

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE? AND HOW CAN THE LINEAR B TABLETS HELP US GET THERE?

The Linear B tablets have played only a modest role in discussions of influence and interconnections between the Aegean and their eastern and southern neighbors, but their usefulness in this field is not yet exhausted. The Mycenaean documents do not contain any direct evidence for foreign trade, an omission which continues to surprise and to attract various explanations. Thus it seems at first look that they have little or nothing to offer discussions of interconnections between the Aegean and the Orient. The tablets can, however, assist in two fields of inquiry: 1) the movement of goods and people; and 2) the reconstruction of Mycenaean institutions and practices. Recent work in each area shows how valuable it can be to broaden the framework in which we regard Mycenaean culture, and this is certainly a consideration for future research.

1 Movement of goods and people

Late Bronze Age exchange systems surely took more than one form.¹ Evidence suggests, however, that much of the trade in the eastern Mediterranean was state-organized and directional, from and to specific locations. The destinations then served as “gateway communities,” through which imported commodities could be redistributed.² Those studying the ship that sank at Uluburun soon after 1316 B.C. now believe that its varied and wealthy contents are evidence that this ship was engaged in high-level directional trade, though on any voyage it may have had several ports of call.³ The vessel was heading west toward the Aegean when it sank, toward the Mycenaean states which clearly participated in a system of foreign exchange. The presence of foreign goods in Greece and Crete, and the tablets from palatial centers, confirm the Mycenaean market for Near Eastern commodities, notably elite raw materials. It is not surprising that nearly all the foreign substances named in the texts have been found *in corpore* on the Uluburun wreck. For most of these substances the Mycenaeans kept their original Semitic or Anatolian names, so that awareness of their exotic status was not lost:⁴

African blackwood	ku-te-so (PY)	gold	ku-ru-so (KN, PY)
blue glass paste	ku-wa-no (MY, PY)	ivory	e-re-pa (KN, PY)
boxwood	pu-ko-so (PY)	sesame	sa-sa-ma (MY)
copper/bronze	ka-ko (KN, MY, PY)	terebinth resin	ki-ta-no (KN)
cumin	ku-mi-no (MY)		

-
- 1 Recent volumes dealing with trade in the eastern Mediterranean include *Bronze Age Trade*, A.B. KNAPP and J.F. CHERRY, *Provenance Studies and Bronze Age Cyprus: Production, Exchange, and Politico-Economic Change* (1994); *Thalassa*, which includes a discussion of the Linear B tablets: T.G. PALAIMA, “Maritime Matters in the Linear B Tablets,” pp. 273-310. Different models of contact are described by CLINE, *SWDS*, 85-88.
 - 2 T.R. SMITH, *Mycenaean Trade and Interaction in the West Central Mediterranean 1600-1000 B.C.* (1987) 61-62, 65-66, 133-34, 136, 138.
 - 3 G.F. BASS, “Evidence of Trade from Bronze Age Shipwrecks,” in *Bronze Age Trade*, 69-82; C. PULAK, “The Uluburun Shipwreck,” in R. HOHLFELDER and S. SWINY (eds.), *Res Maritima 1994: Cyprus and the Eastern Mediterranean, Prehistory through the Roman Period*. BASOR Archaeological Reports 4 (forthcoming); both with further references. I thank Cemal Pulak for letting me use a draft of his article before publication.
 - 4 On the foreign origins of many of these words and substances, and some others which occur in the Linear B tablets, see *SWDS*, 128-31; cf. PALAIMA (*supra* n. 1) 278-79. Those interested in the meanings and citations of the words in the tablets may consult F. AURA JORRO, *Diccionario micénico* I (1985), II (1993). Site references given here include compound forms and derivatives.

Many of the references come from Pylos, where the tablets date to the last year of the palace administration at the end of LH IIIB. At this time, trade contacts with the Near East continued, though probably not on as large a scale as prevailed during LH IIIA2-IIIB1. It could be argued that many foreign materials mentioned in the Pylos tablets had been in local circulation for some time when the tablets were written, and that the spices had been transplanted. If such items were recent imports, however, this suggests that access to foreign materials was still important to the Mycenaean elite at the end of LH IIIB. The production of finished prestige goods to trade for such imports also seems to have remained a high priority in late LH IIIB. Pylos provides textual evidence for state-organized production of linen textiles and perfumed oil in industrial quantities, similar to the Knossos wool industry. Textiles are largely invisible in the archaeological record, but the stirrup jars which contained the oil are heavily represented among Mycenaean pottery found outside the Aegean.⁵

As redistributive centers, the Mycenaean palatial sites were thus in a position to control both local access to imports, and the production of goods for export. Another indication that foreign contact took place at the level of the state emerges from Deger-Jalkotzy's recent discussion of the Kom el-Hetan statue base of Amenhotep III.⁶ She points out that the only four mainland names listed there can be linked with the best known mainland Mycenaean palaces: Mycenae, Dikte (=Boeotian Thebes), Messana (=Pylos), and Nauplia (=Tiryns). With this concentration, she rightly contrasts the much more diffuse access to prosperity and even foreign materials during post-palatial LH IIIC, as evidenced by rich grave goods in Arkadia, Akhaia, Phokis, and the Aegean islands. The difference is in line with other evidence that in the palatial era Mycenaean states regulated both acquisition and production of prestige goods at their end of the exchange line. It also follows from this list of Aegean places that at least one Egyptian pharaoh was aware of, or interested in, the mainland Mycenaean only at the level of these principal administrative centers.

5 A. LEONARD, Jr., *An Index to the Late Bronze Age Aegean Pottery from Syria-Palestine*. SIMA 114 (1994), the most recent corpus of Aegean pottery from this region, lists 686 examples of Mycenaean stirrup jars (Furumark Form 46, including 32 possibly derivative). This form thus comprises 36% of the 1916 fragments of identifiable Mycenaean shapes. A distant second in frequency is the amphoroid krater (Form 8), with 196 examples (10%). A schematic summary of form frequency may be useful to those with ceramic interests (note that Leonard's catalogue includes both extra numbers, e.g. 131a, and numbers not used, e.g. 43):

no. of examples	forms
686	46 (stirrup jar)
196	8 (amphoroid krater)
161	7 (pithoid/piriform jar)
129	58 (semiglobular cup), 80 (deep rounded bowl; including 26 locally produced IIIC)
101	79 (stemmed cup)
98	19
89	48
71	85
62	54
42	47
28	– (zoomorphic rhyton)
21	16
16	49
12	62
9	25
8	35
7	90
5	74
4	23, – (misc. jugs), 55, 57
3	45, 52, 78
2	15, 31, 53, 63, 88, 102
1	17, 24, 28, 33, 39, 42, 43, 82, 87

6 S. DEGER-JALKOTZY, "On the Negative Aspects of the Mycenaean Palace System," in E. DE MIRO, L. GODART, and A. SACCONI (eds.), *Atti e memorie del secondo congresso internazionale di micenologia II* (1996) 727-28. CLINE, *SWDS*, 38-39, 112-13 no. A.24 (= 115 no. A.34) discusses the statue base from Kom el-Hetan and collects bibliography on it.

Despite all this evidence for the prominence of the Mycenaean states, however, nothing suggests that the Mycenaeans themselves carried out the trade in which they participated. This remains true even if all or part of the Mycenaean world is identified as Ahhiyawa.⁷ Here is another issue where the Linear B tablets must be taken into account, in so far as they are consistent with other indications that the Late Bronze Age Greek world was a series of separate states, not a unified empire. The king of Ahhiyawa could not have been the king of Greece, though he might have been the king of a single dominant state like Mycenae, or of a maritime confederacy headed by such a state.⁸ If he were, several implications would have to be considered. Would this state, or confederacy, have controlled the flow of all trade goods in and out of Greece? Against this possibility is the distribution of foreign artifacts in Greece, which suggests that different Mycenaean states may have had specific trade arrangements with different foreign states. For example, there is a preponderance of Cypriot imports at Tiryns, but of Egyptian imports at Mycenae.⁹ Thus more than one place likely served as a “gateway community” through which foreign goods were redistributed.

We know very little as yet about interstate commerce and relations between different Mycenaean centers, though there is evidence that contact and even the movement of goods did occur.¹⁰ Tablet X 508 from the House of Shields at Mycenae records the allotment of cloth *te-qa-de / Thebasde/*, ‘to Thebes’. The allative probably refers to the Boeotian center, like the same word on three nodules from Thebes itself (Wu 51, Wu 65, Wu 96).¹¹ People from Pylos too were in a position to travel elsewhere, by water as well as by land. There are musters of naval personnel (*er-e-ta / eretai/*, rowers) in the tablets there, and a serviceable man-made port for the site has recently been identified by the Pylos Regional Archaeological Project.¹²

However, no certain records of foreign exchange survive at any Mycenaean center (for possible examples see below on *ku-pi-ri-jo*). Even if trade were indirect, filtered through the Argolid, we would still expect some records to have been preserved and recognized in the very large Pylos archive. Were they kept in another medium like leather, which perished in the fire that baked the tablets?¹³ Or did the Mycenaean state administrations simply play little part in carrying out the trading expeditions from which they benefited?

Some support for the latter view comes again from the Uluburun wreck.¹⁴ The shapes of the Mycenaean pottery on board are utilitarian, not normal export types, and suggest the presence of a Mycenaean. The anchors and the rest of the galley ware point to a Syrian origin, however, and the Mycenaean was probably a passenger sailing under a Canaanite captain. This is only one ship, but my own view is that Cypriots and Canaanites were the likely conductors of much of the Late Bronze Age trade in the eastern Mediterranean, even if they sometimes worked for other powers.¹⁵ Further corroboration comes from recent work on Aegean pot marks by N. Hirschfeld.¹⁶ Many such marks belong to the Cypriot syllabary, suggesting that

7 SWDS, 69 with references.

8 For the latter suggestion, see the paper by C. MEE, this volume.

9 SWDS, 87.

10 Cf. PALAIMA (*supra* n. 1) 276-78, and now the appearance of the ethnic *ra-]ke-da-mi-ni-jo* and the term *ra-ke-da-mo-ni-jo-u-jo / Lakedaimonios huios/*, “son of Lakedaimon” in the new tablets from Pelopidou Street, Thebes: V. ARAVANTINOS, L. GODART, and A. SACCONI, “Sui nuovi testi del palazzo di Cadmo a Tebe: Noti preliminari,” *Rendiconti dell’Accademia Nazionale del Lincei. Classe di Scienze morali, storiche e filologiche* s. 9, v. 6.4 (1995) 844-45.

11 Arguments pro and con are suggested by PALAIMA (*supra* n. 1) 276-77.

12 E. ZANGGER *et al.*, “The Pylos Regional Archaeological Project, Part II: Landscape Evolution and Site Preservation in the Pylos Region,” *Hesperia* (forthcoming).

13 The Minoans seem to have made leather documents: J. WEINGARTEN, “The Use of the Zakro Sealings,” *Kadmos* 22 (1983) 8-13. The Mycenaeans too have been suspected of writing on perishable materials: J. CHADWICK, *The Mycenaean World* (1976) 27-28; C.W. SHELMEARDINE, *The Perfume Industry of Mycenaean Pylos* (1985) 139-41; V. ARAVANTINOS, “The Mycenaean Inscribed Sealings from Thebes: Problems of Content and Function,” in T.G. PALAIMA (ed.), *Aegean Seals, Sealings and Administration. Aegaeum* 5 (1990) 151 n. 10, pl. 24a.

14 PULAK (*supra* n. 3).

15 The same view was expressed at this conference by G.F. BASS and others.

16 N. HIRSCHFELD, “Cypriot Marks on Mycenaean Pottery,” in J.P. OLIVIER (ed.), *Mykenaiika: Actes du IX^e Colloque international sur les textes mycéniens et égéens, Athènes, 2-6 octobre 1990* (1992) 315-19; *Eadem*, dissertation on Aegean and Canaanite marked pottery in progress at the University of Texas.

marked Mycenaean vessels found in the Argolid were destined for export, part of a trading system in which Cyprus played a leading role.

Another way in which the Mycenaean documents are relevant to discussions of foreign contact is through the presence of foreign names and ethnics, indicating that people as well as goods entered the Aegean from outside. For some purposes, the Linear B tablets can be discussed together, without regard for date or context. This inquiry, however, must take into account the different dates of the tablet deposits:

LM II:	Knossos, Room of the Chariot Tablets ¹⁷
LM IIIA2 or IIIB:	Knossos, main archive ¹⁸
LM IIIB:	Chania, tablet Sq 1, also 6659 and KH 3 (possibly Linear B) ¹⁹
end LH/LM IIIB1:	Chania, tablets Ar 3, Gq 5, X 6 ²⁰ Mycenae, tablets from Oil Merchant group of houses ²¹ Thebes, Ug tablets and Wu sealings ²²
end LH IIIB2:	Mycenae, tablets from the Citadel ²³ Tiryns, all tablets ²⁴ Thebes, Of tablets and new Pelopidou Street deposit ²⁵ Pylos, all but five tablets ²⁶

-
- 17 J. DRIESSEN, *An Early Destruction in the Mycenaean Palace at Knossos: A New Interpretation of the Excavation Field-Notes of the South-East Area of the West Wing*. ActaArchLov Monograph 2 (1990). See, however, dissenting reviews by P. WARREN, *CR* 42 (1992) 137-39 and M.R. POPHAM, *JHS* 113 (1993) 174-78.
- 18 Summary and references for different datings are conveniently collected by J.-P. OLIVIER, "The Inscribed Documents at Bronze Age Knossos," in D. EVELY, H. HUGHES-BROCK, and N. MOMIGLIANO (eds.), *Knossos: A Labyrinth of History. Papers presented in honour of Sinclair Hood* (1994) 165-68. This account, however, must be corrected in one respect. OLIVIER argued here and in J.-P. OLIVIER, "KN 115 = KH 115. Un même scribe à Knossos et à La Canée au MR IIIB: du soupçon à la certitude," *BCH* 117 (1993) 19-33, that one Knossos scribe also worked at Khania, with consequences for the date of the main Knossos archive. This article was effectively challenged by T.G. PALAIMA, "Ten Reasons Why KH 115 ≠ KN 115," *Minos* 27-28 (1992-1993) 261-81, and Olivier has now withdrawn the suggestion (*BCH* forthcoming).
- 19 E. HALLAGER, M. VLASAKIS, and B.P. HALLAGER, "The First Linear B Tablet(s) from Khania," *Kadmos* 29 (1990) 24-34, esp. 27 with n. 13.
- 20 E. HALLAGER, M. VLASAKIS, and B.P. HALLAGER, "New Linear B Tablets from Khania," *Kadmos* 31 (1992) 61, 67-70.
- 21 E.B. FRENCH, "Pottery from LH III B1 Destruction Contexts at Mycenae," *BSA* 62 (1967) 149-93. On these houses see I. TOURNAVITOU, *The 'Ivory Houses' at Mycenae*. *BSA Suppl.* 24 (1995), and on the tablets C. VARIAS GARCIA, *Los Documentos en Lineal B de Micenas. Ensayo de Interpretación Global*. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Barcelona (1993).
- 22 Ug series: S. SYMEONOGLOU, *The Topography of Thebes from the Bronze Age to Modern Times* (1985) 40, 231, site 3; K. DEMAKOPOULOU in *ArchDelt* 29 (1973-1974) *Chronika* 441. Wu series: C. PITEROS, J.-P. OLIVIER and J.L. MELENA, "Les inscriptions en linéaire B des nodules de Thèbes (1982): la fouille, les documents, les possibilités d'interprétation," *BCH* 114 (1990) 104-105.
- 23 Oi series, Wt 700, X 707: W. D. TAYLOUR in J. CHADWICK (ed.), *The Mycenae Tablets III*. TAPS N.S. 52, Part 7 (1962) 45-46; K.A. WARDLE, "A Group of Late Helladic IIIB 2 Pottery from Within the Citadel at Mycenae: 'The Causeway Deposit,'" *BSA* 68 (1973) 297-348. L 710: G. MYLONAS, "A Tablet from Mycenae," *Kadmos* 7 (1968) 65-66. Fu 11: G. MYLONAS, "A New Tablet from Mycenae, MY Fu 711," *Kadmos* 9 (1970) 48.
- 24 Cb 4, Ef 2, Ef 3: L. GODART and J.-P. OLIVIER, "Nouveaux textes en linéaire B de Tirynthe," in *Tiryns VIII* (1975) 41-53. Si 5: U. NAUMANN, L. GODART, and J.-P. OLIVIER, "Un cinquième fragment de tablette en linéaire B de Tirynthe," *BCH* 101 (1977) 229-34. X 6: L. GODART, J.T. KILLEN, and J.-P. OLIVIER, "Un sixième fragment de tablette en linéaire B de Tirynthe," *AA* 1979, 450-58. Tablets fallen into Room 130 of the Lower Town: L. GODART, J.T. KILLEN, and J.-P. OLIVIER, "Eighteen More Fragments of Linear B Tablets from Tiryns. Ausgrabungen in Tiryns 1981," *AA* 1983, 413-26.
- 25 Of tablets: T. SPYROPOULOS and J. CHADWICK, *The Thebes Tablets II*. *Minos Suppl.* 4 (1975) 53-55. Pelopidou Street: ARAVANTINOS *et al.* (*supra* n. 10) 823.
- 26 C.W. BLEGEN and M. RAWSON, *The Palace of Nestor at Pylos in Western Messenia I: The Buildings and Their Contents* (1966) 421-22. This date for the main archive, though much debated, has not yet been convincingly supplanted. Five earlier tablets: T.G. PALAIMA, "Evidence for the Influence of the Knossian Graphic Tradition at Pylos," in P. OLIVA and A. FROLIKOVA (eds.), *Concilium Eirene* 16 (1983) 80-84.

The distribution of foreign ethnics across this chronological spectrum is interesting. The only two possible references to people of Egyptian origin come from Knossos: *a₃ku-pi-ti-jo* / *Aiguptios*/, 'Memphite' or 'Egyptian' is the name of a shepherd on Db 1105, and *mi-sa-ra-jo* / *Misraios*/, 'Egyptian' appears as a man's name on F(2) 841, among recipients of foodstuffs.²⁷ Both individuals, therefore, are assimilated into ordinary local contexts, not related to foreign affairs of any kind. That the presence of these possible Egyptians is restricted to the Knossos tablets may be an accident of preservation. It is nonetheless in keeping with the independent observation that Egyptian contact is more widely documented with Crete than with Greece, and in the earlier rather than the later phases of the Late Bronze Age. In LH IIIA2 the mainland's contacts with Egypt and the Near East increased as those of Crete waned, but by the end of LH IIIB mainland communication too is diminished. The absence of references to Egyptians in the large, late LH IIIB2 Pylos archive is therefore no surprise.

By contrast, western Asia Minor and the nearby island of Lemnos figure prominently at Pylos, especially in the personnel tablets of the A-series. These lists of textile workers include the following designations: *a*64-ja* / *Aswiai*/, 'Lydians,' *ki-ni-di-ja* / *Knidiai*/, 'Knidians,' *ki-si-wi-ja* / *Kswiai*/, 'Khians?', *mi-ra-ti-ja* / *Milatai*/, 'Milesians,' *ra-mi-ni-ja* / *Lamniai*/, 'Lemnians,' and *ze-pu₂-ra₃* / *Dzephurrai*/, 'Halikarnassians' (cf. Strabo 14.2.16).²⁸ The women were part of the Pylos work force, but the use of the ethnics to identify them suggests that they were still recognizable as foreigners, and therefore were relatively recent arrivals, not second-generation residents. The inference that Pylos was able, in late LH IIIB, to attract or to conscript foreign laborers is another point that should figure in any consideration of Mycenaean history and foreign relations. Furthermore, several of the same ethnics appear, in masculine or feminine form, on other Pylos tablets.²⁹ Though the other mainland tablet assemblages are much smaller, they too preserve references to some of these ethnics: an *a-si-wi-jo* is among the working personnel at Mycenae (Au 653, Au 657), and the new Thebes tablets from Pelopidou Street contain a number of references to Milesians.³⁰ These terms are proportionally much rarer on Crete: *a-si-wi-jo* at Knossos on Df 1469 is a shepherd and *a*64-jo* appears on Sc 261 from the Room of the Chariot Tablets, while *ki-si-wi-jo* may be read on V 60.³¹

By contrast, ethnics which appear to pertain to Cyprus occur equally both on Crete and at mainland sites.³² *a-ra-si-jo* / *Alasios*/ refers to individuals at Knossos on Df 1229, Fh 369, and X 1463. The word *ku-pi-ri-jo* / *Kuprios*/ appears, with variants, more often, particularly in the Fh oil series. There has been some debate about whether this ethnic refers at Knossos to people or to things.³³ The strongest support for the latter comes from tablet Od 667, where new joins reveal the reading *ku-pi-ri-ja* in line .A, and *ke-[]-ja* in line .B. These could well be adjectives modifying the wool which is the subject of the tablet, though nothing rules out

27 *SWDS*, 128.

28 *Ibid.* 130-31. J. CHADWICK, "The Women of Pylos," in J.-P. OLIVIER and T.G. PALAIMA (eds.), *Texts, Tablets and Scribes: Studies in Mycenaean Epigraphy and Economy Offered to Emmett L. Bennett, Jr.* *Minos Suppl.* 10 (1988) 78-84, 91-92. A skeptic could argue that each name referred to a non-Ionian place, but the cumulative picture is persuasive.

29 *a-si-wi-ja* is an epithet of Potnia on Fr 1206, but *a-si-wi-jo* is the name of a shepherd on Cn 285, and of a landholder on Eq 146. Vn 1191 includes a woman named *a*64-ja*, and the masculine equivalent *a*64-jo* appears on Cn 1287, Fn 324, and Jn 832. Knidians are among the groups of women listed on An 292. The man's name *ra-mi-ni-jo* occurs on An 209, Cn 328, and Cn 719. *ze-pu₂-ro* holds land on Ea 56.

30 As reported by W.-D. NIEMEIER at this conference.

31 Cf. *ki-si-* , perhaps *ki-si-wi-jo* on Od(1) 570.

32 *SWDS*, 130.

33 People: L. GODART, "*Kupirijo* dans les textes mycéniens," *SMEA* 5 (1968) 64-70; J.T. KILLEN, "Some Further Thoughts on 'Collectors,'" in *Politeia*, 215-21, with further references.. Things: J.L. MELENA in E.L. BENNETT, Jr. *et al.*, "436 raccords et quasi-raccords de fragments inédits dans *KT* 5," *Minos* 24 (1989) 202-204; disagreement, *Ibid.* 216-17. MELENA is followed by PALAIMA (*supra* n. 1) 281, 293-94; and by L. HIMMELHOCH, "The Use of the Ethnics *a-ra-si-jo* and *ku-pi-ri-jo* in Linear B Texts," *Minos* 25-26 (1990-1991) 91-104.

taking them as feminine recipients in the dative singular. Several difficulties seem to me to stand in the way of extending the adjectival interpretation of *ku-pi-ri-jo* to other contexts at Knossos, though a decision is not necessary for the purposes of this paper.³⁴ At Pylos, in any case, *ku-pi-ri-jo* certainly designates or names persons on Cn 131, Cn 719, Jn 320, and Un 443. The last tablet shows a transaction of wool and homespun cloth *146 for alum. The appearance of a Cypriot (whether local or visiting) in this context is significant, since Cyprus is known to have been a source of alum in antiquity.³⁵ It is not certain that this ethnic occurs at other sites, but Melena has suggested that the abbreviation *ku* on the Thebes Of tablets stands for *ku-pi-ri-jo/ja*, and describes wool deriving from or destined for a Cypriot market.³⁶

Across the board, then, the distribution of ethnics among tablets from different sites may be useful in assessing Mycenaean foreign relations in different periods. It should be stressed that in many cases the individuals with foreign names or ethnics are assimilated into the local picture. This does not seem to me to diminish their value in indicating areas with which the Mycenaean communicated. A strong Cypriot connection is the most durable foreign contact on archaeological evidence, and the attestations of *ku-pi-ri-jo* from both Crete and the mainland bear this out. It may not be merely an accident of preservation that the second term *ara-si-jo* occurs only at Knossos. Whatever date one assigns to the Knossos archive, it is unlikely to be as late as the very end of LM IIIB. If *Alasia* was a designation (perhaps earlier, perhaps in a different language) for all or part of Cyprus, was it one that the Pylian scribes rejected? Did they prefer the alternative *Kupros* because it was more durable, or because it carried a clear meaning in Greek?³⁷ As for Egyptian links to the Aegean, pottery finds dating to the long reign of Ramses II show that trade continued in and perhaps through the Mycenaean palatial period. However, the time of greatest contact is earlier, notably during the reign of Amenhotep III. The restriction of Egyptian ethnics to Knossos – always speaking, of course, on present evidence – is consistent with that archaeological picture. Finally, ethnics from western Asia Minor appear much more often on the mainland than on Crete, in the small assemblages from Mycenae and Thebes as well as in the much larger Pylos archive. This distribution too may be something to consider in evaluating the nature and extent of contact between that area and the various Mycenaean states. It is worth noting, for example, that the extant references to Milesians all date to the end of LH IIIB.

2 Near Eastern analogies

When Linear B was first deciphered, the overwhelming emphasis on local concerns, particularly agriculture and animal husbandry, prompted some comparisons with the feudal estate records of Mediaeval England. It was clear from the start, though, that “the most useful and significant analogies” lay with the better documented and more fully understood societies of the ancient Near East.³⁸ Occasionally research on the Mycenaean has clarified a practice known elsewhere: the association of oil with textiles on some tablets makes sense of the formerly puzzling notation at Mari, “(sesame) oil to make cloth shine.”³⁹ Often, though, it is the more fully documented Near Eastern practices which illuminate the sometimes cryptic

34 Among the doubtful points are the interpretation of *MU* as a large container and *o-no* as an ass-load (PALAIMA [*supra* n. 1] 293, with references), and the argument that when coupled with a name in the dative *ku-pi-ri-jo* cannot refer to a person (HIMMELHOCH [*supra* n. 33] 99-100). The latter objection falls if one takes *ku-pi-ri-jo* either adjectivally with the dative name, or as a nominative.

35 L. BAUMBACH, “Mycenaean *tu-ru-pte-ri-ja* and Herodotus II.180,” in P.Hr. ILIEVSKI and L. CREPAJAC (eds.), *Tractata Mycenaea* (1987) 49-54. Possible implications are considered by KILLEN (*supra* n. 33) 219-21.

36 MELENA (*supra* n. 33) 204-205.

37 Unfortunately the body of texts from other sites is too small to include them in such speculation.

38 M. VENTRIS and J. CHADWICK, *Documents in Mycenaean Greek*¹ (1956) 106.

39 C.W. SHELMEARDINE, “Shining and Fragrant Cloth in Homer,” in J.B. CARTER and S.P. MORRIS (eds.), *The Ages of Homer* (1995) 103.

Mycenaean documents. To pick one of many examples, John Killen successfully used Ugaritic parallels to elucidate the recruitment policies behind lists of rowers at Pylos.⁴⁰ Here, too, there is scope for future work. A recent effort concerns the practice of ritual feasting, a phenomenon used in many cultures both in religious celebrations and as a way for a king to display and maintain his authority. A Hittite version of such a feast can be inferred from surviving descriptions of festival rituals, including the seating of guests and the presentation by cooks of dishes of water and meat.⁴¹ More explicit is the elaborate chronicle of a banquet hosted by the Assyrian king Assurnasirpal II on a primarily secular occasion, to inaugurate the palace at his newly built capital city, Calah:⁴²

When Assurnasirpal, king of Assyria, inaugurated the palace in Calah, a palace of joy and (erected with) great ingenuity, he invited into it Assur, the great lord and the gods of his entire country, (he prepared a banquet of) 1,000 fattened head of cattle, 1,000 calves, 10,000 stable sheep, 15,000 lambs... 10,000 loaves of bread, 10,000 (jars of) beer, 10,000 skins with wine... 100 bunches of grapes... ten homer of perfumed oil... When I inaugurated the palace at Calah I treated for ten days with food and drink...altogether 69,574 invited guests... I (furthermore) provided them with the means to clean and anoint themselves. I did them due honors and sent them back, healthy and happy, to their own countries.

Jane Carter recently has recently drawn attention to the *marzea*, a Syrian association of elite men which carried out religious banquets in honor of the dead.⁴³ By a systematic comparison of iconographic evidence from the Bronze Age Aegean with the more extensive Levantine evidence, she was able to suggest that the Mycenaeans held similar banquets, which may also have been occasions for performances of epic poetry.

There is now further evidence to confirm that the Mycenaeans celebrated ritual banquets. Though the evidence does not tie them explicitly to the dead, such meals are clearly linked both to the king and to religion. This evidence has been the subject of several recent discussions, which can simply be summarized here. Several texts are now recognized as lists of supplies for such a ceremonial feast. The 56 sealings of the Wu series from Thebes record the delivery of foodstuffs, in particular a wide variety of animals.⁴⁴ The total number of these is only 47, nothing like on the scale of Assurnasirpal's extravaganza, but the same animals recur on two Pylos tablets, Un 2 and Un 138. The numbers of each type are similar at the two sites. This observation led to the interpretation of both these tablets and the Thebes sealings as lists of banquet supplies.⁴⁵ Un 2 has the widest variety of commodities, including barley, cyperus, honey, figs, olives, wine, and cloth as well as animals of several kinds. The quantities are sufficient to feed 1000 people, with 500 grams of meat and a half-liter of wine apiece!⁴⁶ Most important, Un 2 has a heading which reveals the kind of occasion which would prompt such a feast. It refers to a special ceremony at *pa-ki-ja-na*, an important Pylian sanctuary. The king either undergoes or presides over this ceremony; the most plausible translation is "upon the initiation of the king..."⁴⁷ Probable joins (still to be confirmed physically) between

40 J.T. KILLEN, "PY An 1," *Minos* 18 (1983) 71-79.

41 O. GURNEY, *The Hittites* (1954) 152-55.

42 J.B. PRITCHARD, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*³ (1969) 558-60.

43 J.B. CARTER, "Ancestor Cult and the Occasion of Homeric Performance," in J.B. CARTER and S.P. MORRIS (eds.), *The Ages of Homer* (1995) 285-312.

44 PITEROS *et al.* (*supra* n. 22) 103-184.

45 *Ibid.* esp. 171-84; J.T. KILLEN, "Observations on the Thebes Sealings," in J.-P. OLIVIER (ed.), *Mykenaiika: Actes du IXe colloque international sur les textes mycéniens et égéens, Athènes, 2-6 Octobre 1990*. *BCH Suppl.* 25 (1992) 365-80; *Idem*, "Thebes Sealings, Knossos Tablets and Mycenaean State Banquets," *BICS* 1994, 67-84; C.W. SHELMEARDINE, "Mycenaean Administration: Where's the Chief?," paper delivered at a symposium on Mycenaean administration at the annual meeting of the Society of American Archaeologists, April 1997 (forthcoming).

46 PITEROS *et al.* (*supra* n. 22) 179 with n. 332.

47 For discussion see P. CARLIER, *La royauté en Grèce avant Alexandre* (1984) 91-94; M. VENTRIS and J. CHADWICK, *Documents in Mycenaean Greek*² (1973) 440-41, 562 *s.v.* *mu-jo-me-no*; KILLEN 1994 (*supra* n. 45) 72; AURA JORRO 1985 (*supra* n. 4) 80-81 *s.v.* *a-pi-e-ke*, 459-60 *s.v.* *mu-jo-me-no*.

existing Un tablets and a fragment recently found by Fred Cooper in Blegen's dump at Pylos form another such list, on which the word *wanax* also appears in the dative; preserved ideograms refer to quantities of wheat, barley, oxen, honey, unguent and figs.⁴⁸ The Pylos textual evidence thus links ceremonial banquets both to the king and to religion.

Archaeological evidence suggestive of communal feasts also shows links to religion, for example in the Lower Citadel at Tiryns (LH IIIC), and at Tsoungiza (LH IIIA2 early).⁴⁹ The Pylos megaron may provide an illustration of such a feast.⁵⁰ The procession of men and women with a bull in Vestibule 5 culminates on the northeast wall of the megaron. The lyre-player at the right-hand end of the wall entertains at least two pairs of men seated at tables, while nearer the throne is a bull either standing or, in a more recent reconstruction, recumbent and actually trussed for sacrifice.⁵¹ The setting of the painting makes the throne room, and the throne itself, the culmination point of the painted sacrificial procession and banquet. The cumulative testimony of this painting, the miniature kylikes and an offering table near the hearth, and a libation channel beside the throne, offers strong support for the view that the megaron was one locus of such ritual activity.⁵² Just so, the textual evidence indicates that the king himself played a central role in events of this kind. Like Carter, I refrain from suggesting that the Mycenaeans simply borrowed the notion of ritual banquets from the Levant. Rather I want to emphasize how valuable it can be to look at Near Eastern analogies when attempting to reconstruct a Mycenaean institution.

Where, then, do we go from here in considering contact between the Mycenaeans and their neighbors to the east? I have tried to summarize some of the contributions which the Linear B tablets have made and can still make to such discussions: in documenting the goods which came into the Mycenaean centers, and the priority of state-controlled production of exports; in showing contact through foreign ethnics, and perhaps how the degree and focus of such contact may have shifted over time; and in the study of various institutions and practices. I simply close with a plea to colleagues who work in all these areas to be as aware of each other as were the people they study. Further advances in knowledge are sure to result if we continue to study trade from both ends, and if we broaden our view of these various ancient cultures to include the larger world in which they surely lived.

Cynthia W. SHELMERDINE

-
- 48 The new Pylos fragment is now under study for publication; preliminary notice by F.A. COOPER, "MARWP Pylos Project" (address verified 15 January 1998): <http://marwp.cla.umn.edu/PYLOS/pylos.html>.
- 49 The following summarizes discussion in C.W. SHELMERDINE, "Review of Aegean Prehistory VI: the Palatial Bronze Age of the Southern and Central Greek Mainland," *AJA* 101 (1997) 537-85, and *Eadem* forthcoming (*supra* n. 45).
- 50 Cf. the discussion of this fresco and comparanda by CARTER (*supra* n. 43).
- 51 M.L. LANG, *The Palace of Nestor at Pylos in Western Messenia II: The Frescoes* (1969) 38-40, 192-93, reconstruction pl. 119. In the megaron itself, L. McCALLUM, *Decorative Program in the Mycenaean Palace of Pylos: The Megaron Frescoes*. Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania (1987) 68-141 reconstructs a trussed bull lying on a table, but only the bull's shoulder actually survives: LANG (*supra*) 109-10 no. 19 C 6, pls. 53, 125; CARTER (*supra* n. 43) fig. 18.8.
- 52 S. HILLER, "Mykenische Heiligtümer: Das Zeugnis der Linear B-Texte," in R. HÄGG and N. MARINATOS (eds.), *Sanctuaries and Cults in the Aegean Bronze Age* (1981) 117-19; K. KILIAN, "Mykenische Heiligtümer der Peloponnes," in H. FRONING, T. HÖLSCHER, and H. MIELSCH (eds.), *Kotinos. Festschrift für Erika Simon* (1992) 17; and R. HÄGG, "State and Religion in Mycenaean Greece," in *Politeia*, 389-90.

Discussion following C.W. Shelmerdine's paper:

M. Fotiadis: Is it really compelling to see *kuprios* and anything else of that nature that appears in the tablets as an ethnonym?

C.W. Shelmerdine: Yes. Yes. I think so. It's definitely an ethnic and could be used as a name. I should add that if you see *kuprios* at one site, it could be a name, but if you find him there in several different contexts, and then you find him at other sites, you begin to think about "them" rather than "him," just as the presence of 'mi-ra-ti-jo' in the new Thebes tablets has to stand now alongside the presence of Milesian women at Pylos. The fact that they are at two Mycenaean sites – in both the case of *kuprios* and the case of *mi-ra-ti-jo/ja* – means that the probability really is that we're talking about farther away places and not some place local to a particular center.

V. Karageorghis: There is one instance in the Knossos tablets where *kuprios* is an adjective for coriander – *ku-pi-ri-jo ko-ri-ja-do-no* – which has been translated as "coriander from Cyprus." And, as you know very well, coriander has been found on the Uluburun ship. When I was lecturing about two months ago in Dublin, and mentioned your work on the importance of the trade of perfume, somebody asked me: "did the Aegeans use 'aromatherapy'?"

C.W. Shelmerdine: Gee, I think only a Californian would be able to answer that question – I may have to turn it back over to the West Coast specialists. (Laughter.) I wonder if I could get a research grant to undergo some and see what it was like? (Laughter.) But, on the matter of the coriander, that is one of the tablets on which we also have the word *ono*, this transaction term. I myself, in that instance, take *kuprios* to be the individual involved in the transaction, which is about the coriander. But, your point still stands, because one of the Od tablets from Knossos has new joins which show that we have *kupria* cloths; the debate really has already started about whether these are cloths for Cyprus, going to Cyprus, or whether they are Cypriot cloths that have come, and are being counted at Knossos. In either case, there are instances where the adjective is just that, an adjective. I'm not sure if coriander is one of them, but I'll go home and look. [Addendum: *ku-pi-ri-jo* in the Knossos Ga series appears with both cyperus and coriander. It could be either an adjective or a noun; the evidence is not conclusive.]

