in the early stages of a decipherment. Yet in several cases the Greek words yielded by Ventris's sound values gave the meaning which could be deduced simply from the arrangement of the text. Totals were often preceded by a word read as *to-so* or *to-sa*, which could readily be interpreted as *to(s)soi*, *to(s)sail*, 'so much, so many'. Groups of women, recognisable from the pictorial sign for woman, were regularly accompanied by two words, *ko-wa* and *ko-wo*, followed by numerals. The context clearly suggested that these were references to children; and *ko-wa* and *ko-wo* could immediately be interpreted as *lkorwail* and *lkorwoil*, 'girls' and 'boys': not the form of the word in any normal Greek dialect of the Classical period, but exactly what one could reconstruct for the form of the term used in the second millennium BC.

This was something no previous attempt at decipherment had produced: the right sort of Greek for a period 500 years before Homer. But there were few people equipped to approach it. Chadwick, however, with his philological training, was; and after some days spent finding Greek

words on the tablets as transcribed with Ventris's values, he wrote to him on 13 July congratulating him on his 'magnificent achievement' and offering any help he needed to exploit his discovery. ('If there is anything a mere philologist can do please let me know'.) Ventris wrote back at once saying he was much in need of technical help with the Greek he had found. Thus began the legendary collaboration which was only to end with Ventris's tragically early death four years later.

As this account indicates, and as Chadwick himself always insisted, the decipherment of Linear B was Ventris's achievement, and his alone. (So modest, indeed, was Chadwick about his part in the collaboration that, as the obituarist in the *New York Times* noted, he made no mention of himself in an American encyclopedia article he once wrote on Linear B.) But his role in helping to extend and exploit Ventris's breakthrough was nonetheless an absolutely crucial one. His first letter to Ventris contains several examples of the ways in which he was able to contribute. At this stage, all the signs, even some frequent ones, had not yet been assigned values; and Chadwick correctly suggested that an unidentified member of the *p*-series was *pu*, since this would give not only *pu-ro* = Pylos, but also the preposition *a-pu*: not *apo*, the Attic form of the word, but the form in the Arcado-Cypriot and Aeolic dialects. (Later, he was able to establish the value of another sign not yet transliterated, *nu*.) He also made a number of proposals about the interpretation of sign groups. Not all of these have stood the test of time, but his suggestions that *pa-ka-na* is *lphasganal*, 'swords' and that *pi-ri-je-te* 'sounds as if it should mean "sawyer"' have. The main point, however, is that he could provide Ventris with information about the forms which one expected for Greek in the second millennium. This required the sort of technical expertise which Ventris did not have and few other people could have helped him with. And not only was Chadwick's help indispensable: we should note that to provide that help required a great deal of courage. Chadwick was a young man who needed to make his way and had no reputation in Greek studies. The tendency to assume that all decipherments are the work of obsessive madmen was and is strong. In siding with Ventris John was risking his future career and in a sense his livelihood. There was more; the decisions he had to take about the etymology of individual words, about the possibility or otherwise of certain forms in the second millennium BC, were often unprecedented. Given his current lack of experience it was more than likely that he would make bad blunders, and this too was dangerous in career terms. Yet, in the young Chadwick's mind, intuition and excitement prevailed over his natural caution.

The first fruits of the collaboration with Ventris appeared the following year: the cautiously titled paper ‘Evidence for Greek Dialect in the Mycenaean Archives’ in the *Journal of Hellenic Studies* for 1953. This was the first description of the decipherment in a scholarly journal; and Ventris insisted that it should appear under their joint names. The article, if reread to-day, almost fifty years after its publication, is as striking as it must have been at the time. Not a word is wasted nor is there any sign of complacency, but what is remarkable apart from the style of argumentation is how much is still valid both in the values given to the signs and in the interpretation of forms, words, and texts in general. In the final part, which summarizes the phonological and morphological characteristics of the Greek of the Linear B tablets, there is again a sureness of touch which is almost uncanny. When the article was finished in November 1952 Ventris was 30 and Chadwick 32; neither of them had ever published anything about Greek dialects or even Greek linguistics. The notes thank a number of people for their help, only one of whom (G. Björck) was a classical linguist. It seems likely that the observations on the archaic features of the texts, on the dialect features, etc. are all due to Chadwick, and they must have been written at the time when he was preparing or delivering his first lectures ever on Greek dialects. The sharpness and (with hindsight) the obvious correctness of his explanations are remarkable, but even more exceptional is the clarity and simplicity of the exposition in what is after all a set of very technical statements.

Following this, in the summer of 1954, Ventris and Chadwick began their next project. This was the massive *Documents in Mycenaean Greek*, which they completed in a remarkably short time—just under a year—and which was published by Cambridge University Press in 1956. The core of the book is an extended commentary on 300 representative tablets; but it also contains a lengthy introduction, with chapters on the decipherment, the Linear B writing system, the Mycenaean language and the evidence of the tablets for life in the Greek Bronze Age, as well as a vocabulary, a list of personal names and a bibliography. *Documents*—often referred to as the Bible of Mycenaean studies—is an astonishing achievement. Though developments in a rapidly-moving subject over the fifty years since it was written have rendered many of the details obsolete, it is remarkable how much of it still remains valid: a tribute to the breadth and solidity of Ventris’s and Chadwick’s learning, the excellence of their judgement and above all their caution. As the authors explain in the introduction, and as their correspondence of the time confirms, this was a genuinely joint enterprise, with each submitting his work to the other for criticism and

revision. In 1973, Chadwick produced a second edition of *Documents*. Here, out of respect for Ventris, he preserved everything in the first edition except for the vocabularies and the bibliography, but added an Additional Commentary of some 140 pages, a fresh bibliography and an admirable new glossary. *Documents*<sup>2</sup> has all the same qualities of learning and sound judgement as its predecessor; and we shall have occasion to refer to it again later.

*Documents* was published in the autumn of 1956. By then, however, Michael Ventris was dead. On 6 September, as he drove home alone at night on the Great North Road, his car ran into a stationary lorry on the Barnet by-pass, and he was killed instantly. He was only 34. His death was a savage personal blow for Chadwick: he and Ventris had worked intensely together for four years and in the process had become friends. On rare occasions (such as that of the Gif conference) they had been able to relax with each other talking of other things than Linear B (Stowe 1984, p. 43). Joan Chadwick remembers all too clearly the blackness that descended on John when he heard of his friend's death. And he was soon to feel the loss of Ventris in another way, for Ventris's death left John to face alone the critics of their joint work. As he put it later, 'The storm didn't really break until after his [scil. Ventris's] death. Up to the publication of "Documents" we were fighting a battle, obviously, and he was very good at presenting, modestly, his achievements, but he was leaving it to other people to evaluate by saying: "Well this is what I think. I have people who support me, but you must make up your own mind." The real attack on the decipherment followed in the years after 1956 and for something like ten years I was involved with various kinds of running battles with critics of one kind or another, and it was a relief when these things gradually started to fade away and the critics bowed out' (quoted in Stowe, 1984, p. 44).

The idea that there could be Greek spoken in Crete in the second millennium had been strongly rejected by Evans, who indeed believed in a Minoan colonisation of the Mainland. Another leading archaeologist, Alan Wace, had advocated the idea of Greek take-over of the island, but this was far from generally accepted. Yet for a time after it was announced the decipherment encountered few objections, from non-archaeologists at least. Significantly, most of the leading experts in Greek historical linguistics gave their assent, and began themselves to work on the subject: Björck in Sweden, Chantraine and Lejeune in France, Risch in Switzerland, Rui Pérez in Spain, and Palmer in England. In Britain, of course, the press made much of the coincidence in the *annus mirabilis* 1953 of a series of

events: the Coronation, the success of a British-led expedition in making the first ascent of Everest, England's recapture of the Ashes for the first time after the war, and the British decipherment of Linear B. In 1953 a new discovery convinced many of the remaining sceptics: a tablet at Pylos showing pictorial ideograms of tripod cauldrons with varying numbers of handles, and with terms standing before them which if transcribed using the Ventris values could readily be interpreted as describing the objects: *ti-ri-po-de* as */tripodes/*, 'tripods', *qe-to-ro-we* as */k<sup>w</sup>etrōwes/*, 'having four ears or handles', etc. Chadwick described how Ventris, who had received a letter from C. W. Blegen, the excavator of Pylos, informing him of the discovery, broke the news: 'Michael Ventris had called me from London in a state of great excitement—he rarely showed signs of emotion but for him this was a dramatic moment' (Stowe, 1984, p. 40). And he concluded his account with the comment '... this was a proof of the decipherment which was undeniable'.

In 1956, however, a major attack on Ventris's solution was launched; and it was followed by others over the next few years. Some of the criticisms, like those of the Germans Grumach and Eilers, could be answered relatively easily. A potentially much more dangerous opponent, however, was A. J. Beattie; for he, unlike many of the other critics, was a historical linguist and a philologist. He had, as we have seen, been one of Chadwick's own teachers at Cambridge before leaving for a chair at Edinburgh in 1952. His first assault on the decipherment appeared in the *Journal of Hellenic Studies* for 1956. He began with a criticism of the way the decipherment had been arrived at, and then levelled three further charges: (i) that the graphic system was inadequate to represent Greek, (ii) that the forms of certain words were unacceptable in the language; (iii) that there were large areas of text which yielded no sense. As the surviving member of the Ventris–Chadwick partnership, Chadwick had clearly to respond to this broadside; and in the following year's *JHS* he published a brief but effective reply. Beattie's account of the decipherment was 'tendentious and distorted', and what mattered in any event was not so much how the decipherment was arrived at, but the results it yielded. (As he put it, 'the cross-check provided by syllabic values which repeat in different words is itself sufficient guarantee of a correct solution; add to this the fact that the words identified are repeatedly—not on one tablet only—confirmed by self-evident ideograms, and the conclusion is beyond any doubt whatsoever'.) Nor were any of Beattie's other criticisms valid. Though the number of possible interpretations of any Mycenaean word was theoretically very large, it was much smaller in practice, given the



possibilities of the Greek language and the requirements of the context; a number of the terms criticised by Beattie, such as *wanakteros*, were in fact perfectly acceptable as Greek; and the relative rarity of vocabulary words in the material was simply a reflexion of the high proportion of personal names it contained.

The debate then entered a much more unpleasant phase. In his 1956 paper, Beattie had devoted a lengthy appendix to an attempt to undermine the support for the decipherment provided by the Pylos tripod cauldron tablet. Clearly, however, this continued to trouble him; for in 1958 he made a second attempt to dispose of it. The tablet was found in 1952; Ventris, he suggested, must have seen it or a copy or a photograph, and then used the words in it to assign appropriate values to the signs. He would then have tried to give the impression that these values were confirmed by a new piece of evidence. These extraordinary assertions were quickly disproved by Blegen. The tripod tablet was found in two pieces, one on 4 June, the other on 10 June 1952. They were coated with lime and unreadable; and they were stored in a locked box, from which they were not removed until taken to Athens for cleaning and mending late in July. Thus, even if he had been in Greece, which he was not, Ventris could not possibly have seen the tripod tablet until long after his correspondents had received the twentieth *Work Note*, dated 1 June, in which he proposed for the first time his theory that the language of the tablets was Greek. Nor, as Blegen confirmed, had any photographs or copies of the tablet been made before 1953.

Faced with this impossibility in his reconstructed chronology, Beattie then resorted to an even more outrageous assertion, published in the *Glasgow Herald* in May 1959. Ventris might not have seen the tripod tablet in 1952; but he had seen a very similar document, which he had then destroyed, hoping that a similar one would be discovered later, thus giving support to his decipherment.

These attacks on Ventris's integrity were deeply upsetting. Those of us who saw John Chadwick, many decades later, violently reacting to unjustified assertions which unfairly 'did down' an individual, can easily guess how he must have reacted to something which was so close to his heart. As we have noted already, this was a very difficult time for him, and, in addition to dealing with the public assaults, he had to endure a difficult private correspondence with Beattie, with whom he had tried to maintain friendly relations until the nature of the later accusations made this impossible. He had some powerful support however, including that of Denys (later Sir Denys) Page, the Regius Professor of Greek at

Cambridge, who gave him invaluable advice on how to deal with Beattie, and Professors (Sir) Eric Turner and T. B. L. Webster in London, who wrote excellent letters to the press at various stages in the controversy. And he also had the satisfaction of seeing that Beattie attracted no significant support, particularly for his later assertions. Indeed, serious opposition to the decipherment ended after 1960, except perhaps for Scotland. Both of us remember Scottish graduates in the mid sixties turning up at Oxford and Cambridge classes and protesting not all that mildly that there was no reason to believe in the decipherment. However, in the 1980s John could say truthfully that 'the situation at the moment is that there is next to nobody left who does not believe in the decipherment' (Stowe, 1984, p. 40). At the time, in spite of the strain he was under, he managed to keep some sense of humour. About Beattie he commented: 'alas, I must see him as one of my failures'.

Whilst the Beattie controversy was raging, John Chadwick was at work on his next book, *The Decipherment of Linear B* (CUP, 1958). This is intended for a wider audience than *Documents*, and contains a lucid, if inevitably less than exhaustive description of the process of decipherment, an account of the new light it cast on Bronze Age Greece and a moving description of his collaboration with Ventris. Chadwick was exceptionally good as a populariser of his subject; and *Decipherment* was a huge success, not least because the genuine affection for Ventris and the emotional circumstances of his death come through in a restrained but highly effective fashion. The book has been translated into thirteen languages, and continues to sell well in English-speaking countries. It does not waste words, it is factual and not sentimental, but the reader finds it deeply touching.

Ventris was the decipherer, but credit for the establishment of Mycenaean studies must go to John Chadwick, not only because fate prevented Ventris from continuing his work but mainly because the two collaborators had different aims and interests. For Ventris the decipherment was the end of a long journey whose aim was to solve a tantalising problem; Chadwick, too, trained as he was in code-breaking, found the puzzle aspect of the problem irresistible, but he was also a classicist and a philologist who wanted to use the results of the decipherment to increase our knowledge of early Greek culture and language. It is doubtful that Ventris would have been equally interested in the Linear B texts if someone else had deciphered the script, but it is clear that John Chadwick would have found them just as compelling even if he had come to them not at the start of the inquiry but when some of the spadework had already been done. But it was the great fortune of the subject that John

was there at the beginning and had sufficient authority to impose some order on what happened later and to define methods and standards. For the next forty years he continued to work on Linear B, and played a central and shaping role in the development of the new subject. As early as 1955, he and Ventris had attended the first international Colloquium on Mycenaean, held at Gif-sur-Yvette near Paris. Thirty years later Michel Lejeune, the organiser, described the event: ‘Y arrivent de Grande-Bretagne, Michael Ventris et John Chadwick, les déchiffreurs du linéaire B. Le CNRS leur offre, après le *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, leur première grande tribune’. There followed at regular intervals nine more Colloquia, with the eleventh Colloquium taking place in 2000 after John’s death. At Paris Ventris was the star of the occasion: as Chadwick recorded later, ‘his fluency in French made a great impression, but he was equally at home chatting to the Swiss in Schwyzerdeutsch, or to the Greek delegate in Greek’. But Chadwick too made his mark and gained a respect from his French and other international colleagues that he was never to lose. He organised one of the later Colloquia and attended all the others held during his life-time. He was a central figure at them, giving admirably presented and often ground-breaking papers and contributing wisely—and never excessively—to discussions. His obvious enjoyment of the meetings, of the scholarly discussions and of the friendly encounters that the Colloquia allowed and encouraged was part of the role which largely unconsciously he came to play, that of moderator and guarantor of the propriety and integrity of Mycenaean studies. The Colloquia, which one attended strictly by invitation, encouraged young scholars by recognising their work and allowing them to find a forum for it, while excluding cranks and madmen. They also defined a working scenario. With one or two recent exceptions, it has always been the tradition in Mycenaean studies to share knowledge and information, and not only with the most senior scholars. This exemplary tradition had started at Gif, which was an exceptionally harmonious meeting, and ‘l’esprit de Gif’ continued to be invoked and maintained at all later Colloquia, with Chadwick himself acting as both its promoter and its guardian. The friendliness and the sharing of information was not limited to the Colloquia; in the early 1960s one of us, then aged 24 and a foreigner, was privileged to receive from John a number of newly edited texts in advance of publication with the permission and indeed encouragement to use them in her forthcoming lexicon; not much later the other, also in his early twenties, was chosen as John’s coeditor for the important third edition of *The Knossos Tablets in Transliteration* which appeared in 1964.

In Britain, too, Chadwick played a leading part in the development of the new subject. He was a key participant in the Mycenaean seminars which met regularly in the 1950s and 1960s in the Institute of Classical Studies in London to discuss the texts; and even in later years, when the focus of the seminar had become much more archaeological, he continued to be a regular attender and contributor to discussions. He was very much involved in the yearly bibliographical survey of Mycenaean work (*Studies in Mycenaean Inscriptions and Dialect*) which began under the auspices of the ICS in 1956. At the same time, to again quote Lejeune, ‘autour de Chadwick, Cambridge devient un des foyers de la mycénologie militante’. Such was his standing in the subject, and so well known had *Documents* and *Decipherment* made him, that from the late 1950s onwards a whole host of younger scholars from abroad made the pilgrimage to Cambridge to work with him on Mycenaean. Of the scholars who are now the leading experts in the field, a remarkably large number studied with Chadwick at some point in their early careers, and fondly remember his Mycenaean Epigraphy Room in Cambridge, particularly in its first manifestation, from the early 1960s to the mid 1980s, in the Laundress Lane Faculty Rooms off Mill Lane, with its marvellous view over the Mill Pond. Many of these visitors remained in touch with Chadwick, and he with them, for the rest of his life. In that sense he founded a school; in another sense he did not nor did he try. He never tried to impose on students or colleagues his view of what one should believe or how one should proceed.

Fame and what we could call his facilitator role in Mycenaean studies did not prevent John Chadwick from continuing with his own original work: some 140 articles and reviews in addition to his numerous books easily demonstrate that. His writings on Mycenaean from the late 1950s onwards covered an extremely wide range of topics. Not surprisingly, given his linguistic inclinations and training, many of his contributions focused on the language of the documents and other philological questions. The identification of sign values was of course part of the decipherment, but it was not always possible to assign a value to the least frequent signs and this remained a continuing subject of discussion. Chadwick wrote on the possible values of the rare signs nos \*34/35, \*64, and \*82, the last of which he ingeniously suggested might be *swa*, since this would enable an equation to be made between the place-name *pi*-\*82 at Pylos and the Classical toponym Pīsa. His paper at Gif concerned the phonetics of the series of signs transcribed by Ventris as *za*, *ze*, &c., and he returned to this problem on a number of occasions. His eventual

conclusion, that the first element in these syllables was probably some kind of affricate, has found more support than the alternative view, that it is a palatalized velar. His lexicographical interests naturally led him to the study of the Mycenaean vocabulary; the glossary of *Documents*<sup>2</sup> has probably been more used than any of the other, more extensive, Mycenaean lexica, and he performed a great service for classicists by compiling a list of Greek words which are attested in Mycenaean (the second edition in collaboration with a South African colleague Lydia Baumbach). Finally, a number of his papers dealt with dialect, including the dialect relations of Mycenaean, and the early development of Greek. In 1956, he wrote a classic paper in *Greece & Rome* summarising for English-speaking readers the recently published theories of E. Risch and W. Porzig about the relations of the dialects in the Bronze Age, and in particular Risch's revolutionary suggestion that Ionic was a relatively recent creation which had developed as a result of contact between speakers of a Mycenaean-type dialect and West Greek (Doric) speakers in the period 1200–1000 BC. It was in this article that Chadwick first advanced the hypothesis, which he later developed further, that the Greek language, rather than having developed outside Greece and been brought into the area by three successive waves of invaders, as P. Kretschmer had argued, had originated within the peninsula itself, as a result of contact between incoming speakers of an Indo-European language and the indigenous population(s) of the area. His chapter in the *Cambridge Ancient History* on the *Pre-History of the Greek Language* (1963) which incorporates some of his earlier work on the topic has also been very influential. Starting in the mid 1970s he developed even further his attack on the view that the dialects arose as the result of different migratory waves, and argued that the Dorians were in fact not newcomers in the Peloponnese and in Crete but survivals of the lower classes which during the Mycenaean period had spoken a more conservative form of dialect than that which appears in the tablets. It was a daring view which remained controversial and may eventually be abandoned, but it led to a great deal of discussion and very useful rethinking.

Chadwick's training was indeed that of a philologist (in the English sense of the word) and this is how he introduced himself to Ventris in his first letter. His Greek research, as contrasted with the more specifically Mycenaean work, fits within this paradigm: on the one hand his lexicographical contributions, on the other his analysis of dialect texts and dialect features. In an important article (1992) he advanced a new theory about the accent of Thessalian; if his view that Thessalian had an initial

stress is correct, this may explain a series of oddities in the Thessalian treatment of vowels and may also fit with the well-known accentual recessivity found in Lesbian, a closely related dialect. There are other contributions, etymological or epigraphic, which have lasting value and which in themselves would be more than enough to justify an academic career. By contrast, it would be difficult to speak of Chadwick's work on Mycenaean as only, or even mainly, philological. He started by applying philological techniques, but soon the data dictated the approach. If the Mycenaean documents were to be fully understood and exploited, skills other than purely linguistic ones were required. First, there was need for epigraphical work. While the Pylos tablets had been expertly edited by E. L. Bennett, and the meticulous records kept by the excavators of their find-places had enabled a great many joins between broken pieces to be made, the Knossos tablets were in a much less happy state. Many fragments, stored in the Iraklion museum, still remained unpublished; many joins between tablets had not yet been made (and the records of their find-spots were much less complete than those at Pylos); and much also remained to be done on the readings of the tablets. Bennett had done some admirable work to repair some of these deficiencies in the early 1950s; but Ventris and Chadwick also turned their attention to these epigraphical problems. Both worked in Iraklion in the mid 1950s; and both became expert epigraphists. During a stay in Iraklion in 1955 Chadwick made a celebrated join between fragments which yielded another striking proof of the correctness of the decipherment: a record of what the pictorial ideograms clearly showed were horses or donkeys, with the words *i-qa*, *po-ro*, and *o-no* standing before these signs. It was difficult not to accept that these were the Greek words *lhiqq<sup>u</sup>oil*, 'horses', *lpōloil*, 'colts' and *lonoil*, 'asses'; on seeing the join the Director of the museum, Nicholaos Platon, who had previously expressed some doubts about the decipherment, immediately began to reconsider his views.

Bennett, Chadwick, and Ventris published the results of their work in Iraklion in a new transcription of the Knossos tablets (*KT<sup>2</sup>*) in 1956. After Ventris's death, Chadwick produced further editions of *KT* with other collaborators (J. T. Killen and J.-P. Olivier); and from the 1980s onwards he led an international team of scholars working to produce a major edition of the Knossos material, to include a text with critical apparatus, a drawing and a photograph for each of the three-thousand-plus documents. Happily, he lived long enough to see the virtual completion of this vast project. By the time of his death, three of the four volumes of the *Corpus of Mycenaean Inscriptions from Knossos* were in print; and he

was able to see and correct the penultimate proofs of the fourth volume, which appeared at the end of 1998.

But his epigraphical work was not confined to Knossos tablets. He published, always with commendable promptness, new finds from Mycenae and Thebes; he wrote on the reading of the inscription on a Thebes transport jar; and he helped improve the readings of new fragments from Pylos. In later years, he did rather less epigraphy, particularly in museums; but he did not lose his skill in the art. When two of his younger colleagues, who thought of themselves as rather proficient epigraphists, were finding it difficult to read a newly discovered tablet from Tiryns which they had been asked to publish, and showed him a photograph of it, he quietly suggested that they might find their task a little easier if they looked at the document the other way up.

Though Chadwick's work on editing the Knossos tablets was solely concerned with the texts of these documents, his editions of the new Mycenae and Thebes material went beyond the actual reading of the tablets and discussed their interpretation. Here too his touch was masterly. One of his great contributions to Mycenaean studies was his pioneering approach to the interpretation of tablets that involved looking at the documents, not in isolation, but in what he termed 'sets': groups of tablets written by the same scribe on the same subject and filed together in the same part of the palace archives. Because the tablets are so laconic it is often only the comparison of other records in the same 'file' that reveals what the scribe was doing and consequently what the tablets are about. The approach led to major advances in interpretation. A clear example is that of the *Na*-tablets of Pylos. The earlier hypothesis that they dealt with rations of linseed issued to the troops guarding the coast could be dismissed simply because in the parallel texts the same words had to be differently interpreted. The final interpretation is that at some places liable to contributions of flax to the palace part of the land was occupied by groups which provided the manpower to guard the coast.

Interpretation of texts is in the last resort what the work was all about: philology, epigraphy, etc. were all ancillary to this aim. But there was an even wider goal. From the texts one can get back to the realia or indeed to the culture of the place and the period. It is striking that while Chadwick the Hellenist was fundamentally a philologist interested in language who left historical and literary pursuits to others, Chadwick the Mycenaeanist was always on the lookout for the practical realities that lay behind the bureaucratic records. Many of his writings dealt with such subjects as the workings of Mycenaean administration, the nature of

land-holding and taxation, and the minutiae of ration scales. He did more than anyone to reconstruct the geography of Mycenaean Pylos; and he also wrote on Cretan geography, again on the basis of the tablets. His book *The Mycenaean World* (1976), still in print after twenty-five years and available in six different languages, remains the most comprehensive and reliable account for the general reader of life in the Late Bronze Age as it is reflected in the tablets.

What is the explanation of the contrast between the Hellenist and the Mycenologist? Any answer must be speculative, and in all likelihood more than one answer is needed. But it is probable that consciously or subconsciously John came to realise that if anything of real value was to be derived from Mycenaean it was in fact necessary to pool all one's resources and look at the data from all angles. He was there at the start, he was one of the select few who could actually do it—and he did it. With Greek of the later period much more is known. If the quantity of evidence is overwhelming, as it is in the case of Greek, more than one specialist is needed. But in the case of Greek the specialist, i.e. the philologist or the historian or the textual critic, has more solid ground on which to build. We can discuss the forms of the genitive in classical Greek without agonising over whether we have identified the genitive correctly in one or the other text. The same is not true for Mycenaean, where all too often we can identify a genitive only if we are certain about the interpretation of the text where it is found. But the interpretation of the text will depend on the correct reading of the tablet, and this in its turn will depend on the identification of the scribal hands, etc. For Mycenaean Chadwick simply did what was needed—and that was everything. For Greek too, however, though his work was essentially linguistic, he did not think of himself as a linguist. He once said as much to one of us, and when asked what he meant by 'linguist', he illustrated it with examples of scholars he thought deserved the description. Once again the difference may have been that between application and theory. In lexicography John was interested in the user of the dictionary and the best way to find and communicate information about words and their meaning; he was not interested in modern semantic theory. Similarly for language in general he was more interested in how language or rather a particular language was used than in Universal Grammar. From this point of view the divergence between his work on Mycenaean and his work on alphabetic Greek was less substantial than might appear at first sight.

The impression we have so far given is of a full-time researcher who in addition to Mycenaean and Greek philology also found some time for his



work on Swedenborg. But John Chadwick's life was not exclusively or even mainly one of research. He had a teaching position which he took very seriously. He had regular courses of lectures to give (mainly, but by no means exclusively, on Greek philology); and as a non-Professor in what was effectively a three-man sub-department of his Faculty he also had responsibilities for individual tuition (supervision in Cambridge terms), which took up a number of hours each week. After 1960, moreover, he had college duties to contend with. For the first eight years of his lectureship he did not hold a college fellowship. In 1960, however, he was elected Collins Fellow of Downing College, where his Faculty colleague W. K(eith) C. Guthrie, the Laurence Professor of Ancient Philosophy, was Master. Chadwick enormously valued his association with Downing (which made him an Honorary Fellow on his retirement and in whose gardens his ashes are buried); but the Fellowship involved him in yet more teaching, this time not necessarily in philology but in straight classics; he was also appointed Director of Studies in Classics, a post which he continued to hold until 1983 and which obliged him to organise the studies and tuition of the college undergraduates even when he did not teach them personally. Some of his charges as Director of Studies found his dealings with them a little impersonal, but they appreciated the care and efficiency with which he performed his duties, and the promptness with which he took action if they complained that a teacher was not giving them what they needed. He was also active in other aspects of college life, and took his turn on a number of committees—though he did draw the line at undertaking the Vice-Mastership when this was suggested to him on one occasion. On top of this there were of course faculty administrative tasks. He was an efficient Chairman of the Faculty Board for the standard two years; he was a member of the committee that established the Intensive Greek programme for beginners in the language in the 1960s; and he was Chairman of the Management Committee for the Museum of Classical Archaeology for ten years from 1980. In short, he had a time-consuming set of duties all through his career which made his level of productivity even more remarkable.

He was a good teacher. He lectured mainly from a full script; eye-contact with the audience was not a frequent occurrence; and he did not waste words. One of his students talks of pens exploding as his charges struggled to get everything down. But his audiences quickly appreciated both the value of what they were hearing and the care that had clearly gone in to the preparation of his lectures; he was always ready to answer questions afterwards and he would take endless pains to explain anything

which his listeners had found difficult. His real forte, though, was as a supervisor of research students. He had many Ph.D. students, by no means all working on Mycenaean. To mention only two: G. C. Horrocks, now Professor of Comparative Philology at Cambridge, worked with him on prepositional usage in Homer, and R. Janko, now Professor of Greek at UCL, worked on a statistical and linguistic approach to the dating of Homer, Hesiod, and the Homeric Hymns. He was excellent at suggesting subjects for his students to work on, and he took trouble: drafts were always returned promptly, with incisive comment attached. Praise from Chadwick gave his students confidence in their abilities as researchers; and many feel that they owe their careers to him. Nearly all his research students became his friends for life, and continued to benefit from his advice and support long after they had gained their doctorates.

Distinguished academic careers are marked by honours. From this angle Chadwick's career was both typical and eccentric. While still in his thirties he was made a Corresponding Member of the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut (1957) and received an honorary degree from the University of Athens (1958). In the 1960s he was appointed to a readership in Cambridge (1966) and was elected a Fellow of the British Academy at the relatively young age of 47. After that, honour followed honour—internationally at least. He received honorary degrees from Brussels, Trinity College, Dublin, Vitoria, and Salzburg, as well as the medal of the J. E. Purkyně University of Brno, the Austrian Republic's *Ehrenzeichen für Wissenschaft und Kunst* (he was one of only sixteen holders of the award outside Austria) and the Greek Republic's Order of the Phoenix. He became corresponding member of the Austrian Academy, Honorary Councillor of the Athens Archaeological Society, Associé Etranger of the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres (Institut de France), and Foreign Member of the Accademia dei Lincei, which in 1997 gave him its premier award, the Feltrinelli Prize for Linguistics. A Festschrift containing contributions by forty-three colleagues and former pupils was published in Salamanca in 1987 and a further volume, with papers by twenty-six contributors, mostly from Greece, was published in Thessaloniki in the same year. And yet in Britain he received no honorary degrees and no civil honour; foreigners never understood why they should not call him professor, but Cambridge never gave him the personal chair which he so richly deserved. Why this was so it is difficult to fathom. He was a modest man and did not court honours; if he had wanted a professorship he could have left Cambridge, but he loved that university more than any other. Obviously his subjects—Greek philology and

Mycenaean—were known only to a very few. There may have been other reasons, and at the start he may not have been helped by the somewhat cool relationship which existed between him and the other main Mycenologist in Britain, Leonard Palmer (1906–84), Professor of Comparative Philology at Oxford from 1952 to 1971. Both Palmer and Chadwick offered indispensable contributions to the early development of Mycenaean studies but they had different styles; the more passionate, enthusiastic and indeed overheated Palmer became, the colder and calmer Chadwick appeared to be. The outsider's impression was that one was intent on being brilliant, the other on being reliable. The older man found it difficult to yield to the younger one in anything, and at the start Chadwick certainly missed the support that he should have received from the more established scholar.

John retired from his university post in 1984, three years earlier than the absolute deadline. Predictably he continued to work and to write and most days went to the Mycenaean Epigraphy Room, often to type up work he had done the previous evening at home. He published two more classical books in retirement: *Lexicographica Graeca* (1996) and a volume, *Linear B and Related Scripts*, in the British Museum 'Reading the Past' Series (1987). Like all his books for a general audience, this was extremely successful, and it has been translated into Dutch, Greek, and Polish. Articles too appeared on various subjects, including the Thesalian accent article mentioned above. And, as he had always done, he kept up a large correspondence: on Linear B, of course, but also on a number of other interests: Swedenborg, New Testament Greek, Classical Greek inscriptions (with his friends Joyce Reynolds and John Graham), the Supplement, and his new Intermediate Greek Lexicon project. He was always punctilious about replying to letters, even from strangers asking for information or his comments on their 'decipherments', often of undecipherable material like the Phaistos Disc. 'Decipherments' arrived with remarkable frequency; and while many could be dealt with relatively simply—for instance, by pointing out to some of the Phaistos Disc experts that they had read the inscription starting from the wrong end—others required longer and more considered replies. Even schoolchildren got replies: John Ray, now Reader in Egyptology at Cambridge, wrote to Chadwick as a schoolboy—not about the Phaistos Disc—and received a prompt and courteous answer to his letter.

Travel is the only hobby John ever listed in *Who's Who*, and he continued to make expeditions, mostly with Joan to their country cottage in Norfolk or to Kent to visit their son, but also overseas to collect his

numerous honours. In 1990 he attended the Ninth Mycenaean Colloquium in Athens; he was his usual self but he found it exhausting. Five years later he was somewhat reluctant to go to the Tenth Colloquium in Salzburg but was persuaded to do so by the organisers and enjoyed it. Nobody of those present will ever forget his touching address where he reminisced about the past of Mycenaean studies and expressed his wishes for the future; he received a standing ovation which never seemed to end.

In 1987 John had had a bad heart attack. He recovered and for the next eleven years remained in reasonably good health. He still did some teaching and only a month before he died had finished a short introductory course on Linear B for students taking Greek from Mycenae to Homer as one of their final year options. On 24 November 1998, however, he set out to travel to London for a meeting, and drove as usual to Royston to park his car before taking the King's Cross train. He never reached his destination. As he waited at the station, he suffered a major heart attack; and was dead on arrival in hospital in Stevenage.

\* \* \*

The role that John Chadwick, Perceval Maitland Laurence Reader in Classics at Cambridge, performed in the history of scholarship is clear, and much of what he discovered has now become part of the basic knowledge which we impart to first-year undergraduates. There is something mythical about the events of his professional life. Once again Michel Lejeune knew how to describe it: 'Ainsi le sort avait-il un jour donné un royaume à John Chadwick. Il a su le mettre en valeur et lui imprimer sa marque; avec son autorité tempérée de modestie et de courtoisie; avec sa rigoureuse méthode, qui n'est pas exclusive d'intuitions fulgurantes. Il est un maître.'

It is more difficult to write about the man. In the brief account of his life between 1945 and 1952 which he left unfinished John Chadwick wrote 'I have no intention of disclosing details of my personal life which can be of no general interest'. The sentence is significant. Neither John nor Joan were likely to discuss their emotions or the private events of their life. Their mutual devotion was obvious, as was the harmony which surrounded their small family of three plus the siamese cat which was an integral part of it. In the early days one could feel a sort of stiffness round John, perhaps prompted, but this is guesswork, by a desire not to be found wanting, to do things correctly both from a scholarly and from a personal point of view. There was a reluctance to let himself go. But in

time, as success and experience grew, the atmosphere round him became more relaxed. People said that John had mellowed, and even beyond the circle of his immediate friends it became possible to see how keen a sense of humour he had. And yet in some ways he remained a complex personality differently interpreted by different people. A friend spoke of him as an exceptionally calm person who never raised his voice and gave as an example the way in which he kept his head when he was on Wyllie's staff working at the *Oxford Latin Dictionary*. That is so, but perhaps it was a question not so much of calm as of stiff upper lip or maintaining control. The latter he could do and almost always did: it was the result of strict, often self imposed, training, but the calm was not always there. If John saw some injustice being done or even some instance of incorrect or unfair behaviour his reactions were strong. In those cases he did not hesitate to put pen to paper and write the strongest possible letter without calculating the consequences. He did not do that on his own behalf but he did it for others; for younger people who had not been made enough of, for colleagues who were not sufficiently appreciated, for decisions which had been improperly reached, for institutions which were underrated and should not have been. His own personal problems he kept at bay, and it was only in very exceptional circumstances that he allowed others to get a glimpse of them. Occasionally, very occasionally, if he acted with even more than the necessary emphasis in favour of a pupil or a younger person, one felt prompted to wonder whether he was in fact compensating for an injustice which he had endured himself.

John's word could be trusted. He had total integrity, no ulterior motives in his actions and no malice in his speech; not for him that type of destructive vanity which cannot bear to see anyone being more successful than oneself. Some teachers like to be surrounded by less brilliant students, but for John the opposite was true. He was proud of the achievements of his students and eager to tell others of them, just as he was eager to report about new discoveries or findings: 'You will know', he started, 'that a new tablet has been found in . . .'; 'you will know that *X* has now convincingly demonstrated that . . .'; 'you will know that it is now clear that the old interpretation of *y* was wrong'. These sentences, so frequently heard, said it all: there was the desire to inform but also the satisfaction of the man who now knows what the truth is. *Magna est veritas et praevalabit* was the natural gloss which came to mind. He was more hesitant when reporting his own results: 'I have a new idea, but I do not want to talk about it; it is too early'; perhaps the fear of making blunders was still there. In addition there was obvious generosity and less obvious,

because often concealed, but very real warmth. A number of younger Mycenologists from abroad (one of the writers included) owe to him their first contact with the wider world of Mycenology and their chance to find their niche in it; in the bad period of the cold war more mature scholars from East Europe were helped to keep contact with the West and offered books and invitations. He was generous in his personal relationships and generous in more conventional senses too: a large part of the Feltrinelli Prize was given to the University of Cambridge to set up a fund for Classical Philology, though this was certainly not broadcast. The generosity could take the form of tolerance; this most punctilious of men who never missed a deadline and organised his time and his work to perfection knew how to smile indulgently when others did not answer his letters or did not meet their commitments; very occasionally he complained but with sympathetic understanding. The scholarly work will survive, but those who knew John Chadwick will miss him in his role as friend, adviser, and touchstone of decent behaviour. Decency may seem a dull word, but in this case at least it is not a dull concept.

J. T. KILLEN

*Fellow of the Academy*

A. MORPURGO DAVIES

*Fellow of the Academy*

*Note.* John Chadwick published little about his life. The Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei printed an autobiographical sketch (3 pages), written at their request, in a booklet recording the winners of the Antonio Feltrinelli prizes for 1997; and there is a little personal information, besides the extensive description of the collaboration with Ventris, in *The Decipherment of Linear B*. There are also some brief recollections of his war-time code-breaking experiences and of his career as a lexicographer in the introduction to *Lexicographica Graeca*. He left, however, three unpublished accounts of parts of his life, now held in the Mycenaean Epigraphy Room of the Faculty of Classics, Cambridge. The longest (82 pages of typescript) is an account of his war-time experiences. There is also a shorter version (10 pages of typescript) of the section of this document dealing with the period 1942–5, when he was engaged in intelligence work. This has now been published in *Action this day: Bletchley Park from the breaking of the Enigma code to the birth of the modern computer*, edited by Michael Smith and Ralph Erskine, London, Bantam Press, 2001, pages 110–26. Finally, there is an 18-page manuscript account, written shortly before his death and left unfinished, of his life between 1945 and 1952. We have drawn heavily on all three accounts, as well as on Chadwick's (and Ventris's) extensive correspondence files, also held in the Mycenaean Epigraphy Room, Cambridge. A small booklet *Michael Ventris Remembered* published by Stowe School in 1984 and compiled by Simon Tetlow, Ben

Harris, David Roques, and A. G. Meredith has a short preface by John Chadwick but also reports odd sentences and pieces of information which the authors had from him in 1983; here it is quoted as Stowe, 1984. We have not listed the numerous obituary articles which appeared but we have made use of a brief commemoration by J. T. Killen published in *Minos*, 31–2 (1996–7), 449–51 and of Anna Morpurgo Davies' address at John Chadwick's memorial service (February 1999) which was printed in the *Association Newsletter and College Record of Downing College*, Cambridge for 1999 (pages 50–5). We occasionally refer to the late Michel Lejeune's preface to the Chadwick *Festschrift* (p. 9 f.) mentioned below.

We are very much indebted to Mrs Joan Chadwick and Mr Anthony Chadwick for their help in compiling this memoir. We are also most grateful to the following for reminiscences and information: Revd Professor H. Chadwick, the late Professor R. G. G. Coleman, Professor Sir Kenneth Dover, Revd J. H. Elliott, Professor A. J. Graham, Professor G. C. Horrocks, Professor R. Janko, Mr. D. Mervyn Jones, Mr D. Mann, the late Dr W. N. Mann, Dr P. Millett, Mr J. D. Ray, Dr J. M. Reynolds, Dr A. A. Thompson, Mr C. R. Whittaker. Professor A. G. Woodhead has, inter alia, provided invaluable information about John Chadwick's years at St Paul's and about his final undergraduate year at Cambridge.

A bibliography of John Chadwick, covering the period 1950–87, is published in J. T. Killen, J. L. Melena, and J.-P. Olivier (eds), *Studies in Mycenaean and Classical Greek Presented to John Chadwick* (Salamanca, 1987). We append below a supplementary list compiled by J. T. Killen which covers the later work, together with a list of John Chadwick's writings on Swedenborg.

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