

CONTENTS

Table of Contents	v
Foreword	vii
Chapter 11. Y. DUHOUX, <i>Interpreting the Linear B records: some guidelines</i>	1
Chapter 12. T.G. PALAIMA, <i>Scribes, scribal hands and palaeography</i> . . .	33
Chapter 13. J. BENNET, <i>The geography of the Mycenaean kingdoms</i> . . .	137
Chapter 14. S. HILLER, <i>Mycenaean religion and cult</i>	169
Chapter 15. J.L. GARCÍA RAMÓN, <i>Mycenaean onomastics</i>	213
Chapter 16. † C.J. RUIJGH, <i>Mycenaean and Homeric language</i>	253
Indexes	299
1. General Index	299
2. Index of Linear B Texts	315
3. Index of Linear B Words	319
4. Index of Linear B Undeciphered Syllabograms	329
5. Index of Linear B Abbreviations/Ideograms	329
6. Index of Alphabetic Greek Words.	331

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A Companion to Linear B
Mycenaean Greek Texts and their World

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CHAPTER 14

MYCENAEAN RELIGION AND CULT*

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SUMMARY

§14.1. Introductory remarks	170
§14.1.1. The nature of the texts	170
§14.1.2. Aspects of methodology	171
§14.2. A tentative classification of the Linear B religious texts	173
§14.2.1. Offerings of agricultural and industrial products	173
§14.2.2. Offerings of livestock	176
§14.2.3. State banquets	177
§14.2.4. Offerings and rations for religious festivities	179
§14.2.5. Cult personnel	180
§14.2.6. Economic involvements of the religious sector	181
§14.2.7. The 'holy' district of <i>pa-ki-ja-ne</i>	182
§14.3. Religious terms and their categories	182
§14.3.1. Recipients of religious offerings	183
§14.3.1.1. Major Olympic deities	183
§14.3.1.2. Minor deities known from the Classical period	185
§14.3.1.3. Deities unknown in the Classical period	187
§14.3.1.4. Divine pairs	189
§14.3.1.5. Sacred animals? Theriomorphic deities?	190
§14.3.2. Cult-places and sanctuaries	195
§14.3.3. Festivals, rituals and month names	199
§14.3.4. Cult officials and cult organization	200
§14.4. Some general conclusions	203
§14.5. References for Chapter 14	208

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§14.1. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

§14.1.1. *The nature of the texts*

The decipherment of Linear B and the intensive study of the Mycenaean texts that followed yield significant insights into several aspects of the religion of Late Bronze Age Greece. Though we cannot say that this led to a complete change in the way in which we understand (or speculate about) this topic, we now move on much firmer ground. We may start with an example: the old view that the god Dionysus was a newcomer to Greece (possibly from Thrace) was challenged when – in the fifties – the names *di-wo-nu-so*, *di-wo-nu-so-jo*, i.e. *Diwonūsos*, appeared in two Pylos tablets (Xa 102 and Xa 1419). Unfortunately the two texts were fragmentary and there was no absolute certainty that we dealt with a god. However, in 1990 the appearance in Crete of *di-wo-nu-so* written on a new tablet from Khania (Gq 5) next to]*di-wę*,]*Diweī* ‘to Zeus’, confirmed the antiquity of the god Dionysus on the Greek scene. The divine nature of the *di-wo-nu-so* mentioned on PY Xa 102 has meanwhile been confirmed by MELENA’s (2001, 36) join of Xa 102 with PY Ea 107 which yielded an almost complete text, now labelled PY Ea 102 and read as *di-wo-nu-so-jo e-ka-ra* GRA 2 T 6 [, *Diwonūsojo eskharāi*. This clearly indicates that a plot of land (measured in quantities of wheat) is linked with ‘the hearth (altar) of Dionysus’.

However, our understanding of many aspects, including some central features, of Mycenaean religion and cult is still limited and in many regards unsatisfactory. The Linear B documents concern the economic administration of the palace in its various aspects. Therefore, there are no religious texts in the strict sense of the word – no prayers, hymns, manuals of religious instruction. All that we can use are the records of economic transactions – gifts to gods or sanctuaries, contributions for religious rituals, State banquets, etc. They are written on small clay tablets of ephemeral use that mostly contain very few data both about the recipient(s) and the kind and quantity of the commodities offered.

In addition the records that list palace personnel or provide for their subsistence sometimes mention titles of religious dignitaries. From these different types of documents we learn the names and/or titles of some deities, festivals, priests and other religious personnel, sanctuaries and cult places as well as of agricultural products and other objects that are given as offerings and/or subsistence rations. The evidence is by no means sufficient for a full reconstruction

documents; we have no ‘private’ documents that reflect popular religion (*Volksreligion*). Secondly, all conclusions can only be incomplete and provisional since they are mostly based on extrapolations from the restricted number of relevant terms and names available in the few texts at our disposal.

Because of the inadequacy of the documentation, Linear B scholarship has necessarily concentrated on specific aspects of Mycenaean religion, such as theonyms, or on the few tablets of outstanding interest such as KN Fp 1, KN V 52, PY Tn 316 (see *Companion* 1, §9.6, 9.17, 9.38) or MY Fu 711. No comprehensive study has been written or could be written. Consequently, the monograph by M. GÉRARD-ROUSSEAU correctly entitled *Les mentions religieuses dans les tablettes mycéniennes* (Rome, 1968) is largely an annotated commentary on single words and names thought to be of religious nature — this book is now mostly out-of-date and should only be used in conjunction with F. AURA JORRO’s *Diccionario Micénico* (Madrid, 1985/1993). Similarly, J. CHADWICK’s contribution to A. MORPURGO DAVIES’ and Y. DUHOUX’s 1984 survey, entitled *What do we know about Mycenaean Religion?*, mainly reviewed the names of gods and goddesses, cult functionaries, religious festivities and various types of offerings. In an attempt to clarify the basic methodological problems Chadwick ended his study with an ‘appeal for greater caution in all discussions of this difficult subject’ (CHADWICK 1985, 201).

In the last fifteen years the situation has not drastically changed and Chadwick’s warning has lost nothing of its validity. However two new and important pieces of evidence have now appeared: firstly, the sealings found in Thebes in 1982 document the existence of State banquets (cf. §14.2.3) and record the items sent for this purpose; secondly, the tablets found in Thebes in 1993–95 have raised lively and extensive discussions (cf. e.g. §14.3.1.5).

§14.1.2. *Aspects of methodology*

The method used to identify the tablets which contain religious terms is relatively simple (see also this volume, Chapter 11).

First, we look for unambiguous religious terms known from the Classical period, mainly basic words like *te-o*, *thehos* ‘god’, *te-o-jo do-e-ro/a*, *thehojo dohelos/ā* ‘god’s servant’, *i-je-ro*, *i-je-re-u*, *i-je-re-ja*, *hieron*, *hiereus*, *hiereja*, ‘holy/sanctuary’, ‘priest’, ‘priestess’; or theonyms like *di-we*, *Diwei* ‘for Zeus’, *po-se-da-o-ne*, *Poseidāhōnei* ‘for Poseidon’, etc.; or terms for offerings such

The *internal context* is the immediate context of the tablet, e.g. the kind and quantity of the commodities (possibly offerings) mentioned or the presence of other religious items such as sanctuaries, cult personnel, religious festivals, etc. A good example is provided by tablet KN Fp 1(1) where we find clear theonyms (*di-we*, *Diwei* 'for Zeus', *pa-si-te-o-i*, *pansi theoihi* 'for all gods', etc.), sanctuaries (*Daidaleionde* 'to the [sanctuary called] Daidaleion') and also a clear instance of a female cult functionary (*a-ne-mo i-je-re-ja*, *Anemōn hierejāi* 'for the priestess of the Winds'). Since the whole tablet is clearly a record of offerings and their recipients, we may consider, by analogy, as religious designations the other terms like, e.g., *pa-de*, *qe-ra-si-ja* and *47-*da-de*, which are structurally parallel to the clear cultic designations, even if they have no match in alphabetic Greek.

In some cases word formation can also give useful hints. For instance, we often come across words suffixed with *-te-ri-jo* or *-i-jo* (the latter mostly added to gods' names). In alphabetic Greek many names of festivals or sanctuaries show these terminations, e.g. the festivals called *Anthestēria*, *Pluntēria*, etc., or sanctuaries such as *Olumpieion*, *Hēraion*, *Asklēpieion*, etc. We can then assume that comparable Mycenaean terms, if found in religious contexts, are festival names or sanctuaries. As festival names we may quote e.g. *po-re-no-zo-te-ri-ja* (the festivity of the 'girding of persons offered to a deity'?), *to-no-e-ke-te-ri-jo* (the festivity of 'pouring libations at/from the throne'?), *re-ke-to-ro-te-ri-jo* (*lekhestrōtērion* 'the spreading of the bed'); as sanctuaries cf. *di-wi-jo(-de)*, *po-si-da-i-jo(-de)*, *da-da-re-jo(-de)* which designate the sanctuaries of Zeus (*Diwion*), Poseidon (*Posidāhion*) and of (or 'built by'?) Daidalus.

We call *external context* what is usually called 'series' or 'set', i.e. a coherent administrative document consisting of several tablets written by the same scribe, showing the same scribal layout, the same physical condition and found at the same spot. This is the case of, e.g., the Knossos Fp(1) set which consists of ca 10 tablets contained in a chest which was found in a room at the southern end of the palace's west wing. All these texts have the same shape, i.e. they are so called palm leaf tablets and are written by a single hand (h. 138). They all register quantities (allocations) of olive oil (offerings) in comparable small amounts — another feature that is characteristic of offering tablets. On the other hand, not all series/sets that include religious terms are necessarily religious tablets. Thus, to give a further example, the Pylion E- series in which we repeatedly meet religious designations for persons — for instance *te-o-jo do-e-rola*, *thehojo dohelos/ā* 'god's servant', *i-je-re-ja*, *hiereja* 'priestess', *ka-ra-wi-po-ro*, *klāwiphoros* 'key-bearer' (female functionary with religious obligations) — as well as the

find *ka-ke-we po-ti-ni-ja-we-jo*, *khalkēwes potniawejoi* 'bronze-smiths belonging to Potnia', i.e. we deal with personnel which fulfils an industrial task but belongs to a goddess. In conclusion, in order to identify and interpret the tablets with religious content it is important to start with terms whose meaning is certain and with contexts which clearly indicate religious matters; it is only from this starting point that we may dare to move to more speculative fields exploiting intertextual comparison. Etymological observations, though always of interest, are a less secure guide and can only be used with caution.

§14.2. A TENTATIVE CLASSIFICATION OF THE LINEAR B RELIGIOUS TEXTS

It is useful to provide a preliminary classification of the texts which are relevant to the organization of cult. We may distinguish six different categories, five of which are immediately linked to religious aims and have a specific administrative character, while a sixth class, though not directly connected with religion, is marked by the occasional inclusion of terms with religious connotation. The six classes proposed are as follows: offerings of agricultural and industrial products (§14.2.1); offerings of livestock (§14.2.2); State banquets (§14.2.3); offerings and rations for religious festivities (§14.2.4); cult personnel (§14.2.5); economic involvements of the religious sector (§14.2.6). As is obvious, by far the most numerous group of religious texts is that which deals with offerings (cf. WEILHARTNER 2005).

§14.2.1. Offerings of agricultural and industrial products

We include in this category all texts that list offerings sent to deities or cult-places either on a routine basis (monthly, etc.) or for special occasions (festivals, etc.). This group of tablets has by far the largest number of theonyms, names of cult-places, festivals, etc.

The texts mainly record agricultural products such as olives (*NI*), olive oil (*OLE*), honey (*ME+RI*), barley (*HORD*), flour or spelt (*FAR*), spices (*CYP*, *AROM*, etc.), but also wool (*LANA*) and textiles (*146, *166+*WE*), as well as some commodities expressed by the unidentified ideograms *170, *171, *190. Whereas most of these series which deal with agricultural produce tend to record one product only,¹ the

KN Fs series is different because of its combination of several kinds of food-stuff including barley (HORD), figs (*NI*), oil (OLE), flour or spelt (FAR), wine (VIN) and occasionally also honey (*ME+RI*).

Apart from textiles, the precise use of which remains unknown (cloths for cult-images? or robes for attendants at religious festivities?), there is a more striking example of manufactured product offered to gods: the gold vessels recorded on PY Tn 316 (see *Companion* 1, §9.38) as offers for various deities and/or sanctuaries. They are unique since, when we find other vessels mentioned in offering tablets in connection with liquid commodities such as honey (KN Fs 8 v., Gg series) or wine (KN Uc 160, if religious), these are simply (clay) containers and serve to indicate the quantities of liquids.

Usually the quantities mentioned for the various types of offerings are modest. Thus, e.g., the oil rations recorded by the KN Fp tablets mostly note amounts of about 10 l.; they rarely amount to 20 l. or so and only exceptionally reach or surpass 30 l. Within the 'mixed' KN Fs series the quantities normally offered are of around 9.6 l. of barley (HORD), 4.8 l. of figs (*NI*), 0.8 l. of olive oil (OLE), 1.6 l. of flour or spelt (FAR), 1.6 l. of wine (VIN) and 0.4 l. of honey (*ME+RI*). Within the KN Gg(1) and (3) sets only one or two amphorae of honey are given to deities or sanctuaries. At Pylos the normal quantities of olive oil documented in the Fr tablets range from 0.8 l. to 30.4 l., with the exception of two unusually high quantities for which see below. Annual amounts of barley contributions (*not* offerings!) to Poseidon (and some human recipients) which are listed in the PY Es tablets and were made by several functionaries differ widely: thus *ka-ra-i* (MN) who is at the lower end of the contributions, gives only 19.2 l., while *a-re-ku-tu-ru-wo* (MN; *Alektrūwōn* — in Classical Greek, this name meant 'Cock') who is at the upper end is committed to providing no less than 220.8 l.

According to the PY Fn series the rations supplied to officials who took part in religious feasts, some of which presumably lasted several days, consisted of varying quantities of barley (HORD) and figs (*NI*) — from 3.2 l. to 64 l. of barley (for individuals; groups are granted multiple allocations) and from 9.6 l. to 96 l. of figs. The quantities of olive oil recorded in the PY Fr series show still greater variation: they range from 0.4 l. for the 'Trishero' *ti-ri-se-ro-e* (GN; *Trishērōhei*; Fr 1204) to 160 l. for the 'Divine Mother' (*ma-te-re-te-i-ja*, *mātērei thehiāi*; Fr 1202; for possible interpretations cf. §14.3.1.1, 14.4). The quantities of wine (VIN) in PY Gn 428, which probably belongs to

on the recipients' status than on the period of time for which these contributions were provided.

Manufactured items normally also occur in low numbers: five or fewer pieces of textiles (indicated by the ideograms *146 and *166+*WE*) are apparently offered for religious purposes according to PY Mb 1366 and 1402, whereas on the KN M and Oa texts usually one piece is recorded. Again, however, the occasion of the offering and the nature of the recipient have to be considered. There are at least two exceptional cases of unusually high numbers of textiles offered to deities: 22[pieces are listed on KN Oa 745 for the Lady of the Labyrinth (*da-pu₂-ri[-to-jo]* *po-ti-ni-ja*, *D/Laburin[thojo]* *potniāi*) and no less than 37 units of the textile *146 are mentioned on PY Un 6 (on that text cf. below §14.2.3) in connection with a State banquet (cf. also NOSCH – PERNA 2001).

What part of the total agricultural assessment concerned the religious sector? The question has been discussed by L. Bendall in a useful and profound study. About the ratio of the overall olive oil production to the share devoted to religious purposes at Knossos and Pylos, she concluded that, despite the relatively 'large number of tablets on which offerings are recorded', which give 'the impression that large amounts of palatial commodities were allocated for religious purposes', 'the figures do not bear this out.' 'On the whole,' according to her results, 'it might be accurate to say that *ca* 4-7% of palatial resources were earmarked for religious offerings' (BENDALL 2001, 449; see further BENDALL 2007).

There are, it must be added, also exceptions to the rule that offerings were normally modest: thus, e.g., KN Fp 5504 mentions 288 l. of olive oil as (being or having been) sent to the place (sanctuary?) *a-ka-ta-ra-te-so-de*; on KN G 7509 no fewer than 576 l. of cyperus (*pyc+o*) are recorded next to *di-ka-ta-de* [*Diktānde*] 'to Dikte') and on KN E 842 we find 2342.4 l. *ōliyes* (*OLIV*) in connection with the entry *te-o-i me-a-de* (*thehoihi*, *me-a-de* 'for the gods, to the site of M.'). Comparable to these cases are, as already stated, the 22[cloths obviously made of linen (*ri-no*, *linon*) and of the *wehanos*-type (*we-a₂-no*; described ideographically as '*ri* *166+*WE*') which are mentioned next to *da-pu₂-ri[-to-jo]* [*po-ti-ni-ja*, *D/Laburin[thojo]* *potniāi* 'for the Lady of the Labyrinth'; and also the 37 textile pieces of the *146 type listed on PY Un 6, which belongs to the type of the 'mixed' records characteristic of State banquets ('mixed' means that these lists contain several different commodities). The general impression suggested by these texts is that they refer to overall amounts going

§14.2.2. Offerings of livestock

The tablets which record the various kinds of commodities to be consumed at State banquets (cf. below §14.2.3) tell us that sacrificial animals were sent from rural places to the palace and, perhaps (via the palace?) also to other local cult places in the provinces. Accordingly it is possible to identify some groups of tablets which clearly contain the records of animals meant for sacrifice (GODART 1999). These are, at least occasionally, described as *sa-pa-ka-te-ri-ja*, *sphaktēria* 'sacrificial' (e.g. KN C[2] 941) or as *i-je-ro/a*, *hieron/a* 'sacred' (TH Wu series). Contrary to our category 1 (above §14.2.1) these tablets usually contain no indication of date and/or recipient. Apart from direct indications such as *sphaktēria* (or the abbreviated form '*sa*') and *hiera* it is, as just stated, primarily the low numbers, as opposed to much higher quantities for the herds, and only rarely the context, which are characteristic of this class.

From our point of view, it emerges that for the central administration at the time when these tablets were redacted the date and site were not important; obviously the purpose of these texts was to make sure that sacrificial animals were available when required. This was achieved monitoring the persons who had to deliver them (or had already delivered them?) and keeping on record the number of animals which had to be provided.

The KN C(2) and C(3) series are important tablets which record the delivery of sacrificial animals to the palace. KN C(2) seems to register animals (sheep OVIS and goats CAP) to be delivered by high status persons while KN C(3) seems to concentrate on local functionaries who are obliged to supply pigs (SUS). The same class of functionaries is expected to deliver (or to have delivered?) one bovid (BOS) per person together with 12 items of an unidentified commodity (*ne* *170; *ne-wa* 'young, small') on KN C 902. At Pylos this category of texts is represented mainly by the tablets Cn 3 and Cn 608 (cf. Cn 1197, 1287). Thus it seems that both at Knossos and Pylos sacrificial animals were levied from high-ranked individuals (cf. KN C 954 and PY Cn 1287) as well as on a more local and communal level (cf. KN C 902 and PY Cn 3, 608).

As we saw above, it is only in a few cases that we are told something about the recipients; exceptionally in KN C 394 a sacrificial (*sa*; cf. above) bull and one (?) *raṃ* are recorded in the line above *pa-ja-o-ne* / *pa-de*], where the first word might perhaps (??) be a variant of *pa-ja-wo-ne* *Pajawōnei* 'for Paiaon' attested on KN V 52.2 (cf. the alphabetic Greek epithet of Apollo *Paiāōn*), and *pa-de*] may be the god *pa-de* attested elsewhere at Knossos but unknown from

presumably the 'priest of Zeus', who is also a kind of inspector (?) of *me-za-na* (GN, gen./dat., *Meṛ'ānās/i*, possibly the equivalent of Classical Greek *Messēnē*, both a goddess and a place-name). We may then, by implication, conclude that, according to the interpretation favoured here, the local goddess (?) **Meṛ'ānā* was the recipient of (sacrificial) bulls and that the palace had ordered some local military contingents to send these bulls to the priest of Zeus (cf. also Classical Greek 'Zeus Eleuther') for her (or for sacrificing to her) (cf. KILLEN 2000, chap. III).

The sacrificial animals are normal domestic species, i.e. bovids (BOS), sheep (OVIS), goats (CAP) and pigs (SUS). On the whole, relatively small numbers are characteristic of tablets which record animals meant for sacrifice; the small numbers are an idiosyncratic trait by which this type of documents differs from the records of whole herds that list much higher figures. Yet, we must not forget that, although individual contributors apparently had to deliver only a small number of animals, we do not know how often this was the case; it might have been only once a year, but we cannot exclude that animals had to be sent to the palace repeatedly, e.g. whenever a festivity was held.

Of some interest is the combination of three animals such as BOS, OVIS and CAP which, as already mentioned, occurs as a regular pattern on KN Ce 152 where either one or twelve animals of each species are consistently grouped together (yielding a likely offering of three or 36 animals). A full hecatomb is probably mentioned in KN C 914; it consists of 50 rams (OVIS^m 50) and 50 he-goats (CAP^m 50) which are being sent (or have been sent) to a festival (?) called *a-ka-wi-ja(-de)* (on this term cf. below §14.3.3).

§14.2.3. State banquets

We must keep in mind that in the Greek culture all slaughtering of animals was seen as a sacrificial act.

We cannot say how butchering was ritualized in Mycenaean times when performed on an unofficial, perhaps minor, scale, but the tablets provide evidence for official feasts held at the palaces and connected with the slaughtering of 'sacrificial animals.' In recent years it has become usual to speak of 'State banquets', using the term to refer to festivals organized by the ruler and/or high officials, which assembled a great mass of participants, including members of the elite; no doubt these State banquets also had the political purpose of

may also have been libations, etc. However, most of the banquet consisted of communal feasting rather than of a religious ceremony.

That in Pylos State banquets were performed was concluded from archaeological evidence even before it was understood that several important tablets concerned this topic (cf. SÄFLUND 1980, who calls these events 'sacrificial banquets'). However, it was only when a group of inscribed sealings (TH Wu series) was discovered at Thebes (PITEROS *et al.* 1990) that it emerged that the animals and other recorded commodities (expressed by the undeciphered ideograms *171, *190) were closely matched by the 'mixed' list of the tablet PY Un 138; both documents record almost exactly the same number of animals (sheep: 16 at each site; goats: 14 at Thebes, 13 at Pylos; pigs: 12 at TH, 13 at PY; bovinds: 2 (3?) at TH, 3 at PY). Soon afterwards it was recognized that other tablets of the same 'mixed' class belonged to this specific group.² Meanwhile the subject has become a major field of Mycenaean studies (VARIAS GARCIA 2000; PALAIMA 2004; cf. the bibliography in *Mycenaean Feast*).

Though, on the whole, the presence of a religious component in these tablets cannot be doubted, it is striking that in most examples of this category we lack specific indications which refer to divine recipients. Two tablets only, PY Un 6 and Un 853, mention Poseidon as the deity receiving a part, at least, of these offerings. In the standard sacrifice patterns of the Classical period the larger part of the offerings was meant for the human participants in the feast. At Pylos a man called *e-ke-ra₂-wo* provides half of the total quantity of delivered items; his status is disputed but *e-ke-ra₂-wo* is often, and correctly in my view, taken to be a title of the *wanax* (or his personal name; cf. PALAIMA 1995). His contribution may be a share of the income from the *wanax*'s personal land-holding, i.e. the *te-me-no* of the *sa-ra-pe-da* type (crown-land?) recorded on the tablets PY Er 312/880 and Un 718 (KILLEN 1999, 350ff); cf. the alphabetic Greek *temenos*, 'area of land reserved for the ruler' (Homer) or 'for the god' (Classical). On Un 6 besides Poseidon the goddess *pe-re*-*82 (for whom see also PY Tn 316) is also mentioned as receiving offerings. In addition to these very important texts, PY Un 2 is also worth mentioning here since its introductory line informs us that a banquet was held at the cult centre (holy district) of *pa-ki-ja-ne* on the occasion of *mu-jo-me-no e-pi wa-na-ka-te*, *mūjomenōi epi wanaktei*. This must mean either that the *wanax* was introduced into a religious mystery cult (?) or that he presided over some kind of initiatory ritual.

Another individual who, as indicated by tablet PY Cn 418, organized a State banquet, is recorded as *we-u-da-ne-we* (dative) (a form *we-da-ne-we* may be a

scribal variant [?]). In all likelihood he may be identified with the *ra-wa-ke-ta*. The *ra-wa-ke-ta*, *lāwāgetās* (alphabetic Greek *lāgetās*) 'leader of the people (sc. in arms)' is generally supposed to hold the second place after the *wanax* in the Mycenaean hierarchy of power. As far as we know, the *wanax* and the *lāwāgetās* only own the privileged type of land-holdings called *temenos* (nom. sg., PY Er 312). Therefore it may be not accidental that both persons are connected with this kind of banquets.

With reference to the quantities of commodities it is worthwhile to remember the conclusions which J. CHADWICK (*World*, 100f.) reached about the food-stuff consumed at the feasting event recorded in PY Un 2 (which presumably was compiled at the time of the 'initiation' of the king; see above): 'The list of goods is impressive: 1574 litres of barley, 14.5 litres of cyperus, 115 litres of flour, 307 litres of olives, 19 litres of honey, 96 litres of figs, 1 ox, 26 rams, 6 ewes, 2 he-goats, 2 she-goats, 1 fattened pig, 6 sows, 585.5 litres of wine, not to mention three commodities which are listed by unknown abbreviations or ideograms. The barley alone would provide rations for 43 people for a month. But if the ceremony really were a royal initiation, these offerings are by no means excessive.'

§14.2.4. Offerings and rations for religious festivities

As was recently pointed out by J.T. KILLEN 2001, there is a further category of tablets that records different classes of ration recipients — officials as well as craftsmen, and also deities and cult-places. Killen has now convincingly interpreted this so far poorly understood and strange-looking class as recording both offerings and subsistence rations promised by the palace to deities and to officials involved in these cult performances on the occasion of religious festivities. It is especially tablets like PY Fn 187 which contain terms of different categories such as cult-places (*po-si-da-i-jo-de*, *posidāhionde* 'to the sanctuary of Poseidon', *pa-ki-ja-na-de* 'to the holy place of P.'), deities (*u-po-jo-po-ti-ni-ja*, *u-po-jo potniāi*, 'for the Potnia of U.'), priests (*po-si-da-i-je-u-si*, *posidāhiesi* 'for the priests of Poseidon'), officials (*ka-ru-ke*, *kārukei* 'for the *kāru*' (dative), 'herald' in alphabetic Greek and craftsmen/women (e.g., *a-ke-ti-ri-ja-i*, *askētriāhi*, female textile workers, specialized in finishing processes, cf. Classical Greek *askeō*). Another tablet which may be included here is PY Un 219 which registers divine and human recipients in the dative together

(women engaged in textile industry), *a-ti-mi-te* (*Artimitei* 'for Artemis'), etc. The KN Fs series, which was mentioned above, may also belong in this group since it includes terms of religious nature and is most likely a record of a 'ten days' worth of meals for a single person' (R. PALMER 1994).

Finally, the majority of the tablets found in 1993–95 at Thebes apparently belong to this category (but see below). Here barley (HORD; Fq series), olives (OLIV; Ft series) and wine (VIN; Gp series) are recorded mostly (or exclusively) for human recipients who are supposed to take part in some kind of religious performance; among them there occur in TH Fq 254 a *de-go-no*, *deipnos* 'caterer (?)' (but cf. *Companion* 1, 386), and also, in another series recording personnel and rations, (two) *ru-ra-ta-e*, *lūrastāe* 'lyre-players' (Av 106). The amounts of commodities range for barley between 0.4 l. and 19.2 l., for olives between 3.2 and 40 l. and for wine between 0.8 l. and 192 l. On the much-debated question whether these tablets also contain the names of deities and of sacred animals cf. § 14.3.1.5.

§14.2.5. *Cult personnel*

Apart from monitoring processes within the material economy, the recording of the status and changes of personnel was also a main task of the palatial administration. Consequently we are told about various characteristics of the religious personnel. The tablets PY An 607, An 1281 and Ae 303 offer interesting examples. PY An 607 records women of 'religious' parentage who are obviously connected with functionaries called *e-qe-ta*, *hek^wetai*, alphabetic Greek *hepetai* 'followers'; part of these women has mothers who are *do-e-ra* (*dohelā* 'servant') of either *do-qe-ja* (most likely an otherwise unknown deity) or *di-wi-ja* (*Diwia*, another goddess) while their fathers are either *do-e-ro* (*dohelos* 'servant') of again *do-qe-ja* or smiths (*ka-ke-u*, *khalkēus*; cf. also the *ka-ke-we po-ti-ni-ja-we-jo*, *khalkēwes potniawejo* 'bronze-smiths belonging to Potnia' on PY Jn 310, 431). PY An 1281 registers persons associated with two Potniai: *po-ti-ni-ja i-qe-ja* and *po-ti-a-ke-ši po-ti-ni-ja*; the restoration in line 9, which is based on the place-name *po-ti-a-ke-e* attested in PY An 298 and An 610, is possible, but by no means certain, nor is certain the interpretation of *]-a-ke-ši* as a place name. PY Ae 303 mentions 14 women at Pylos (*pu-ro*) who are described as *i-je-re-ja do-e-ra* (*hierejās dohelai* 'servants of the priestess') *e-ne-ka ku-ru-so-jo i-je-ro-jo*, (*h*)*eneka khru-so-jo hiero-jo* 'in

(called *po-re-na*) are described together with gold vessels given as offerings to various deities.

§14.2.6. *Economic involvements of the religious sector*

Though it does not constitute a coherent administrative document, a further class of tablets may be seen as a separate category with tablets from several series that concern either agricultural products or manufactured items. Their common feature is that they refer to personnel and establishments of either agricultural or industrial nature which are evidently controlled by sanctuaries, which in their turn are supervised by the palace.³ Agricultural establishments of this kind are known from tablets which list sheep flocks belonging to the Potnia (KN DI[1] series) or from a tablet such as KN D 411 which mentions at least 90 sheep in the possession of *e-ma-a₂-o* (*Hermāhāo* gen., 'of Hermes'). KN Mc 4462, in addition to a normal flock cared for by an individual shepherd called *]-ra-wo-qo-no*, *]-Lāwok^whonos*, also registers some products for *a-re*; if this is to be read *Arei* dat., 'for the god Ares' we may well be dealing with offerings, but *a-re* may also be taken as a MN.

Some, at least, of the palatial workshops dedicated to industrial production seem to have been also controlled by sanctuaries. The tablets recording *ka-ke-we po-ti-ni-ja-we-jo*, *khalkēwes potniawejo* 'bronze-smiths belonging to P.' (PY Jn series) may be mentioned again. PY Un 249 which registers an *a-re-pa-qō[-o]* *po-ti-ni-ja-we-jo*, *aleiphad^woh[os]* *potniawejos* 'unguent-boiler belonging to the Potnia' falls also into this category and points to another industrial establishment owned by this goddess and dedicated to the production of perfumed oil, perhaps also to be used in the cult as in the PY Fr series. In PY Fr, oil generally serves for offerings and also in a special case (Fr 1225) as ointment (*a-ro-pa*, *aloiphā*, alphabetic Greek *aloiphā* 'unguent, ointment') for the cloths (*we-a₂-no-i*, *wehanoihi*) of the *u-po-jo po-ti-ni-ja* ('Potnia of/at U.'). These establishments which belonged to sanctuaries were called *wo-ko* (nom. sing., *woikos*, Classical Greek *oikos* 'household'). This is shown by the tablets PY Sh 736 with *me-za-na wo-ke*, *Me^wānās woikei* 'in the *oikos* of (the goddess?) Me^wana' (interpretation not unanimously accepted, but cf. KILLEN 2000, chap. III) and TH Of 36 with *po-ti-ni-ja wo-ko-de*, *potniās woikonde* 'to the *oikos* of P.'. A different, but presumably related, type of establishment, also controlled by sanctuaries, is indicated with the expression *do-de* (*dō-de* 'to the

house' [of]). On TH Of 26 (a tablet recording allocations of wool), *do-de* is connected with the name of *di-u-ja-wo* (cf. also TH Of 33) and is followed, in the next entry, by the term *po-re-si* which is obviously the dat. (pl.) of *po-re-na*, designation of persons (victims, bearers of gold vessels?) who appear in clearly religious function on the Pylos 'pantheon tablet' Tn 316 (cf. below and see *Companion* 1, §9.38). A religious connection is also apparent for the persons found in the PY Qa series and, at least in part, for those listed in PY An 1281; both the Qa texts and An 1281 come from the so-called North-Eastern building next to the Palace which seems to have functioned either as a workshop or, more likely, as a store-room for industrial products. Here too we find a remarkably close association between religious personnel and economy matters (cf. also LUPACK 1999).

§14.2.7. The 'holy' district of pa-ki-ja-ne

In addition to the tablets which belong to our category 6 above (§14.2.6), we must mention here the Pylos series which records land-holdings in the cult centre (or sacred district) of *pa-ki-ja-ne* (PY Eb/p, En/o series). *Pa-ki-ja-ne* is obviously a kind of a 'temple estate' belonging to the Potnia (and, perhaps, to the *wanax*?). This is shown first by the tablet PY Tn 316 where the toponym *pa-ki-ja-ne* is mentioned first, and, in association with *po-ti-ni-ja*, together with a whole series of cult-places which receive precious gifts. Moreover, in *pa-ki-ja-ne* we find (PY Eb/Ep, En/Eo) a remarkable concentration of cult personnel, including many *te-o-jo do-e-ro/a* (*thehojo doheloi/ai* 'god's servants', surely not 'slaves' in the Classical sense of the word), a priest and a priestess named *we-te-re-u* and *e-ri-ta*, the *ka-ra-wi-po-ro* (*klāwiphoros* 'keybearer' [of the sanctuary]; a purely religious title) named *ka-pa-ti-ja*, a *i-je-ro-wo-ko* (*hieroworgos* 'sacrificing priest'), and a further person qualified additionally as *po-ti-ni-ja-we-jo* (*potniāwejos* 'belonging to the Potnia'). Given this majority of cult personnel among the land-holders at *pa-ki-ja-ne*, these Eb/Ep, En/Eo series, though meant primarily as a kind of cadastre, may also be counted among the texts which provide indirect 'religious' information (cf. also below §14.3.4).

§14.3. RELIGIOUS TERMS AND THEIR CATEGORIES

we can do is to identify individual lexical items and classify them into the relevant fields: deities (recipients of offerings), cult-places (destinations of offerings), cult events (religious festivities and rituals), cult personnel (including some indirect evidence on cult hierarchy and cult organization), and agricultural or industrial establishments controlled by the sanctuaries (which in their turn are supervised by the palace). Further inquiries may lead us to the comparison of Mycenaean data with the data offered by later sources

§14.3.1. Recipients of religious offerings

§14.3.1.1. Major Olympic deities

For the historian of religion the fact that the deities mentioned in the Linear B texts include a majority of Olympian deities known from the Classical period is of paramount interest. In the Mycenaean texts we find great part of the main gods and goddesses of the Olympian pantheon: Zeus, Hera, Artemis, Poseidon, Dionysus (the latter was thought for a long time to be a first millennium newcomer), Hermes, Ares, Hephaestus (attested only indirectly by a MN) and, perhaps, Demeter (?). The attempts to identify Demeter in our texts have focussed on the terms *ma-ka* (TH), *Mā Gā* (?),⁴ *si-to-po-ti-ni-ja* (MY; *sitōn potnia* 'Lady of the Grain') and *ma-te-re te-i-ja* (PY; *matērei thehiāi* 'for the Divine Mother' (for another possible interpretation of this term cf. § 14.4), but there is no general agreement. Athena is most likely to be implied by the phrase *a-ta-na-po-ti-ni-ja* on KN V 52, frequently interpreted as *Athānās Potnia* cf. Homeric *potni* *Athēnaiē* (fitting the hexameter) — see *Companion* 1, §9.17. The term is likely to indicate the *Potnia* of a place called *a-ta-na*, which could be either an otherwise unattested Cretan site or perhaps a form (in the singular) of the name of the well known place (in the plural) in continental Greece; in this connection Athens' role in the Minotaur's myth comes to mind. Hephaestus seems to be attested indirectly by the personal name *a-pa-i-ti-jo*, *Hāphaistios/iōn* on a tablet found at Knossos (KN L 588.1), but so far the corresponding theonym does not occur.

Two deities are conspicuously absent: Aphrodite and Apollo; the second of these names was recognized in the incomplete word *pe-ro₂-[ne* on KN E 842.3, cf. Doric *Apellon*; but this reading is very uncertain and the word could also be restored as *u-[pe-ro₂-[ne*; cf. below §14.3.1.2. Given that our information

tablet, this may be accidental, but it could also be due to the fact that both deities entered the pantheon of Classical Greek religion in post-Mycenaean times only. According to some authors Aphrodite was indicated with the term *po-ti-ni-ja*, but this is impossible to demonstrate. If so, she may have reached Greece after the Greek colonization of Cyprus which did not start before 1200 BC, while Apollo may have accompanied the Doric conquest of the Peloponnesus after 1100 BC. Perhaps the lack of direct evidence for Hephaestus is due to his basic connection with Lemnos, an island outside the Mycenaean cultural orbit proper (although known to Mycenaeans as shown by some Late Mycenaean pottery found there and also by the female workers called *ra-mi-ni-ja*, *Lāmniai* mentioned on PY Ab 186 with other foreign workforces). Athens was an important Mycenaean centre, but, as far as we know, not one of the most powerful; consequently it is possible that Athena's rise to prominence in the pantheon followed the rise of her eponymous city during the Dark Ages. Needless to say, most of what precedes is bound to be speculative.

It would be important to extrapolate from the tablets some information about the hierarchy of the Olympian gods, but at present this seems hardly possible, except for some very general observations. The different quantities of commodities or animals allocated to the individual deities may not be a reliable indication of the gods' status since they are too susceptible to local and temporal circumstances, though this may be possible in some instances (for a contrary view see *Companion* 1, §9.6). Some Olympians (Zeus, Poseidon, Dionysus, Hermes) are found in Crete as well as on the Greek mainland. So far Artemis is only attested in tablets from the Greek mainland. Since in the Classical period she was frequently identified with the Cretan Diktunna, it is possible that she appears in the Knossos tablets under another name. *Qe-ra-si-ja*, who so far is not attested outside Crete, is interpreted by some scholars as a theonym designating a 'divine huntress' *K^{wh}ērasiā* (cf. Classical Greek *thēraō* 'hunt', etc.). If so, she might be a Cretan predecessor of Artemis. On the other hand, if the island of Thera had this name as early as the Late Bronze Age, and if the name was related to the 'hunting' root mentioned above (which is far from certain), *K^{wh}ērasiā* could perhaps be taken as the eponymous 'Goddess of Thera', who, as a local deity, would have been widely respected after the devastating explosion of the island's volcano at the beginning of the Late Bronze Age. That the Minoans were in close contact with the island of Thera at the time of the great Thera eruption emerges, at the very least, from some clay sealings (i.e. official documents) imported

Unquestionably, Poseidon emerges as the most important deity from the Pylos tablets; he is also known at Knossos where, however, it is difficult to define the relative importance of the deities. Zeus, undoubtedly of Indo-European origin, is attested at Pylos and in Crete, both at Khania and in the Knossos palace; cf. KN F 51 (but see §14.3.1.5) and, in connection with the cult place at Dikte, KN Fp 1. On the basis of this broad regional presence, he may have been regarded even in this period as, if not the most, at any rate a very prominent and powerful god. Similarly Dionysus, who is found at Pylos (Ea 102, Xa 1419), may have been a deity of considerable importance, since in Crete he is associated with Zeus on the tablet KH Gq 5, perhaps as a *theos sunnaos* (dwelling with Zeus in the same cult building). Hera was presumably Zeus' wife even in this period (cf. below §14.3.1.4) and should have had similar status; so far, however, she is not attested in Crete, but we find her on the mainland at Pylos (Tn 316; cf. Un 219) and also at Thebes (Of 28).

Hermes, though he is not mentioned frequently, nevertheless appears at all 'major' Linear B sites, Knossos (D 411), Pylos (Na 1357; Tn 316; Un 219.8) and Thebes (Of 31). On the other hand it may be accidental that so far Ares is attested only at Knossos (Fp 14.2; Mc 4462), though in the classical period his cult is more widespread on Crete than on the mainland. However, it is conceivable that the epitheton *a-re-ja* found in PY Tn 316 v.7 *e-ma-a₂ a-re-ja*, *Hermāhāi Arejāi* (?), is somehow linked with Ares.

§14.3.1.2. Minor deities known from the Classical period

Besides the Olympian deities we find in the tablets the names of several gods and goddesses who are known from Classical sources, even if they do not belong to the most distinguished family of the Olympians. In this group we can list *Paiāōn/Paiōn* (*Pajāwōn* [KN V 52] and perhaps [but see § 14.2.2] *pq-ja-ō-ne* [KN C 394]), *Enualios* (KN V 52; the MN *e-nwa-ri-jo*, PY An 724.12, which presumably is **Enwālios*, should not be confused with the god Enualios), *e-ne-si-da-o-ne* (dat.; cf. alphabetic Greek *Ennosigaios*, *Ennosidās*), *Eleuthia* (without doubt a variant spelling for *Eileithuia*⁵) and *Erinus*.⁶ Daidalus, indirectly attested by a sanctuary/cult-place (*da-da-re-jo-de*, *Daidalejon-de* 'to the Daidaleion', KN Fp 1.3), should also belong here. Other instances of this type may be Graia⁷

and Harpuia (if *a-pu-wa*, TH Fq 229, etc., can be interpreted in this way, but this is disputed). If Graia (?), Harpuia (?) and Erinys were correctly identified, this would provide evidence for three deities of the dark chthonic sphere; in this connection we are reminded of the ugly tall figurines found at Mycenae and of S. Marinatos' interpretation (MARINATOS 1971). The Hero Ptoios may be regarded as Apollo's predecessor in Classical Boeotia where he was venerated in a sanctuary which is not far from, but cannot be equated with, the Ptoion of the Classical era. This Ptoios may, at least indirectly, be attested by the festival name *po-to-a₂-ja(-de)*, *pto(i)haja-de* 'to the Ptōia' (TH Av 104), but this equation is not without phonetic problems.

It is striking that apart from Graia (?), Harpuia (?), and, perhaps Ptoios, most of these deities are known from Cretan tablets — some of them became later assimilated to Olympian gods: *Pajāwōn* and *Ptoios (?) with Apollo, *Enualios* with Ares, *Ennosidās* with Poseidon and *Eileithuia*, in some places, with Artemis. Here we may see a reflection of the strong impact which the Minoan culture (religion included) exercised on Mycenaean Greece, especially during the period of Mycenaean occupation. Like many other elements of the Minoan culture, such as writing, administration, (religious) pictorial iconography, etc., some minor deities are likely to have been appropriated by the Mycenaeans who came under Cretan influence. Some of them show a strong Cretan background as *Pajāwōn*, *Enualios* and *Eileithuia* and have no clear Greek or Indo-European etymology. Another instance of this phenomenon may be the Aeginetan/Cretan goddess Aphaia, who perhaps is indirectly attested by the term *a₂-pa-a₂-de*, if read *Hapha(i)ha-de* (?) 'to the festival (called) Haphaiha' (neutr. pl. [?]) TH Wu 94 — the second *h* is difficult to understand in a termination *-aia*, however): in Classical times, Aphaia was taken as another designation for Cretan Diktunna (HILLER 2001). Similarly *e-ri-nu* 'Erinys' so far is only found on tablets from Crete: in her case too we may speculate that she migrated from the Minoan into the Greek pantheon.

Some gods who function as personifications of natural phenomena may also be classified with the deities considered above. The 'Winds' are recorded as recipients of offerings sent to *a-ne-mo i-je-re-ja*, *anemōn hierejāi* 'for the Priestess of the Winds' (KN Fp 1) at Amnisos. The cult of Winds lived on at Amnisos into the Classical Period (HAMPE 1967). The Sun- and Moon-god may also be represented if we follow the proposals by J.T. KILLEN (2000; 2004, 157) who interprets KN E 842 *me-na* and *u-]pe-ro₂-[ne* as *Mēnāi* 'for the Moon' and

Hu]perio[nei 'for the Sun' (on the latter term which could also be completed as *a-]pe-ro₂-[ne*, *A]pello[nei* cf. above §14.3.1.1)

§14.3.1.3. Deities unknown in the Classical period

A relatively large number of divine recipients of offerings known from the Linear B tablets did not survive into the Classical period. Some of these are supposedly from a pre-Greek cultural layer. This is true for deities from Crete like *pa-de*, *pi-pi-tu-na* (KN Fp 13, cf. Cretan Diktunna), *ti-ta-ma(-i)* (?)⁸ and presumably also for the offering recipients recorded in the KN Fs series who bear names which are clearly not Greek; these are likely to represent Minoan deities called, e.g., *a-*65-ma-na-ke*, *a-ro-do-ro-o*, *qe-sa-ma-qa*, *e-ti-wa*, etc. (DUHOUX 1989/90); others like *a-pa-ṭo[-re* ([?]) KN Gg 5185, cf. Apollo Aphetor II. 9.404) and *a-pe-ti-ra₂* (KN V 280.11, perhaps *Aphetria who may be the female counterpart of Aphetor) could be Greek translations/interpretations of Minoan theonyms.⁹

At Pylos the same could be true of *me-za-na*, *Met^sānā*, perhaps the eponymous deity of alphabetic Greek *Messānā* (?),¹⁰ and of *do-qe-ja* (PY An 607; cf. above §14.2.5) who are not attested on tablets from other sites. Several further deities, who were not received among the Olympians, are recorded in the Pylos 'Pantheon' tablet Tn 316, which looks like a register of Pylos deities, but creates its own problems of interpretation (see *Companion* 1, §9.38). The text seems to distinguish various sanctuaries and here we list the relevant deities accordingly: (a) at (the sanctuary of the) Potnia of/at *pa-ki-ja-si*: *ma-na-sa*, *po-si-da-e-ja*, *Posidāhejāi* 'for Posidaeia' (obviously a female counterpart to Poseidon), *ti-ri-se-ro-e*, dat., *Trishērōhei* 'for Trishero' and *do-po-ta*, *Do(n)spotāi* (cf. alphabetic Greek *despotās*) 'for the Master'; (b) at another group of sanctuaries (or a common one?): *i-pe-me-ḡe-ja* (cf. alphabetic Greek *Iphimedeia*, which is not necessarily related), *di-u-ja*, *Diwjā* (an early female counterpart to Zeus), *pe-re-*82* (female deity); (c) finally, in the sanctuary of Zeus (which he shares with Hera): a Zeus' son, called *di-ri-mi-jo* (without corresponding alphabetic GN).

The various Potnia(i) 'Mistress(es)' who are connected with specific places and whom we find in all major collections of tablets may also be regarded as mainly local deities. The subject is complex and a full discussion would require

a whole monograph (cf. BOËLLE 2004). At Knossos we read of *a-ta-na-po-ti-ni-ja*, *Athānās Potnia* (presumably Potnia of Athana, KN V 52 v.1; cf. above § 14.3.1.1 and also *Companion* 1, §9.17) and of *da-pu₂-ri-to-jo po-ti-ni-ja*, *D/Laburinthojo potnia*, 'Mistress of the Labyrinth'.¹¹ The presence of another Potnia (or, perhaps less likely, of other Potniai) is suggested by the adjective *po-ti-ni-ja-we-jo*, 'belonging to P.', in tablets which register flocks mainly at *si-ja-du-we* (DI 933, etc.) but also at *qa-nwa-so* (DI 943), *ra-ja* (DI 7771), *ka-ru-no* (DI 7147) and *da-*22-to* (C 5730); whether these Potniai represent local deities or are Potniai of another kind or of some other place where they would also possess flocks must remain open (on the question of agricultural establishments owned by gods cf. above §14.2.6). At Pylos, in addition to the *po-ti-ni-ja* at *pa-ki-ja-ne* (Tn 316), we read of a *po-ti-ni-ja a-si-wi-ja*, *Potnia Aswiā(s)* perhaps 'Mistress of Asia' or 'Asiatic Mistress' (Fr 1206), an *e-re-wi-jo-po-ti-ni-ja* (Vn 48.3), a *ne-wo-pe-o po-ti-ni-ja* (Cc 665), an *u-po-jo-po-ti-ni-ja* (Fn 187.7; Fr 1225, 1236; on the latter text localized at *pa-ki-ja-ni-jo a-ko-ro*) and a *po-ti-a-ke-ši po-ti-ni-ja* (see § 14.2.5).

While these epithets of the Potniai refer to their respective cult places, others show a more practical character. At Pylos we hear of a *po-ti-ni-ja i-qe-ja*, *Po]tnia (h)ikk^weja* 'Po]tnia hippeia' ('Mistress of horses' [?], or 'M. of chariotry, chariot drivers' [?], cf. Myc. *i-qi-ja (h)ikk^wiā* 'chariot') and at Mycenae we meet the *si-to-po-ti-ni-ja*, *sitōn Potnia* 'Mistress of grain'¹² who, as stated above (§14.3.1.1), may be taken as a kind of Bronze Age predecessor of Demeter or one of her epithets. At Thebes the term Potnia also occurs in the sequence *po-ti-ni-ja wo-ko(-de)*, *Potniās woikon(-de)* '(to) the *oikos* of P.' (TH Of 36, which describes what may be an economic/industrial establishment owned by sanctuaries, cf. §14.2.6).

Sometimes *po-ti-ni-ja* is unspecified: in the Pylos Fr series we find her in the sequences *po-ti-ni-ja di-pi[-si-]jo-i* (Fr 1231.1) and *wa-na-so-i po-ti-ni-ja* (Fr 1235), with which we may compare the sequences *wa-na-ka-te wa-na-so-i*¹³ and *di-pi-si-jo-i wa-na-ka-te* (Fr 1220). Unfortunately the terms *wa-na-so-i* and *di-pi-si-jo-i* are highly problematic; *wa-na-ka-te*, *wanaktei* (dat., 'to the *wanax*') is philologically clear, but what kind of *wanax* is meant, a human or a divine one? A similar connection between the *wanax* and (an unspecified) Potnia is indicated by the tablet TH Of 36 where adjacent entries refer to both — in line 1 we find the *a-ke-ti-ra₂ wa-na-ka[-te-ra]*, *askētriai wanak[terai]*, i.e. a group of

qualified female textile workers belonging to the *wanax*; in line 2, as we have seen, *po-ti-ni-ja wo-ko-de*, *Potniās woikon-de*, followed by *a-ke-ti-ra₂*. Perhaps we may also compare PY Un 219.7: *a-na-ka-te TE 1 po-ti-ni-ja*], though the lack of initial *w-* would be unexplained. It cannot be excluded that here we are dealing with a human (but [semi-?])divine offering-recipient) Potnia at the side of the *Wanax*; is she the 'queen'? If so, the king and queen would have been human substitutes for some kind of divine pair and, in addition to other functions, could have performed the ritual of sacred marriage (*Heilige Hochzeit*; a notion perhaps indirectly indicated by the festival name *re-ke-e-to-ro-te-ri-jo*, *lekhestrōtērion* 'the spreading of the couch', PY Fr 1217.2). A sacred marriage was still performed in Classical Athens by the priestess called *Basilinna* and a high official, the *Arkhōn Basileus*; they were treated as *hupostaseis* (embodiments) of Dionysus and his maiden bride.

§14.3.1.4. Divine pairs

If this hypothesis is correct, *Wanax* and Potnia will not have been the only (semi-?) divine couple. There are certainly others: a striking one is *po-se-da-o-ne* (dat.) and *po-si-da-e-ja*, Poseidon and Posidæia. The Cretan deities *a-pa-ṭo[-re* ([?] KN Gg 5185) and *a-pe-ti-ra₂*¹⁴ may be added as a further possible divine couple. Another possible example might be *qe-ra-si-ja Gh^wērasia* ([?]; cf. above § 14.3.1.1) and her male counterpart *qe-ra-si-jo*, *Gh^wērasios*, who is attested on the tablet KN Fp 16 (if it is not a scribal error for *qe-ra-si-ja*). One could also tentatively add the equivalents of the perhaps theriomorphic deities *qo-we* (*g^wowei*, dat., MY Fu 711; cf. alphabetic Greek *bous*) and *qo-wi-ja* (*g^wowia*, PY Tn 316 v.3; cf. *Companion* 1, §9.38). It must be stressed, however, that here again the interpretation is not certain and other ones cannot be excluded. This cumulative evidence may lend support to the alternative interpretation favoured here. In its turn this may support the view that a possible counterpart of *i-qo*, (*h)ikk^wos* 'horse-god' (PY Ea 59, Fa 16), if divine and not simply 'horse', is the *po-ti-ni-ja i-qe-ja*, *Po]tnia (h)ikk^weja* (perhaps a kind of divine 'Lady of the Horses', PY An 1281.1) referred to above (cf. also below §14.3.1.3).

The most spectacular case of divine pair is provided by *di-u-ja*, *Diwjaī* 'Dīa' (PY Tn 316 v.6) and Zeus (cf. *di-we*, *Diwei*, dat.) whose names are clearly derived from the same Indo-European root. However, by the end of the Bronze Age Zeus is obviously already paired with Hera (Tn 316 v.9); the fact that both

Zeus and Hera appear at Pylos in the sanctuary of Zeus (*di-u-jo, diwjon*)¹⁵ can hardly be explained differently; in any case Zeus and Hera, together with *di-ri-mi-jo*, share a common home as a normal family does. Since Hera is traditionally at home at Argos and Mycenae (in Homer she is called *potnia Hērē*) it may be that, together with the Mycenaean rulers' claim that they were Zeus' offspring, the political supremacy of these places in Late Bronze Greece led to Hera's rise to the status of Zeus' consort. This happened, as it seems, to the disadvantage of Dia who, as her name indicates, is likely to have been the first wife of the supreme god. It may be recalled on this occasion that in Classical Antiquity the goddess Dia was still venerated at Phleious and Sikyon where, however, she had become assimilated with Ganymeda or Hebe (Strab. 8.3.2; Paus. 2.14.4; 13.3) with the only function of Zeus' associated cup-bearer.

§14.3.1.5. Sacred animals? Theriomorphic deities?

A special case, which is still under discussion, belongs to a series of texts which was found at Thebes, Odos Pelopidou, between 1993 and 1995, and may have religious content. They were published and interpreted by the archaeologist V.L. Aravantinos and the philologists/epigraphists L. Godart and A. Sacconi (see *TOP*; ARAVANTINOS – GODART – SACCONI 2005). About 240 inventoried tablets, mostly fragmentary, constitute a remarkable additional group of Mycenaean documents. The largest part of texts was attributed by the editors to three different series, TH Fq, Ft and Gp. They are written by different scribes, and record different kinds of commodities and their recipients. The Fq series, which consists of about 125 tablets, registers allotments of barley (HORD), the Ft series (16 tablets) of olives (OLIV), and the Gp series (54 texts) of wine (VIN). In addition, there occur occasionally some other products indicated once by CYP+O, and more frequently but more doubtfully by the sign , for which it is debated whether and where to read it as 'ju' or as FAR. These series have common features (for instance, some recipients), but also differences (for instance, in the vocabulary used). On the whole, the amounts allocated on each tablet to a list of several recipients are relatively small. Among the recipients there are clearly individuals called by their personal names, some groups of personnel (trade or occupational names) and also topographical indications some of which may refer to the names of festivals. There are, moreover, two highly debated categories of recipients. The first consists of three terms, *ma-ka*, *o-po-re-i* and

ko-wa. These were interpreted by *TOP* as *Māi Gāi* ('for Mother Earth'), *Opōrēhi* ('for [Zeus] Opōrēs) and *Korwāi* ('for the Maiden/Daughter'). *TOP* recognizes in these three terms the names of the Mycenaean equivalents of a kind of divine triad comparable to the Eleusinian deities which includes Demeter, Zeus (designated elsewhere by the epithet *opōrēs*) and Kore (Persephone). The second class includes items which were taken first by *TOP* and then by several other authors who followed in their steps (though others strongly objected) as names of sacred or divine animals; these are (in alphabetical order): *e-mi-jo-no-i* (*hēmionoihi* 'to the mules'), *e-pe-to-i* (*herpetoihi* 'to the quadrupeds', less likely, 'to the snakes'), *ka-no/ka-si* (*khanōn, khānsi* 'of' or 'to the geese'), *ke-re-na-i* (**gerenāhi* 'to the cranes'), *ku-ne/ku-no/ku-si* (*kunes, kunōn, kunsī* 'the dogs', 'of the dogs', 'to the dogs') and *o-ni-si* (*ornisi* 'to the birds'). In other words, *TOP* take the Thebes series as lists of religious offerings and their recipients.

However, this interpretation has met with sharp criticism by several authors, above all T. PALAIMA (2002, 2003) and Y. DUHOX (2003, 2005, 2006a, 2006b, 2008). Both scholars explicitly reject all religious background. Likewise they do not believe in the occurrence of theonyms and of sacred/divine animals (though not necessarily of animal names, which may be borne by normal persons, as indeed happens in most if not all languages). Apart from the etymological problems created by the derivation of Myc. *o-po-re-i* from **Opōrēs*, it must be conceded that: (a) there is no obvious divine triad consisting of *ma-ka*, *o-po-re(-i)* and *ko-wa* since the three terms never occur in a direct sequence; (b) that, as argued primarily by Y. DUHOX, animal names can be found in many Linear B texts where they do not refer to real animals but are used as, for instance, anthroponyms or toponyms.

However a case can also be made for a religious setting of the new series from Thebes. J.T. KILLEN (2001, 2006) argues for a parallel background to that which, even before the publication of the new texts from Thebes, he had convincingly reconstructed for several tablets from the Pylos Fn series, and above all for PY Fn 187.

This tablet contains a strange blend of different classes of nouns, including theonyms, toponyms, individuals and personnel (some apparently with religious meaning). According to Killen's interpretation, here — and likewise at Thebes — we have records of commodity allocations made on the occasion of religious feasts. So far, no better interpretation has been proposed for this otherwise hardly understandable class of documents.

the relatively modest amounts which are characteristic of offerings, the combined occurrence of anthroponyms used for individuals, of terms designating personnel, and of toponyms in the allative case. Finally, the dative plural is regularly used for groups of personnel, as is also in the class of the supposed animals at Thebes, and consequently has, in our view at least, some bearing on the interpretation of the Theban tablets. The same should be said about the strange mixture of different classes. To judge from our understanding of the Pylos Fn tablets we should not give too much weight to arguments based on the structural parallelism of word classes; in other words, the undeniable existence of anthroponyms in the new texts from Thebes does not necessarily imply that the tablets did not contain other types of nouns in the same position.

On the other hand, we must admit that, if we leave aside the doubtful triad of *ma-ka*, *o-po-re(-i)* and *ko-wa*, we are left without theonyms, since the term *di-wi-ja-me-ro* (TH Gp 109.1), which had been interpreted as *Diwiās meros* 'the share of Diwia', is now generally understood as *dwi-āmeron* 'period of two days'; cf. also *di-wi-ja* on TH Gp 313. Other undisputed religious terms are hard to find; the reading and precise meaning of *i-je-ṛo* on Fq 200.2 is uncertain and *i-je-re-wi-jo(-ju?)* on Gp 303.1 is likely to be used as a personal name. The interpretation of *po-to-a₂-ja-de* and *te-re-ja-de* (both appear on Av 104, i.e. a tablet from another series) as **Ptoia-de* and **Teleia-de* 'to the sanctuary/feast of (Apollo) Ptoios' and 'of (Hera) Teleia', seem at least plausible, if the terms refer to festivals in honour of local Boeotian versions of Apollo and Hera, but other interpretations cannot be completely ruled out.

From a more general point of view some kind of feast seems to be implied by terms like *de-go-no* (Fq 254; *deipnon* or **deipnos* ('meal' or 'steward') and *ru-ra-ta-e* (Av 106.7), **lurāstāe* 'two lyre-players' (perhaps the equivalent of 'singers' in the Homeric sense?). But we must stress again that clearly lay designations of recipients such as *te-ka-ta-si* (*tektasi* 'for the carpenters'), *ku-na-ki-si* (*gunaiksin* or **kunāgisi* 'to the women' or 'to the huntresses'), *i-go-po-go-i* ([*h*] *ikk^wo-phorg^woihi*, 'to the grooms'), *o-ti-ri-ja-i* (dat. pl., of a term for some kind of specialized female textile workers) etc., prevail.

It is still debated whether we can state what occasion prompted the distribution of allocations to individual or collective recipients. Three tablets,¹⁶ which contain introductory sentences consisting of a temporal clause which starts with *o-te* (*hote* 'when'), might provide an answer, if we could find a generally accepted interpretation. Unfortunately this is not the case. The easiest sentence (TH Fq 126) reads: *o-te tu-wo-te-to*, *hote thuwo* (?) *theto* 'when *thuwo* (?) was

put (down)'. The favoured interpretation is: 'When a burnt offering (*thuwo* [?]) was put (sc. on to the altar [?])'. However, those who see no religious element in the text may prefer the translation given by DUHOUX 2003, 205: 'When (a person called) Thyōn/Styōn was laid (in the grave)', with a unique event able to be used in a date formula. From the point of view of the Mycenaean spelling rules both versions are equally possible. Are we able to decide which one of these two interpretations is the most likely to be right? The present author is inclined to give preference to the former since: (a) Greek *tithēmi* is used in connection with offerings, while, though attested, it is less commonly used to mean 'bury'; (b) the common Greek noun *thuwo* 'burnt offering', which plays a central role in Greek religious terminology, seems, on statistical grounds if nothing else, a more likely interpretation than a somewhat rare personal name like 'Thyon', etc., though it is only fair to say that this cannot be excluded; finally (c), both terms, *thuwo* and *tithēmi*, occur together in alphabetic Greek with the meaning 'to make an offering', and may well represent a traditional technical expression (cf. Pind. *Ol.* 7.43; *Sylloge inscriptionum graecarum* 982.24; *LSCG* 69).

No definitive decision is possible at present, but in our view there are reasons to favour an interpretation of the Theban tablets which brings them into line with the Pylos Fn tablets, as suggested by John Killen, while acknowledging that both sets have a religious background. But in that case what should we do with the animals? Once more, we must reiterate that the Mycenaean spelling rules allow the possibility of reading these terms differently, i.e. not as animal names. However, even if we take them as animal names, in theory they could be used as individual designations: persons called 'fox', 'wolf', 'nightingale', etc., are widely found, irrespective of language, and occur in the Linear B texts too (cf. BARTONEK 2003, 404). But, since some of the terms under discussion are in all likelihood in the dat. pl. case (*ku-si*, *ka-si*, *e-mi-jo-no-i*, *ke-re-na-i*, *o-ni-si*), and since all other forms of these words can be read as plurals (nominative or genitive; cf. *ku-ne*, *kunes*; *ku-no*, *kunōn*; *ka-no*, *kānōn*), and probably should be read as such, for reasons of structural consistency, to interpret them as personal names is difficult and indeed unlikely (on the possibility of tribal names cf. Herodotus V.68). On the other hand, some of these plural forms have been interpreted as place, trade or occupational names (cf. DUHOUX 2008).

If, therefore, these terms are animal names and refer to the recipients of offerings, it is not very likely that they also refer to real animals. It hardly makes sense that dogs are fed with barley (HORD) or quadrupeds/snakes (?) and

within the somewhat narrow limits of the evidence offered by the texts. If we look for parallel data for animals which belong to the supernatural sphere, we are brought back to the figurative art of the late Bronze Age which left us representations of several kinds of attendant animals (dogs, quadrupeds, birds) together with other figures which apparently have divine character. The assumption that there were sacred/divine animals or theriomorphic deities in Mycenaean religion is not new. More than twenty years ago L.R. PALMER (1969, 1981a, 1983a, 1983b), perhaps with excessive enthusiasm, but in general with reputable reasons, argued that it was possible to identify in the tablets a Horse God and a Horse Goddess as well as a Bull God and a Cow Goddess. For the 'Horse God' his interpretation was based on the tablets PY Ea 59.5, where the allocation of a plot of land is listed as *e-ne-ka i-qo-jo*, (*h*)*eneka* (*h*)*ikk^wojo* 'because of the horse', and PY Fa 16, where a large quantity of cyperus is allocated *i-qo* (dat. ? [*h*] *ikk^wōi*) 'to the horse'. For the Horse Goddess Palmer referred to the *po-ti-ni-ja i-qe-ja*, *po]tnia* (*h*)*ikk^weja* '[Po]tnia Hippeia' mentioned above (§14.3.1.3; PY An 1281.1). In addition he pointed to the phrase *e-pi i-ku-wo-i-pi*, *e-pi* (*h*)*ikk^woihiphi* (instr./dat. pl. or dual) 'at the (pair of) horses' on the tablet KN V 280, which he took (correctly in my opinion) as a religious text (the unusual writing *i-ku-wo-* instead of *i-qo* has, however, led also to other interpretations). As for the existence of a Bull God and a Cow Goddess Palmer inferred it from the tablets just quoted (§14.3.1.5), which mentioned *qo-we*, *g^wowei*, (dat., MY Fu 711) and *qo-wi-ja* (*g^wowia*, PY Tn 316 v.3) as possible recipients of offerings; once more it must be stated that this is a plausible and attractive hypothesis (at least in this author's eyes) but is not generally accepted.

We now return to MY Fu 711, one of the texts that L.R. PALMER interprets as a list of offerings and quotes as evidence for Mycenaean theriomorphic deities. This is a list of allocations of barley, flour or spelt (HORD, FAR) and other commodities (*NI*, CYP+O, cf. TH Gp 290) to recipients whose names are mostly lost. Among the few that are preserved we read *ku-ne* and *ka-ra-u-ja* and on the reverse side *qo-we*. As early as 1983, these words were interpreted by L.R. Palmer as *kunei* 'for the dog', *grāwiāi* 'for Graia' and *g^wowei* 'for the bull' (for a different interpretation of the latter cf. *Documents*² 'MN'; nom. pl. cases are also possible, *kunes*, *grāwiāi*, *g^wowes*, but they seem less likely here). PALMER (1983a) argued for the religious character of the tablet on the basis of the kinds and quantities of the commodities. His interpretation, which this author finds convincing, was not generally accepted. J. Chadwick, who reads *ku-ne* as *Kunēs* (MN; *Documents*², 557, s.v.), stated, not entirely without sar-

Ka-ra-u-ja on MY Fu 711 is obviously an alternative spelling for *ka-ra-wi-ja* which is now attested on TH Fq 169.4, 207.1 and 228.2. Another tablet, this time from Knossos, which plays some role in the discussion of the religious (?) character of the new Thebes tablets is KN F(1) 51. Since this tablet mentions *di-we* (most likely *Diwei* 'for Zeus' — but see below) together with a relatively small quantity of barley (HORD), it was also taken to represent an offering text. Another term found on it is *po-ro-de-qo-no* clearly related to *de-qo-no* on TH Fq 254, mentioned above. Finally, the same tablet has a further term read either *ma-ka* or *ma-qe* in the current editions, which has been compared with the *ma-ka* of Thebes (cf. §14.3.1.1). However, the reading *ma-qe* with a clear *-qe* has recently been proposed from autopsy by Y. DUHOUX who, at the same time, questions the religious character of the tablet as a whole, rejecting also the interpretation of the term *di-we* (dat.) as 'for Zeus'; for this word he suggests instead a reading *Diwēs* (nom.) as a normal lay anthroponym.¹⁷ But it is, after all, difficult to regard these clear parallels between, on the one hand, the relevant tablets from Mycenae and Knossos, which so far have been accepted as religious, and, on the other, those from Thebes, as merely due to chance and, thus, meaningless.

The ambiguity of the Mycenaean writing system has perhaps never been felt as painfully as in the discussion of the new texts from Thebes. It must be conceded that practically all terms which point to a religious background can be interpreted in a different way and attributed a non-religious meaning.

In conclusion, we must state that, if the new Thebes tablets are not offering texts of the kind attested by the tablet PY Fn 187, it is difficult to understand to what text category they belong. What was their immediate purpose? When and why, apart from religious occasions, did the Mycenaeans receive food allocations in such small amounts, that, as J.T. Killen has convincingly argued, they corresponded to no more than a single meal?

§14.3.2. *Cult-places and sanctuaries*

In the offering texts we find frequent references to cult places or sanctuaries.

There is no doubt that it was the palace which functioned as the (or a) main cult centre. This is especially evident for Knossos, where the many offerings recorded without indication of cult place imply that the palace itself was the central cult place. There is, however, also a series of non-palatial cult places,

The dichotomy may be exemplified by the tablet KN Fp 1 (cf. *Companion* 1, §9.6). It is likely that its first five entries, which are preceded by the month's name but by no name of locality, concern the palace itself. Oil is offered to the deities *pa-de* (.4), *pa-si-te-o-i*, *pansi thehoihi* 'to all gods' (.5) and *qe-ra-si-ja* (.6); the offering to *di-ka-ta-jo di-we*, *diktajōi Diwei* (.2) indicates that Diktaean Zeus was also worshipped here, while that to the *da-da-re-jo(-de)*, *Daidalejonde* 'to the Daidaleion' (.3) may (but need not) imply that there was a sanctuary of Daidalus within the palace (not surprisingly, given the close mythological connections between Daidalus and Knossos). The second part of the tablet apparently deals with sanctuaries outside Knossos. The next set of offerings was sent to 'Amnisos', *a-mi-ni-so*, *Amnisos*, a well known site not far from, but outside, the palace. It is at Amnisos that All-Gods, i.e. *pa-si-te-o-i*, *pansi thehoihi* 'to all gods' (.7), and presumably the Erinyes, i.e. *e-ri-nu*, *Erinu(i)* or *Erinus* receive oil. The tablet ends with records of offerings for the (place of?) *47-*da(-de)* and for the *a-ne-mo i-je-re-ja*, *anemōn hierējāi* 'for the priestess of the Winds'.

In addition to Amnisos and the sanctuary of (Diktaean) Zeus at Dikte (cf. *di-ka-ta-de*, *Diktān-de* 'to [the sanctuary at] Dikte'¹⁸), the Knossos tablets mention at least other 20 cult places outside the palace, but none of them seems to have survived into the historical period and, therefore, we are not able to localize them (cf. HILLER 1981a, 1997).

At Pylos *pa-ki-ja-ne* is the main cult centre and we know that it is one of the nine districts of the Hither Province. Since it is frequently associated with the name of Pylos it is supposed to have been not far from the palace itself (but the association may be explained in other ways; there is no rule that the main sanctuaries have to be situated next to the capital). It is not localized archaeologically, which is very unfortunate, since many land-holdings of cult functionaries, both male and female, are in *pa-ki-ja-ne*. *pa-ki-ja-ne* is also the place associated with the great ritual (procession?) described in PY Tn 316, though it is not clear whether it is only the Potnia's sanctuaries or all sanctuaries mentioned in that tablet which belong here (for Tn 316 see *Companion* 1, §9.38). Other sanctuaries of Potnia were in places outside the palace of Pylos, e.g. at *po-ti]-a-ke(-ṣi)* (cf. An 1281: see § 14.2.5), *e-re-e-we* (cf. Vn 48.) and *ro-u-so* (cf. Fr 1226). Again we are not able to localize any of them. Of special interest are the sanctuaries which have names derived from theonyms: prominent among these are the *di-u/wi-jo*, *Diw(i)jon* 'sanctuary of Zeus'¹⁹ and the *po-si-da-i-jo*,

Posidāhion 'sanctuary of Poseidon'.²⁰ Apart from these there is also an *i-pe-me-de-ja-<jo>*, *Iphemedēja<jon>* 'sanctuary of Iphemedēia', a *di-u-ja-jo*, *Diwajon* 'sanctuary of Diwia' and a *pe-ṛe-*82-jo* 'sanctuary of P.' (all on PY Tn 316, but note that there is not complete agreement that these are sanctuaries rather than e.g. processions or festivals).

Terms such as these, including *da-da-re-jo(-de)*, *Daidalejon*, necessarily lead us to ask what the form and shape of these sanctuaries were. The same question arises for the sanctuaries whose existence is presupposed by the offerings to the *a-ne-mo i-je-re-ja*, *Anemōn hierējāi* 'for the priestess of the Winds' and *da-pu₂-ri-to-jo po-ti-ni-ja*, *D/Laburinthojo potnia*, 'Mistress of the Labyrinth' (cf. above §14.3.1.3). We are not able to demonstrate that the sanctuaries were solid buildings (or part of such buildings), though this is a most attractive suggestion given the archaeological evidence for solidly built sanctuaries and the minor rooms used for cult purposes that are usually called 'shrines' in order to avoid the misleading term 'temple'; we know such rooms from palatial buildings as well as from sites outside the capitals (cf. ALBERS 1994; WHITTAKER 1997). In favour of the assumption that at least some of these sanctuaries were solid buildings we may recall as internal evidence the religious functionary called *ka-ra-wi-po-ro*, *klāwiphoros* 'key-bearer', but also the requisition of *ka-ko na-wi-jo*, *khalkos *nāwios* 'temple (?) bronze' (PY Jn 829). Although there are other conceivable explanations for these terms, it remains difficult to imagine how a key could be used without a door leading into a building and also how 'temple-bronze' (whatever its precise meaning; cf. HILLER 1979) could have been kept (or employed outside a closed building). In other words both terms point to actual buildings. Hence some at least of the sanctuary names ending in *-i-jo* are likely to refer to built establishments, the generic term for 'sanctuary' being *i-je-ro*, *hieron*.²¹

The existence of open air sanctuaries is indicated by references to places like *ro-u-si-jo a-ko-ro R/Lousios agros* '(rural) territory of R/L.', etc. Also, it is difficult to imagine that the 'priestess of the Winds' mentioned above was active anywhere else than in the open landscape. Perhaps also the *da-pu₂-ri-to-jo po-ti-ni-ja*, *D/Laburinthojo potnia*, 'Mistress of the Labyrinth' was one of the deities venerated in natural sanctuaries, or on mountains, or next to fountains or sacred trees, or in caves like Eileithyia at Amnisos. The (pre-)Greek word 'labyrinth' may well have originally referred to a subterranean cave and may have become only later a technical term for the Palace or some other building at Knossos. There are some internal contextual indications pointing to a

localization of the original Labyrinth somewhere in the region between Knossos and Amnisos and there is reason to suppose that the nearby cave of Skoteino might have been this original 'Labyrinth' (cf. HILLER 1981b). If this is true, the name Labyrinth was later transferred, together with the goddess herself, from there to the site of Knossos. In any case, cave sanctuaries are a fairly well known phenomenon of Minoan religion.

The precise meaning of *wo-(i-)ko(-de)*, *woikon-de* 'to the *Oikos*',²² *wo-ke, woikei* (?) 'at the *Oikos*' (?)²³ and *do-de, dō-de* 'to the house (of)'²⁴ are still problematic. Both terms indicate some kind of building and/or industrial establishment, but their exact nature is unknown (see above §14.2.6).

Another prominent feature of Minoan and Mycenaean religion are aniconic cult objects such as baetyls (holy stones) and pillars. The expression *o-pi-e-de-i, opi hedei* 'at the seat' (PY An 1281.2) which is contextually connected with Potnia may contain a more specific meaning than merely 'at her sanctuary' (which would be called *i-je-ro*). Thus *hedos* may indicate either an aniconic cult object or, more likely, a (seated) iconic cult image. In case it was aniconic, *hedos* would be used in parallel and perhaps almost synonymously with the term *ki-wo-na-de, kiwōna-de* 'to the column', an expression found in religious context on PY Vn 48.4. It is a well known fact that sacred columns could be dressed with textiles such as bands (*tainiai*) or cloths even in the Classical period; thus, according to the tradition (Clem. Alex. *Strom.* I.24 p. 102 Stählin), it was the key-bearer Kallithoe, priestess of Argive Hera, who first girded with bands the great column of the goddess (*Anassēs*). The *we-a₂-no-i, wehanoihi* (dat. pl., alphabetic Greek *heanos* being a special kind of cloth) of the *u-po-jo po-ti-ni-ja, potnia* 'of/at U.' to be perfumed, according to tablet PY Fr 1225, with ointment (*a-ro-pa, aloiphā*) made of olive oil (*e-ra₃-wo, elaiwon*), may have served for a ritual of this or a related kind. This provides us with evidence for *Kleiderkult* (NOSCH – PERNA 2001). Finally we have the terms *to-pe-za, torped'a* (alphabetic Greek *trapeza*, here 'altar?-table') attested on KN V 280 and *e-ka-ra, eskharā* ('hearth' [?]) on PY Ea 102; cf. also *e-ka-ra* on PY Ta 709.2). The sheep called *e-ka-ra-e-we* (nom. pl., in the KN Dm series) have been understood as related to specific cult purposes,²⁵ but other interpretations have also been offered. We should also mention some cult implements called with terms which are not always clear. In PY Ta 716 the ideograms clarify terminology which could otherwise be obscure: we find two double axes (*wa-*

o, obscure) together with two sacrificing (?) knives (*qi-si-pe-e, k^wsipehe* 'two swords'; cf. SACCONI 1999; SPECIALE 1999). The two objects mentioned first have no ideogram and remain enigmatic: *pa-sa-ro ku-ru-so a-pi to-ni-jo 2, psallō khrusō* (?) *amphithroniō* or (?) *amphitorniō* (dual, 'two golden posts' either '[placed] on both sides of the throne' [?] or 'adorned around with ridges [flutings?]'); perhaps these poles carried the holy symbol of the double axe.

§14.3.3. *Festivals, rituals and month names*

As mentioned above, the actual offering texts are regularly distinguished by an indication of time and sometimes also by the specification of the occasion at which the offering was made.

In toto, we learn from the Knossos tablets of eight (?) month names (*a-ka-[]ri-jo-jo me-ṇo*[, *a-ma-ko-to me-no, de-u-ki-jo-jo me-no, di-wi-jo-jo me-no, ka-ra-e-ri-jo[-jo] me-no, ra-pa-to me-no, sa-pa-nu-wo me-no* and *wo-de-wi-jo[-jo] me-no*). To these we must probably add three further names from Pylos: *ki-ri-ti-jo-jo* (month-name [?] Es 650), *po-ro-wi-to(-jo)* (PY Tn 316.1, cf. PY Fr 1218 etc.) and *pa-ki-ja-ni-jo-jo me-no* (Fr 1224). Only two of these month-names (*ra-pa-to me-no* and *di-wi-jo-jo me-no, Diwiojo mēnos* (gen. temp. 'in the month of Zeus')) are known from Classical sources as *Lapatō* and *Diōn* (cf. TRÜMPY 1997). From this regular use of month-names on offering tablets (they never appear on other texts) it emerges that it was important for the palace to make sure that the offerings were given at the right time. We conclude that the palace was obliged to survey the fulfilling of religious obligations pertaining to a great variety of deities venerated in the palace as well as in local sanctuaries outside the capital. On the whole one wonders whether the offering tablets were not primarily intended to monitor the fulfilment of religious obligations rather than economic accounting.

Apart from the designations of months, names of festivities are also recorded. The following terms almost certainly belong here: (i) *to-no-e-ke-te-ri-jo* (PY Fr 1222) for which a possible, though not generally accepted interpretation, may be *Thornoenkhetērion* (?) 'the [festivity of the] libation at the throne'. (ii) *re-ke(-e)-to-ro-te-ri-jo, Lekhestrōtērion* 'the (festivity of the) spreading of the bed' (PY Fr 343, Fr 1217; for the form see *Companion* 1, §7.2.1). Cf. Latin *lectisternium*; here in my view we are more likely to have a reference to the bed for a 'sacred marriage' than to a *bliss* (see 1).

po-re-na were probably persons allotted to deities as either servants or human victims (for PY Tn 316 see *Companion* 1, §9.38). *po-re-no-tu-ṭe* (PY Ua 1413) may be another term of this class. We should also mention here *me-tu-wo ne-wo* on PY Fr 1202, *Methūwos newō* (?) genitive of time (?) 'at the (festivity) of the New Wine'; cf. the Classical *Pithoigia* celebrated at Athens when the vessels containing the new wine were opened. Another term is *a-ka-wi-ja-de* (KN C 914) which KILLEN (1994, 78) following a suggestion by J. Chadwick interpreted as 'to the (festivity called) Akhaia' (neut. pl., allative). Even if the derivational patterns are not altogether clear, we have proposed above an interpretation of *a₂-pa-a₂-de*, *Haphaiha* (?) as 'to the (festivity called) Haphaiha' (neut. pl. allative) connecting the word with the name Aphaia (HILLER 2000; see above for its links with the Cretan Diktunna). We would also like to think that the Theban terms *po-to-a₂-ja-de* and *te-re-ja-de* (both in TH Av 104) may be festival names and be read as *Ptoihaja-de* 'to the (festivity called) Ptoiaia' (?) and *Telejade* 'to the (festivity called) Teleia'.

The term *te-o-po-ri-ja*, *thehophoria* 'the carrying of the god' is likely to refer to a procession at which one or more cult-images were carried around (HILLER 1984). And finally the form *e-wo-ta-de* which is read on KN C 901, apparently an offering text, has been interpreted as indicating *hewortān-de* 'to the feast'.

Besides unburnt, burnt offerings seem also to be mentioned. First, *tu-wo-te-to* on TH Fq 126 is often interpreted as *thūwos* (?) *theto* 'a burnt-offering (?) has been made' (cf. TOP, 185ff). However, Y. Duhoux translates the phrase *o-te tu-wo-te-to*, *hote Thuwōn* (?) *theto* as 'when Thuwōn (?) was buried'.²⁶ Second, we may refer to *di-wo-nu-so-jo e-ka-ra*, *Diwonusojo eskharāi*, 'for the (offering-) hearth of Dionysus';²⁷ the term *eskharā* has, however, different meanings, including also 'offering pit', which would imply the possibility of an unbloody/unburnt ritual. The question whether burnt offerings, in the sense of partial or total burning of sacrificial animals, were made in Late Bronze Age Greece was for many years among the most disputed ones (cf. BERGQUIST 1993) but is now decided positively by the observation of clear archaeological evidence for this kind of offerings (ISAAKIDOU *et al.* 2002; HAMILAKIS – KONSOLAKI 2004).

§14.3.4. Cult officials and cult organization

From the tablets we know of several designations or titles of cult officials such as *i-je-re-u* (KN, PY), *i-je-re-ja* (KN, PY), *hiereus*, *hiereja* 'priest, priestess',

i-je-ro-wo-ko (PY), *hieroworgos* 'offering-priest', *ka-ra-wi-po-ro* (PY), *klāwiphoros* 'female keybearer'. These titles mostly refer to officials engaged in various tasks or to recipients of subsistence rations. Moreover, there seem to be some special classes of officials who are connected with deities or cult structures, e.g. *di-wi-je-u* (PY, derived from *di-wi-jo*, *diwion*, possibly 'priest in the Zeus-sanctuary' or the like) and *po-si-da-i-je-u-si* (PY, dat. pl., derived from *po-si-da-i-jo*, *Posidāhion*, possibly 'priests in the sanctuary of Poseidon' or the like). To this category may also belong terms like *di-u/wi-ja-wo* (KN, PY, TH, derived from *di-u/wi-ja diw[i]ja*, possibly 'priest [in the sanctuary] of Dia), *pa-da-je-u/pa-de-we-u* (PY, cf. *pa-de* at KN; cf. also perhaps PY Un 219.2 *pa-de-we*; possibly 'priest in the sanctuary of *pa-de* or [??] *pa-de-we*') and *ki-jo-ne-u-si* (dat. pl., PY Gn 428, connected with *ki-wo-na-de* [?] 'priests at the sanctuary of the [sc. Holy] column'??; however, the orthographic difference between *ki-wo-* and *ki-jo-* poses a formidable difficulty, which may be insurmountable). What we find here, as in many other Linear B texts, is an extreme kind of specialisation. Other terms that may also indicate specialisation within the same cult sphere, though not all of them are clear, are *da-ko-ro-i* (PY), *po-ro-po-i* (MY), *di-pte-ra-po-ro-i* (PY), *ki-ri-te-wi-ja-i* (PY, KN), *te-o(-jo) do-e-ra-lo* (PY, KN), *tu-ra-te-u-si* (PY, KN), etc.

We have, so far, no precise idea of how the religious sector was organized. Was there something like a hierarchy of the cult officials and if so, who was subordinated to whom? Who was at the head, who in lower positions? How far were the cult and the officials engaged in institutionalized positions? Were the cult officials active as full time professionals? And if so, on whom did they depend and who cared for their subsistence?

A partial answer may come from the Eb/p and En/o series from Pylos which record the land-holdings of cult personnel at *pa-ki-ja-ne*. Without going into the extremely complex problems posed by this series, we may state that a part at least of the cult personnel depended for its subsistence on allotments of land which were meticulously monitored by the palace administration. Most of these land-holders are reported to have the status of *te-o-jo do-e-rola*, *thehojo dohelos/ā* 'servant of the god or goddess'; one of them was called *[po-]ti-ni-ja-we-jo*, *[po]tniawejos* 'belonging to Potnia' (PY Eb 364.1; Ep 613.1). Other people, recorded in other series, are characterized in the same manner: several smiths (PY Jn 310.14, 431.16) and also a man working as *a-re-pa-ṣo*[-o], *aleipha^dzō*[-hos] 'unguent-boiler' (Un 249); one *ka-e-se-u* (MN) *po-ti-ni-ia-wi-jo* is recorded in PY Oa 1299 (in a series which has

shepherd' (KN Am 821). Other flocks belong to *e-ma-a₂-o*, *Hermāhāo* (gen., KN D 411; cf. also the allotment of flax land, owned by Hermes, on PY Na 1357). At Pylos there is also a land-holding called *po-ti-ni-ja-we-jo-jo* (PY Eq 213.5). There is in conclusion, as argued above (§14.2.6), some evidence for economic establishments controlled by sanctuaries, which were themselves supervised by the palace.

We cannot say for certain who the Potnia is in the texts just quoted. Indeed, a main problem is whether all these mentions of the Potnia at KN, PY, MY, TH with different qualifiers which refer to animals or commodities (e.g. *i-qe-ja*, [*h*]ikk^weja; *si-to*, *sitōn*) or places (e.g. *da-pu₂-ri-to-jo*, *D/Laburinthojo*, *a-si-wi-ja*, *ne-wo-pe-o*, *pa-ki-ja-si*, etc.), or even without qualifiers but with some connection with the *wanax* (cf. above §14.3.1.3), must be taken as referring to different forms of one and the same divine person, or to different deities (several models are conceivable) — see BOËLLE 2004. Even if we ignore this difficulty, the mention of the Potnia without a qualifier but with a connection with the *wanax* raises the same questions as the *wanax*, who at times appears as human actor and at times as the recipient of offerings. BENDALL's (2001, 447 n. 17) recent statement according to which 'whether the *wanax* be human or divine, a ritual context is implied' is valid also for the Potnia at his side; even if she is not a proper deity, she must have at least a semi-divine status. Since, as shown above, this unspecified Potnia has close relations with the *wanax* and, since both apparently receive offerings,²⁸ it may be a sound assumption that both *wanax* and Potnia were at the top of the hierarchy and combined in similar ways religious, economic and political power.

An understanding of these basic socio-political aspects is crucial for that of the central aspects of religion, but we must concede that we are still far from approaching a generally accepted and undisputed picture of how this hierarchy — both secular and religious — was structured and how it worked. Further study and, perhaps, further finds of our fascinating but — alas — so desperately laconic texts, which are our only written sources for the Mycenaean period, may lead to a more coherent and accurate understanding of religion. If so, many, if not most, of the preliminary conclusions reached above, whose speculative nature is all too apparent, may be eventually superseded by future work.

§14.4. SOME GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

The way in which a subject is understood depends to a large extent on the approach taken by the researcher. But from what point of view should we look at the information about religion provided by the Linear B texts?

The crucial point is that in this context we cannot speak of a specific perspective. Our approach is mainly descriptive; it consists of assembling the individual terms found in the texts, grouping these terms according to their subject matter, and attempting to define their meaning as precisely as possible. Moreover, all inferences drawn from these terms must be seen within the limits of the economic nature of the texts; in their turn the texts are meant to answer the most simple administrative questions: what commodities were given to whom, when, and in what quantity? Consequently we learn from the offering texts about the names of gods and goddesses, cult functionaries, sanctuaries, the kind and quantity of commodities, and sometimes about festivities and month-names. These are our only hard facts.

But what can they tell us about religion? Hardly anything about matters of belief or the deeper theological aspects. Taken as a whole, they do, however, provide the information that there was a variety of deities and that the palace took care of their cult. There were cogent religious requirements to be fulfilled by the palace. Thus the official texts teach us that religion was, to a certain extent at least, an official affair. It was important enough to oblige the palace administration to record in detail the cost of the various religious activities. And, as I see it, there are strong reasons to believe that the primary motivation for the scrupulous monitoring of all major and minor expenditure for offerings and other religious activities was not only economic interest; it was much more the awareness that the communal welfare depended on the fulfilment of religious duties. Consequently it was the palace's most important obligation to secure the gods' benevolence through a firm control of all religious prescriptions. Although the control of economic aspects is a plausible concern, the main purpose of writing offering lists may have been to make sure that all religious duties had been observed and to do further checks whenever this was felt to be necessary. More generally: the book-keeping testifies to the practice of piety towards the gods.

The usual perspective from which we approach the tablets is that of historical comparison, asking how things developed, what came first and what came later, what changed and what caused changes. At the same time we need

Greek religion of the Classical period (nothing certain can be said about Greek religion before the Mycenaean period)? Second, how much have the decipherment and interpretation of Linear B documents changed our picture of Mycenaean religion? And there is a third question, discussed since, at least, the publication in 1928 of M.P. NILSSON's fundamental book on *The Minoan-Mycenaean religion* (2nd ed. 1950): how much does Mycenaean religion differ from, and how deeply was it influenced by, Minoan religion?

Clearly the main gain from the decipherment of Linear B is the conclusive proof that Mycenaean Greece was inhabited by people speaking (an early form of) Greek and that the ruling class and its administration used Greek as their native language. Thanks to the decipherment of Linear B Bronze Age Greece has unequivocally become part of Greek history and culture. The Greek language provides the basic link through which continuity is preserved between the earlier (Bronze Age) and later (Classical) period. The collapse of the palatial system at the end of the Bronze Age may have severely affected several sectors of society and culture, but did not break the tradition as a whole.

From comparative linguistics we learn that the Greek *Zeus-Patēr* and the Latin *Iu-(p)iter* are cognate, and go back to the Indo-European parent language of Greek and Latin. Zeus must have entered Greece together with the people who were the forefathers of the later Greeks. Thanks to the decipherment of Linear B we are now able to say that this must have happened before the rise of the Mycenaean culture which developed continuously starting from the Early Helladic III/Middle Helladic culture (about 2100-1650 BC). The archaeological evidence for a remarkable cultural break at the end of the Early Helladic II culture (around 2600/2100 BC) speaks for the 'Coming of the Greeks' towards the end of the 3rd millennium BC (see *Companion* 1, §4.2). Consequently to find in the Linear B texts the highest god of the Classical Greek pantheon does not come as a real surprise. Yet, it can be debated what position he held in that period.

On the basis of archaeological research, and in particular of the observation that female persons or deities were prevalent in the religious iconography of the Late Bronze Age, most scholars were inclined to accept a more or less complete lack of male gods in the religion of that period. But the decipherment made clear how unreliable pictorial information may be. It is from the Linear B texts that we conclusively learn that most of the Olympian deities, among them many male ones (Zeus, Poseidon, Hermes, Dionysus, Hephaestus, Ares) were already part of the Mycenaean Pantheon (cf. ROUGE-MONT 2005), where the female Olympian

the same time the occurrence of all these Olympians is a striking proof of a high degree of continuity between Mycenaean and Classical Greek religion.

There are clear signs of a Minoan-Mycenaean syncretism. This is shown by the connection of Greek Zeus with the traditional Minoan cult place of/at Dikte, the integration of originally Minoan deities like Enualios and Paiaon into the Mycenaean and Classical Pantheon, and also by the cult for Minoan deities like the 'Lady of the Labyrinth', Eleuthia, *pi-pi-tu-na*, etc. Of special interest is the mention of *a-ta-na-po-ti-ni-ja*, *Athānās Potnia* 'Lady of Athana' at Knossos who, despite the singular case *Athana* instead of *Athanaī* (pl.) — but see *Companion* 1, §9.17 —, must be a forerunner of Classical Athena. Its appearance at Knossos may have something to do with some historical event reflected in the myth of the Athenian hero Theseus and its Knossian relations. We learn from the Linear B texts that the iconography of the Late Bronze Age is an incomplete and, therefore, unreliable guide to religious ideas.

It is easy to explain why: the figurative arts of the Mycenaean depended almost completely on what they had taken over from Minoan Crete where there was a considerable preponderance of female persons or deities. In other words, Mycenaean art had not developed an adequate repertoire to represent the male members of the Pantheon. Historians of religion have long suspected that some minor prehistoric deities were assimilated by later Olympians, e.g. Enualios by Ares, or Paiawon and Ptoios by Apollo. Other deities who may have originally been major figures may have degenerated into heroes, e.g. Daidalus or Iphimedeia. This process is now well evidenced by divine names found in the Linear B texts like *e-nu-wa-ri-jo*, *Enuwalios* and *pa-ja-wo-ne*, *Pajāwōnei* (dat.) at Knossos, a sanctuary called *da-da-re-jo(-de)*, *Daidalejon-de* 'to the Daidaleion' again at Knossos, and possibly a festivity called *po-to-a₂-ja(-de)*, *ptoihaja-de* 'to the (festivity called) Ptoiaia' (?) at Thebes. We are not able to define more precisely the specific character of the divine personality indicated by the name *ti-ri-se-ro-e*, *Trishērōhei*: one might suggest that he had something to do with the (royal?) ancestors' cult. It is, however, of some interest that it attests to the existence of the notion of hero in the Late Bronze Age.

There is a remarkable consistency between Mycenaean and Classical religion, but there are also no less obvious differences. Thus it is striking that the names of Apollo (but see §14.3.1.1) and Aphrodite have so far not been found in the Linear B texts; this is also true for the name of Demeter (but see §14.3.1.1). Whether this is only due to chance and to the vagaries of preservation and find circumstances or whether it represents a real phenomenon of historical

correspondence we are left relatively helpless as to the individual personality of the deities whom we know through their (Linear B) names but whose specific function and character escape us.

A special problem is caused by the hotly disputed question of possible sacred animals and/or of possible theriomorphic deities. The discussion has recently revived after the publication of the new texts from Thebes discovered in 1993–95. Their existence should not be excluded a priori. Epithets like *boōpis* for Hera, *glaukōpis* for Athena, *hippios* for Poseidon or *hippiā* for Athena (cf. SCHACHERMEYR 1950) may reflect these obviously very archaic notions of divine appearances in the shape of animals. Pausanias (8.25.5; 42.6) reports the tradition that at Phigaleia the head of the cult-image of Demeter Melaina was horse-shaped and that there as well as at Telphousa Poseidon had coupled with Demeter in the form of a stallion after she had changed herself into a mare. Even so, the texts remain problematic.

That Minoans and Mycenaeans had both open air and built sanctuaries is clear from the archaeological evidence. We may thus expect that such cult places are, at least by implication, recorded in the Linear B texts. This does indeed happen, but it is interesting to note that it was the palace which felt responsible for these sanctuaries (or at least some of them). From the point of view of continuity, it is, once again, encouraging to find among the sanctuaries or deities recorded in the Mycenaean texts a Daidaleion, the cult (place) of Diktaean Zeus, and also the name of Eleuthia at Amnisos. A regrettable omission, however, is caused by our incapacity to find precise geographical identifications for most cult places (sanctuaries) located outside the palace, whenever the place-names have not survived into the historical period.

It goes without saying that cult activity needs its personnel, above all priests and priestesses. But it is impressive how many specialized professionals with various functions were engaged in the religious sector, mainly in connection with cult events. Here we encounter as high a degree of specialisation as that which we observe in the field of handcrafts and industries. This specialisation level of cult functionaries seems to go beyond what we know from the Classical sources.

We have a very limited view, glimpses more than anything else, of the rituals performed. We owe it once more to single designations of festivals which can be etymologically interpreted, e.g. *te-o-po-ri-ja*, *thehophoria* 'the carrying of the god', *re-ke-to-ro-te-ri-jo*, *lekhestrōtērion* 'the (festivity of the) spreading of the bed' and also to descriptions of cult activities like *mu-jo-me-no e-pi wa-*

hietoi k^we pa-kiansi dōra k^we pherei phorenas (?) k^we agei '(the palace of Pylos) performs a cult ceremony ([?]; by organizing a procession?) and brings offerings and leads victims (?)' (PY Tn 316). The term *te-o-po-ri-ja*, *thehophoria* 'the carrying of the god' (KN Ga 1058; Od 696) suggests that processions were held in the course of which the (cult-image of a) deity was carried around and, as the tablet PY Tn 316 just mentioned shows, gifts in form of precious vessels were brought into sanctuaries.

Cult installations are indicated by terms like *to-pe-za*, *torpeda* (Classical Greek *trapeza*, here 'altar?-table'; KN V 280) and *e-ka-ra*, *eskharā* 'hearth (fire-altar?)' (PY Ea 102) which presuppose the use of offering tables and hearths (probably for burnt offerings), and also by expressions like *o-pi-e-de-i*, *opi hedehi* 'at the seat' (PY An 1281.2) and *ki-wo-na-de*, *kiwōna-de* 'to the column' (PY Vn 48.4) which may be understood as indications of cult images and aniconic installations (*Kultmale*; in the form of a throne or a sacred column).

Offerings mainly consist of natural products, cereals, fruits and vegetables as well as animals, but sometimes also include man-made ones such as textiles and precious vessels. Here it may also be mentioned that for religious purposes men and women seem exceptionally²⁹ to have been transferred to sanctuaries, perhaps as gifts. That the personnel mentioned on PY Tn 316 and called *po-re-na* were sent there as human offerings cannot be excluded.

Taken as a whole the outlay for the offerings was on a modest scale. It seems that it took the form of offerings given, i.e. dedicated, to the deities themselves; other contributions were supplied to support the cult personnel which took part in religious festivals which may have lasted several days. As far as we can see the amount of agricultural commodities consumed on the occasion of religious activities was less than 10% of the totals recorded by the palace administration. Yet, as can be inferred from the class of 'mixed' offering tablets, a relatively large part of these offerings was for State banquets organized by the palace. The commodities, which on these occasions were consumed in respectable quantities, included vegetables, cheese, wine and, above all, all kinds of sacrificial animals. A great number of participants are supposed to have taken part in these events; presumably they assembled in the megaron and the court(s) of the palaces or, on other occasions, at places outside the citadels (cf. *Od.* 4.31ff). Among them there were the most powerful representatives of the State, the *wanax* and the *lāwāgetās*. The *wanax* ('king') was clearly a recipient of offered gifts³⁰ as was the/a (?) Potnia (in some cases presumably the 'queen' cf. above §14.3.1.3). Apparently we are confronted with a kind of theocratic system in

which the ruler and his wife and perhaps also the king's mother (cf. *ma-te-re te-i-ja, mātērei thehiāi* 'for the Divine mother', PY Fr 1202³¹) hold a (semi-) divine position. In any case there was a close interconnection between what we would now call the religious and the secular sector. The executive power, it seems, was supported by, and integrated into, religion.

Much remains to be done before we can achieve a generally satisfying interpretation of the Linear B texts concerning Mycenaean religion. At the moment, despite the great and undeniable progress made, there are still numerous problems. But, in any case, and despite all the difficulties which must still be overcome, the tablets are an invaluable source of information, which allows us to explore at much greater depth the question of the origins and development of Greek religion. Their historical position, between the Indo-European background and the Classical period, provides us with a sort of 'frozen picture' of an important moment in Late Bronze Age Greece.

§14.5. REFERENCES FOR CHAPTER 14

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