Θέμις in the Mycenaean Lexicon
and the Etymology of the Place-Name
*tt-mi-to a-ko

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Data de recepción: 4/7/1999

Abstract

Reassessing work by Spanish scholars Martín S. Ruipérez and Mercedes Aguirre de Castro, this paper examines words in the Linear B texts that have been connected with the later Greek word themis. New readings of several key texts and a fuller understanding of the still much-debated tablet KN V(2) 280 argue against interpreting any words as connected with themis. This is consistent with the general absence of references to legal procedures in the Mycenaean records and the conspicuous absence in the Linear B inscriptions of any derivatives of the word for the notion of ‘justice’ ὅιος, which occurs so prominently in historical Greek literature and even as a formative element in historical personal names.

The paper further explores the significance of these conclusions for the interpretation of the toponym *tni-mi-to a-ko, a prominent provincial capital in the Pylos tablets which has been identified archaeologically as the site of Nichoria. Using the results of three separate surveys and archaeobotanical studies of the region and the work of José L. Melena and José Fortes Fortes with botanical terms from the Mycenaean and historical periods, I propose that the interpretation ‘σχοινό ο τερεβίνθιοι δέντρα’ would fit both the topography of the environs of Nichoria and the attested high exploitation of products from the terebith trees in late palatial Crete and Messenia. Stephanus of Byzantium cites the toponym Tremithous in Cyprus, and there are other examples of such phytomonic toponyms.

Key words: Linear B, etymology, linguistics, legal terms, place-names, plant names, archaeobotany, Bronze Age Messenia.

Resumen

Estudiando de nuevo los trabajos de los investigadores españoles Martín S. Ruipérez y Mercedes Aguirre de Castro, este artículo examina los términos que en los textos en línea B se han puesto en relación con la palabra themis del griego alfabético. Nuevas lecturas de varios textos clave y una comprensión más exacta de la tablilla KN V(2) 280, objeto todavía de una viva discusión, sirven de argumento contra la interpretación de cualquier palabra como emparentada con themis. Esto concuerda con la ausencia general de referencias a procedimientos legales en los registros micénicos y con la llamativa ausencia en las inscripciones en Linear B de cualquier derivado de la palabra que designa la noción de ‘justicia’: ὅιος, que aparece de forma tan destacada en la literatura del griego histórico e incluso como elemento formador de antropónimos de época histórica.

El artículo investiga también el alcance de estas conclusiones para la interpretación del topónimo *tni-mi-to a-ko, una capital de provincia importante en las tablillas de Pilo, que ha sido identificada arqueológicamente con el yacimiento de Nijoria. Utilizando los resultados de tres
prospecciones separadas y de estudios arqueobotánicos en la región y los trabajos de José Melena y de José Fortes Fortes con términos botánicos de los periodos micénico e histórico, propongo que la interpretación ‘agoxos de los árboles terebino’ se adecuara con la topografía de los alrededores de Níjar y así con la intensa explotación de productos de los árboles terebino atesiguada en el último periodo palacial de Creta y de Mesenia. Estaban de Bizancio se vinculaba el topónico Trimenthos en Chipre, y hay más ejemplos de tales topónimos fenicios.

**Palabras clave:** lineal B, etimología, lingüística, términos legales, topónimos, nombres de plantas, arqueobotánica, edad del bronce de Mesenia.

There is scant evidence in the Linear B inscriptions for the sphere of law. We can get some sense of the paucity of information about legal matters by surveying the recent lists and semantic classification of Mycenaean non-onomastical word-units by Antonín Bartoněk. Of some 244 lexical units pertaining to man and his socio-economic environment, none relates to law or the administration of justice. The sizable body of Mycenaean onomastical material—between seventy and eighty percent of the word-units in Linear B are anthroponyms or toponyms—does not contribute any pertinent data. Roots relating to basic concepts such as ‘law’ or ‘justice’ are absent from anthroponyms in the Mycenaean period. This stands in marked contrast with the popularity of personal names formed from such roots as δίκαιος and its derivatives in the historical period. In team-teaching with Hittitologist Sara Kimball at the University of Texas at Austin a course mainly focused on the textual evidence for Hittite and Mycenaean societies, I cite single entries in the Linear B land-tenure documents from Pylos as the limited evidence for the kind of disputes that would have needed some form of ‘legal’ arbitration and resolution among competing claimants. In the principal entry in what we consider the final recension PY Ep 704.7–8, the ‘priestess’ Eritu is recorded as ‘holding’ and ‘claiming to hold’ e-ti-mo-ja land ‘for the deity’ (te-o interpreted as a dative). This is then disputed by the damos in the clause which immediately follows in this entry: "but the damos says that she has an o-na-to plot of the land category known as ko-to-na-o ke-ke-me-na-o (partitive gen. plur.)." In the presumably preliminary single-entry document corresponding to this entry Eb 297, a plural group of ‘land-holders’, the ko-to-no-o-ko, are recorded in the place of the damos as the parties disputing the claim of the priestess. This is a desperate attempt on my part to find something in the Mycenaean texts to compare even unfavorably with the detailed documentation of the great Hittite codes and compilations of law, law cases and legal precedents. Nonetheless we have recorded on Pylos tablets Eb 297 and Ep 704 a serious set of contrasting claims about the status of a landholding, and certainly the obligations and benefits attached thereto. But we are nowhere in our extant documents given further information as to the mechanisms by which such a dispute would have been settled.

The argument of this paper casts doubt or further doubt on the one term relating to law (δίκαιος) that has been thought to occur in the Mycenaean texts as an independent lexical item and in derivative and compound formations as the name of an official and as a place-name and toponymic adjective. We shall start with the toponymic forms. Among the 240 place-names attested in the Linear B tablets from Mycenaean Pylos, the two most prominent toponyms that can be linked with virtual, if not absolute, certainty to actual Late Bronze Age settlements identified by intensive survey and excavation are pu-ro and *ti-mi-to-o-ko, pu-ro, which occurs more than fifty tablets, indisputably refers to the palatial center excavated at the site of Ano Englianos which produced our Linear B tablets. It is clearly to be understood as the Bronze Age site of the toponym Pylos, the location of which has a peripatetic history later...
in the historical period\(^6\). *ti-mi-to a-ko*, to which reference is also made in the tablets by its related alternative adjectival forms ti-mi-ti-ja and te-mi-ti-jal-jo, has been convincingly associated by Cynthia W. Shelmerdine with the archaeological site of Nichoria\(^7\). The location of Nichoria, its topographical situation and the regional resources which it would have controlled at the end of the Bronze Age are all consistent with the economic and military contexts in which the place-name *ti-mi-to a-ko* appears in the Linear B archives. The site represents one of the 16 major districts into which Bronze Age Messenia is administratively divided, and it occurs on ten tablets that relate to: bronze working, six standard items of regional taxation, bronze recycling for weaponry production, coastal defensive arrangements, gold, landholdings, livestock, male personnel, and rather intensive levels of flax production\(^8\). Nichoria matches the tablet information in that it sits on a ridge with a view of the sea and would thus be an appropriate ‘coastal-watchstation’. It is also situated on the ‘further’ side of the posited boundary between the Nearter and Further Provinces of Bronze Age Messenia. This system of regional districts and their second-order centers can be reconstructed from the canonical order of the sixteen major toponyms in the tablets. *ti-mi-to a-ko* would fit Nichoria, and vice versa, as being the first of the major centers in the Further Province. Finally the archaeological site overlooks a fertile valley to the east watered by five rivers. This would make it most suitable for flax growing and processing. The most recent full discussion of settlements and resources and regional administrative organization in late Bronze Age Messenia further supports these identifications\(^9\).

The standard interpretation of the toponym *ti-mi-to a-ko* itself was proposed by Martin S. Ruipérez in 1957 and the identification of the first element of the compound *ti-mi-to* as attested also in the adjectival forms *ti-mi-ti-ja* and *te-mi-ti-jal-jo* has prevailed in scholarly interpretation\(^10\). The toponym is viewed as the compound. The first element is interpreted as the genitive of later Greek ἥμιος, here with an original and literal meaning of ‘boundary furrow or stone’, ‘frontier’ or ‘border’\(^11\). The second element most likely is the term ἄγρυς in the sense of ‘mountain glen’, ‘valley’, ‘barranco’, ‘zona de árboles’ (DGE, s.v. 1 and 2), although other alternatives such as ἰγράς = τέμενος in the sense of ‘holy ground’ were proposed in early scholarly discussions\(^12\). Thus in the recent definitive publication of the excavation of the site of Nichoria, we read that the name *ti-mi-to a-ko* is appropriate for this site at the juncture of mountains and valley; the most widely accepted interpretation is Θείμιος ἄγρυς, ‘the mountain glen of the frontier’\(^13\). While this is not an instance of ἥμιος in its later meaning of ‘law as established by custom’, it would attest that the word was in use in the Mycenaean period.

There are several reasons why we might wish now to consider alternatives to the standard interpretation. First and foremost, the interpretation of the first element as derived from ἥμιος is problematic in terms of what we know about Mycenaean dialect. One of the features used by the late Ernst Risch to differentiate between what he called *special* and *normal* Mycenaean «dialects» is the alternation in spellings of given words with either ἡ or ἐ, mostly in the environment of a labial consonant\(^14\). The main evidence adduced by Risch and later scholars for this particular feature includes the variants *ti-mi-ti-ja* vs. *te-mi-ti-ja* (cf. *ti-mi-to a-ko*) and the theonym *a-ti-mi-te* vs. *a-te-mi-to*; as well as the universal Mycenaean treatment of vocabulary items for loan words that varies from the later universal treatment, e.g., *di-pa* vs. Homeric δέκας and *ku-te-so* vs. later Greek κύτταρος (Theophrastus, Pliny)\(^15\).


8. The texts and their contents are currently surveyed in SHELMERDINE, op. cit., 1981: 321, n. 5. The suitability of the site and its environs for flax production are critical to the argument, (Ibid.: 324-325).


10. M.S. RUÍPERÉZ, «Notes on Mycenaean Land-Division and Livestock Grazing», Minos 5, 1957: 183. The Ruipérez etymology has only been brought into question in P. Chantraine, DELG, 428, in regard to its later extension in the Homeric texts, where Ruipérez would see it as contrasting with ἀγρυς in the sense of ‘polished stones set down as seats for elders’: M.S. RUÍPERÉZ, «Historia de ἥμιος en Homer», Eumenia, 28/1, 1960: 99-123. A key element in this interpretation which Chantraine regards as the impetus for the convivants, is the term as given in Mycenaean, usually of the word which originally means Λύδιος κοινωνικος, is to mean ‘boundary stone’ and then ‘boundary’, but can also develop in Homeric texts into a meaning of οὐσίας λίθος ἄρα ἄρος of de la boule (RUÍPERÉZ, op. cit., 1960: 121). VERTIQUE and CHADWICK (op. cit., 1973: 584) interpret ti-mi-ti-ja as Thémis and view the connection with ἥμιος as made less likely by the alternative spelling ti-mi-ti-ja. I thank M. Del Freo for alerting me to the fact that M.A. DE CASTRO, «Micénico TE-MI: nuevas consideraciones», Cuadernos de Filología Clásica, 18, 1983-84: 283-293, esp. 391, alone had earlier proposed and argued for the alternative interpretation suggested in this paper. Readers of DE CASTRO’s article will see that its emphasis is on examining the overall dossier and suggesting the alternative without the supporting evidence offered here from new readings of pertinent texts and from the archaeobotanical and archaeological record.


12. Cf. AURA JORBO, op. cit., 1993, s.v. For example, L.R. PALMER, The Interpretation of Mycenaean Greek Texts, Oxford, 1963: 278 and 458, interprets ti-mi-to-a-ke-i-i as Θέμιος δ' ἔτης, which agrees with Ruipérez only in the first half of the compound.


15. There are also some etymologically problematic terms like ge-to which some have connected with θέμιος. Cf. AURA JORBO, op. cit., 1993: s.v. The variant treatment in ku-te-so obviously does not occur in a labial environment.
Yet the opinio communis on this particular alternation in spelling has always connected it with the fact that the words wherein it occurs are words of no convincing Greek etymology and «in a number of cases demonstrably foreign borrowings»16. This view is also supported by the evidence of non-Greek proper names in the Mycenaean onomasticon like e-pa-sa-na-ri vs. i-pa-sa-na-ti and qa-me-si-jo vs. qa-mi-si-jo where the textual contexts may support the names referring to one and the same individuals, i.e., they are true variant treatments of the same anthroponym and not different anthroponyms that happen to be spelled the same in Linear B17. Similar linguistic variation has been used recently by José Fortes Fortes to establish the non-Greek sources of a number of plant names in the historical Greek lexicon, particularly the non-Greek origin of the name of a plant central to the discussion in this paper: τέχνηνδυς, τούμπως, τοφίεψως18. Thus it is a priori more probable that the first element of the compound toponym which fluctuates as te-mi-ti- vs. ti-mi-i- is of non-Greek etymology. This would rule out its derivation from θίμης.

Second, among the key comparanda used by Ruizperez in his discussion of the Mycenaean evidence that te-mi-ti-i-ti-mi-ti- represented forms of the Greek term θίμης is line 1 of tablet KN 821. The accepted reading in 1957 was e-qa-la-e, e-ne-ka, ti-mi-to together with a parallel entry e-ne-ka, ‘o-pa’ twice recurring on this fragmentary tablet. However, in 1968 Sourvinou proposed that the correct reading in line 1 of the tablet now known as Am(2) 821EFR is e-mi-to, to be interpreted as genitive plural εμιτον οι ‘asaliadots’, and this reading and line of interpretation have prevailed in KT 5 and CoMIIK I and the scholarly literature19. The implications of this reading are aptly expressed by Sourvinou: «En conséquence toutes les théories qui ont été bâties sur ti-mi-to s’écroulent»20. These theories include those which viewed the word as connected with ‘Gesetz’ or ‘justice’.

17. Cf. on both points the opinion of D.A. HiSTER, «The Use Alternation in Mycenaean Greek», Minor, 6, 1958: 33: «The convention that most of the certain examples of Mycenaean ε = Greek ε in proper names or words not of Greek origin seems correct as far as roots are concerned.» For context and likely identity of e-pa-sa-na-ri i-pa-sa-na-ti and qa-me-si-jo qa-mi-si-jo, cf. PY En 74,13 and PY En 247,4 and KN As 1516,5 and KN Sc 135. The two Pylos E- series texts are respectively «final» and «preliminary» records. The KN tablets come from area J2 and The Room of the Chariot Tablets (RCT) respectively. The RCT material is demonstrably our earliest collection of Linear B documents at site apart from tablets found in other locations in the Palace of Minos. Cf. J. DREiSSen, The Scribes of the Room of the Chariot Tablets at Knossos, Supplem. a Minor 13, Salamanca, forthcoming. Yet it has been argued from the military aspects of the tablet contents that qa-me-si-jo and qa-mi-si-jo might refer to the same individual. Cf. J. DREiSSen, «Quelques remarques sur la “Grande Tablettee” (As 1516) de Chroissos», Minor, 19, 1985: 177.

Third, Ruizperez also based his argument on what he considered a separate word-unit ti-mi-to-qol-ro inscribed on Pylos tablet AQ 218 verso after the tablet surface had dried considerably21. Following a restoration proposed by Meriggi, Ruizperez interpreted ti-mi-to-qol-ro as ἡμιτονατος «judge» in its classical continuation22. Again the reading of the text has improved and this sequence of phonetic signs is now seen to be part of a longer «string» di-wes-si-po-ro-ti-mi-to-qo that probably recurs in whole or part on the verso of PY Xa 412 (where qa is definitely the final sign of the word-unit—or here «string» of phonetic signs) and on the lower portion of the palimpsestic front of the large tablet PY Tn 316, where it is also incised lightly into the surface of the tablet as a kind of test grattato. Ruizperez and Melena now hypothesize that this «string» of signs represents a Mycenaean «abc»s, equivalent to the iroha sequence of Japanese katakana syllable script, and may well be a mnemonic/pedagogic tool devoid of meaning23. The contexts and the method of inscribing the three «strings» make this interpretation probable. Given the comparanda, there is no reason to restore ro at the end of the «string» on AQ 218 (in fact ro is now conjectured) and the division of the string of syllabograms to yield a word-unit ti-mi-to-qo or ti-mi-to is considered speculative. On AQ 218 and Xa 412 the signs are spaced in such a way as to make any division dubious.

Fourth, Ruizperez argued from Knossos tablet V280 that the word θιμης occurred in the phrases o-u-te-ri (KN V 280,11, 12, 13, 14) and o-uk-te-ri (KN V 280,5) and so was already well-attested in the evolved sense of ‘justice’ in the 15th century B.C.E. This interpretation, however, was based on highly speculative assumptions that the text was somehow «calendrical» and that a standard term like to-pe-za ‘table’ could somehow be viewed as the name of a ‘festival’. It is now seen to be unlikely from the contents of the tablet24. The phrases occur with the items to-pe-za 'table' and a-pe-ti-ra, an adjective that seems to be derived from ομπ- and ένο, describing ‘a table at which one may eat from two sides’25. The find-context of the tablet, the so-called Room of the Chariot Tablets, also makes it probable that te-mi is here to be interpreted as τέμμως, a ‘support element’ (cf. Hesychius τέμμως ποιός and the Mycenaean technical term applied to

21. In the definitive corpus volume of the Pylos tablets under direction of J.L. Melena, the final sign is now read as a tentative ri.
   — Tn 316 recto grattato in lower right: si-po-ro ti-mi-to
   — Xa 412 verso: texts inscribed: δι-φω σι-πο-ρο τι-[m]ι-το-qo [-]
   The division of the texts to yield separate word-units is problematic.
24. VENTUS and CHADWICK, op. cit., 1973: 584 s. te-mu: formerly taken as themis, but explanation of this tablet as a calendar unlikely. Cf. the appendix to this paper.
25. Cf. C.J. RUGH, Études sur la grammaire et le vocabulaire du grec mycénien, Amsterdam, 1967: 116, n. 84. This kind of table is familiar from frescoes, e.g., those from the central megaron at Pylos, which depict paired banqueters seated facing each other across a table.
chariot wheels te- mi-doe) for tables. The tables are here recorded in an inventory tablet non-ideographically and in single entries, just as they are in nine separate entries on tablets in the famous Pylos Ta series of furniture, tripods and other ceremonial equipment: Ta 642, 713 and 715. We should note also that check marks were added at the right opposite the entries in lines .5 and .11-.14, as if the textual inventory of tables had later been audited against the physical objects.

We conclude then that there are no comparanda in the Linear B tablets for the use of the word Θέμας and that the eli alternation in the toponym and toponymic adjective suggests that the element te-mi-ti-mi-ti- derives from a non-Greek word. Thus our results are negative, insofar as tracing the development of central Greek cultural concepts, in that it is probable that the term Θέμας is not attested at all in Linear B.

If the toponym *ti-mi-to a-ko and its derivatives are not related to the Greek word Θέμας, what is their etymology? We have argued that the first element probably comes from a non-Greek root, and we should prefer, if possible, to find a term that makes sense of the toponym. While not without complications, I propose that the root te-mi-ti-mi-ti- is connected with the loan word τεφυρινδος, τεφύρινθος, τεφύρυθος which refers to the tree pistacia terebinthus. The adjectival forms of the root may be interpreted as τεφυρινδας/τεφυρινδα. These occur once on each of five different tablets, twice with t-treatment (PY On 300.10 and Ac 1278) and three times with i-treatment (PY Aq 64.6, Jo 438.24 and Vn 493.2). Only tablet Aq 64 is a known scirbal hand. H 2126. The compound toponym occurs on PY Cn 600 seven times with its elements separated by a word-divider (ti-mi-to, a-ke-e) and on Jn 829, Ma 123, and Na 361 without any spacing or word-divider to suggest division (ti-mi-to-a-ke-e)27. Cn 600 is by scirbal hand H 21, while the other tablets are by closely related scirbal hands H 1 and H 2. It may be read as τεφυρίνθων ἄγεχθη ‘the hillside vel sim. of pistacia terebinthus trees’.

Regarding the linguistic aspects of this proposal, we should note that the toponym is everywhere represented with i-treatment (ti-mi-to-) and that where an identifiable scirbal hand (H 21) writes both the noun and adjectival forms, he consistently uses the i-treatment. In fourteen occurrences on eight tablets by three major scirbal hands (H 1, H 2, and H 21) and two unidentified hands of the same palaeographical class as Hands 1 and 2 (Jo 438 and Vn 493) i-treatment prevails. e-treatment occurs but twice and on tablets that deal with regionally distributed groups of men (Ac 1278 from the Northeast Workshop) and assessments(?) of oixides from regional officials in the two major provinces of Messenia (On 300). Whether judging from frequency of occurrence or the importance or prominence of the texts and their scribes, e-treatment would seem to be standard. This would cast further doubt on an etymological connection with Greek Θέμας.

27. The tablet surface between the two elements of the compound on PY An 661.10 is damaged and may contain a word-divider. Here the form is -a-ke-i.

If the word does represent a version of the loan word amply attested in later Greek as τεφυρινθος, the i-treatment may derive in one of two ways. The simplest explanation would be to view it as comparable to Mycenaean ku-te-so vs. later Greek χιτόνος, i.e. an alternation that is not dependent on a labial environoment and where one or the other of the competing vowel-treatments may become standard in historical Greek. We are probably dealing here with the results of the confrontation of speakers of different languages each with a distinct vocalic system, e.g., Minoan a, i and u vs. Greek a, e, i, o and u, so that an original non-Greek word spoken by non-Greek-speakers with an i-vowel was then opened and pronounced as e by Greek-speakers. This would explain, for example, original Artimos as being transformed into Artemis. The consonant θ/ in Greek also has a bearing on vocalic aperture, cf. Ϛαφος vs. Χαφος, the preservation of long α after ο in Attic, and so forth. So a word like non-Greek *tirm̩inio{s} might be heard by Greek speakers as terminhthos or terebinthos. Fluctuations between i/ and θ/ in attested Greek terminhthos, terebinthos, and terebinthos might be linked to the peculiar non-Greek phoneme /m/ that is represented by phonogram *22 in Linear B23. An alternative and more complex interpretation of sound changes within Greek is hinted at by the variant forms listed by José Fortes Fortes (above n. 18) τεφυρινθος, τεφυρυθος which exhibit metathesis in εγ to επ. Liquid metathesis is well-attested in Linear B, e.g., to-no vs. to-ro-no-wa-ko (δόρονος vs. δόρωνο). It occurs in the very Mycenaean term ki-ta-no (= νόημανος vs. the later Greek χρήμανος; cf. Hesych. χρήμανος τεφυρινθος) which José L. Melena has identified as the ‘nut of the pistacia terebinthos’ tree from which is made a resin used in perfumed oil manufacture, a major industry in the Mycenaean palatial period24. Thus one could imagine that a metathesized form like τεφυρυθος in prehistoric Greek would have led to the i-treatment of e in the environment of a labial. This would produce *τεφυρυ(θ)ος which, itself subject to liquid metathesis, would yield the desired τεφυρινθος represented in Linear B as ti-mi-to. We should stress that what looks like a lengthy, if not somewhat topographical, string of sound changes is in fact the product of attested instability/fluuctuation in the pronunciation of the vowel + liquid or liquid + vowel and the attested fluctuation in words of non-Greek origin in the articulation of the vowel, in this case in a particular environment.

Lastly, it is possible that some may wish to find fault with this reconstruction because of the adjectival form of the toponym in ti-ja. Again it is known that Mycenaean generally assimilates *ti, *thi and *thn before i as in adjectival derivatives in -ios, e.g., ko-ru-si-ja (from κορυθή ‘helmet’), za-ku-si-ja (ethic of Ζακυνθος), ko-ri-si-ja (ethic of Κόρινθος), a-ta-ra-si-ja (from τάλαντον) and

ka-pa-si-ja (= Καρπασία from Κάρπατος) 30. But, as in later Greek, there are notable exceptions including me-ri-ti-jo (from μελαν-), a, ku-pi-ti-jo (from αλκυντος), mi-ra-ti-ja (from μιλατος) and ka-pa-ti-ja (= Καρπατία also from Κάρπατος).

In later Greek the non-assibilated forms are generally explained as resulting from assimilation with the basic noun forms in which no sound change has occurred, thus reintroducing the original dental stops. We should in the Mycenaean period reckon with conservatism in the pronunciation of proper names (me-ri-ti-jo, a, ku-pi-ti-jo and ka-pa-ti-ja) 31 and even with the isolation of groups of speakers from palatial centers where standard dialect changes occurred more rapidly or idiolectal features were beginning to spread through lexical diffusion. It is worth noting that major Pylian scribes in several tablet series and in multiple instances evidence spelling with -ti- in the name of the important religious official known as the ‘key-bearer’ Καρπασία 32 and the ethnic women workers designated as Μιλατία.

Likewise the well-known and relatively frequently used name of the provincial capital Μινα το α-κο should have exerted a conservative influence over the adjectival spellings that might well be absent in rendering adjectival versions of a more obscure local settlement or district (*ko-ri-to) within Messenia or an extra-regional place-name (*za-ku-to). In any case, the spellings ti-mi-ti-ja and te-mi-ti-ja are hardly unexpected or inexplicable within the Mycenaean lexicon.

The proposed interpretation would also yield a compelling meaning for the site. As mentioned above, perfumed oil manufacture was a major industry of the Mycenaean palatial territories as attested in the tablets and in the archaeological evidence for the trade of oil in stirrup jars, inscribed and uninscribed 33. A key substance used otherwise in the manufacturing process for perfumes was the resin extracted from the pistacia terebinthus tree 34. This resin is found in large quantities (more than 60 full Canaanite amphorae) on the Ulu Burun shipwreck dated near the end of the 14th century B.C.E. 35. Terebinth nuts or resin identified by

31. Homerικοι Ορολογοι vs. Ορολογοι are good examples of conservative vs. innovative forms of the same name (E. 5.6545, 5.546, 5.247, 5.549) carried by different individuals. Cf. H. VON KAMPFZ, Ήρωικα Προσωνωνυμα, Göttingen, 1982: 212.
32. There is no reason to think that ka-pa-si-ja in PY 45.512, a list of individuals who seem to be allotted de-mi-ni-ja ‘beds’, is the same as the important religious official known as the ‘key-bearer’.

Melena (above n. 28) as Mycenaean ki-ta-no occur with the ideogram for spice/aromatic AROM in significant quantities on KN Ga 1530, Ga 1532 and X 1385. In the first two tablets, we are dealing with contributions (a-pu-do-si) from a number of second-order communities in Crete that were obviously producing this commodity from the natural resources of their own territories. Tablet Ga(5) 1530+1531 gives totals delivered of AROM 58 and still owing AROM 31, quantities that seem to suggest sizable local sources of this plant product in the Mycenaean landscape.

This is confirmed by the archaeobotanical studies executed by the Minnesota Messenia Expedition, the Nichoria Excavation Project and the Pylos Regional Archaeological Project. All found ample evidence in their pollen samples for significant growth of pistacia terebinthus in the region of Messenia during the Mycenaean palatial period. In fact during the LH III period both olive and pistacia terebinthus reach very high levels in the pollen core record, seemingly indicating intentional and intensive cultivation and/or exploitation 36. The most recent report indicates that during the late Bronze Age as much as 10% of the total surface land might have been devoted to olive growth. The pistacia terebinthus grows in the so-called macquis or macchia community on steep hillside, craggy gorges, and in low and dense scrubby forested areas 38. Such suitable environments are ample around the site of Bronze Age Nichoria, and the macchia community shows a definite upwining in the middle and late Bronze Ages due to deforestation and human settlement 39. If we then prefer the «concrete» to the «abstract» and interpret Μινα το α-κο as the ‘dryos of the terebinth trees’, we have a reasonable toponymic reference to the terrain and botanical environment of the district of Nichoria and specifically to a plant, the natural product of which would have been exploited in support of a vital palatial industry in late Bronze Age Messenia. Such toponymic toponyms are reasonably common in Greek-settled areas as documented

36. Melena suggests (per litteras) that even if the original reading of ni-mi-to were maintained in KN Am(2) 821 + fr, it would make sense to have eqe-le for the core of (e-ne-kai). Μινα το α-κο gen. plur. Μινα terebinth trees: ‘If we remember that ki-ta-no seems to be a strategic product at Knossos, it is likely that the terebinthe trees would be under the supervision of high functionaries’. The work of extracting the resin from these trees is difficult and labor intensive. American soil worker James Brown was born to a father who was among the impoverished black laborers who worked the terepine trees in the area around Barnwell, South Carolina. Thus the industry would not only have been important, but it would have required management of teams of laborers.
even in Stephanus of Byzantium’s entry on a place-name in Cyprus named after the terebinth trees40.

Appendix on KN V(2) 280

The full text of KN V(2) 280 reads as follows:

1. wo-de-wi-jo
2.-4. vacant
5. to-pe-za, o-u-ki-te-mi X
6.-10. vacant
11. a-pe-ti-ra, o-u-ri-te-mi X
12. o-u-te-mi X
13. o-u-te-mi X
14. o-u-te-mi X
15. e-pi, i-ku-wo-i-pi

It can be translated as follows:

1. in the month of wordēwios
2.-4. table, not any supporting termis X
6.-10. table(s) for two / no supporting termis X
11. no supporting termis X
12. no supporting termis X
13. no supporting termis X
14. no supporting termis X
15. e-pi, i-ku-wo-i-pi

This text is the kind of inventory represented, with a need for fuller detail, by the tablets of the PY Ta series, which share with it specification in the heading phrase of the time or occasion when the inspection of the individual items took place41. There then follows a record of the individual pieces examined. In the Pylos Ta series the tables, throne-chairs, footstools, vessels and other equipment under inventory are very elaborate and costly and require more detailed descriptions, but even then the scribe in charge tries to organize the material neatly and efficiently and to streamline the descriptive terminology required to identify individual pieces. This is most conspicuous on Ta 721. For the recording of separate pieces line by line, and even with omission of the numeral ‘1’, as here in V 280.5 and .11-14, cf. the like treatment of to-pe-za and to-no on PY Ta 642, 707, 708, 713, 714, 715. The inventory in the Pylos Sh series of ten different sets of body armor, each listed on a separate leaf-shaped tablet with identical texts for six and four of them respectively is also comparable42. The monotonously identical entries or tablets are confirmation that the scribe or administrator whom he accompanied had examined the original objects individually.

40. For the occurrence of such phytomorphic place-names in the Aegean, cf. de Castro, op. cit., 1983: 84: 391, citing Myc. ku-pa-rí-so = Κυπαρισσός. In historical times, cf. the citation and opinion in Stephanus of Byzantium 632.15-633.7: τρομῆθες, κύριε Κύπαρι...δέοι δέ δουκά ἀπὸ τῶν περί τῶν τόπων περιπολών τεθηκόντας δὲ Κύπαρι φρονήσας καλέσας ἄνωμολόν, ὑπὸ δὲ χειρὸς ἄλλης ἀπὸ τῶν ἐν αὐτῷ πλατύνασθαι φυτῶν, ἐν μνή τε ἀκτικῇ Ἄραμονθα, ἐν δὲ τῇ Ἁλαταίη Ἄραμονθα, καὶ τῇ Πηλοπόννησῳ Κυπαρισσίων καὶ Θησείῳ, καὶ Εὐλείνῳ. Maurizio del Prete (per litteras elettronicae) would add to this list: Selinous and Marathon.