

## 13B: MYCENAEAN RELIGION

*Thomas G. Paláima*



### SOURCES FOR RECONSTRUCTING ANCIENT RELIGION

**R**econstructing the religion of an ancient culture is hard work. Religious beliefs and practices consist of things thought, said, shown, and done. In the material record, we look for the locations where rituals were performed, the objects and materials used in ceremonies, and artistic representations (iconography) of such activities. If we are lucky, we will have written religious texts containing sacred myths that serve both as the “verbalization of ritual” and as a record of a culture’s religious belief system, their thoughts about how human beings relate to supra-human powers.<sup>35</sup> Depending on how a religion is structured within a given society, such written documents can be fixed and canonical, or they can vary according to time and place. We may also have other texts (mainly inscriptions) that reflect what people are doing or are expected to do as forms of religious practice (often grouped together as “sacred laws”),<sup>36</sup> who those people are (their religious titles, occupations, personal names), where they are doing these things, what they are using, and the obligations and benefits that motivate them.

### THE NATURE OF WRITTEN SOURCES FOR MYCENAEAN RELIGION

For Mycenaean religion, we have a limited amount of clear archaeological, iconographical, and artifactual data, and we have the information contained in the Linear B records.<sup>37</sup> These tablets were produced, however, by anonymous tablet-writers in order to keep track

of economic information related to the operation of the Mycenaean palatial centers (Chs. 1, p. 13; 12, pp. 291-2). We find in the Linear B tablets no myths, hymns, prayers, ritual prescriptions or laws, or sanctuary regulations; nor are there any inscriptions written by or for dedicators upon dedicated objects. The limitations and peculiarities of our archaeological and inscriptional data thus present interesting challenges. For help we may look backward, sideways, and forward from Mycenaean religion (1) to elements borrowed from earlier Minoan culture and from the preexisting "substrate" culture(s) of the Greek mainland and the general Aegean area (called "substrate" because they were eventually "submerged" in the dominant Mycenaean Greek culture); (2) for the influence of contemporary eastern Mediterranean and Near Eastern cultures; and (3) for similarities and differences between Mycenaean religion and later Greek religion. Here, too, the data are limited and come with their own sets of problems.

For any given site, tablets cover at most five to seven months from the administrative periods under way when the palatial centers suffered burning destructions (Chs. 1, p. 13; 15, p. 390). Therefore, we cannot study religion through time at any site in order to see whether ritual practices reconstructed from the tablets were standard or exceptional. For example, Pylos tablet Tn 316 (below, p. 354; Pl. 13.3) was long viewed as a record of extraordinary ritual actions, perhaps even including human sacrifice, undertaken during an extreme crisis. Study of the internal chronology of the Pylos archives has cast doubt on this interpretation.<sup>38</sup> Another problem is that the texts are peculiarly focused and shorthand in style, making it difficult to identify religious terminology (mainly functionaries and divinities) from their lexical forms alone. It took Mycenologists years to figure out that *ka-ko na-wi-jo* on Pylos tablet Jn 829 was "temple bronze" and not "ship bronze" (below, p. 350).<sup>39</sup>

Methods of contextual association help us to identify "religious" entities in the texts. We work by extrapolating from known items to unknown items. But even here we run into trouble because the purpose of many texts or series of texts was to record the distribution of commodities, whether for religious or nonreligious purposes. Religious officials may thus be listed alongside "private" individuals and secular occupations or titles. It is then a serious problem of method that a few religious terms may take precedence over a larger number of indeterminate entries in deciding whether a tablet has a religious purpose or not. In interpreting records that associate deities and sanctuaries with

shipments of goods and materials, we try now to distinguish between offerings (going directly to the deities as an explicit religious act) and deliveries (to be used in support of sanctuary operations, only a secondary act of religious piety).<sup>40</sup>

Still, because we have identified these problems, we can cautiously use the Linear B tablets and our understanding of historical Greek religious practices, including those reflected in the traditional texts of Homer and Hesiod, to reconstruct Mycenaean religion.

## WHAT RELIGION IS AND HOW WE MIGHT FIND IT

In order to know what to look for, we need to make clear what religion means. At its most basic, religion is a “system of thought founded upon belief in an unseen and non-material world interacting with the visible world around us.”<sup>41</sup> Religion serves as a significant cultural marker, “a unified set of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things” that unites a community.<sup>42</sup> Historical Greek religion had an overall ritual framework and belief structure, but it was uncanonical, undogmatic, and improvisatory.<sup>43</sup> Nothing in our evidence for Mycenaean religion suggests that it was any different.

Religion is also a natural social response to the chaos of human existence that brings human beings to the limits of their analytical capacities, powers of endurance, and moral insights.<sup>44</sup> Given the precarious nature of human existence in the late Bronze Age, religion is likely to have been omnipresent in the daily lives of the Mycenaeans. We get some sense of this from the distribution of the distinctive Mycenaean small clay psi- and phi-shaped human figurines. These are found as offerings, grave goods, and possibly apotropaic objects in domestic contexts (above, pp. 332–3; II, pp. 272–4).<sup>45</sup> They provide good evidence for the spread of religion through the population, and our textual evidence confirms how it permeated Mycenaean society.

Ample data for religion are found in the four largest collections of Linear B tablets (Knossos, Pylos, Thebes, and Mycenae) and on a single tablet from Chania on Crete. Because we lack Mycenaean mythical or ritual texts, however, much about the religious thought, beliefs, and practices of the Mycenaeans is forever lost to us. But we can compensate by imagining how these inhabitants of the late Bronze Age Aegean would have felt about the world around them.

## MYCENAEAN RELIGIOUS ATTITUDES

Mycenaean religion was serious business. The “days” section of Hesiod’s *Works and Days* catalogs religious prescriptions and prohibitions governing many facets of normal daily life in Greece in the eighth century BCE. It reminds us how pervasive and necessary religion was. In the traditional texts of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* of Homer and *Works and Days* of Hesiod, the gods and other supernatural forces influence human actions. Dire consequences ensue for individuals, communities, and leaders who offend deities or priests, neglect rituals, or fail to follow divine directives or ensure divine good will. The Mycenaean Greeks undoubtedly had similar views about their own relationship with the gods.

Greece is a country with very limited resources. The populations in its various regions have always struggled to develop and defend their human and material assets. In doing so, Greek communities in prehistory and history appealed to the gods for assistance. In the Mycenaean period, palatial centers organized society to produce tradable goods that could be exchanged for basic necessities, such as the copper and tin needed to make bronze, and also for luxury goods and precious raw materials.<sup>46</sup> The order, security, and relative prosperity introduced by the Mycenaean palatial system would have been highly appreciated. Rituals designed to secure divine favor and thereby keep the prevailing order intact would have been practiced scrupulously at all levels of society. The palatial centers themselves served as focal points of rituals of unification and divine propitiation that each Mycenaean king, or wanax, performed on behalf of his territory.<sup>47</sup>

## TRACES OF DIVERSITY IN MYCENAEAN RELIGION

Students of historical Greek culture rightly speak of Greek religions in the plural.<sup>48</sup> Likewise, in prehistory we may look for different sources of influence, both Indo-European and non-Indo-European. The Indo-European Greek-speakers borrowed and adapted ideas from the “substrate” population groups that lived on the Greek mainland and Aegean islands before their arrival (Ch. 2, pp. 38–41). They were also influenced by neighboring Minoan, Semitic, and Anatolian cultures. We also look for differences in religious thought and practice chronologically, region to region, across social strata, and between state (official) and popular cults.<sup>49</sup>

The Linear B evidence helps us see how much archaeological evidence for religion is missing, and indeed little is known about the material side of Mycenaean ritual practices.<sup>50</sup> Most key elements of earlier Minoan religion (Ch. 7, pp. 165–70) either are not found in Mycenaean times or become negligible in later phases of the Mycenaean palatial period. Absent are Minoan architectural features that are linked with religious activities (Chs. 6, p. 148; 7, pp. 165–6): **lustral basins** (small sunken rooms of unknown function; Pl. 6.4), pillar crypts, **polythyra** (rooms with pier and door partitions; Pls. 6.6, 6.7), and incurved altars. Other Minoan elements are minimally attested: three-dimensional **horns of consecration** (a symbol shaped like abstract bull horns), double axes (both symbolic miniatures and functional bronze axes), and the stone Minoan chalice. Sanctuaries and cult places identifiable on the Middle and Late Helladic mainland are few (Fig. 13.5; Ch. 10, p. 249).<sup>51</sup> No cult locales on the Mycenaean mainland have the distinctive features of Minoan peak sanctuaries.

#### ICONOGRAPHICAL EVIDENCE FOR MYCENAEAN RELIGION

Iconographical representations of ritual practices are found on seals (and seal impressions) and in frescoes. Among the activities shown are processions, libations, sacrifices, feasting, and musical performance (Fig. 13.6).<sup>52</sup> During the palatial period, the Mycenaean users used seals with Minoan motifs, including clearly religious motifs.<sup>53</sup> But it is hard to disentangle what the Minoan elements meant to the Mycenaean users.<sup>54</sup> For example, the Mycenaean users were selective about the Minoan religious motifs they used on their seal rings. Either they are found in regions heavily influenced by Minoan culture such as Messenia, or the Mycenaean users reinterpreted them.

One big surprise is the almost complete absence from Mycenaean seals of representations of ecstatic divine epiphany (Ch. 11, pp. 279–80).<sup>55</sup> There is persuasive linguistic and textual evidence that the Mycenaean Greeks were influenced by Minoan notions of divine apparition in constructing their beliefs of what gods are and how they manifest themselves to human beings. They, and the later Greeks, used a word for “deity” (*theos*) constructed from a different Indo-European root than in other Indo-European cultures. Especially when used in compound words, the root (*thes-*) conveys the peculiar sense of the eerily instantaneous presence of a supernatural force.<sup>56</sup> Yet, unlike the

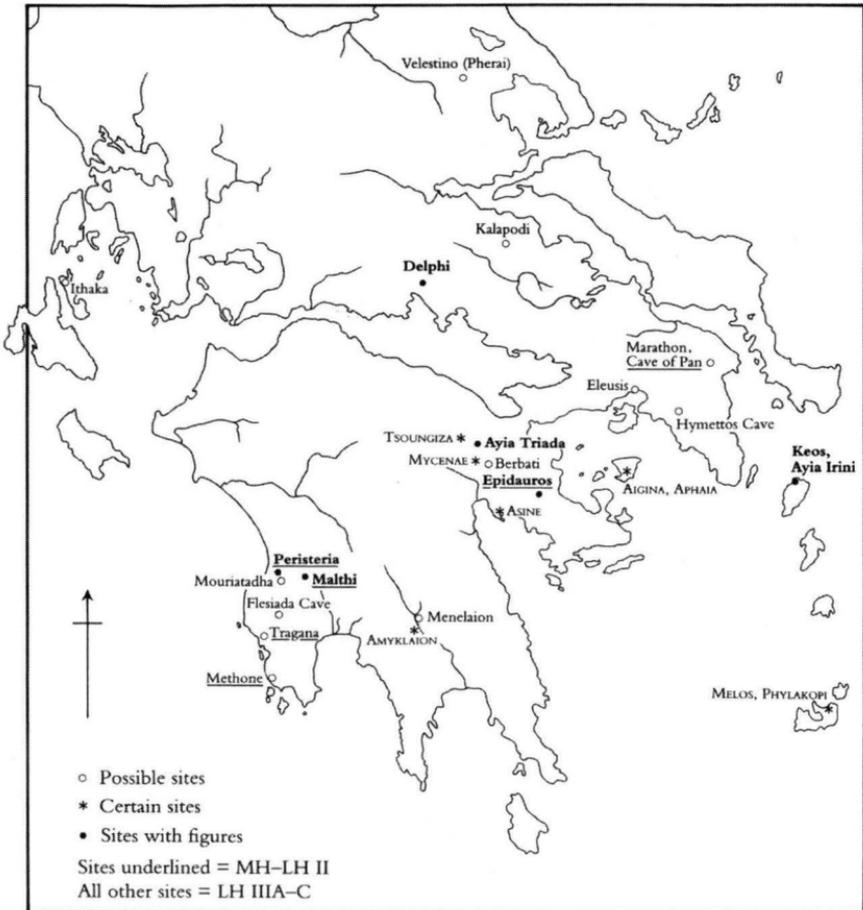


FIGURE 13.5. Map of MH and LH sanctuary locales. J. C. Wright, "The Spatial Configuration of Belief: The Archaeology of Mycenaean Religion." In *Placing the Gods: Sanctuaries and Sacred Space in Ancient Greece*, edited by S. E. Alcock and R. Osborne. Oxford: Clarendon Press 39, ill. 3.1. Courtesy of Susan Alcock.

Minoans, the Mycenaean did not attempt to display this aspect of divinity pictorially.

Krzyszowska argues that seals were originally acquired by elites in the Mycenaean Prepalatial period and that, even when a more widespread "popular" style developed in LH III A, seals remained restricted to elites and subelites, including those in marginal regions.<sup>57</sup> The Minoan religious symbolism so prominent in artifacts from the shaft graves at Mycenae may have been confined to elites. Elements of Minoan religious iconography would have been phased out of the broader Mycenaean religion of later palatial culture.<sup>58</sup>

## HOMER AND LONG-TERM RELIGIOUS CONTINUITY

It has fallen out of fashion to use Homer to explicate Bronze Age society.<sup>59</sup> Most scholars recognize some features of Bronze Age origin in the Homeric epics, but the old view of Moses Finley now prevails among all but a few scholars: Homer is “no guide at all” to the Mycenaean period.<sup>60</sup> One main obstacle is the gap of fifteen generations or more between the collapse of the Mycenaean palaces and the process of shaping the Homeric epics into their present forms in the historical period.

Nonetheless, there is a clear similarity between the portrayal of Nestor and the kingdom of Messenia in *Odyssey* Book 3 and the picture derived from the Pylos Linear B tablets and the iconographical program of the Palace of Nestor. In both cases, a specific palatial center and its leader are preoccupied with ritual piety and territorially unifying ceremonies. It is arguable that the kings of Pylos and Messenia were not fictionalized as exemplars of kingly and communal piety, but were incorporated and preserved in the oral tradition as a “true” historical memory.<sup>61</sup>

### MYCENAEAN AND HISTORICAL GREEK RELIGION

Mycenaean religion shows many features intrinsic to historical Greek religion. The distinctive Greek terms *theos* and *hieros* (*hierous*) are used for the concepts of “deity” and “holy” (“holy man”), as in Homer, Hesiod, and later Greek historical culture.<sup>62</sup> The Mycenaean terms for sacred space (*nawos* for “temple,” literally “dwelling place of the deity,” and *temenos* for “space cut out” of communal land) survived into the historical period. Mycenaean offerings clearly follow the historical Greek principle: “we give to you gods, so that you may give to us.” The palatial centers carefully recorded their “giving” to sanctuaries and the gods within them: mainly shipments of oil and honey, but also of grains, spices, figs, and cloth.<sup>63</sup> We do not always know whether such offerings were made as part of public ceremonies, but month names seem to be recorded only on religious offering texts.<sup>64</sup>

According to the textual evidence, the major deities with sanctuaries were Poseidon, Zeus, and Diwia (a female deity derived like Zeus from the Indo-European root concept of “shining” sky). Of other deities recognizable from later Greek religion,<sup>65</sup> Dionysus and

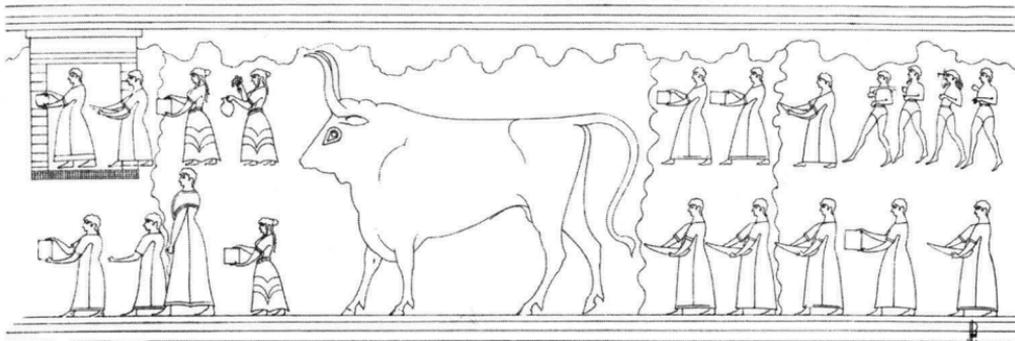


FIGURE 13.6 Drawing of the procession fresco from the Pylos palace, Room 5. M. L. Lang, *The Palace of Nestor at Pylos in Western Messenia II: The Frescoes*. Princeton: Princeton University Press 1969, pl. 119 top. Courtesy of The Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati.

Hera received offerings within sanctuaries of Zeus at Chania and Pylos, respectively, whereas Hermes, Artemis, and a Zeus of Mt. Dikte received offerings at localities, without any specifications of their particular sanctuaries. In some cases this may have been a bookkeeping convention, indicating that the palatial center sent the materials to officials at particular sites who in turn would have seen to their delivery to the sanctuaries per se. There were also sanctuaries devoted to minor deities: at Knossos a sanctuary of Daedalus and at Pylos sanctuaries to Iphemedeia and to a deity known probably as \**Pretwā*.

The greatest surprise is Dionysus, whose possible attestations in the texts were long denied on grounds that he should have come into the Greek pantheon sometime after the Bronze Age. Now he is found at Chania (tablet Gq 5) as the recipient of an offering of honey in the sanctuary of Zeus. At Pylos, a fire altar (*eskharā*) of Dionysus is registered (tablet Ea 102) in a district where landholdings of individuals associated with the official known as the **lāwāgetās** (second-ranking official of the state) are recorded.<sup>66</sup> This sets Dionysus apart from the other main gods (Zeus, Potnia, Poseidon, Hera, Hermes), who are located in the district of *pa-ki-ja-ne*, Sphagiānes (the main sanctuary connected with the palatial center of Pylos, literally “the place of slaughter”), and thereby closely associated with the Mycenaean king or wanax.

Conspicuously absent, of the major first-millennium BCE Greek deities whose presence we might expect to be attested in the Mycenaean period, is Demeter. It is our opinion that Potnia fulfilled this role, especially in her manifestation as *sitōn potnia* (Potnia of grains) in

tablet Oi 701 from the Citadel House at Mycenae, and in her image in the Room of the Frescoes from the Cult Center at Mycenae (Fig. 13.7; Pl. 11.7; Ch. 11, pp. 264, 270).<sup>67</sup> Attempts to identify within the new Thebes tablets a holy triad of Demeter (identified as *Mā Gā* or “Mother Earth”), Zeus (identified solely by an epithet misinterpreted as “of the fall harvest”), and Persephone (identified merely by her epithet *Kore*, “maiden”) and their attendant ritual functionaries<sup>68</sup> are unconvincing for internal contextual, etymological, and linguistic reasons.<sup>69</sup> These terms and another fifty or so human recipient entries occur repeatedly on a unified set of fifteen to eighteen tablets (the Fq series). They are best interpreted as records of a half-month of routine daily allotments of grain. These Theban texts do not display any religious vocabulary of the kind found on other Linear B religious texts: month names; vocabulary of offering, donation, sanctifying, ritual payment; known deities; sanctuaries and cult buildings (*\*na-wo* “temple”; *\*wo-ko* “home”; *\*dō* “building”). Likewise, attempts to identify theriomorphic (animal-formed) deities in the texts have been soundly refuted.<sup>70</sup>

## MYCENAEAN FESTIVALS AND SANCTUARIES

A few texts contain festival designations that give us insight into ritual practices: “the bringing forth of the throne(s)” (*to-no-e-ke-te-ri-jo*), “the strewing of the bed” (*re-ke-e-to-ro-te-ri-jo*), “the girding of the bearers” (*po-re-no-zo-te-ri-ja*), “the carrying of the gods” (*te-o-po-ri-ja*).<sup>71</sup> The name of the last ceremony has inspired an imaginative re-creation of how the architecture, clay cult figurines, and processional way of the Cult Center within the citadel of Mycenae might have been put to ceremonial use (Fig. 13.7).<sup>72</sup>

A number of sanctuaries are recorded in the Linear B tablets at locations away from the palatial center of Pylos. Some of these have names formed directly from gods’ names. This evidence compensates for our inability to locate such cult locales archaeologically.<sup>73</sup> For example, on Pylos tablet Jn 829 all sixteen administrative districts of the palatial territory of Messenia have *nawoi*, which means “dwelling places” of the gods (above, p. 342; Ch. 12, p. 295). Religious officials (*dumartes* “masters,” *pro-dumartes* “vice-masters,” and *klāwiphoroi*, “keybearers”) in each of these districts interacted with palatial officials known as the *korētēr* and *pro-korētēr* (the mayor or governor and his deputy; Ch. 12, p. 301) in the deaccessioning and

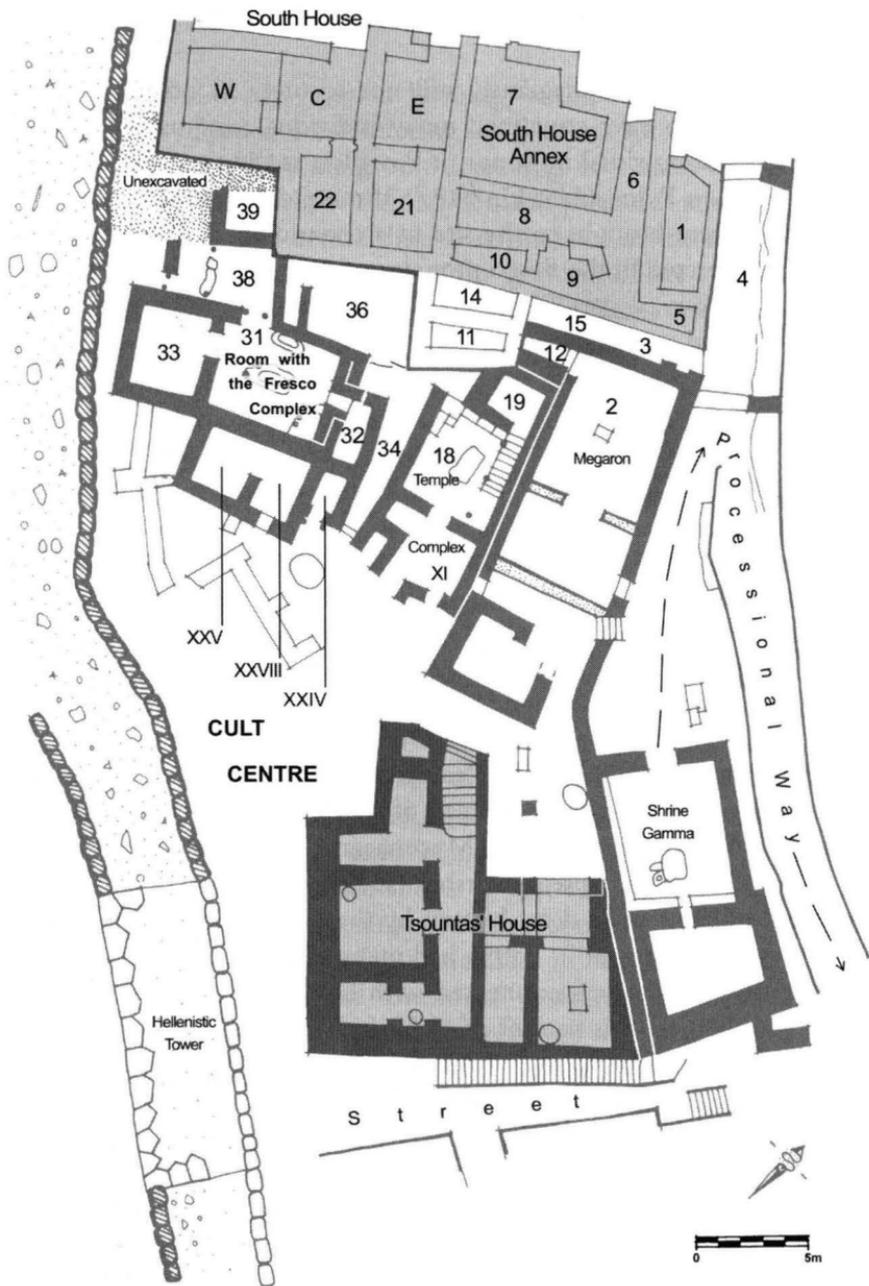


FIGURE 13.7. Plan of the Cult Center at Mycenae. © Mycenae Archive. Courtesy of Elizabeth French.

recycling of bronze objects (dedications and tools) “owned” by the temples.

The district of Sphagiānes, still not securely identified on the ground, seems to have contained many individual sanctuaries. Food-stuffs for a feasting ritual in honor of Poseidon at the site of *sa-ra-pe-da* are recorded on Pylos tablet Un 718.<sup>74</sup> But we do not know whether these items were brought to the site in a ceremonial procession, such as the one depicted in the fresco program of the palatial center at Pylos (Fig. 13.6; below, p. 353; Ch. 11, p. 270)<sup>75</sup> or were simply transferred in a routine and practical way.

### MINOAN OR SUBSTRATE FEATURES IN MYCENAEAN RELIGION

There are some features of Mycenaean religion that we can attribute to the early influence of Minoan culture or the “substrate” cultures of the Greek mainland. A few minor deities with clear “Minoan” name-formations occur at Knossos (*pi-pi-tu-na*) and Pylos (*a-ma-tu-na*) (compare the historically attested goddess *Diktunna*); and the etymologically obscure name of the historical Greek Olympian goddess Artemis occurs in a form that shows a distinctive “substrate” vowel treatment: \*Artimis (with *i* in the second syllable instead of *e*). But the most conspicuous feature of religious belief that the Mycenaean Greeks derived from earlier cultures is the widespread worship (at Knossos, Pylos, Thebes, and Mycenae) of the female deity known by the Greek term *potnia* (literally “she who has power”). Potnia had many epithets, indicating many manifestations.<sup>76</sup> She was connected with horses and grains, with the *daburinth* (whatever this variant of “labyrinth” meant during the Late Bronze Age), with the site of Sphagiānes, and with Assuwa (later Asia), a territory in central western Anatolia.

Yet another non-Indo-European feature of Mycenaean religion is the appearance of the deity who became known and widely worshipped as Athena in the first millennium BCE. She appears in Knossos tablet V 52 as the Potnia of *Athānā*, a pre-Greek place name (note the distinctive *-ānā* suffix and compare *Kullānā*, *Priānā* and *Mukānā*, later *Kyllēnē*, *Priēnē* and *Mykēnai*). In the Mycenaean texts, she is clearly the powerful female deity of the site known as Athens. Later she will be transformed, as we see already in the *Iliad*, into a deity generally worshipped as the “goddess of warrior nearness.”<sup>77</sup> In the *Iliad*, she is still commonly referred to as the “Athenian Potnia.”

## ARCHAEOLOGY, TEXTS, AND RELIGIOUS PRACTICE

As suggested above (p. 350), archaeology and texts come together best in the rituals of processional offering and feasting. The canonical central **megaron** (an axial building unit consisting of a main room with an anteroom and/or porch) within Mycenaean palatial centers was a place of royal ritual.<sup>78</sup> The central hearth reminds us of the importance of fire to Greek communities and of the goddess of the hearth, Hestia. She is unattested in the Linear B tablets for the same reason that she was not anthropomorphized in the historical period. She was a stationary concrete object, the central focus of the Mycenaean palatial centers and, by extension, of their palatial territories.<sup>79</sup>

At Pylos in the main megaron, Room 6, we have evidence for the throne emplacement and for libation ritual (Fig. 12.1).<sup>80</sup> The wall frescoes from Room 6 show paired seated banqueters and a bardic performance. Frescoes in Anteroom 5 symbolize the unification of the community whose members bring offerings for a feast, including a supra-scale bull being brought in for sacrifice (Fig. 13.6). Related texts, both on tablets and on clay **sealings** (lumps of clay impressed by a seal; Fig. 1.3), that were associated with the deliveries of animals for sacrifice and consumption, give evidence that the major components of society joined together in such events: the king (*wanax*), the military leader (*lāwāgetās*), the *dāmos* (the collective body that saw to the distribution of communal land in individual localities; it may not yet mean “body politic,” but see above, p. 334; Ch. 12, pp. 300–301), and a group that arguably represents outsiders (compare the large and economically important class of resident aliens in historical Athens known as *metoikoi*, “metics”). These “outsiders” performed military service for the community and in compensation received marginal land to work.

Sacrifices of bulls are a prominent feature of seal iconography, and the tablets record the stunning axes and slitting knives used in sacrificial ceremonies,<sup>81</sup> “the core ritual of Greek religious practice” from the Bronze Age and throughout the Greek historical period.<sup>82</sup> In one instance (Pylos tablet Un 2), an official known as the *\*o-pi-te-u-ke-e-u* (literally “the overseer of paraphernalia”) is recorded as in charge of the foodstuffs being collected for a major sacrificial feast. Recent restudy of faunal evidence from the palace has revealed the remains of feasting for considerable numbers, probably over 1,000 people. Moreover, the state of these bones (burnt after the meat was removed) suggests sacrificial activity, rather than mere culinary practice. The species represented (predominantly male oxen, with at least one red deer) conform better

to the iconography in the wall paintings described above than to the more varied list of species in documents (oxen, sheep, goats, pigs). The location of one deposit of bones, along with miniature **kylikes** (stemmed drinking cups) in Archives Complex Room 7, suggests a role for palatial administrators in monitoring the proper fulfillment of such rituals and the numbers of high-ranking participants for whom special seating was provided.<sup>83</sup> Finally, the huge numbers of ceramics stored in palace pantries accessible either to inner courts or upon entry to the palatial complex (Ch. 12, p. 291), including kylikes and various bowls for food, are consistent with the numbers suggested by quantities on documents and by the faunal evidence.<sup>84</sup> Gold Mycenaean kylikes, bowls, and Minoan chalices are recorded on Pylos tablet Tn 316 as “sent” or “sanctified” to Potnia, Zeus, Hera, Hermes, and minor deities (Pl. 13.3).<sup>85</sup>

### A LAST LOOK AT HOMER

In conclusion, we might recall the massive community-uniting sacrifices of bulls conducted by Nestor in Homer’s *Odyssey* Book 3. There Telemachus, son of Odysseus, arrives, searching both for his father and for role models – his own has been absent for many years – of the “good king” that he himself is on the verge of becoming. He immediately sees nine companies of men (compare the nine main communities in the Hither Province of Mycenaean Pylos), each sacrificing nine bulls under the supervision of their good king Nestor. This scene defines the main characteristic of the king of Pylos throughout this book: his pious attention to religious ceremony.

This is the same aspect of rulership that we see most in evidence in the iconographical program of the Palace of Nestor, in its archaeological remains, and in the Linear B textual documentation from Pylos. The description of the king of Pylos in *Odyssey* Book 3 then looks not like fiction, but like preserved traditional memory slightly “heated up” for emphasis.

### CONCLUSIONS

It is doubtful whether we shall ever understand Mycenaean ritual beliefs as fully as we do later Greek religion. The Mycenaean Greeks did not write down in preservable form sacred myths, sacred laws, ritual

prescriptions, or even the names of pious dedicants. Material evidence for sanctuaries and sanctuary structures away from palatial centers is virtually nonexistent. Iconographical evidence is incomplete when we move beyond images of simple and central practices: animal sacrifice, communal processions, and bardic performance. On seals, unlike the Minoans, the Mycenaeans chose not to represent gods appearing to human beings. The Linear B texts give us the basics: the names of gods worshiped, in some cases where they were worshiped, the titles of cult practitioners, cult implements, cult locales, and cult buildings, and the vocabulary for “holy,” “deity,” and “offering.” They sometimes record who offered what to whom, where, and when.

By combining different categories of evidence and by cautiously using different interpretative approaches, we do know roughly how the Mycenaeans fit into the evolution of religious practices and basic religious notions in the Aegean area from the Minoans and pre-Greek inhabitants of the southern Balkan peninsula to the well-attested historical Greek communities of the historical period. We have suggested, too, that the Homeric poems may be more useful in preserving some form of authentic memories of Bronze Age religion than it is now fashionable to accept.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

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