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## SECURITY AND INSECURITY AS TOOLS OF POWER IN MYCENAEAN PALATIAL KINGDOMS

“The *raison d'être* of the Linear B tablets is not society but economy.”  
Cynthia W. Shelmerdine 2008<sup>1</sup>

“Besides the records dealing with economic activity narrowly defined, there are a great many more that bear witness to an involvement by the palaces in a wide variety of other activities, such as military and religious affairs. ... [I]t becomes in my view extremely difficult to avoid the conclusion that the role which the palaces play in the economy of Mycenaean states was not merely significant, but central and dominant.”

John T. Killen 2008<sup>2</sup>

In papers at the last three *Aegaeum* conferences on the topics of *Epos*, *Dais* and *Kosmos*,<sup>3</sup> I have argued systematically that the Mycenaean palatial centers and the regional ‘kingdoms’ that the palatial centers developed and maintained around them during the 14<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C.E. were not short-lived and failed social, political and economic experiments and were not fundamentally unsuited to the conditions that prevailed in the regions the palatial centers controlled during this period (and that prevailed later in the corresponding *polis* territories during the historical period).

My arguments have been based partly on what we can reconstruct as happening at the palatial centers themselves. To extrapolate from the texts, architecture, material-object remains and fresco programs of the palatial center at Ano Englianos in Messenia, the *wanax* at the Palace of Nestor behaved, *mutatis mutandis*, much like the Carolingian king in his palace at Aachen<sup>4</sup> or the Hittite *hassu-* in his Great Hall at Hattusa<sup>5</sup> or even

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<sup>1</sup> C.W. SHELMEARDINE, “Mycenaean Society,” in *A Companion to Linear B: Mycenaean Greek Texts and Their World*, Y. Duhoux, A. Morpurgo Davies (ed.), Louvain-La-Neuve 2008 (Bibliothèque des Cahiers de l’Institut de Linguistique de Louvain), p. 115.

<sup>2</sup> J.T. KILLEN, “Mycenaean Economy”, in *Companion*, Y. Duhoux, A. Morpurgo Davies (ed.), cit. (n. 1), p. 180.

<sup>3</sup> T.G. PALAIMA, “Mycenaean Society and Kingship: *Cui Bono?* A Counter-Speculative View”, in *Epos: Reconsidering Greek Epic and Aegean Bronze Age Archaeology*, S.P. Morris, R. Laffineur (ed.), Liège and Austin 2007 (*Aegaeum* 28), p. 129-140; “The Significance of Mycenaean Words Relating to Meals, Meal Rituals, and Food”, in *DAIS: The Aegean Feast*, L. A. Hitchcock, R. Laffineur, J. Crowley (ed.), Liège and Austin 2008 (*Aegaeum* 29), p. 383-389; “*Kosmos* in the Mycenaean Tablets and the Cultural Response of Mycenaean Scribes to *Kosmos*”, in *KOSMOS: Jewellery, Adornment and Textiles in the Aegean Bronze Age*, M.-L. Nosch, R. Laffineur (ed.), Liège and Austin forthcoming (*Aegaeum*).

<sup>4</sup> For the strategies of establishing and maintaining royal power and authority and ideology in the Carolingian Dynasty, see C. WICKHAM, *The Inheritance of Rome: A History of Europe from 400 to 1000*, Penguin 2009, p. 375-426.

<sup>5</sup> On the ideological connections between the Mycenaean *wanax* and the Hittite *hassu-*, see T.G. PALAIMA, “*wanaks* and Related Power Terms in Mycenaean and Later Greek”, in *Ancient Greece: From the Mycenaean Palaces to the Age of Homer*, S. Deger-Jalkotzy, I. Lemos (ed.), Edinburgh 2006

Louis XIV at Versailles.<sup>6</sup> And the *lāwāgetās* also played an important, but nonetheless secondary role.<sup>7</sup>

The *wanax* and the *lāwāgetās* presided in formal halls of state built to be reassuringly grand and impressive, and to mark out their relative stations.<sup>8</sup>

In these locations, they received, no doubt both conspicuously and privately, depending upon the rank and importance of the visitor(s), ‘foreign’ (or at least extra-regional) emissaries, peer ‘brothers’ (either real peers or those who were pronounced so as part of an honorific fiction), religious and political dignitaries, palatial and provincial officials, members of the regional nobility and individuals known as ‘collectors’ who played key roles in serving the economic interests of the central palatial elites while also seeing to their own personal prosperity. The *wanax* and the *lāwāgetās* had their own sets of retainers, as is well attested by the crafts personnel and other specialist workers who are beneficiaries/recipients of landholdings in the Pylos **Ea** series (focusing on the *lāwāgetās*) and the **Eb**, **En**, **Eo** and **Ep** series (focusing on religious personnel and craftspeople of the *wanax*) specifically because of their service (and their service in the religious sphere).<sup>9</sup>

The *wanax* and the *lāwāgetās* participated in ceremonies involving offerings, libations, sacrifices, processions, songs and unifying communal feasting.<sup>10</sup> They made reassuring public displays of their power and authority, and, in general, communicated the primary ideology of rulership that fueled human activities in their regions and reassured the inhabitants of those regions that all was well and their way of life was secure.

As Shelmerdine rightly stresses, the Linear B tablets are focused on economic matters. Their texts do indicate that the palatial centers sit atop political and economic systems. Given the difficulties of transportation, communication, organization and

(Edinburgh Leventis Studies 3), p. 53 n. 3, 57-58. On the Hittite king and the ideology of his authority and his court activities, see T. BRYCE, *Life and Society in the Hittite World*, Oxford 2002, p. 11-31, 34.

<sup>6</sup> See the groundbreaking and fundamental study of how power works within the social, political, economic and religious structures of ‘court society’ by N. ELIAS, *The Court Society*, trans. E. Jephcott, New York 1983.

<sup>7</sup> See the section of the *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers*, D. Diderot, J. d’Alembert (ed.), Paris 1751-1772, cited in ELIAS, *The Court Society*, cit. (n. 6), p. 59, stressing the simple “straight lines” of the architectural styles appropriate for the dwelling places of military leaders, the “restrained style” and lack of “frivolity and ornamentation” for religious leaders, and the controlled and pious formal arrangement for magistrates. All must “avoid in these different styles the grandeur and magnificence proper to the palaces of kings.” This well fits the contrast between the central palatial building at Pylos with its elaborate core megaron complex for the *wanax* and the SW Building of which the architecturally austere Halls 64 and 65 are more fitting for the subordinate, but nonetheless major figure known as the *lāwāgetās*. Architectural and other distinctions kept power figures properly separated from one another, each at a designated level of privilege, rewards and responsibilities.

<sup>8</sup> As explained above n. 7.

<sup>9</sup> On the roles of the *wanax* and the *lāwāgetās* (and other officials as well) within Mycenaean palatial government, administration and social hierarchy, see C.W. SHELMEKDINE and J. BENNET, “Mycenaean States: Economy and Administration”, in *The Cambridge Companion to the Aegean Bronze Age*, C.W. Shelmerdine (ed.), Cambridge 2008, p. 292-303.

<sup>10</sup> See T.G. PALAIMA, “Sacrificial Feasting in the Linear B tablets”, in *The Mycenaean Feast*, J.C. Wright (ed.), *Hesperia* 73.2 (2004) 217-246.

information-processing at this stage of state development and the limitations of natural resources that always shaped what cultures could achieve in the general Aegean area, the palatial systems were arguably real successes. The palatial systems managed to place the Mycenaeans on the ‘world stage’ in the form of whatever coalition of palatial territories made up the kingdom of the *Ahhiyawa*.<sup>11</sup> They also placed the Mycenaeans on the itinerary of Amenophis III<sup>12</sup> and enabled them to acquire the natural resources necessary to operate the ‘military-industrial complexes’ that were essential for their very survival.<sup>13</sup>

In LH III B Messenia alone, the Mycenaean *politeia*, in the complete later sense of both governmental structure and overall ‘citizen identity’ and ‘way of life’, was organized ‘around’ or ‘under’ the palatial center at Pylos. Its territory covered ca. 2,300 km. and included at least 50,000 inhabitants located at ca. 250 settlements that were themselves organized into two provinces. The provinces were sub-divided further into 9 + 7 = 16 districts around 16 second-order centers.<sup>14</sup>

These are all well-known numbers, but it is not often considered how complicated it must have been to maintain all the arrangements among these places and among all the individuals who were responsible for getting things done and who themselves used different networks and power bases to get things done. Keeping track of the necessary *data* alone would have been daunting. Prospective texts like **PY Jn 829** and **PY Un 718** (and, by implication the Pylos **Ma** series with their set ‘taxation’ targets, exemptions, and amounts still due) involved simple estimates and were easy to produce. But checking the collection and delivery of the quantities of materials and items listed on them, both at the

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<sup>11</sup> For the most recent reappraisal from a Mycenaean perspective of the evidence for the location and capital of the *Ahhiyawa*, see T.G. PALAIMA, “Euboea, Athens and Thebes: The Implications of the Linear B References”, in *Euboea and Athens: Proceedings of a Colloquium in Memory of Malcolm B. Wallace. Athens, 26-27 June 2009*, D. W. Rupp, J. E. Tomlinson (ed.), Athens 2011 (Publications of the Canadian Institute in Greece, No. 6) with a survey of earlier literature. For a thorough review and analysis of the evidence and theories for the location of the land of the *Ahhiyawa*, see M.H. WIENER, “Locating *Ahhiyawa*”, in *Doron: Timetikos Tomos gia ton Kathegete Spyro Iakobide*, D. Danielidou (ed.), Athens 2009 (Academy of Athens Center for Research in Antiquity Monograph 6), p. 701-715. Wiener (p. 715) concludes that, considering “the preeminence of Mycenae and the Argolid in the 14<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C. (*sic*)...Mycenae must be considered the likely center in this period of the state known to the Hittites as *Ahhiyawa*.”

<sup>12</sup> E.H. CLINE, “Amenhotep III, the Aegean, and Anatolia” in *Amenhotep III: Perspectives on His Reign*, D. O’Connor, E.H. Cline (ed.), Ann Arbor 1998, p. 236-250; and “Amenhotep III and Mycenae: Further Evidence”, in *Autochthon: Papers presented to O. T. P. K. Dickinson on the occasion of his retirement, Institute of Classical Studies, University of London, 9 November 2005*, A. Dakouri-Hild, S. Sherratt (ed.), Oxford 2005, p. 317-328; and, on trade in general with Egypt and the near eastern world, “Rethinking Mycenaean International Trade with Egypt and the Near East”, *Rethinking Mycenaean Palaces II*, M.L. Galaty, W. A. Parkinson (ed.), Los Angeles 2007 (Cotsen Institute of Archaeology at UCLA Monograph 60), p. 190-200.

<sup>13</sup> J. DRIESSEN, “The Archaeology of Aegean Warfare”, in *POLEMOS: Le contexte guerrier en Égée à l’âge du Bronze*, R. LAFFINEUR (ed.), Liège and Austin 1999, (*Aegaeum* 19), p. 11-20; and “The Arsenal of Knossos (Crete) and Mycenaean Chariot Forces”, in *Archaeological and Historical Aspects of West-European Societies. Album Amicorum André Van Doorselaer*, M. Lodewijckx (ed.), Leuven 1996, (*Acta Archaeologica Lovaniensia Monographiae* 8), p. 481-498.

<sup>14</sup> SHELMEKDINE and BENNET, “Mycenaean States”, cit. (n. 9), p. 298-301.

local sites and districts involved and then later after many deliveries to the palatial center, would have been elaborate and time-consuming.

I agree with John Killen that it is indisputable that the palatial centers throughout the Mycenaean world were central and dominant. However, just as with the later Greek *poleis*, the intensity of their centrality and the degree of their domination over the economic, social, political and religious lives of what we may call their ‘citizens’ and the areas where those ‘citizens’ lived must have varied region to region and even period to period.

It is my belief that the Mycenaean regional ‘kingdoms’ were no more, and arguably far less, ‘oppressive’ than other contemporary cultures operating at a larger scale and over longer time periods (Hittite, Egyptian, Mesopotamian, and prosperous kingdoms like Ugarit in Syria) in regard to their mobilization of labor, exploitation of natural resources, distribution of work and other forms of obligation, and compensation for doing the required work and for meeting assigned responsibilities.

As in the formation of the Carolingian state around Pippin, Charlemagne and their successors and the Hittite state around Hattusili I, Mursili I and their successors, the continuing existence of Mycenaean palatial kingdoms depended on the central authorities being seen as capable of, and being trusted to, provide benefits in the form of land grants, elevated social status and hierarchical public distinctions, food allotments (through centrally monitored harvests and even the archaeologically invisible importation of grain), feasts and festivals, major quality-of-life-improving public works (aqueducts, road networks, dams, harbors, fortification walls, and impressive palatial buildings) and the employment opportunities such large-scale engineering and building projects provided<sup>15</sup>, general and local prosperity and material well-being. Put simply, the *wanaks* and *lāwagetās* had to be seen as benefactors in a very literal and big sense. And they had to motivate and reward regional and local nobility, the hierarchy of palatial officials, and dependent personnel.<sup>16</sup>

Besides providing for relative material prosperity, the Mycenaean rulers had to convey to the inhabitants of their regions an overall feeling (and reality) of security from outside threats and internal disorders and of the possibility of redress from local misapplications of justice. The Mycenaean palatial system, like the Carolingian and Hittite kingdoms and like France in the period of Louis XIV, had to construct forms of cohesion and identity and reinforce social arrangements and modes of behavior within an

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<sup>15</sup> See **PY An 18** with its list of 90 *qo-u-ko-ro* (in line .9) and 256? *te-[ko-to-ne?]*, *te-[re-ta?]* (in line .11) alongside *to-ko-do-mo* (in line .6); **PY An 830** [+] **907** listing four groups of 204 *qo-u-ko-ro* total; **PY Fn 7** with its month-allotments of grain and olives to wall builders, sawyers and a building project foreman (*pa-te-ko-to*); and **KN F(2) 852** with its oft-cited enormous harvest of grain (ca. 775 tons) at the site of *da-wo* (theoretically placed in the Mesara). See KILLEN, “Mycenaean Economy”, cit. (n. 2), p. 172-173.

<sup>16</sup> For a succinct sociological analysis of the major figures in the Mycenaean socio-political hierarchy and personnel and collective groups connected with them, see B. HILDEBRANDT, *Damos und Basileus: Überlegungen zu Sozialstrukturen in den dunklen Jahrhunderten Griechenlands*, Munich 2007, p. 92-137; and also the complete textual discussion of the appearance in Linear B economic documents of “les dignitaires mentionnés par leur titre” in FR. ROUGEMONT, *Contrôle économique et administration à l'époque des palais mycéniens (fin du II<sup>e</sup> millénaire av. J.-C.)*, Paris 2009, p. 211-250.

efficient power hierarchy that would allow for the cooperative mobilization of work efforts and restrain people with power from destabilizing self-rewarding.

It would have been dangerous and counter to the self-interests of the main power-holders themselves to tolerate *βασιλῆες* who were *δωροφάγοι* (Hesiod's criticism of local power figures: personally greedy and bribe-susceptible) or *δημοβόροι* (fashioned on the criticism of a *wanaks* in the *Iliad*: devouring the produce of his people as a whole, i.e., greedy and thereby oppressive) at district or local village levels anywhere in their palatial territories. Nor could they countenance such behavior in their own palatially appointed officials who interfaced with villages, towns and larger district centers and their power figures. The main figures here were the *da-mo-ko-ro*, *ko-re-te-re*, *po-ro-ko-re-te-re*.

Instead, the Mycenaean palaces promoted an ideology of nurturing and abundance. This is seen conspicuously in the omnipresence and scale of feasting throughout the Mycenaean world. But it also is consciously displayed in the titles of the major officials who oversaw the interests of the palatial centers in their component provinces. They were called each a *dāmokoros*. Their very title forbids them to 'devour gifts' or 'consume the *dāmos*' itself (*δωροφάγος* or *δημοβόρος*). It is difficult to fix the meaning(s) of the term *da-mo* in this period<sup>17</sup>, but the compound term *dāmokoros*, as has been recently demonstrated by J.L. García Ramón<sup>18</sup>, was correctly explained by A. Heubeck and others as "der den *dāmos* gedeihen lässt, fördert" or "he who feeds or nourishes or lets grow the *δᾶμον*", i.e., the title stresses that this specifically *wanax*-appointed official will bring the *δᾶμος*, whatever the term *da-mo* precisely means during this period, to a state of satiety, a healthy state of growth.<sup>19</sup>

It is hard to resist the conclusion that the pejorative term *δημοβόρος* is found used in the popular song tradition that is distilled in the *Iliad* because it was formed as a term of satirical social criticism of the attested Mycenaean title *δᾶμοκόρος*. The *Iliad* after all is also the end result of a long-standing song tradition listened to at public communal events and in aristocratic social circles. Such song traditions encapsulate positive and negative examples of how rulers are to behave and the consequences of their behavior for the people whom they rule.

Mycenaean rulers had to reinforce patterns of tolerable behavior in local authority figures, as Charlemagne tried to do through his *missi* (emissaries sent out to local districts where they served as the 'king's eyes and ears', reporting back to him, and even holding

<sup>17</sup> SHELMEKDINE and BENNET, "Mycenaean States", cit. (n. 9), p. 300. My own feeling is that it is still best to stick fairly close to the carefully reasoned opinion found in M. LEJEUNE, "Le δᾶμος dans la société mycénienne", *REG* 78 (1965), p. 1-22: "entité administrative locale à vocation agricole," i.e., a local land-distributing body who oversaw and regulated the 'holding' (through 'distribution' \**deH*<sub>1</sub>) of community land and consisted, at least in part, of individuals designated as *telestai* (PY Er 312). It is this concept that will lead to other meanings over time as the possession of land and the rights, privileges and obligations attendant thereto change in relationship to new social and political structures.

<sup>18</sup> J.L. GARCÍA RAMÓN, "Reconstructing IE Lexicon and Phraseology: Inherited Patterns and Lexical Renewal", in *Proceedings of the 21st Annual UCLA Indo-European Conference*, S.W. Jamison, H.C. Melchert, B. Vine (ed.), Bremen 2010, p. 69-106.

<sup>19</sup> See also HILDEBRANDT, *Damos und Basileus*, cit. (n. 16), p. 124-126.

court cases where local officials were held to account for corruption).<sup>20</sup> In addition, Charlemagne moved ‘greater’ old noble families (40-50 have been identified) around the 802 *missatica* (defined sub-territories where *missi* operated in pairs along with a count and a bishop) of the Frankish heartland. These families formed a *Reichsaristokratie*, mingling and sometimes intermarrying with local elites, but owing allegiance to the king. The kings also held royal assemblies every year at the palace at Aachen ahead of the military campaign season and they could and did call secondary assemblies. Accounts indicate that the great king took the opportunity at such meetings to develop ties with district power figures. Out in the landscape, such local elites could meet in county assemblies known as *placita*.

Mycenaean ‘collectors’ could have served the same function as the Carolingian *Reichsaristokratie*. Likewise the palatially appointed *ko-re-te-re* and *po-ro-ko-re-te-re* (and the *e-ge-ta*?) may have served some of the functions of the Carolingian *missi*. The very titles *ko-re-te-re* and *po-ro-ko-re-te-re*, related to the same root found in *da-mo-ko-ro*<sup>21</sup> and marking them out as ‘agents of increase or satiety’, put into speech the ideological self-presentation of the palace as *the* center of healthy growth, nourishment and fullness for the kingdom. The *ko-re-te-re* and *po-ro-ko-re-te-re* spread this ideology throughout the sixteen districts of the kingdom (equivalent to the Carolingian *missatica*?); and they operated in relationship with the two *da-mo-ko-ro*, as discussed above, and the figures known as ‘inspectors’ *e-re-u-te-re*, and the ‘followers’ or *e-ge-ta* of the *wanax*.

There were power-figures (like the *qa-si-re-we* with their *qa-si-re-wi-ja* councils, *ke-ro-te* and the heads of *ke-ro-si-ja*, and the *telestai* who composed local *dāmoi*) whose power bases lay in spheres that pre-existed the palatial centers and the development of *wanax*-ideology. The very names of the high palatial officials conveyed to these power figures that the *wanax* was the ultimate guarantor of ample sustenance at the district and the local community levels and that his agents always kept a close eye on what was happening throughout his kingdom.

Most importantly of all, the rulers had to see to ‘religious security’.<sup>22</sup> The Mycenaean rulers had to demonstrate constantly – through rituals, sacrifices and offerings, and general pious behavior and display (as seen in Homer, *Odyssey* book 3, with many instances of the clear emphasis that king Nestor places on the proper behavior of a regional *wanax* with regard to rituals of sacrifice, feasting and *xenia* and with regard

<sup>20</sup> WICKHAM, *The Inheritance of Rome*, cit. (n. 4), p. 388-390.

<sup>21</sup> J.L. GARCÍA RAMÓN, “Reconstructing IE Lexicon and Phraseology”, cit. (n. 18), p. 78 and n. 29: “The assumption of a single root is certainly an economical hypothesis; but the extreme complexity of attested formations suggests the existence of two roots with different meanings: on the one hand, IE *\*kerh<sub>1</sub>-* ‘to grow up’ (from the beginning, i.e., ‘to be born, created’) beside causative ‘to make grow’ (and ‘to create’), and on the other, IE *\*kerh<sub>3</sub>-* ‘to nourish, feed, fodder’. Some of their reflexes in the daughter languages may have merged phonetically and semantically in the terms evoked above. Contamination of both may be supposed at least for Greek and Latin, so that the basic opposition ‘grow up’/‘make grow’, ‘feed’, as assumed above, remains the most plausible starting point, at least for Greek and Italic.”

<sup>22</sup> On the *wanax* and religious ritual and the concept of ‘Zeus-born’ and ‘Zeus-nourished’ rulers, see PALAIMA, “*wanaks* and Related Power Terms”, cit. (n. 5) p. 57 n. 7 and 64-66.

to other actions of rulership) – that the state and its rulers were in a good relationship with the deities who controlled human events.

In the fifth century B.C.E. a full one third of the Athenian year was devoted to festivals involving sacrifices and feasting, while a study of the Athenian calendar shows that with the exception of the month of *Maimakterion* “not a month passed without massive slaughtering of beasts.”<sup>23</sup> Likewise, “[a] substantial part of the Hittite year was occupied with the celebration of religious festivals, as indicated by the large number of festival texts, far surpassing all other written sources, in the archives of the royal capital. Up to 165 festivals were incorporated into the official calendar, and no doubt there were many local community and rural festivals which were never recorded in permanent form. The state-sponsored celebrations imposed considerable demands on the kingdom’s resources, in terms of time, personnel, equipment, and consumable items. Some lasted just a few hours, some several days. But the most important ones continued for several weeks, or more. Many required the king’s personal participation, even if he had to cut short a military campaign to attend them”.<sup>24</sup> This last statement is very telling. What it implies is that the ruler’s primary obligation is to keep matters right with the gods, because if the gods are not favorable, it does not matter what is going on with the armies, labor forces and workshops, or the elites of the kingdom.

In the *Book of Ceremonies* in the 10th century A.D., the emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogennitos reports that “the emperor is expected to take part in a great number of religious processions in Constantinople: one on every day in the week after Easter, Ascension, Pentecost, 1 May, feast days for Elijah, St. Demetrios, the Elevation of the Cross...all across the year.”<sup>25</sup> The emperor was accompanied by “a long list of secular officials and religious leaders, tens or often hundreds of people, the wives of officials sometimes, and also the leaders of the circus factions of the city.” These figures issued formal acclamations as the emperor went from the Great Palace out to holy buildings around the city and back. So much time consumed by so many notables caused Oxford professor of medieval history Chris Wickham to apostrophize, “Can all this really have taken place, for every feast in every year, with all these people?”

Indeed it did, and this same mode of behavior preoccupied the Mycenaean rulers. We see this in the palatial fresco iconography at the Palace of Nestor. We see it in the records of offerings to sanctuaries and deities in the Pylos **Fr** series and the Knossos **Fp** and **Fs** series. We see it in the processional ritual and festival activities in tablets like **PY Tn 316**, **Un 2** and **Un 718** and, according to Killen’s interpretation, many tablets of the **Fn** series. Such ceremonials took up lots of the time of palatial elites within the Mycenaean kingdoms as well.

The Greek national epic of the historical period, the *Iliad*, was part of a tradition beginning back in the 15<sup>th</sup> c. B.C.E. It was the central Greek enculturating text (see Plutarch, *Life of Lycurgus*). It begins with a clear instance of the bad things that happen to

<sup>23</sup> PALAIMA, “Sacrificial Feasting”, cit. (n. 10), p. 221 and n. 37.

<sup>24</sup> BRYCE, *Life and Society*, cit. (n. 5), p. 188.

<sup>25</sup> WICKHAM, *The Inheritance of Rome*, cit. (n. 4), p. 298. The next quotations, too, come from the same page of the cited source.

the *lāos* (a concept already in place in the Mycenaean period) when the supreme leader of the Trojan expedition, Agamemnon, ritually offends Apollo by, *inter alia*, being *δημοβόρος*. Agamemnon as *wanax* then has to undo practically and ritually the consequences of his own impious actions. Hesiod's *Works and Days* also lays out clearly the severe negative consequences when local Zeus-nourished 'kings' neglect to enforce in their communities the 'justice' that is transmitted to them by Zeus.

Mycenaean rulers also had to keep potential competitors among persons of high status, like the 'collectors' who interface with the palatial administration, but are not in any way, so far as we can tell, part of the chain of command of administrative officials, well enough satisfied to check the formation of political factions and any impulses towards challenges to power that are hallmark features of the history of Hittite kingship and of the historical Greek *poleis*.<sup>26</sup> We may cite here the observation of Imparati that, given the frequency of threats to central power in the Hittite kingdom, 'peace' was "an absence of civil wars, an absence of conspiracies against the royal court rather than ... an absence of exterior wars".<sup>27</sup>

That is to say, the main worries of the Hittite kings were *coups d'état* even from within the extended royal families. Given the history of political factionalism, tyrannies and revolutions within later Greek *poleis* and the mythological traditions focused on this very fact of life within Greek communities centered around the major Mycenaean citadels, it would be irresponsible for us not to see a similar concern as a main motivating factor driving Mycenaean rulers to increase their power and to institute practices that might obviate potential threats to their authority. In a word, the Mycenaean rulers had to provide stability, they had to make the people living and working within their palatial territories feel 'secure' with and within the prevailing social and political order, and make themselves feel secure at the same time. They also had to see to it that power-figures, who were potential rivals, at second-order centers and within the palatial system of organization, felt sufficiently rewarded with prestige, public recognition and material

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<sup>26</sup> See the brilliant observation by ELIAS, *Court Society*, cit. (n. 6), p. 22-23, that attaining and maintaining supreme power requires a 'routinization' of autocratic rule, an elaboration of practices of social behavior and goal-setting and goal-seeking whereby potential rivals (and rival groups) to power are kept preoccupied and satisfied: "Like other social positions, that of a monopoly ruler demands a very carefully judged strategy of behavior if the occupant is to secure the throne and its power for himself and his family over a long period....A tightrope-walker's confidence and skill are needed." In fact in a parallel analysis of the Third Reich, Elias (p. 277-279) argues that "no scholarly books are needed to teach a powerful monopoly ruler that unanimity among his leading groups means a reduction of his power, perhaps even a threat to his personal rule, and that disunity, if it does not go too far, strengthens his power," because then "none of the rival groups [i]s in a position to form a new authority and so to lay claim with any legitimacy to political leadership." J. DRIESSEN, "The Northern Entrance Passage at Knossos. Some Preliminary Observations on Its Potential Role as a 'Central Archives'", in *Floreat Studia Mycenaea*, S. Deger-Jalkotzy, S. Hiller, O. Panagl. (ed.), Vienna 1999, p. 206, points to the similar notion that the *wanax* "needed his men in place, but also some way of controlling these men" and doing it ideologically, partly through the nomenclature of office.

<sup>27</sup> F. IMPARATI, "La politique extérieure des hittites: tendances et problèmes", *Hethitica* 8 (1987), p. 187-207; BRYCE, *Life and Society*, cit. (n. 5), p. 277 n. 6.

tokens of honor.<sup>28</sup> At the same time, the Mycenaean rulers had to keep any group of such figures ‘insecure’ and preoccupied with activities and ceremonies and obligations so that they would have little opportunity or incentive to combine forces against their *wanax*. Simply put, the *wanax* felt most secure when his chief rivals all reasoned like Creon in Sophocles’ *Oedipus Tyrannus*, that it is better to have all the benefits that comes with proximity to supreme power without the cares and dangers of actually holding it.

In examining security and insecurity within the Mycenaean palatial kingdoms, I see no need to revisit the old notion of ‘state of emergency’ conditions. I think we may all accept the fact that the texts from the end of LH III B reflect conditions that led to the destructions of palatial buildings and the accidental preservation of the tablets on which the texts are written, shortly after the tablets were written. This view has long been corroborated by what we see going on in modifications to and around the Palace of Nestor in later III B and the concerns for defensive fortification and water supply at the site of Mycenae during the same period. The mid-III B texts from Khania, Thebes, and the houses at Mycenae would undoubtedly reflect somewhat uncertain conditions, too, if we had fuller contexts in which to interpret them.

In a sense, I think we need to open ourselves even further to seeing what we really do not have clear evidence for in the Linear B documents or the iconographical programs of the palatial centers. We also have to deal with limitations of the level of power and prosperity of the Mycenaean palatial centers and rulers within their kingdoms in relation to higher and longer established major cultures like the Hittite and the Egyptian.

We have to rely heavily on the three sites that give us fuller views of palatial economic and political operations: Pylos, Knossos and now Thebes. For example, it is worth speculating about what level of yearly taxation would have been felt to be oppressive by individuals and communities of varying status; how many individuals (and their families and clans) would have benefited enough from the palatial system fully to ‘buy into’ it; why institutions like *ke-ro-si-ja*, *qa-si-re-wi-ja*, *ra-wa-ke-si-ja* are so infrequently attested in the texts; how long the kinds of rewards of landholdings seen in the Pylos E-series could have operated and how widespread the phenomenon of central monitoring of land allotments, seen admittedly in just two localities at Pylos (at *pa-ki-ja-ne Eb, En, Eo* and *Ep* and *ti-no? Ea*) would have been, how well the local *dāmoi* cooperated with the wishes and needs of the central rulers, and so on.

Let us pose a few such questions. How ‘onerous’ was what we might call palatial taxation upon the nine and seven districts in 13<sup>th</sup>-century Messenia? If we look at the three items in the Ma series that have reasonably secure identifications: \*146 (*wehanos*) cloth, \*152 (*wrinos*) oxhide, and *RI (linon)* flax or linen, weighed in M units, it is difficult, at least for me, to determine how heavily a yearly ‘payment’ of 12 ox hides from *me-ta-pa*, 8 from *ka-ra-do-ro*, and 10 from *a-pu<sub>2</sub>* and *sa-ma-ra* would have weighed upon these district centers and the resources of the districts that they controlled, especially if we imagine district or local ceremonies of sacrifice and feasting taking place (as in the Hittite realm and in the later Greek *polis* of Athens) with reasonable frequency.

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<sup>28</sup> PALAIMA, “Sacrificial Feasting”, cit. (n. 10), p. 225, on the historical Greek liturgy known as *hestiasis* serving as a mechanism for channeling and exhausting the eristic energies and resources of ambitious elites.

We know from Pylos tablet **Jn 829** that these districts all had *nawoi*, i.e., places where deities resided and where bronze objects, like tripods, were dedicated and used in rituals and where bronze agricultural implements were used most likely on the kind of landholdings that the *te-o-jo do-e-ro /-ra, i-je-re-ja/-u* and royal crafts personnel ‘held’ as *o-na-te-re* (another ‘propagandistic’ term: literally ‘agents of land held as a benefit’). The palatial center had the authority, through its officials (the *ko-re-te-re* and *po-ro-ko-re-te-re*) to command recycled materials. The recycled bronze required from the *du-ma-te, o-pi-su-ko* and *o-pi-ka-pe-e-we* in sanctuaries in each of these districts was equal to or greater than the recycled bronze required from the most prominent district in the palatial documents from Pylos. This district is *pa-ki-ja-ne* (‘the place of ritual slaughter’). *pa-ki-ja-ne* had a special relationship with the palatial center of Pylos, reflecting the special relationship that the *wanax* clearly had with the goddess *potnia*, the principal deity in the district of *pa-ki-ja-ne*. We may compare the special relationship between the Hittite *hassu-* and the sun goddess of Arinna, the goddess who was considered ‘patron and protector of the Hittite state and monarchy’.<sup>29</sup>

The quantities, albeit modest, of bronze on **Jn 829** suggest that ritual locales and practices were widespread throughout the sixteen districts of the kingdom. Where there were dedications made of bronze, there most likely were other kinds of religious ceremonies, sacrifice among them. In each district, enough bulls would have been slain at such ritual events to provide one ox hide per month or fewer to the central palace. We may compare the main example from the palace records, the ceremony to Poseidon being prepared at an otherwise unknown site called *sa-ra-pe-da* (**Un 718**). The sacrificial animals registered for this ceremony include 1 bull.

Other indicators that such deliveries would not have been too taxing are the releases from payment to compensate for specialist-worker production in specific districts (mainly *ka-ke-we*, bronze-workers, whose production, to judge by **Jn 829** and by their interface with individual *qa-si-re-u* in other Jn tablets, may have been related to the ‘military-industrial’ sector; but also *ku-re-we* and the ethnic designation *ma-ra-ne-ni-jo*) and the minimal evidence for non-payments in the prior administrative year (on just 8 of 18 tablets). We should note that these non-payments do not pertain across the board, but only to selected items.

For example, to stick with the known commodities: *ri-jo* (**Ma 193**) has a non-payment from the previous year of 2 out of 17 units of \*146 (11.8%). *ra-wa-ra-tja* (**Ma 216**) owes 3 out of 30 units of \*152 (10%); *e-sa-re-wi-ja* (**Ma 330**) 6 out of 18 units of \*152 (33%); and *sa-ma-ra* 2 out of 10 units (20%). Although these are listed as not provided by the particular districts in the year just past (*o-pe-ro pe-ru-si-nu-wo*), we do not know what arrangements were made within those districts for individuals, clans, households or particular localities to be responsible for the payments.

Just for sake of example, with the far simpler payment of modern taxes to the Internal Revenue Service in the United States, in tax year 2008, there were 142,450,569 tax returns and 3,732,000 delinquent filers (i.e., taxpayers not paying in that year). 2.6%

<sup>29</sup> BRYCE, *Life and Society*, cit. (n. 5), p. 143.

of households were in arrears; a rather consistent number over time.<sup>30</sup> And we should remind ourselves that there is no evidence for arrearage on 10 out of 18 tablets.

Again relying on **Jn 829** as our model, the *ko-re-te-re* and *po-ro-ko-re-te-re* are responsible in each district for set quantities of recycled bronze that they or their nameless assistants must have literally scrounged up from ‘dwelling places’ of the deities. We do not know whether this is a standard yearly required contribution or if it is a ‘state-of-emergency’ measure.

However, if we imagine the effort it took in time and human energy first to gather from sanctuaries throughout the kingdom the small quantities of 2.75 to 4.5 kg. of used bronze and then to transport these small masses of bronze across the kingdom to the palatial center, we can understand either [1] how valuable the metal was in late Bronze Age Messenia; or [2] what desperate straits the kingdom was in when it came to this important metal for the manufacture of military spears and javelins; or [3] how the *wanax* diffused any potential threats from high-ranking administrators indirectly by keeping them preoccupied with such tasks.

It is difficult to know whether these shortfalls indicate some widespread fall-off in the ability of districts to fulfill their designated obligations from their natural resources or if the relatively small proportion of shortfalls is linked to what would be regularly recurring issues of failures of individual households, clan groups, or specific settlements within districts to be able to pay within specific years because of all the vagaries that can affect production of materials derived from agriculture, herding or collection of natural resources (illness or death within families or communities, pestilence, changes in weather conditions or in patterns of work and so on, damage even to finished products, diseases affecting the quality of plant and animal products in specific areas). If we had a few more years’ worth of such records we could see whether such tax-arrearage was typical as in the IRS records.

What we do know from zooarchaeological studies is that significant pressures on land use for competing purposes in LH III B:2 at Nichoria (*ti-mi-to a-ko*) led to a reduction of grazing land and an increase in foraging and a related reduction in the numbers of cattle used as meat sources.<sup>31</sup>

Likewise, we may wonder how extensively the pattern of *o-na-to* grants to *o-na-te-re*, as documented in the Pylos **Eb**, **En**, **Eo** and **Ep** tablets, was practiced in the entire kingdom of Messenia. It is clear that these texts deal with the situation in *pa-ki-ja-ne* near to the Palace of Nestor at Pylos and that the ‘religious’ designations *te-o-jo do-e-ro* and *te-o-jo do-e-ra* for the majority of basic land-holders and the occurrence of the *i-je-re-ja pa-ki-ja-na*, the *ka-ra-wi-po-ro* and royal crafts personnel (*ke-ra-me-u*, *e-te-do-mo*, *ka-na-pe-u*) among the *o-na-te-re* are indicative of the close link between the *wanaks* and the goddess *po-ti-ni-ja*. The same applies to the various professions connected with the

<sup>30</sup> IRS on-line data, courtesy of Prof. Lillian Mills of the McCombs School of Business: <http://www.irs.gov/taxstats/article/0,,id=207457,00.html>; <http://www.irs.gov/taxstats/article/0,,id=171961,00.html>.

<sup>31</sup> T.G. PALAIMA, “Perspectives on the Pylos Oxen Tablets”, in *Studia Mycenaea 1988*, T.G. Palaima, C.W. Shelmerdine, P.H. Ilievski (ed.), Skopje, 1988, p. 111.

*lāwāgetās* and listed as land recipients at the nearby site of *ti-no* in the Pylos **Ea** series. Did the same models, again *mutatis mutandis*, prevail in the other seventeen districts? The role that the *da-mo* plays even in the **E-** series *pa-ki-ja-ne* texts would indicate that it did.

Again, returning to our Carolingian parallel, it is worth speculating what status and relationship to the palatial center at Pylos the fourteen *te-re-ta* (**En 609.2**) have. It is worth noting that it is through them that the many *o-na-te-re* derive their *o-na-to* land.

On **Un 718** and **Er 312**, it is clear that three *te-re-ta* stand in for the *da-mo*. If that is the case in the landholding texts of *pa-ki-ja-ne*, then the central authority would be working in cooperation with or through the local *da-mo*. We should also stress the benefits of positive good will that the many individuals who hold these land-use grants (and the honorific titles of *te-o-jo do-e-ro/-ra*) would feel toward the palatial rulers. This engendering of widespread good will through land grants has clear historical parallels. The term *o-na-to* ‘land that provides a benefit or advantage’ is a good fit for the granting of a *beneficium* by Carolingian rulers.

Two points can be made here in terms of the conscious efforts of the *wanaks*, *lāwāgetās* and the palatial center *per se* to distribute land. Charlemagne increased his power and made it secure through the granting of what he called *honores*, which included both titled offices and land grants. But he made sure that the land and the offices were revocable and dependent on the good behavior of the recipient-holders. He distributed both ‘royal’ and ‘church’ land in this fashion. As we have just mentioned, he called his revocable grants *beneficia*.<sup>32</sup> The term has a meaning that closely approximates that of the Mycenaean *o-na-ta* and undoubtedly had the same effect of binding the many *o-na-te-re* to the palatial system. What is difficult to determine from the sparse Linear B economic records is what the relationship was between the palatial centers and the individual holders of *o-na-to* land allotments in the generally religious district of *pa-ki-ja-ne* (both the *te-o-jo do-e-ro* and *do-e-ra* and the *wa-na-ka-te-ro* specialists) and the *te-re-ta* whose land is parceled out to these individuals.

But exploring these kinds of questions with judicious use of historical parallels helps us see better in the Mycenaean written and archaeological evidence how power relationships are managed and manipulated and how notions of security and insecurity are exploited in the process.

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<sup>32</sup> WICKHAM, *The Inheritance of Rome*, cit. (n. 4), p. 381.