

FORUM

Redistribution in Aegean Palatial Societies

A View from Outside the Palace: The Sanctuary and the *Damos* in Mycenaean Economy and Society

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Abstract

The Linear B offering tablets at first seem to indicate that Mycenaean palaces engaged in a form of redistribution with respect to the religious sphere. That the palace sent offerings caused many scholars to assume the religious sector was dependent on the palaces for its daily maintenance. The sanctuaries were therefore also thought to have been subject to palatial authority. However, more detailed analysis shows that the offerings could not have fully supported the sanctuaries, which eliminates the main argument used to support the idea that the sanctuaries were subject to palatial authority. This also indicates that the offerings cannot be interpreted as part of a real system of redistribution. Like the religious sphere, the individual communities found within palatial territory, referred to as *da-mo*, or *damos*, have been seen as subject to the political and economic control of the palace. However, a closer look at the textual evidence shows that each *damos* maintained a significant degree of independence from the palace. We may therefore posit (at least) three spheres of economic influence in Mycenaean states: the palace, the sanctuaries, and the *damos*.

INTRODUCTION

Killen recently has republished his view, which he first put forth in his seminal 1988 article, that the closest parallels for the Mycenaean economy are to be found “not in the later Graeco-Roman world, but in the contemporary and earlier Near East.” This means that for the Mycenaean economy, “the key role in the movement of goods and the employment of labour was played, not by a market economy or money, but by a central redistributive agency,” that is, “by a central palace.”¹ This has become a fairly controversial statement—much more so now than in 1988 when Killen

first published it. It has to be recognized, though, that Killen does, and did in the original article, go on to define more precisely what he means by “redistributive.” Drawing on the work of Earle,² he classifies the type of redistribution that the palatial administration engaged in as “the *mobilization of resources*: the acquisition of the food and raw materials needed by specialist craftsmen and others who served the centre and who depended on the centre for those commodities because they did not produce them themselves.”³ This more precise characterization has merit, especially considering the evidence in the tablets for the comprehensive management of certain key industries, such as textile manufacture, and the interest the palace demonstrates in gathering the agricultural produce necessary to support both the palatial workers and the palatial elite.

Nonetheless, Killen (among other scholars) sees this aspect of the palatial economy as defining and dictating the economy of the rest of Mycenaean society. As Killen concludes: “Once we are faced with this evidence, it becomes in my view extremely difficult to avoid the conclusion that the role which the palaces played in the economy of the Mycenaean states was not merely significant, but central and dominant.”⁴ This statement causes me to pause. The effects of this way of thinking have been far-reaching. Many scholars have assumed that the Mycenaean economy in general should be classified as primarily redistributive. But to define the nature of the Mycenaean economy as a whole in this way has the potential to severely limit our view of Mycenaean society. Could it not have been that other players in Mycenaean society—for instance, those at the top of the religious hierarchy and the principal

¹ Killen 1988, 241; 2008, 159.

² Earle 1977, 215.

³ Killen 1988, 283–84 n. 38; 2008, 173 n. 37 (emphasis original). See Morris (1986), who confirms this characterization

of the palatial economy by demonstrating that the allocations recorded in the tablets were sent almost exclusively to the industrial sector or to the religious sphere.

⁴ Killen 1988, 255; 2008, 180.

men of the *damos*—had a significant impact on the residents of Mycenaean villages and towns? I think this was the case not only for those who lived farther from the palace but even for those living close to the palaces in towns such as *pa-ki-ja-ne*. I do not mean to argue with the basic characterization of the Mycenaean palatial economy as redistributive (as long as we keep in mind that the palace acquired many of its goods through exchange systems that were not under its control),⁵ but rather I mean to add players to the scene in an effort to loosen up our traditional palace-focused concept of the Mycenaean social framework. Doing so will allow us to conceive of a broader range of social interactions and activities that could have occurred in the Mycenaean world (a pursuit with which I hope Killen would be sympathetic).

THE SANCTUARY

The traditional view of the Mycenaean economy as generally redistributive has had a significant impact in particular on the way scholars have viewed the role of the religious sector in Mycenaean society. Because the palace sent offerings to various sanctuaries, deities, and religious personnel, it was thought that the religious sector was included in the palatial system of redistribution. Hence, the sanctuaries and their personnel were relegated to a rather minor role in Mycenaean society, one that was definitely subordinate to the *wanax* (king) and his economic administration.

Indeed, at first glance the Linear B tablets that record offerings do seem to demonstrate that the palace provided goods that could have served to support the sanctuaries. On occasion, the palace sent somewhat costly (or at least showy) offerings. PY Tn 316, for instance, records the offering of several gold cups and human servants to several different deities at their respective sanctuaries. This type of offering, however, if we can take the tablets as representative of the way in which the palace fulfilled its cultic obligations, seems to have been fairly uncommon. The more typical offerings consisted of small amounts of perfumed oil (as on the Pylos Fr and the Knossos Fp and Fh series), honey (KN Gg), and spices (KN Ga), which were sent to various deities, such as Poseidon

(e.g., PY Fr 1219) and the goddess Potnia (e.g., PY Fr 1206), or to their sanctuaries, such as the Sanctuary of Zeus (*di-wi-jo-de* [PY Fr 1230]) and *pa-ki-ja-ne* (a sanctuary of preeminent importance to the Pylians, which, rendered as *Sphagianes*, can be translated as the “place of slaughter” [e.g., PY Fr 1209]).⁶ Offerings were also made on the occasion of specific festivals, such as the “Festival of the New Wine” (*me-tu-wo ne-wo* [PY Fr 1202]). In addition to these offerings, several tablets, such as those within the PY Un series, record the collection of livestock, wine, cheese, and other foodstuffs that were earmarked for use at religious festivals. PY Un 718, for instance, indicates that the goods were being collected for a festival being held in honor of Poseidon. Still other tablets, specifically the Pylos Fn series, detail the allocations of rations sent by the palace to the religious sphere (and possibly also to secular recipients). For example, allocations of grain are recorded on PY Fn 50 as being sent to members of a standard list of various religious officials. The list is repeated (sometimes in part) on several tablets (PY Un 219; PY An 39, 207, 424, 427, 594), with titles such as the “mixer” (*mi-ka-ta*), who may have been the priest responsible for the preparation of religious offerings, and the “skin bearer” (*di-pte-ra-po-ro*), who could have worn a skin as a sign of his priestly status.⁷ Allocations of grain supplemented with figs are recorded on PY Fn 187 as being sent to, among other locations, the Sanctuary of Poseidon (*po-si-da-i-jo* [PY Fn 187.2]) and *pa-ki-ja-ne* (PY Fn 187.4). Among the individuals listed on PY Fn 187 are the heralds (*ka-ru-ke*) of each sanctuary as well as “the priests of Poseidon” (*po-si-da-i-je-u-si* [PY Fn 187.18]). Thus, the existence of shrines and sanctuaries with hierarchies of specialized religious personnel was not in question,⁸ but their role in Mycenaean society, relative to the palace, was. And the answer was dictated by the prevailing view of Mycenaean society and economy: that it was governed entirely by the *wanax* and his administration.

Chadwick was among the first to address the issue of the purpose of the palatial offerings. He asked, “Are [the offerings] used for cult purposes or to support a priestly establishment?”⁹ The answer he proposed was that the offerings were used both for the worship of the

⁵Infra n. 21. It should be noted that Killen (2008, 180) does recognize the existence of nonpalatial exchange; he just does not think it would have had as much effect on Mycenaean society as the palatial economic system.

⁶Palaima 1995, 131.

⁷See Olivier (1960) for discussions of these and the several other religious functionaries found on these tablets.

⁸Further religious functionaries are found on the PY Ep and PY En land tenure tablets. Among them are *e-ri-ta*, the

priestess of *pa-ki-ja-ne* (PY Ep 704.3/PY Eb 339.A, PY Ep 704.5–6); *ka-pa-ti-ja*, the Keybearer of *pa-ki-ja-ne* (PY Ep 704.7/PY Eb 338A); a priest (*i-je-re-u*) named *we-te-re-u*; a *i-je-ro-wo-ko*, which has been interpreted as an officiating priest, perhaps in charge of sacrifices (PY Ep 613.7); a man named *we-ra-jo*, who is designated as Potnian (PY Ep 613.14); and 46 “slaves” or “servants of the deity” (*te-o-jo do-e-ro/a*) (Lupack 2008a; 2010, 272).

⁹Chadwick 1988.

deities and for the support of the religious personnel who were attached to the sanctuaries. This makes sense on the face of it. After all, it is unlikely that these goods were simply left on an altar; rather, they were probably used by the mortal agents of the deities to whom they were sent. But, when this basic idea was coupled in the minds of Mycenologists with the assumption that the palaces controlled most of the realm's economy, scholars took it as a given that the sanctuaries were primarily dependent on the palace for their foodstuffs and raw materials, that is, for their daily sustenance.

This is extremely significant, because it leads to the assumption that the sanctuaries were not only economically dependent on the palaces but that they were also under the direct political control of the *wanax*. According to Hiller, for example, the fact that the palace sends offerings:

shows us that the power of the palatial administration, which controlled a vast part of the economy, also extended to the cultic sector. Besides the cult personnel of certain sacral institutions, a number of sanctuaries therefore were also subject to the palace and thus to the central organs of the state's administration.¹⁰

Aravantinos comes to similar conclusions in his analysis of the relationship between the Mycenaean sanctuaries and the secular power of the *wanax*. He takes the position that:

the movement of goods and personnel in the texts to the "sacred" areas seems to indicate the central political power (the palaces) as the only significant economic and administrative factor in the kingdom. During the Mycenaean period, economy, industry, trade and religion, as well as other aspects of the economic, social and cultural life, were most probably controlled and monitored by the palace.¹¹

Many other scholars share these views. De Fidio, for instance, although she points out that we do not really know the "actual range of operation" of the palace, nonetheless says that the palace "made offerings to the divinities as a form of ideological control, which was intended to foster the consensus of its subjects."¹² In effect, she posits the sanctuaries as political extensions of the palaces. Even Palaima, who sees religion as having been extremely important to the Mycenaeans, privileges the *wanax* as the main religious representative of the

people and leaves the religious personnel mentioned on the tablets in relative obscurity.¹³ And most recently, Rougemont has made the straightforward argument that the provision of offerings constitutes evidence that the palace controlled the sanctuaries.¹⁴

Thus, the view that the religious sector was subjugated to the palace serves to keep the *wanax* and the palatial elite at the center of the Mycenaean stage by disallowing a possible competitor for political and economic power. Of course, there are no Linear B documents that seem to have been written by sanctuary personnel, which has made investigating their standing in Mycenaean society somewhat tricky, but we should not mistake this absence of written records as evidence for the dependence of the sanctuaries on the palace or as a reflection of the insignificance of the religious sector in general. Recent scholarship has emphasized how overwhelmingly verbal the administration of economic matters must have been in Mycenaean society.¹⁵ It is likely that the religious sector did not find it necessary to keep written records even though the textual evidence demonstrates that religious personnel did engage in various economic transactions.

Indeed, the apparent involvement of the religious sector in economic activities has been studied. It has long been noticed that there are several series of texts in which deities and religious personnel are associated with various forms of economically productive resources, such as perfumed oil (PY Un 267), flocks of sheep (KN D, KN D1, and KN Dp series), textile-manufacturing workshops (TH Of series), bronzeworking shops (PY Jn series), and the Northeast Building of Pylos, which served as a clearinghouse for raw materials and manual labor used in the manufacture of chariots and other weapons.¹⁶ But the treatment of these tablets and the conclusions that were generally drawn from them were affected by the idea that the religious sector was part of the palatial administrative system of redistribution. Generally, it was concluded that the economic resources found in association with the religious sphere were under the control of the palace, which serves to undermine further the possibility that the religious sphere might have found the means to support itself. For instance, Hiller proposes that there was an economic institution called the *oikos* (which is attested in the tablets, e.g., on TH Of 36.2 [*wo-ko-de*])

¹⁰Hiller 1981, 95 (my translation).

¹¹Aravantinos 1989–1990, 260–61; see also Aravantinos 1995, 618.

¹²de Fidio 2001, 17–18.

¹³Palaima 1995.

¹⁴Rougemont 2009, 144, 152.

¹⁵Pluta 2006; see also Bendall (2007, 270), who demonstrates that a great deal of the economic activity of the palace itself is just not recorded.

¹⁶Hofstra 2000; Bendall 2003.

that “seems to be a Mycenaean parallel to the oriental institution of the so-called ‘temple economy.’”¹⁷ But he hastens to say that the *oikos* system made up only a part of the Mycenaean economic organization and that the production branch was under the control of the palatial administration. Killen notes that the industrial activities associated with the names of divinities are to be “most plausibly understood as references to workgroups and workshops ‘owned’ by these divinities.”¹⁸ But he, too, pictures these assets as having been primarily owned and managed by the palaces and states that “it would be dangerous to assume that there was a fundamental and clear-cut distinction in the Mycenaean economy between a ‘religious’ sector and the secular section represented by the palace.”¹⁹

Palmer constituted a notable exception to this attitude. He was keen to demonstrate that the religious sector played a significant role in the Mycenaean economy. But unfortunately, he went entirely too far in his estimation of the magnitude of that role. For instance, he mentions in his discussion of the Mycenaean economy that “[t]he CATTLE tablets likewise reveal the *wanax* along with the chief religious personages as owners of extensive herds scattered over the two provinces of the kingdom.”²⁰ While it is true that the religious sector is recorded as holding flocks of sheep (and one herd of pigs), the number of flocks documented by the Linear B tablets at Knossos (possibly 11 totaling 500–600 animals) is very small compared with the tens of thousands of animals held by the palaces. The tablets therefore do not support Palmer’s implication that the two spheres were on the same level. His main proposal was that the Mycenaean economy should be characterized as a temple economy along the lines of Near Eastern temple economies. Clearly, this scenario is not supported by the tablets, and Palmer’s exaggerated views seem to have further entrenched Mycenologists in their views that the religious sector had barely any involvement in the economy at all, with the unfortunate result that the fact that sanctuaries did have flocks and other economic resources ascribed to them has been historically either downplayed or simply ignored.

Recently, however, scholars have been investigating the variety of exchange systems in which the My-

cenaean engaged, and it seems that there was much economic activity that did not involve the palace.²¹ For instance, it is now recognized that the general population did not acquire its staple goods through a palace-governed system of redistribution. This has left the door open for a more balanced assessment of the role of the religious sector, both in the economy and within Mycenaean society.

Let us return to offering tablets and the idea that the palaces, by redistributing goods to the sanctuaries, also controlled them politically. If we consider carefully the goods recorded on the tablets and the uses for which they were allocated, it appears that they actually could not have amounted to a real source of support for the sanctuaries. The oil and spices were probably used primarily in cultic contexts and would not have served to feed sanctuary personnel. The livestock, wine, and cheese listed on the PY Un tablets were collected for specific festivals and therefore were probably consumed by the entire community that participated in that festival. This would diminish the benefit of the goods for the religious personnel, and in any case, these foodstuffs were only meant to last for the duration of the festival. Furthermore, Killen has proposed that the allocations of grain sent to the religious sector on the PY Fn series were also earmarked for specific festivals, which he concludes probably ran for three- or five-day periods.²² Thus, like the food on the PY Un tablets, the grain and fig allocations of the PY Fn series were only meant to last for a limited period of time. Therefore, it seems unlikely that the sanctuaries could have derived a very significant proportion of their daily sustenance from the offerings sent to them by the palace. Bendall, who looks at this issue from the perspective of the palace, has confirmed that the offerings did not actually constitute a very large part of the palace’s economic budget.²³ Even though the religious disbursements very often constituted 70–100% of a commodity’s use as recorded in the tablets, the percentage was dramatically reduced, usually to about 5%, when she considered how much of a commodity was used for religious disbursements against the projected total of that commodity available to the palace.²⁴ Thus, it seems that the palaces were interested in fulfilling their ritual obligations and underwriting high-profile

¹⁷Hiller 1981, 103.

¹⁸Killen 1988, 295; 2008, 192 n. 74.

¹⁹Killen 1988, 288–89. Killen (2008, 176 n. 42) remarks before noting the economic resources attributed to deities within the Linear B records: “Nor is there anything to encourage belief in a powerful and independent ‘religious’ sector in the economy, comparable to temples at some periods in Mesopotamian history.”

²⁰Palmer 1963, 95.

²¹Morris 1986; Shelmerdine 1987, 337; Halstead 1988, 1992a, 1992b, 1999a; Laffineur 1995; Parkinson 1997, 1999; Killen 1998; Galaty 1999a, 1999b; Palmer 1999; Whitelaw 2001.

²²Killen 2001.

²³Bendall 2007; see also Bendall 2001.

²⁴Bendall 2007, 265–67.

festivals (which probably served to enhance their own reputations), but the palatial elite seem not to have been terribly concerned about providing daily sustenance to the sanctuary personnel. The sanctuaries, then, were most likely engaged in procuring, through various means, their own livelihoods.

Thus, “redistribution”—with the meaning that significant amounts of consumable goods were allocated to religious personnel to provide for their maintenance—does not accurately describe the relationship between the palaces and the religious sphere. Rather, if we discount the idea that the sanctuaries were supported by the palaces, then the main reason for assuming they were subjugated to the palaces is removed, and a more nuanced relationship between the two spheres may be posited. Also, the role of the sanctuary within its own community can be considered. Elsewhere, I have discussed those series of tablets in which economic resources or activities are recorded with members of the religious sector (deities, sanctuaries, or religious personnel), and I have detailed how religious personnel most likely worked to support themselves through, among other endeavors, farming, animal husbandry, textile manufacture, perfume manufacture, the bronzeworking industry, and the production of chariots.²⁵ To take one example, six Knossos D1 tablets place several flocks of sheep at the location *si-ja-du-we*, and the deity Potnia is recorded as their owner;²⁶ *si-ja-du-we* appears again on KN Am(2) 821, which records the activities of a man who is designated as both a priest and a shepherd. Taken together, these tablets seem to indicate that the sheep were associated with a sanctuary dedicated to Potnia and that the flocks were maintained in the interest of supporting the sanctuary and its religious personnel.²⁷ The sheep would have been useful in the production of many items, such as milk, cheese, meat, tools, shoes, other leather goods, and textiles. In managing these goods and the industrial manufacture associated with them, the religious personnel would naturally have become involved in the economic life of their communities. For instance, they most likely employed people in the village to help with the care of the animals and the production of the goods, and they must have exchanged any surplus they had for goods

they did not produce themselves. Halstead has also shown, based on the Knossian textual evidence, that these shepherds must have been substantial owners of private flocks of sheep. Because the palace was only concerned that the numerical strength of the flock be maintained, the herder—or perhaps in this case, the sanctuary—could have benefited from managing palatial flocks by exchanging animals from private into palatial flocks and vice versa.²⁸ It is possible, therefore, that the personnel associated with the sanctuary of *si-ja-du-we* and other sanctuaries like it may have been able to accumulate real material wealth from their endeavors. If so, then they would have been able to take on additional roles within the community, such as landlord and loan provider, which would have given them added prestige and influence that was not based on their role as intermediaries between the mortal and divine realms. Thus, it seems likely that the religious sector constituted an economic force in Mycenaean society.

Moreover, very often those with economic influence also came to wield political influence. For the smaller sanctuaries, such as *si-ja-du-we*, this influence may have been limited to the community in which it was situated. For more prestigious sanctuaries like *pa-ki-ja-ne*, it could have extended to the *wanax* himself. An indication that this was the case can be found in tablet Un 2 of Pylos. PY Un 2 records a list of foodstuffs similar to those found on other tablets (e.g., PY Un 718) that were destined to be consumed at a ceremonial or religious banquet. The heading of PY Un 2 states that the occasion of the banquet was the initiation of the *wanax*, and the location of the ceremony was *pa-ki-ja-ne* itself. It seems likely that the initiation ceremony conferred a symbolic stamp of divine approval on the *wanax*, an approval that most likely helped him maintain, or at least enhanced, his position as head of state.²⁹ PY Un 2 shows that this religious sanction was bestowed on the Pylian *wanax* specifically by the religious leaders at *pa-ki-ja-ne*. Thus, the religious personnel of *pa-ki-ja-ne* seem to have had a role to play in legitimizing and supporting the position of the *wanax* in Pylian society.³⁰ I do not mean to imply that the power would have been all on the side of the religious sector—by no means. This may have been a delicate and variable

²⁵ Lupack 1999, 2006, 2008a, 2008b, (forthcoming).

²⁶ Lupack 2006; 2008a, 100–3. For other discussions of *si-ja-du-we*, see Hiller 1981, 114–15.

²⁷ See Deger-Jalkotzy (1978, 89) for a similar conclusion.

²⁸ Halstead 1999b.

²⁹ See Palaima (1995) for the importance of the religious role of the *wanax* and Galaty (1999a, 79) for his proposal that

the *wanax* chose to use religion and ritual to legitimize his increased political domination rather than increasing his control over the staple economy.

³⁰ See Lupack (2008a, 44–9) for a full discussion of PY Un 2, *pa-ki-ja-ne*, and the possibility that *pa-ki-ja-ne* may have been located where Chora is today.

game of power.³¹ But I think we can at least say that the religious sector was not without some influence in Pylian politics.

THE MYCENAEAN DAMOS

The role of the *damos* in Mycenaean society and economy, like that of the religious sector, has been relatively neglected as a consequence of the palace-focused bias of traditional scholarship. Nonetheless, as has been recognized by some scholars,³² the textual evidence attests that the *damos* was a major economic and social force within Mycenaean society.³³ The term *damos* refers on the tablets to the political and geographic entities that are commonly called “districts” or “district centers.” At least 16 of these *damosi* are attested in the Pylian Linear B tablets (nine in the Hither province and seven in the Further province), each one of which had its own local officials. Pylos tablet Jn 829 shows that each *damos* had a mayor, *ko-re-te*, and a vice-mayor, *po-ro-ko-re-te*,³⁴ while the affairs of the separate provinces were managed by a *da-mo-ko-ro*, who on PY On 300 heads a list of the *damosi* of the Further province. The *da-mo-ko-ro* was appointed by the *wanax* (PY Ta 711), but Shelmerdine proposes that he may have been chosen from the local *damosi* hierarchies.³⁵ He seems to have been a provincial governor whose job was to oversee and perhaps act as a mediator in the interactions between the palace and the *damosi*.³⁶

The tablets also give us a set of people, called the *ko-to-no-o-ko*, who seem to have been in charge of the management of the land that belonged to the *damos*. The word *ko-to-no-o-ko* represents either the singular or plural of a compound formation with κτοίνα and ἔχω as its two elements, and thus it can refer either to a single person or a group of people who possess land. That the men called *ko-to-no-o-ko* held an elevated status within the *damos* is indicated by the fact that many of them are also designated as *te-re-ta*, a title used for important officials in the Pylian realm. Several *ko-to-no-o-ko* are also recorded on PY Ep 301.2a, 8–14 as personally holding (*e-ke-qe*) *ke-ke-me-na* land in the district/*damos* of *pa-ki-ja-ne*.³⁷ Lejeune points out that the importance

of the *ko-to-no-o-ko* within the *damos* is underlined by the fact that PY Ep 301 is the first tablet of the Ep series.³⁸ Another clue to their role within the *damos* is provided by the tablets PY Eb 297 and PY Ep 704. PY Eb 297 was written as one of a set of shorter tablets that were used in the final compilation of the information found in the longer documents of the Ep series. Note here that on PY Eb 297.2, the scribe records the *ko-to-no-o-ko* as one of the two protagonists involved in a dispute over the classification of a particular piece of land (the other being, significantly, the priestess of *pa-ki-ja-ne*).

PY Eb 297:

1. i-je-re-ja , e-ke-qe , e-u-ke-to-qe , e-to-ni-jo , e-ke-e , te-o
2. ko-to-no-o-ko-de , ko-to-na-o , ke-ke-me-na-o , o-na-ta , e-ke-e
3. GRA 3 T 9 V 3

In contrast, on PY Ep 704.5 (shown below), which constitutes the final version of the record on PY Eb 297, the word *damos* is used instead of *ko-to-no-o-ko*.³⁹

PY Ep 704.5–6:

5. e-ri-ta , i-je-re-ja , e-ke , e-u-ke-to-qe , e-to-ni-jo , e-ke-e , te-o , da-mo-de-mi , pa-si , ko-to-na-o ,
6. ke-ke-me-na-o , o-na-to , e-ke-e , to-so pe-mo GRA 3 T 9

Eritha the priestess holds, and she claims that she holds for the deity, *e-to-ni-jo* land, but the *damos* says that she holds an *o-na-to* of *ke-ke-me-na* land; so much seed: GRA 3 T 9.

This interchangeability of the two words indicates that the landholders designated as *ko-to-no-o-ko* should be identified with the *damos* and must somehow be a part of it. Deger-Jalkotzy proposes that they were “a group of /*damos*/ members . . . which disposed of *ke-ke-me-na* estates,”⁴⁰ while Lejeune proposes that the *ko-to-no-o-ko* constituted a sort of *conseil d’administration*.⁴¹ The *ko-to-no-o-ko*, then, seem to have been the members of a kind of managerial board that directed the affairs

³¹ Another piece of this puzzle that must be considered is that there are a few men (e.g., *a-pi-me-de*, **we-da-ne-u*) who seem to have been highly placed in both the religious and secular hierarchies. This makes sense in that prominence in one area of society could lead to prominence in another. There is evidence, though, e.g., in the dispute between the priestess *e-ri-ta* and the *damos* on PY Ep 704 (which will be considered in more detail later in this article), that the religious sector did constitute a relatively separate sphere from the one governed by the *wanax*.

³² Lejeune 1972; Deger-Jalkotzy 1983; Shelmerdine 2008, 133–34.

³³ Shelmerdine 2008, 133–34.

³⁴ See Killen 1998, 20.

³⁵ Shelmerdine 2008, 133.

³⁶ Carlier 1984, 98–9.

³⁷ The word *ko-to-no-o-ko* should probably also be understood in lines 3–6 (Bennett 1983, 45).

³⁸ Lejeune 1972, 144.

³⁹ This was pointed out by Jones 1966, 246; see also Deger-Jalkotzy 1983, 90–1.

⁴⁰ Deger-Jalkotzy 1983, 90–1, 94–7.

⁴¹ Lejeune 1972, 144.

of the *damos*. Certainly, the representative role the *ko-to-no-o-ko* play in the dispute with the priestess *e-ri-ta* shows that it had the power to negotiate on behalf of the collective *damos*.

That this dispute occurred at all is also of great significance for our view of the *damos*, its *ko-to-no-o-ko*, and, for that matter, the religious sphere. The basic point is that the *damos* itself had the authority to act as a coherent legal entity. The same can be said of the priestess *e-ri-ta*, who acts as the representative of her sanctuary *pa-ki-ja-ne*. In PY Ep 704.5–6, *e-ri-ta* asserts her claim on behalf of (most likely) the deity Potnia that the land should be classified as an *e-to-ni-jo*, which was a privileged piece of land, presumably free of obligations,⁴² rather than as an *o-na-to*, or a regular leasehold that would have been subject to the usual taxes. Deger-Jalkotzy also argues that the obligation to pay a certain amount of tax to the palace was shared communally by everyone in the *damos*.⁴³ Presuming that taxes were handled collectively, the burden of the loss of *e-ri-ta*'s produce would have to be shared among the rest of the members of the *damos* when it came time to collect the amount expected by the palace.⁴⁴ This prospect of heavier burdens for each of its members must have been what prompted the *damos* to object. The *ko-to-no-o-ko*, then, were representing the *damos* in an effort to protect its members' collective interests in the land that they administered and, presumably, from which they all benefited. *E-ri-ta*, however, was trying to do the same for her own constituency. Thus, both the *damos* and the religious sphere had the wherewithal to act as independent legal entities.

Furthermore, it seems that all the land of the district *pa-ki-ja-ne* recorded by the palace belonged to the *damos*. This point has often been taken as a given for the Eb/Ep series, because its *ke-ke-me-na* land is described as (for the most part) either "from" or "in" the *damos* (*pa-ro da-mo*).⁴⁵ In contrast, the *ki-ti-me-na* land found on the Eo/En series (which, like the Eb/Ep series, also records the land in the district of *pa-ki-ja-ne*) has usually been considered to be under the direct control of the *wanax*. It was from this land that the *wanax* was thought to collect the produce he needed to re-

distribute to the palatial residents. This is because *ki-ti-me-na* land is leased out by officials called *te-re-ta*, who have often been associated with the palace. Recently, however, Killen has come to the view, based on work done by de Fidio, that the land recorded in the Eo/En land tenure tablets was owned by the *damos* rather than the palace.⁴⁶ This conclusion was suggested by the most plausible set of equivalencies between the agents on the tablets PY Un 718, PY Er 312, and PY Er 880, which show that the *damos* and the *te-re-ta* should be equated with each other.⁴⁷ This indicates that the land of *pa-ki-ja-ne* found on the Eo/En series should, like that of the Eb/Ep series, be considered to be held not by the palace but by the *damos*. (This, by the way, also implies that the *te-re-ta* most likely owed their service to the *damos* rather than to the palace.)⁴⁸

This is significant because *pa-ki-ja-ne* is thought to have been located very close to Pylos, and if a *damos* so close to the palace managed to retain managerial control of its lands, then certainly those *damoi* farther afield must also have maintained their independence. Another significant point is that with land comes an economic life—in addition to basic crops, it would also support various animals that would have produced meat, milk, and other useful products such as wool, horns, and skins. Also, land requires laborers to farm it and other workers and craftsmen to make the goods that can be manufactured from its produce—the tools, textiles, leather goods, baskets, ceramic vessels, and the like. Some of the goods must have been used by those on the land, but any surpluses could have been traded for whatever was not locally produced. In short, the people of the *damoi* must have been engaging in various economic activities that were not governed by, or even of any interest to, the palatial administration. And I think that it was these activities that most likely occupied the time and thought of most of the inhabitants of the Mycenaean *damoi*.

Also, it is very likely that the land found on the tablets represented but a small percentage of the land that belonged to the *damoi*. For those *damoi* that were not within the immediate vicinity of the palace, this must certainly have been the case, but it may also have been

⁴² Deger-Jalkotzy 1983, 100.

⁴³ Deger-Jalkotzy 1983, 91, 99–100.

⁴⁴ For a full account of the Mycenaean taxation system and the theory that the taxes were assessed in a top-down manner, see Shelmerdine 1973, 1989.

⁴⁵ Killen 1998, 20.

⁴⁶ de Fidio 1977, 114–18, 145–61; 1987, 142–47; Killen 1998; 2008, 164.

⁴⁷ Killen 1998, 1999.

⁴⁸ Carlier (1987) also comes to this conclusion based on the

tablet associations of the *te-re-ta*. Only once is a *te-re-ta* associated with the *wanax*: on PY En 467.5/Eo 371, the *te-re-ta* named *pi-ri-ta-wo* is described as *wa-na-ka-te-ro*. But, Carlier reasons, *pi-ri-ta-wo* was probably given this designation because he was also a potter, and the word *wa-na-ka-te-ro* in all other cases is only applied to artisans. In contrast, all nine of the Pylian tablets that record *te-re-ta* and three of those found at Knossos are concerned with land tenure. Therefore, Carlier reasons that they were associated with the land, not with the *wanax*.

true for a *damos* such as *pa-ki-ja-ne*. Carlier posits the existence of such land based on the fact that most of the En and Ep land was being leased out, while presumably, there was a substantial amount of *damos* land that was reserved for the use and support of the members of the *damos*.⁴⁹ Archaeological evidence cited by Halstead supports this view. Halstead found that the wide range of cereal and pulse crops found at palatial and nonpalatial Late Bronze Age sites are not represented within the grain records of the Linear B texts. He has therefore proposed that “textually attested palatial farming represents only a part of overall regional farming.”⁵⁰ In other words, there must have been large tracts of land that were not recorded on the Linear B tablets. Killen also concludes that the grain needed for the general upkeep of the palace must have been grown on *damos* land and that the palace would sometimes loan out its own oxen “to assist with the cultivation of *damos* land (perhaps on the basis that the *damos* would contribute part of the harvest to the palace in return for its help).”⁵¹ Such an exchange would not be necessary if the palace owned all the land itself.

That the *damos* constituted a corporate body whose leaders acted on behalf of the community in areas other than the management of land is also shown by the Linear B tablets. For instance, PY Un 718.7 records that the *damos* provided an offering for Poseidon alongside other prominent individuals, such as *e-ke-ra₂-wo* (which may be the personal name of the *wanax*⁵²) and the *lawagetas* (who appears to be the second in charge in the Mycenaean palatial hierarchy). A similar situation is seen on PY Cn 608, where the *o-pi-da-mi-jo*, or, as Killen translates, “the people in the *damos*,” of each of the nine districts of the Hither province are to fatten the pigs that are recorded against their names.⁵³ Palaima has proposed that these pigs were probably meant for sacrificial purposes.⁵⁴ Another such example is found on KN C 902, which records a list of men, six of whom are identified as mayors with the title *ko-re-te*. All the men are recorded with single bulls, which may indicate that the bulls were being contributed for a sacrifice. As a last example, the *ko-re-te* and *po-ro-ko-re-te* of PY Jn 829 were responsible for collecting certain amounts of bronze from their constituents so it could be made into spears and arrowheads (presumably by

the palatial administration). Thus, the *damos* acted as a corporate body in affairs other than those that were concerned with land, principally in procuring and providing religious offerings.

It seems, then, that the *damos* had their own mechanisms for governing their people and managing their resources. Thus, the *damos*, although they were expected to pay taxes to the palace and were therefore in a way subordinate to its authority, nonetheless seem to have functioned independently. Lejeune concluded that the *damos* was a fairly complex institution that would have been responsible not only for satisfying its financial obligations to the palace but also for ensuring the subsistence of its personnel, procuring (through barter) whatever was needed by the collective and providing and arranging the necessary offerings to the sanctuaries.⁵⁵ Deger-Jalkotzy thinks the *damos* had a greater presence in the Mycenaean economy than the evidence of the tablets can demonstrate, stating, “one suspects that the communities of the settlement called /*damos*/ in the individual districts were corporate bodies with a wider sphere of activity in property rights, and indeed also in economic activity, than the texts generally let us know.”⁵⁶ Perhaps, as Shelmerdine has suggested, the *damos* leaders had been, in the days before the *wanax* of Pylos came to hold his supreme position in Messenia, the highest authority for each of the districts.⁵⁷ As the power of the *wanax* grew, it began to overshadow that of the separate *damos* leaders, and in particular, because of their close proximity to the palace at Pylos, the *damos* leaders of *pa-ki-ja-ne*. Hence, the *wanax* had the power to tax the land and perhaps even to commandeer some of it for his own purposes. I think it is possible that the root cause of the dispute between the priestess *e-ri-ta* and the *damos* was that the *wanax* had taken a portion of the *damos* land and presented it as a religious offering to Potnia and her sanctuary at *pa-ki-ja-ne*. *E-to-ni-jo* land, then, could simply refer to land that the *wanax* had classified as free of taxes and had given as a gift to someone. It is curious, though, that only three examples of *e-to-ni-jo* land are recorded in the tablets. If the word did refer specifically to land reclassified by the *wanax* as privileged, then perhaps the *wanax* did not often make gifts of this kind. The *damos*’ protest may indicate why: stepping on the *damos*’ col-

⁴⁹ Carlier 1987, 72.

⁵⁰ Halstead 1999a, 38; see also Halstead 1992b, 64.

⁵¹ Killen 1998, 23.

⁵² Palaima 1995.

⁵³ Killen 1998, 20 n. 3. Killen mentions that Chadwick (1976, 76) had previously proposed that *o-pi-da-mi-jo* meant “those in charge of the *damos*.” Killen prefers “the people of the *damos*,”

because on PY An 830, “where it is used as a description of no fewer than sixty *qo-u-ko-ro*, oxherds,” it would be difficult to see the word as applying to only those in charge of the *damos*.

⁵⁴ Palaima 1989, 117–18.

⁵⁵ Lejeune 1972, 142.

⁵⁶ Deger-Jalkotzy 1983, 90.

⁵⁷ Shelmerdine 2008, 134.

lective toes may not have been without consequence, even where the *wanax* was concerned.

CONCLUSION

Distancing the religious sector from the palatial system of redistribution has a significant impact on our view of Mycenaean society. It allows us to see the religious sector not simply as a subjugated and passive arm of the palatial administration but rather as an independent player in Mycenaean economics and politics.⁵⁸ In the same way, pulling the *damos* out from under the shadow of the palace and recognizing that it did not exist simply to supply the palace's needs (i.e., as another arm of the palatial system of redistribution) allows us to think of the local administrations as fairly independent groups of people who were busy managing the affairs of their communities. Although each *damos* was subordinate to the *wanax* in that it had to provide him with the required taxes, the internal economies of the *damosi* seem not to have been managed by the palace. Thus, the local elite must have had a great deal of authority in the economic and political activities that went on within their towns and villages. It is also likely that the *damosi* interacted with one another in their business transactions, which sets up another set of social and political interactions that have not been previously considered. It also seems that the political interactions between the *damosi* and the *wanax* may not have always been so straightforward. The *damosi* leaders did have to fulfill their obligations to the *wanax*, but the *wanax* may also have been in the position of having to cultivate or even win over the loyalty of those local leaders. Perhaps we may now think more in terms of there having been (at least) three foci of power in Mycenaean society: the palace, the *damos*, and the religious sphere,⁵⁹ each of which had its own fairly complex economic and political systems and hierarchies of elites to manage them, whose members aspired to get the most out of those systems for their constituents and, perhaps, for themselves.

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⁵⁸ I have proposed a similar role within the Mycenaean economy for the "collectors" (Lupack 2006), who have a position comparable with that of the religious sector on many of the same series of tablets mentioned in relation to the religious sector's involvement in economic activities. I do not bring them in here as a separate focus of power along the

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same lines as the palace, *damos*, and religious sector, but I do not doubt that they, too, had a great influence within the Mycenaean economy.

⁵⁹ Shelmerdine 1999, 23. I am grateful to Shelmerdine for first suggesting and discussing this possibility with me, particularly with reference to the *damos*.

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