

## THE NATURE OF MYCENAEAN KINGSHIP

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In the Late Bronze Age the lords of mainland Greece succeeded in establishing a system of "... monarchies unlike anything that we associate with the Greeks or anything that ever again existed in Hellas."<sup>1</sup> Contact with and influence from older civilizations of the eastern Mediterranean fostered the development of a political system which became a combination of tribal monarchy and centralized dynastic rule.

To study the evolution of Mycenaean kingship one must begin at the end of the Early Helladic period, ca. 2200 B. C., and the entrance of Indo-European people to the mainland of Greece.<sup>2</sup> Yet, although the roots of Mycenaean civilization extend back into the third millennium, that civilization developed slowly through the Middle Helladic period: six hundred years of consolidation and expanding contact abroad were required to create an established Mycenaean culture. In fact, the Middle Bronze age witnessed a decline in the cultural level of the mainland and it is not until sixteenth century that we sense rapid growth, seen first at Mycenae and soon at several mainland sites.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> D. L. Page, *History and the Homeric Iliad* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1959), 179.

<sup>2</sup> Most modern scholars accept the view that the destructions at the close of the Early Bronze Age in Greece mark the arrival of newcomers. That the newcomers were Greek-speakers is strongly suggested by the use of the Greek language in the thirteenth century. There is no major cultural break between the destructions at the end of the Early Helladic period and the presence of the Greek language in the thirteenth century. See R. A. Crossland, "Immigrants from the North", *CAH I* xxvii (Cambridge, 1967) 18, 25-29.

<sup>3</sup> W. A. McDonald, *Progress into the Past* (Bloomington, Ind., and London, 1967) 367, writes of "... the enigma of the rapid transition from Middle Helladic stagnation to Early Mycenaean dynamism."

The other terminus for Mycenaean kingship can be given as approximately 1200 - 1150 B. C. By the middle of the twelfth century B. C., many of the major Mycenaean sites had undergone destruction by a still-unknown agent.<sup>4</sup> With physical destruction came the collapse of many aspects of life and, consequently, while there was a degree of continuity between the Bronze Age culture and that of the Classical period<sup>5</sup>, the Dark Age witnessed profound changes in the emergence of life organized around the city-state.

It is interesting that the general nature of Mycenaean political organization was revealed by the early archaeological excavations in the nineteenth century. Writing in the 1890's, Tsountas stated:

... that monarchy was the Mycenaean form of government is sufficiently attested by the strong castles, each taken up in large part by a single princely mansion.<sup>6</sup>

While this general picture remains unchallenged, the decipherment of the Linear B tablets as an early form of Greek has revealed more specific aspects of the nature of that monarchy. Although the tablets are simply lists of only a few of the kingdoms<sup>7</sup> with many unsolved riddles, still the mere existence of records treating minute details of organized life bespeaks some degree of regulation and centralization of economic, social and political activities. Moreover, the terminology of the tablets may be used to suggest specific features of Mycenaean political organization.

It is significant that the tablets were found in palaces. By the Late Helladic period the focal point of life in Greece had shifted from towns to palace-fortresses. Developments on the mainland during the Middle Helladic period are still far from clear, yet sites such as Dorion indicate that a civi-

<sup>4</sup> Not all the Mycenaean sites were destroyed and continuity of settlement is shown for Athens, parts of Crete, Iolkos, Ithaca, Naxos and parts of the Argolid. V. R. d'A. Desborough, *The Last Mycenaeans and Their Successors* (Oxford, 1964) 258-9 and *passim*.

<sup>5</sup> One of the major contributions of M. P. Nilsson to modern scholarship was to reveal the degree of continuity in cycles of myth from the Bronze Age to the Classical period. See, for example, his *The Minoan-Mycenaean Religion and Its Survival in Greek Religion* (Lund, 1950) and *The Mycenaean Origin of Greek Mythology* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1942). A strong case for political continuity is made by G. Maddoli, "Damos e basilèes", *Studi Micenei ed Egeo-Anatolici* XII (Rome, 1970) 7 - 57.

<sup>6</sup> C. Tsountas and J. I. Manatt, *The Mycenaean Age* (Boston and New York, 1897) 336.

<sup>7</sup> The bulk of the tablets were found at Pylos and Knossos. Tablets from Mycenae total only slightly more than fifty and further excavation is required at Thebes before an estimate of the quantity of tablets there can be made. There are vases bearing Linear B signs from several sites, notably Mycenae, Thebes and Tiryns but as Chadwick concludes with regard to five examples from Tiryns in *The Mycenaean Tablets III, Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 52:7, 1962, 74: "It is impossible to regard them, any more than similar graffiti elsewhere, as samples of true writing."

lization centered around citadel strongholds had been established by 1600 B. C.<sup>8</sup> The mainland, and perhaps parts of the Aegean Islands<sup>9</sup>, was apparently partitioned into several fairly extensive subdivisions, each region being controlled from a central citadel. It appears that each area was a separate and independent realm under the control of an individual ruler.<sup>10</sup> There may have developed loose confederations of rulers for purposes of warfare as indicated in the persistent tradition of the prominence of Mycenae as well as by the wall at the Isthmus dated to the last half of the thirteenth century B. C. but, as we shall see, the evidence strongly suggests that such confederations were only temporary.

The fortresses cannot properly be termed cities for it seems that only the chief figures of the political and economic system lived within the stronghold.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Debate continues concerning the three-wave theory of Greek migration into Greece. See R. J. Buck, "The Middle Helladic Period", *Phoenix* XX (1966) 193-209. On Dorion see M. N. Valmin, *Swedish Messenia Expedition* (Lund, 1938).

<sup>9</sup> Desborough, *Last Mycenaean*, 147-162 suggests "The area of the Dodecanese, and especially its main island of Rhodes, was one of the great centres of Mycenaean civilization during the Late Helladic III period." 152.

<sup>10</sup> The number of walled sites within a fairly limited area is problematical. "It is not yet clear how Mycenae, Tiryns, Argos, Midea, Berbati, Nauplion, Iria, Asine, Epidaurus, and Lerna managed to coexist harmoniously in the relatively small Argolid, but archaeology shows they did, by alliance or by domination from Mycenae. Thebes, Orchomenos, and Gla faced a similar problem in Boiotia. In Attica, Athens and Eleusis, Marathon, Menidi, Thorikos, Spata, and Perati must have coordinated their power in some way, perhaps in an amphictyonic league or in an inherited feudal hierarchy." E. Vermeule, *Greece in the Bronze Age* (Chicago and London, 1964), 233.

Sterling Dow has argued in "The Greeks in the Bronze Age", *Rapports du XI<sup>e</sup> Congrès International des Sciences Historiques* (Stockholm, 1960) 21 f., that the fortifications were defensive rather than offensive. "Most of all, they were built to shelter the royal treasure. They were defensive. They would hold enough men to man the walls and, under the then conditions of siege warfare, to stand a siege. A small force could do it. This being so, it seems likely enough that the Kings of Mykenai saw no reason to object to the building of walls at Tiryns. If the King of Tiryns wished to be safe, i.e. build a fence around his valuables, that was unobjectionable."

Also problematical is the question of the degree of central control exercised from the citadel of Mycenae over other regions of the mainland. While Dow, *Ibid.*, writes of "Mykenaiian Hegemony", A. Samuel in *The Mycenaean in History* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1966) suggests that trade suffices to account for the homogeneity of culture. Again, Vermeule in *Greece in the Bronze Age*, 236, states: "It is doubtful whether late Mycenaean Greece was either really an empire, ... or a string of local kingdoms who neither respected nor supported one another." On this question see below.

<sup>11</sup> I am following Mylonas's definition: "We noted at the very beginning of our study that the Mycenaean lived in small family groups surrounded by the graves of their ancestors; cities in the modern sense of the word, i.e. an agglomeration of houses of the entire population, did not exist then." G. E. Mylonas, *Mycenae and the Mycenaean Age* (Princeton, 1966) 210 f. For the opposite view see L. A. Stella, *La Civiltà Micenea nei Documenti Contemporanei (Incunabula Graeca VI)*; Rome, 1965) 131-134.

While private houses have been discovered on the citadels proper, e. g. the House of the Sphinxes at Mycenae, the bulk of the population continued to live in small villages throughout the region as it had from the Neolithic period.<sup>12</sup>

The fortresses, however, did serve as the focal points of life within each kingdom. Not only did political and economic affairs center on the citadels but also a fairly high level of cultural unity derived from the palaces and by Late Helladic III it is possible to speak of a general cultural uniformity through most of the Mycenaean world.<sup>13</sup>

This culture was the product of three major influences: the Indo-European background of the Greeks combined with the non-Indo-European culture of the Early Helladic period and modified by contact with Minoan Crete. While it cannot be denied that the influence of Crete on the mainland was especially strong, the two cultures were not identical. Furumark, for instance, finds that LH IIIB ware is largely a mainland creation resulting from the fusion of Minoan and native mainland traditions.<sup>14</sup> A recognition of the several elements of Mycenaean culture is vital for an understanding of the political structure of that society. There was borrowing from Minoan Crete in this sphere as well as in religion and art; however, the Mycenaean structure preserved features that are best described as Indo-European.<sup>15</sup>

The Mycenaean ruler was known as the *wanax*. In Classical Greek the term ἄναξ with the digamma is used of the gods, of Homeric heroes, of kings and metaphorically as in *κώπης ἄνακτες*, lords of the oar (Aeschylus, *Persians* 378). The meaning of the term in the Classical period is lord or master and the same sense can be projected back to the Mycenaean usage although it has been argued that the term originally was a divine epithet with the added connotation of protector.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>12</sup> The Kingdom of Pylos, for instance, seems to have been divided into two regions or provinces containing, respectively, nine and seven principal sites. See L. R. Palmer, *Mycenaeans and Minoans* (New York, 1961) 81-95.

<sup>13</sup> "Within the central Mycenaean sphere of Greece and the Aegean this is a time of remarkable uniformity. The objects found, of whatever material, conform to a general pattern, and a similar statement, though there are occasional locally imposed variations, may be made with regard to settlement and burial architecture." Desborough, *Last Mycenaean*, I.

<sup>14</sup> For example, A. Furumark, *The Chronology of Mycenaean Pottery* (Stockholm, 1941) 17 f.: "In the earliest periods, corresponding to LM I A and B, the stylistic parallelism between Crete and the Mainland is very obvious, but in the succeeding LM II and LM III periods there are considerable differences."

<sup>15</sup> Crossland, "Immigrants from the North", 52-56 and C. G. Thomas, "Matriarchy in Early Greece: The Bronze and Dark Ages", *Arethusa* VI (1973) 179-183 and 189 f.

<sup>16</sup> J. Puhvel, "Greek ANAX", *Zeitsch. f. vergl. Sprachforschung* LXXIII (1956) 202-222.

On the tablets the noun is used in the nominative, genitive and dative masculine singular but seldom is the masculine plural found. The feminine form, on the other hand, is employed equally often in the singular and plural. The root is used to form the adjective *wanakteros* and, in other forms, is seemingly employed for the name of a festival and to specify a place.<sup>17</sup>

Although the tablets give few indications concerning the *wanax*, most scholars follow the original conclusion of Ventris and Chadwick that a state was governed by a sole king.<sup>18</sup> The association of the *wanax* with a *temenos* or cut of land strengthens this identification for, in Classical times, a *temenos* was a precinct dedicated to a god.<sup>19</sup> M. I. Finley has demonstrated the changing relationship between the two most common words for king in the Greek language and has concluded that the word *anax* was displaced by the term *basileus* which had risen in stature.<sup>20</sup> To envision the change in rather different fashion, we might say that *anax* continued to climb the social ladder until it was so exalted that it was most applicable to the gods.

Any attempt to determine the bases of royal power in the Mycenaean period must begin with the recognition that the Mycenaean overlords were Indo-Europeans. Certainly deductions about the nature of early Indo-European social-political structure must be made with caution for, first, our evidence is drawn largely from Indo-European communities existing a millennium or more after the presumed primary movements and, second, the earliest Indo-European communities are found in diverse regions where they received various stimuli. Nevertheless, the same general structure is found for the Hittites of the second millennium, the Greeks of the first millennium, the early Latin communities, the Macedonians and the Germanic peoples of the first century B. C. and later. Consequently, comparative analysis can be employed cautiously.<sup>21</sup>

On this principle, an examination of Mycenaean kingship should start with its military basis for Indo-European kingship appears to have developed out of the requirement of a tribal society for effective leadership in war.<sup>22</sup> Where Indo-European peoples succeeded in establishing control over a relatively large pre-existing population they did so as warrior aristocrats. It would

<sup>17</sup> L. Baumbach, *Studies in Mycenaean Inscriptions and Dialect 1953-1964* (Rome, 1968) 247 f.

<sup>18</sup> M. Ventris and J. Chadwick, *Documents in Mycenaean Greek* (Cambridge, 1956) 120: "A monarchical system of government is proved for both Knossos and Pylos by references to the king (*wanax*); the absence of any further qualification shows that the state knew one king only."

<sup>19</sup> Pylos Er 312; Ventris and Chadwick, *Documents*, No. 152.

<sup>20</sup> M. I. Finley, "Homer and Mycenae: Property and Tenure", *Historia* VI (1957) 137.

<sup>21</sup> Crossland, "Immigrants from the North", 52-56.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

appear that the Mycenaeans were no exception for the military nature of their civilization is apparent in all aspects of life.<sup>23</sup>

The earliest Indo-Europeans to arrive on the mainland of Greece appear to have possessed a fairly primitive culture but managed to conquer a larger, preexisting population through superior military skill.<sup>24</sup> By the Late Helladic period, this skill was revealed physically by citadel-fortresses built, like Mycenae, to take advantage of a commanding strategic position and to control a network of roads radiating in several directions which facilitated the regulation of territory under the citadel's rule.<sup>25</sup> At Mycenae, for example, four roads at least converged at the Lion Gate.<sup>26</sup>

There were essential reasons for the Mycenaeans to preserve and strengthen their military superiority. In the first place, it was necessary to maintain control of a conquered population. A further reason stemmed from inter-kingdom hostilities for which there are positive indicators from the fifteenth century into the twelfth.<sup>27</sup> The position of the Mycenaean Greeks

<sup>23</sup> Vermeule, *Greece in the Bronze Age*, 258: "From the end of the Middle Bronze Age, militarism was so congenial to the mainland temperament that both its aesthetics and its technology focused on the trained soldier with his equipment."

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 59. "Like its contemporaries in Anatolia, this talented society suffered the shock of invasion by less advanced tribes. The date may be 2200 or 2100 B.C. While EH III is not yet well understood, it simultaneously interrupted growth and imported a radically different aesthetic and architectural tradition into Greece, which persisted there until the crucial time of Minoan influence nearly eight hundred years later in the Shaft Graves."

<sup>25</sup> R. Hope Simpson and F. Lazenby, *The Catalogue of Ships in Homer's Iliad* (Oxford, 1970) base a number of identifications of sites named in the Homeric catalogue on typology of site. On Oloosson, for instance, it is stated: "We have not been to the site, but from a distance it looked eminently suitable for a Mycenaean fortress guarding the Meluna pass, ..." 147.

W. A. McDonald, "Overland Communications in Greece during LH III, with Special Reference to Southwest Peloponnese", *Mycenaean Studies* (Madison, Wis., 1964) 217-240 writes: "In fact, it is a priori likely that better overland transportation existed in Greece during the Late Bronze Age than at any other time in its history until the nineteenth century A.D." 219. In his paper, McDonald discusses portions of what might be termed the Royal Road of the kingdom of Pylos traced by R. Hope Simpson and himself. He also presents evidence of a network of roads in the northwest Peloponnese in the Alpheios and Kyparissia valleys. See also, W. A. McDonald and G. R. Rapp, Jr., editors, *The Minnesota Messenia Expedition* (Minneapolis, 1972) 25-29 and 148-170 esp. J. Threpsiades' work examining a road system for the Mycenaean site of Gla is reported in *Archaeological Reports for 1959-1960* (1960) 13.

<sup>26</sup> Mylonas, *Mycenae and the Mycenaean Age*, 86 ff.

<sup>27</sup> C. G. Thomas, "A Mycenaean Hegemony? A Reconsideration", *JHS* XC (1970) 184-192. "... there appears to be a discernible pattern to the rise and fall of individual Mycenaean kingdoms before the final destruction [of the twelfth century B.C.]. Especially important is the fact that in each case the fall was apparently through destruction at the hands of another Mycenaean power." 189.

in the larger Mediterranean world provided the third reason for it is possible that Mycenaean acted as mercenaries in the eastern Mediterranean.<sup>28</sup> While the phenomenon of mercenary activity should be ascribed to social and economic causes, still the repute of mercenaries would have reinforced the warlike character of Mycenaean civilization in Greece proper.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, it may well be that the Mycenaean strengthened their power at home by military campaigns in the eastern Aegean.<sup>30</sup>

The Linear B tablets provide some information about Mycenaean armies although it is uncertain whether they were composed of professional, conscript or volunteer soldiers. The Rower tablets of Pylos (series An) suggest that there was a hierarchy of army officials with specified duties to fulfill in certain regions.<sup>31</sup> The identification of the *lawagetas* as war-leader would strengthen this supposition.<sup>32</sup> It is not clear whether military officials performed other prescribed duties, perhaps of an economic nature, as well.<sup>33</sup> Even if we can speak of a professional officer corps, the bulk of the soldiery is likely to have been conscripted only when needed from men who were normally farmers and/or craftsmen.

Given the nature of Indo-European society as well as the importance of military strength in the Mycenaean kingdoms, it is natural to assume that the *wanax* was, at least originally, chosen for his ability as a leader in war. It may well be that *wanax* denoted protector in this very real sense of military leadership. Other civilizations of the late Bronze Age made the same demand on their kings: throughout the eastern Mediterranean in the second millennium the role of the king as a military leader assumed prominence. It was during

<sup>28</sup> M. I. Finley, "The Trojan War", *JHS* LXXXIV (1964) postulates the activity of mercenaries at the end of the Bronze Age in the eastern Mediterranean and suggests that Achaeans formed a portion of the mercenaries.

<sup>29</sup> I owe this explanation of mercenary activity to C. A. Roebuck who asked in correspondence: "Was the phenomenon of mercenaries not comparable to their appearance in the Levant and Egypt in the Archaic period and in Persia in the fourth century? (i.e. a social phenomenon: war at home, changing society, a useful profession for the 'stateless', unemployed men?)" While I agree with this explanation, the impact of mercenaries at home in the Mycenaean period may be compared with the time of Alexander the Great.

<sup>30</sup> This hypothesis involves the "Ahhiyawa Frage". See G. L. Huxley, *Achaeans and Hittites* (Oxford, 1960).

<sup>31</sup> Palmer, *Mycenaean and Minoans*, 143 f. suggests: "The tablet first named a military unit distinguished by the name of its commander in the genitive singular. Then followed a place-name, which I took to be the HQ of the unit in question. This entry was in its turn followed by a group of proper names which I suggested were the 'officers'. The last entry in the paragraph gave the number of men and their station."

<sup>32</sup> See below for a discussion of the *lawagetas*.

<sup>33</sup> For example, the *e-qc-ta* may have had a military function or a religious one or, perhaps, both. See below.

this period that contact between Greece and other areas to the east grew steadily stronger. Nor should legend be disregarded in this matter: in the Trojan and Theban cycles, it is the kings who lead armies.

There are, however, arguments against defining the Mycenaean kings as war leaders. First, Mycenaean society has come to be pictured as a highly-bureaucratized civilization and in some bureaucratic states kingly power loses its personal, military sanctions and comes to rest solely on administrative or religious functions.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, the tablets attest the existence of a *lawagetas*, a title that is best defined as war-leader.<sup>35</sup> Perhaps actual military command passed from the hands of the king to a subordinate official in the Mycenaean kingdoms.

Such a conclusion is possible but not very probable. In the first place, it may be unwise to view Mycenaean society as highly-bureaucratized. While it cannot be doubted that administrative structures did develop in the mainland kingdoms during the Late Helladic period, the systems do not show the same degree of control in all cases. The rigid rule at Pylos and Knossos may be due to the fact that newly-arrived rulers were compelled to exercise a strict organization in order to gain control over their subjects. The scarcity of tablets from other Mycenaean centers may show that the same degree of rigidity was not practiced in most of the kingdoms.<sup>36</sup>

There is another reason for maintaining that the military leadership of a kingdom continued in the hands of the king: there are numerous indications of increased militarism in the Late Helladic period and, on these grounds, there is cause to doubt that the requirement of personal leadership for the kings of the Middle Helladic period was replaced by the demand for administrative expertise only. Conditions of hostility throughout the Late Bronze age surely would emphasize a continuing need for military kingship. The fact that the *lawagetas* appears to have been a war-leader does not mean that the king was replaced in this capacity as the *polemarch* later replaced the Athenian *basileus*. In fact, it may well indicate just the reverse: personal ability in

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<sup>34</sup> As in the later Roman Empire and Eastern Chou China. See A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire 284-602* (Norman, Oklahoma, 1964) I, 376 f., 566 and H. G. Creel, *The Origins of Statecraft in China* (Chicago and London, 1970) 242-316.

<sup>35</sup> The term should be translated roughly "leader of the people". However, the word *lawos* may have had the implication "the body of warriors". Palmer, *Mycenaeans and Minoans*, 99. For an entirely different interpretation of the position of the *lawagetas* see K. Wundsam, *Die politische und soziale Struktur in den mykenischen Residenzen nach den Linear B Texten* (Wien, 1968) 58.

<sup>36</sup> G. Mylonas, "The Wanax of the Mycenaean State", *Classical Studies Presented to Ben Edwin Perry, Illinois Studies in Language and Literature* LVIII (1969) 67 f. "It may be assumed that a tight control over the activities of the people was not established at Mycenae, Tiryns, Thebes and Athens, and to this may be ascribed the scarcity of documents serving that control, the absence of many tablets."



the field was so vital that it made itself an essential part of a growing administrative system which was adapted to the internal economic and social needs of the various kingdoms.

Nevertheless, the growth of administrative structures must have influenced and altered the original Indo-European political organization. The *wanax* came to be more than a tribal chieftain even though military leadership remained a basic prop for kingship. In other words, the Mycenaean kingdoms developed a two-fold organization: an original Indo-European basis with a super-structure of borrowed administrative procedure. As we shall see, the religious functions of the *wanax* point to the same conclusion.

The second foundation of Mycenaean kingship, then, rested on control of a subject population and a fixed amount of territory. The tablets reveal at least one fact plainly: society was aligned on an hierarchical basis founded on either a division of labor or a system of land tenure or both and this structure emanated from the palaces, i.e. the residences of the kings.

The many tablets dealing with distribution of land and/or seed and with conditions for use of the land illustrate the importance of land ownership in the kingdoms. The E series of tablets from Pylos especially, listing types of land and control of produce, shows the prominence of both agriculture and pasturage.<sup>37</sup> One theory holds that some type of feudal system is implied by the information of the tablets but whether or not a contractual relation existed the connection of the *wanax* and *lawagetas* with special land indicates that kingly authority rested in part on possession of landed wealth and, further, that use of *temenos* land was a prerogative of kingship.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Ventris and Chadwick, *Documents*, 232-274. Also E. L. Bennett, Jr., "The Landholders of Pylos", *AJA* XL (1956) 103-133.

<sup>38</sup> Ventris and Chadwick, *Documents*, 121 hold that "some sort of feudal system of land tenure is certain." Palmer in *Mycenaeans and Minoans and Achaeans and Indo-Europeans* (Oxford, 1955) described a society in which "the bonds of society were 'baronial' in nature: in other words that land was held of an overlord in return for an obligation to render military service." *Mycenaeans and Minoans*, 97.

Page, *History and the Homeric Iliad*, 204 n. 23 makes several sound observations regarding Mycenaean feudalism. "A case can be made in favour of some kind of *feudalism* in the Mycenaean social system. It looks as though production was in some respects connected with *tribute*, and land tenure with *service*. Important persons were expected to supply *men* for public services. ... Various classes of *duties* apparently connected with their tenure ...; and the duty of contributing a variety of commodities or artefacts is frequently attested. ...

It is to be admitted, however, that the contexts of many of these documents are — or may be — *religious*; and that the nature of the connexion between service or tribute and land tenure is very imperfectly understood. 'Feudalism' is a shifty term, useless or even misleading unless defined in its context: in this context we cannot define it, and its use would give the impression that we know much more than we really do about the organization of Mycenaean society."

Central control governing the use of land, of natural resources and of labor is clear. It may be true that the tablets were inventories of a single year and were necessitated by events of that particular year, namely defense of a kingdom from attackers.<sup>39</sup> Still, the extent of control revealed by the detailed information did not arise *ex nihilo*. The tablets may be unique products; central control seems not to be. Archaeological evidence further demonstrates this control: both workrooms and storage areas are integral parts of the normal Mycenaean palace complex and it may be presumed that ultimate supervision of these areas rested with the *wanax*.<sup>40</sup>

The third leg of the tripod on which Mycenaean economic power rested was trade both within and beyond the Mycenaean world. Spectrographic analysis of Minoan and Mycenaean pottery is revealing the type and amount of internal trade. A good instance is the Stirrup jars of Thebes whose fabric is comparable with the fabric of pottery from East Cretan sites.<sup>41</sup> Indeed, the cultural unity of the Late Mycenaean world may well have derived from the impact of trade between the overlords of the various kingdoms.<sup>42</sup>

Beyond the Mycenaean world, the number of finds of Mycenaean provenience unearthed in the eastern and central Mediterranean together with the presence of foreign goods discovered in Greece suggest the existence of

"*Temenos* is therefore a land term, connected with the *wanax* (as at times in Homer) and the *lawagetos* (unknown in Homer). More than that cannot be said at present, except by conjecture." Finley, "Homer and Mycenae", 158.

<sup>39</sup> C. G. Thomas, "The Mycenaean Domesday Records," *La Parola del Passato* CXXXIV (1970) 301-311.

<sup>40</sup> A good description of these areas of a palace complex is given for Pylos by Mylonas, *Mycenae and the Mycenaean Age*, 57: "Facing the same court of the shrine and forming the southeast limit of the palace are three contiguous rooms nearly 15.50 m. in total length and 6.40 m. average width... A few scattered potsherds and objects of terra cotta were found in these rooms but also '56 completed, inscribed tablets, many of which deal with repairs in leather or in metal; others are records of parts of chariots, yet others refer to supplies of leather or bronze expected or received.' According to Blegen 'this inscriptional evidence is sufficient to establish the character of the building as a workshop.' At the extreme northeast corner of the palace area is a large structure... divided internally into a narrow vestibule and a large room in which were found an impressive array of pithoi firmly set into hollows cut in the clay floor in regular rows. ... Apparently, this large room was the wine cellar of the palace."

<sup>41</sup> H. W. Catling and A. Millett, "A Study of the Inscribed Stirrup-Jars from Thebes", *Archaeometry* VIII (1965) 32: "In the study of the first set of jars, i.e. jars 1-12, it has been shown that the most likely comparison made was with Type F which only occurred in East Crete." "The second group of jars, i.e. jars 13-18, from their single analysis examination seemed on the whole to be more comparable with Type 0, again an East Cretan source group, than with Type I which was the only other possible comparison."

<sup>42</sup> See above n. 13.

what has been termed "a Mycenaean commercial empire."<sup>43</sup> That the Mycenaean Greeks enjoyed contacts throughout much of the eastern Mediterranean is proved by archaeological artifacts and, perhaps, by foreign literary references.<sup>44</sup> The Aegean also evinces contact with the Mycenaean world as far north as Macedonia, along the coast of Asia Minor and through the Aegean Islands. Indeed, sites such as Ialysos on Rhodes show not only importation of goods but also Mycenaean settlement.<sup>45</sup> Sufficient pottery remains in Italy, Sicily and the adjacent islands to indicate normal trade relations.<sup>46</sup> Further afield, attempts are made to extend Mycenaean trade connections into central Europe and to Britain.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> S. A. Immerwahr "Mycenaean Trade and Colonization", *Archaeology* XII (1960) 4. It is obvious that words such as commercial empire, thalassocracy and even network of trade must be used with considerable caution for raiding must be regarded as one aspect of trading.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 3, for a map showing distribution of Mycenaean pottery before 1200 B. C. The references to "Akawasha" and "Danu" or "Danuna" in Egyptian inscriptions and to "Ahhiyawa" in Hittite documents are likely to refer to Achaeans and Danaans, both names used in the Homeric epics for Greeks. A. Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs* (Oxford, 1961) accepts the "Danu" and "Danuna" as "surely the Danaoi of the Iliad" but does not equate the "Akawasha" with the Achaeans since he feels that "the writing does not quite square with that of the much disputed Ahhiyawa of the Hittite tablets, who at all events have an equal claim." 270. O. R. Gurney, *The Hittites* (Baltimore, Maryland, 1962) 52 ff. is extremely cautious in equating "Ahhiyawa" with the name of the land of the Achaeans. He argues that "Achawai" and "Ahhiyawa" are similar but not identical and that the assumption that "Ahhiyawa" was a country located on the coast of Asia Minor cannot be dismissed until more is known about the problem of Hittite political geography.

Although there is still debate concerning the location of the kingdom of "Ahhiyawa" — is it to be equated with Rhodes as Page argues in *History and the Homeric Iliad*, Cpt. I or is it rather the whole Mycenaean world as Desborough, *Last Mycenaean*, 219, holds? — many scholars feel reasonably secure in equating the people of "Ahhiyawa" with the Achaean or Mycenaean Greeks.

<sup>45</sup> For example, F. Stubbings in "The Rise of Mycenaean Civilization", *CAH* II, xiv (Cambridge, 1963) 20, writes: "At Ialysus in Rhodes the tomb-contents show that there must have been some Mycenaean settlement alongside the known Minoan one at Trianda."

<sup>46</sup> Wm. Taylour, *Mycenaean Pottery in Italy* (Cambridge, 1958). More recently *I Micenei in Italia* (Taranto, Museo Nazionale, 1967). A personal study of the pottery on display in the Taranto museum gave a count of 137 examples ranging from Minyan ware through LH III C 2 ware.

<sup>47</sup> Wm. Taylour, *The Mycenaean* (London, 1964) 152, suggests: "If, on the other hand, a Mycenaean inspiration of Stonehenge in its megalithic form is fanciful, a surer indication of trade relations between Britain and Mycenae is provided by the amber spacer-beads found at Mycenae, Kakovatos, and Pylos, all of the fifteenth century, and these could well have borne the trade-mark 'Made in England'." For trade connections with Central Europe amber and faience beads provide evidence. Immerwahr, "Mycenaean Trade and Colonization", 5.

Much of the trade must have been the exchange of Mycenaean pottery, metal products and, probably, oil, perfume, wine and textiles in return for raw metals and luxuries such as ivory. The physical remains of workshops associated with the citadels, the tablets indicating control of materials and production and the accumulation of large stores such as the hundreds of kylikes at Pylos strongly suggest that kingly power rested, in large measure, on wealth obtained by this manufacture and trade. Raiding and looting can be included as sources of wealth by inference from the lists of slaves in the tablets as well as from Egyptian records and tomb paintings.

The tablets give evidence for control of the allocation of rations to craftsmen and agricultural workers. For example, one tablet is read: "At Eudei-welos: eight women, two girls, three boys: 336 l. of wheat, 336 l. of figs; ..." <sup>48</sup> However, it is instructive to realize that "No word on any existing tablet has been read which, by any reasonable analysis, can mean 'to buy', 'to sell', 'to lend', or 'to pay a wage' (or the corresponding nouns)." <sup>49</sup> The absence of written evidence of a monetary economy and the fact that the ox-hide ingots were not of a fixed standard weight <sup>50</sup> has an important bearing on the administrative systems of the kingdoms: if a system of financial regulation, including taxation, did exist then it rested on control of goods and services only. However, given the probability that the Mycenaean rulers remained essentially warrior aristocrats, such a situation is not unlikely.

How can this developing system of administration be defined and what was the role of the *wanax* in such a system? Before proceeding, it must be recalled that we speak of a single system of administration only because our evidence is extremely limited. If the data were fuller we would undoubtedly discuss the several systems for surely no one pattern existed for all the Mycenaean kingdoms. The bulk of the Linear B records, however, describe the Greek kingdom of Knossos ca. 1400 B. C. and the mainland kingdom of Pylos ca. 1200 B. C. <sup>51</sup> As there are certain similarities in the two sets of

<sup>48</sup> Ventris and Chadwick, *Documents*, 157 f., Tablet Ab02.

<sup>49</sup> M. I. Finley, "The Mycenaean Tablets and Economic History", *Economic History Review* X (1957) 135.

<sup>50</sup> G. F. Bass, "The Cape Gelidonya Wreck", *AJA* LXV (1960) 267 ff.

<sup>51</sup> "Most scholars now accept the view that Mycenaean Greeks established themselves in Knossos in the fifteenth century B. C., perhaps as early as 1480. A new militaristic spirit, shown in the arsenal and, perhaps, the introduction of the chariot, point to the mainland. The period is characterised by the appearance of the Palace Style ware made only at Knossos and on the mainland of Greece. The Linear B tablets, too, are found solely at Knossos and mainland sites. Innovations in fresco painting and architectural features again parallel examples from Mycenaean sites. The throne room in the palace at Knossos, for instance, was apparently re-modelled along the lines of those at Mycenae and Pylos and there is a striking likeness, at least in their reconstructed forms, between

records, we are justified in describing the general nature of the Mycenaean administrative structure.

The tablets list a number of what appear to be official terms. It would seem that the officials of a Mycenaean kingdom were of two basic types: more important state officials and lesser functionaries who exercised a local authority. The existence and identification of state officials is inferred largely from a Pylos tablet which records the distribution of *temene*.<sup>52</sup> An official known as the *lawagetas* is ranked next to the *wanax* in holding of *temenos* and from this position it is suggested that the *lawagetas* was second in command in the Pylian kingdom. His specific function is not spelled out but the etymology of the word suggests that he was the war-leader of the community.<sup>53</sup> Moreover, the *lawagetas* is associated with the absent rowers in the Pylian texts. Given the militaristic nature of the Mycenaean Greeks the existence of such an official is by no means surprising.

In the same Pylos tablet listing *temene*, three officials called *te-re-ta* or *telestai* are given in the third rank of holdings.<sup>54</sup> They individually receive the same amount of land or seed as does the *lawagetas* and, hence, are officials of some importance. Use of the term does occur in Classical Greek as an official title in Elis but it can be defined no more accurately than magistrate. Considerable numbers of *telestai* are given in the tablets and they have been described as fief-holders and as religious officials.<sup>55</sup>

The last entry in this tablet concerns *wo-ro-ki-jo-ne-jo* which is thought to refer to a religious association.<sup>56</sup> The records also mention an official termed *hequetas* who may have been a state rather than local official.<sup>57</sup> His function may have been religious or it may have been military inasmuch as

the griffin frescoes from the throne rooms of Knossos and Pylos." Thomas, "A Mycenaean Hegemony?", 185.

The controversy surrounding the date of the destruction at Knossos, whether ca. 1400 B.C. or closer to 1200 B.C. as Palmer argues [L. R. Palmer and J. Boardman, *On the Knossos Tablets* (Oxford, 1963)] does not affect the present discussion.

<sup>52</sup> Tablet Er312; Ventris and Chadwick, *Documents*, No. 152.

<sup>53</sup> See above n. 35. Wundsam, *Die politische und sozial Struktur*, 58, argues: "Der Lawagetas war der Exponent der Aristokratie gegenüber der Dynastie und erlangte mit der Zeit eine (beinahe) königgleiche Stellung". For an argument against this interpretation see L. R. Palmer's review, *Gnomon* XXXXIII (1971) 170-178.

<sup>54</sup> Tablet An724; Ventris and Chadwick, *Documents*, 187.

<sup>55</sup> Pylos tablet En02 lists 14 *telestai*; Knossos tablet Am826 records 45. Ventris and Chadwick, *Documents*, 241.

Palmer emphasizes the feudal interpretation of the term describing *telestai* as "service men", *Mycenaeans and Minoans*, 99, whereas Chadwick in "Potnia", *Minos V* (1957) 129 writes: "Although there is thus no proof, there is equally nothing in the Knossos tablets to contradict a religious meaning for *te-re-ta*."

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 128.

<sup>57</sup> As suggested by Page, *History and the Homeric Iliad*, 208, n. 39.

we find several such men attached to bodies of troops in the Rower Tablets from Pylos.<sup>58</sup>

In addition to officials connected with the palace proper there were a number of functionaries exercising authority in the outlying regions of the kingdom. The evidence for provincial organization derives, in large part, from Pylos tablets which record nine places of *de-we-ro-ai-ko-ra-i-ja*, or what has been defined as the "hither" province of the kingdom, and seven places of *pe-ra<sub>3</sub>-ko-ra-i-ja*, or the "further province."<sup>59</sup> Without arguing for specific geographical location, it seems safe to suggest that the Pylian administrative system was based on territorial subdivisions. While we can feel certain that there were officials to control each region of the kingdom, the functions of these officials are obscure. We read titles like \*85-*ke-wa* and *du-ma, ko-re-ter* and *pro-ko-re-ter* but remain unable to define their relationship to one another as well as to the *wanax*. At best we might envision a chain of command linked closely with the central citadel and the king.

Mention should be made of one further title, the *pa<sub>2</sub>-si-re-u*, a term which may be the ancestor of the Dark Age term for the Homeric king. It was originally interpreted by Ventris and Chadwick as "connected with the Homeric Basileus, who is not a king, but a kind of feudal lord, master of his own territory but owning allegiance to the king."<sup>60</sup>

It is probable that the original significance of the title did not contain the implication of kingship or perhaps even political leadership.<sup>61</sup> A change in the position of the *basileus* came about only with the collapse of the Mycenaean civilization; before that time, the *basileus* seems to have been no more than a local official.<sup>62</sup> The term is, at times, connected with a toponym

<sup>58</sup> The military connection is preferred by Palmer, "Mycenaean Greek Texts from Pylos", *Transactions of the Philological Society* 1954 (1955) 18-53b whereas Pugliese-Carratelli in "Egeta", *Minoica* (1958) 322, assigns to them a "funzione sacerdotale".

<sup>59</sup> Ng319 and Ng332. Palmer in Chapter Three of *Mycenaeans and Minoans* attempts to bring order to the list of sites described as located on this side and that side of some feature called *ai-ko-ra*.

<sup>60</sup> Ventris and Chadwick, *Documents*, 121 f.

<sup>61</sup> A good discussion of the tablets dealing with the role of the *basileus* is presented in A. Amaraschi, "Terminologia della regalità a Micene", *Atti e memorie della Accademia Toscana di Scienze e Lettere "La Colombaria"*, XXIII N.S. IX (1958) section 4.

<sup>62</sup> Puhvel, "Greek ANAX", 220: "These terms almost certainly denote functionaries in country villages ... and it seems very probable that a *pa<sub>2</sub>-si-re-u* was essentially a local chieftain, comparable to the βασιλῆες of Homeric Ithaca, although it may mean little more than 'foreman' or 'boss' on the occupational lists." Also, P. Meriggi, "Das Minoische nach Ventris' Entzifferung", *Glotta* XXXIV (1954) 27; M. Lejeune, "Les forgerons de Pylos", 422; P. Chantraine, review of Palmer's *Mycenaeans and Minoans*, *Revue de Philologie*, XXXVI (1962) 267; Page, *History and the Homeric Iliad*, 186; K. Maróti, "βασιλεύς", *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* X (1962) 177.

and there are clearly a number of *basileis*.<sup>63</sup> They are, on occasion, concerned with the allocation of bronze, listed among people contributing gold, or recorded as holding a certain type of land.<sup>64</sup> In some tablets they are associated with a *qa-si-re-wi-ja* which may be defined as the “retinue”, “establishment”, or “household” of a *basileus*.<sup>65</sup>

Possessing this limited information we can only speculate about the actual role of the *basileis*. Perhaps they had a “supervisory-managerial function” or they may have been religious, military or feudal officials.<sup>66</sup> The *qa-si-re-wi-ja* may have been a local council; perhaps it was the dwelling of the *basileus*; perhaps neither. As yet answers cannot be given and all that can be stated with some certainty is that the *basileis* appear to have been subservient to the highest-ranking officials of the kingdom.<sup>67</sup>

The administrative systems of the Mycenaean kingdoms do not appear to have included a regularized judicial structure. The tablets contain no reference to law in any form, that is written or customary, or to the administration of justice. There is no hint of a situation in which an individual has applied to an official to redress a wrong and etymology does not suggest that any of the official titles was concerned with justice.<sup>68</sup>

<sup>63</sup> Pylos tablet Ac398; Knossos tablet As1516.

<sup>64</sup> Allocation of bronze: Pylos Jn310; contributing gold: Pylos Jo438; holding land: Pylos Sn64 and An218.

<sup>65</sup> Pylos tablet Fn50, Ventris and Chadwick, *Documents*, 216 f. Retinue: Page *History and the Homeric Iliad*, 208; household: J.P. Olivier, *À propos d'une 'liste' de desservants de sanctuaire dans les documents en linéaire B de Pylos* (Bruxelles, 1960) 109-113; establishment: Palmer, *Mycenaeans and Minoans*, 115 and 137.

<sup>66</sup> On the “supervisory-managerial function” of the *basileis* see Palmer, *Mycenaeans and Minoans*, 106 f., 110 ff. The association of the *basileus* with the goddess Potnia of the Pylian tablets would suggest a religious function. See G. Pugliese-Carratelli, “La decifrazione dei testi micenei”, *La Parola del Passato* IX (1954) 81-117. The mention of a *basileus* as a member of an *o-ka* (defined in *Documents*, 401 as “probably the name of a military detachment or sector”) and the listing of both *basileis* and *lawagetas* on Knossos tablet As1516 (*Documents*, 171) has suggested to some scholars that “the *basileus* occupied a post in provincial towns comparable with that of the *lawagetas* in the capital.” Page, *History and the Homeric Iliad*, 186. On the position of the *basileus* within the “feudal” structure see Amaraschi, “Terminologia della regalità a Micene”, 153 f.

<sup>67</sup> Wundsam, *Die politische und soziale Struktur*, describes the *lawagetas* as the *basileus* of Knossos.

<sup>68</sup> To demonstrate that Western Chou China possessed a legal machinery even though only a rudimentary one, Creel, *The Origins of Statecraft in China*, 192, argues: “The prime responsibility for the administration of justice was ascribed to the King. We find application made directly to him, in his court, for redress of wrong; he then directs certain officials to investigate and remedy the situation. Royal officials also adjudicated between individuals concerning private contracts, and we find at least one case in which a royal official appears to dispense justice within the fief of a vassal.

The absence of such indications may be due to the nature of the Linear B tablets: they are inventories of various types of commodities made for one year. As such, the Mycenaean texts may be comparable to the Sumerian texts from the Third Dynasty of Ur: both deal only with minute details necessary for the administration of the kingdom.<sup>69</sup> Yet, it is known that the Sumerian king Ur-Nammu created a single legal system throughout his kingdom through a codification of laws. The code survives in fragmentary form and is independent of the administrative documents. The situation regarding law in the Mycenaean kingdoms may have been similar.

An alternative explanation for the absence of references to law may arise from conditions in which the Mycenaean *wanax*, as the Egyptian pharaoh, was regarded as the living source of law. However, the pharaoh's role as lawgiver was founded on his position as a living god and, as we shall see, it is unlikely that the *wanax* was regarded as divine.

There is a third alternative, one which takes into account the nature of Indo-European societies generally. In such communities the leader or king had a tripartite role: he was leader in war, chief priest and judge.<sup>70</sup> In this last function he shared responsibility with a council of elders or nobles and an assembly of the free men of the tribe. Law was customary and involved neither formalized procedures nor written codes. If we are correct in describing the Mycenaean overlords as warrior aristocrats, a situation similar to the one prevailing later among the Spartans and Macedonians is likely to have existed in the Mycenaean kingdoms.

There are difficulties of another sort in attempting to determine the religious basis of political power in the Mycenaean world. At the outset of studies of the Linear B tablets there was a tendency to stress a feudal basis for social and political organization. However, since the mid-1950's the role of religious officials within the political sphere has become increasingly evident. The role of religion appears to be so pronounced that it is possible that we are dealing with theocratic states. In other words, the position of the king may have rested on his own divine status.

The question of the divinity of the *wanax* is much debated. On the one hand, it is well-known that kings were considered to be divine in much of the ancient Near East and this may well have been the case in Minoan Crete.<sup>71</sup>

There may have been one royal official who held the title of Director of Crime. ...” There are no such indications for Mycenaean Greece.

<sup>69</sup> For comparable documents from Sumer see T. B. Jones and J. W. Snyder, *Sumerian Economic Texts from the Third Ur Dynasty* (University of Minnesota Press, 1961).

<sup>70</sup> V. Ehrenberg, *The Greek State* (Norton Ed.: New York, 1960) 15.

<sup>71</sup> For a good summation see C. W. McEwan, *The Oriental Origin of Hellenistic Kingship* (Chicago, 1934).



If Minoan kings were regarded as divine, it is possible that sacral kingship found its way from Crete to the mainland as did other features of Minoan culture. Indeed, some scholars feel that evidence of a more direct character is to be found in religious survivals in later Greek culture.<sup>72</sup> On the other hand, however, many scholars argue that the evidence provides no basis for assuming the existence of sacral kingship among the Mycenaeans.<sup>73</sup>

Evidence which can be used to indicate the religious position of the *wanax* derives from three sources: archaeological data, the Linear B tablets and analogies drawn from other contemporary, Indo-European societies. References from the Homeric epics should be permitted to carry little if any weight in reaching a conclusion.<sup>74</sup>

From archaeology we learn that the Mycenaean king may have received divine protection and that he may have played an important role in ritual and ceremony. Indications of divine protection occur on a ring from Mycenae showing a figure receiving a sceptre from a goddess and on the frescoes in the throne rooms at Pylos and Knossos picturing heraldic griffins behind the throne and, presumably, guarding its occupant.<sup>75</sup> The king's importance in

A. Furumark in "Was There a Sacral Kingship in Minoan Crete?", *La Regalità Sacra, Contributi al tema dell'VIII Congresso Internazionale di Storia delle Religioni* (Leiden, 1959) 369 f., writes: "There is, consequently, much evidence in favour of the view that in Minoan Crete there existed a sacral kingship of much the same nature as those of Oriental cultures." R. W. Hutchinson in *Prehistoric Crete* (Baltimore, Maryland, 1962) terms Minoan Crete "a paternal theocracy, not unlike that of Egypt." 258.

<sup>72</sup> For one such argument see P. Walcot, "The Divinity of the Mycenaean King", *Studi Micenei ed Egeo-Anatolici* II (Rome, 1967) who utilizes the Herakles myth to show that "the Mycenaean king was regarded as a living god." 62.

<sup>73</sup> H. J. Rose, "The Evidence for Divine Kings in Greece", *La Regalità Sacra*, 373-378, expresses the opinion that: "...our earliest evidence of how kings were regarded, written in days when kings still had real power and were highly honoured, gives us no authority whatever for supposing that they were then considered divine, nor that they ever had been." 376. The case against divine kingship during the Mycenaean era is well presented by Amaraschi, "Terminologia della regalità a Micene", esp. 141-146.

<sup>74</sup> The Homeric epics remember little of the Mycenaean civilization with regard to political, economic and social structure. Although there is continuity of certain religious elements from the Bronze Age to the Classical period, sacral kingship is not merely a religious phenomenon but also a political institution. The conclusion of Vermeule, *Greece in the Bronze Age*, 282, regarding myths is sound: "We can guess linguistically and historically which myths ought to have a Bronze Age nucleus, but when we consider the great changes even the most stable myths experience between Homer and Euripides, it is all too easy to guess how much they changed in double the time span before." As the result of this limitation to our understanding I am not concerned here with the use of such words as *diotrepheis* in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Homer's definition of a *temenos*, etc.

<sup>75</sup> M. P. Nilsson, *Minoan-Mycenaean Religion*, 351. A. J. Evans, *Palace of Minos* I

ritual is revealed by the location of large hearths before the throne and the channel cut, it would seem, for libations, by the side of the throne in the palace at Pylos.<sup>76</sup> Indirectly, the paucity of special buildings for cult purposes would imply that the palace was the center of religious life as well as the political and economic hub of the kingdom.<sup>77</sup>

The tablets supply further information. It would appear that the palace deity of Pylos, Potnia, was of major importance: this fact could imply the divine nature of the sovereign.<sup>78</sup> In addition, there are equations which lead some to believe that the adjectival form of *wanax* was a divine epithet.<sup>79</sup> The placement of *wanax* before *po-ti-ni-ja*, *e-(ra)*, and *e-ma-a<sub>2</sub>* (Potnia, Hera, Hermes) on a tablet is taken by some to indicate the divinity of the Mycenaean king for the title of an earthly ruler would not precede names or titles of gods.

The third type of evidence, comparative analysis, may be used to argue the case for divine kingship among the Mycenaeans. For the Hittite rulers, Pugliese-Carratelli sees Sole di Arinna as the "patrona dei monarchi etei" and suggests a process whereby the priest-king of the Hittites became a living image of the god.<sup>80</sup> Yet, the comparison between the Hittite and Mycenaean civilizations must be used with caution and the other potential source for comparative analysis, between Mycenaean and later Greece, is a dangerous one. We cannot safely infer sacral kingship from the fact that the term *wanax* was later applied primarily to deities. The shift in meaning of the term *basileus* is enough to show that titles can denote two very distinct positions in different periods.

There is one final category of evidence that has been interpreted as pointing to sacral kingship: it has been concluded that burial customs indicate that divine honors were paid to the Mycenaean kings after their death. It is obvious that the lords of mainland Greece were buried with elaborate ceremony: funeral gifts were customary as tomb finds and, perhaps, the tablets

(London, 1935) 709 ff. for the griffin as champion of the Pharaoh on the spear of Kames; II, 785: "The griffin stood in a specially sacred relation to the Minoan goddess."

<sup>76</sup> M. H. Jameson, "Mycenaean Religion", *Archaeology* XIII (1960) 38 f. . For a survey of shrines see Mylonas, *Mycenae and the Mycenaean Age*, 145-148 who concludes: "The survey of the remains in the Mycenaean area suggested as belonging to shrines proves that they are neither numerous nor very definite." 148.

<sup>77</sup> A large structure which appears to have been a temple has been excavated on the island of Keos. It dates to the Late Helladic period. See J. Caskey, "Excavations at Ceos", *Archaeology* XVI (1963) 284 f; XVII (1964) 277 ff.

<sup>78</sup> For instance, the account of Chadwick, "Potnia".

<sup>79</sup> Ventris and Chadwick, *Documents*, 411. J. Puhvel, "Helladic Kingship and the Gods", *Sundwall Festschrift* (Berlin, 1958) 327-333.

<sup>80</sup> G. Pugliese-Carratelli, "Su alcuni aspetti della monarchia etea", *Atti e memorie della Accademia Toscana di Scienze e Lettere "La Colombaria"* XXIII (1958-9) 99-132.

testify.<sup>81</sup> Yet, funeral gifts do not automatically imply divine status and a cult of the dead. Perhaps the most telling evidence on this point derives from modern scholarship: Mylonas, at one time, supported the view that a cult of the dead was likely to have existed in Mycenaean times but after a re-examination of the evidence concluded that such was not the case.<sup>82</sup>

What, then, can be said about the religious sanctions of Mycenaean kingship? First, neither the tablets nor archaeological evidence reveals that the king was thought to be divine either when living or dead. The *wanax* may have been thought to have divine protection and aid; there may have been royal cults; the king was buried with elaborate ceremony and costly gifts. However, none of these conditions implies sacral kingship. Although our evidence is inconclusive in this matter, as in so many others, still it would seem that the concept of sacral kingship would reveal itself more forcefully in the evidence if it had been a foundation of Mycenaean kingship. The case of sovereignty in Minoan Crete may be instructive in this regard: archaeological evidence alone indicated the religious basis of Minoan rule when Sir Arthur Evans began his excavations.<sup>83</sup> Most scholars, still relying on archaeological evidence only, tend to accept the definition of theocracy for Minoan Crete.

A consideration of the other bases of kingship suggests that militarism and economic regulation had just as much importance, if not more, in the Mycenaean states as did religion. This is not to say that the *wanax* owed no part of his power to religion. As in Indo-European societies generally, the king is likely to have acted as priest, perhaps chief priest of his people. He was not a god, however, and the Mycenaean states were not theocracies.

What can be said about the religious functions of the *wanax*? On the one hand, it is clear that religious ritual was an important aspect of palace life: altars, tables of offerings and libation vessels and basins are associated with the palaces.<sup>84</sup> The tablets tell us, moreover, that priests and priestesses were important personages within the Mycenaean social structure. Indeed, the evidence permits us to reconstruct, with some degree of certitude, the nature of Mycenaean ritual.

<sup>81</sup> C. W. Blegen, *Prosymna, the Helladic Settlement Preceding the Argive Heraeum* (Cambridge, Mass., 1937). For evidence from the tablets see Palmer, *Mycenaeans and Minoans*, 160 ff. on Pylos tablet Ta711.

<sup>82</sup> G. Mylonas, "The Cult of the Dead in Helladic Times", *Studies Presented to D. M. Robinson* (St. Louis, Mo., 1951) 64-105 and "Homeric and Mycenaean Burial Customs", *AJA* LII (1948) 56-81 for his early interpretation. For the revised position see Mylonas, *Mycenae and the Mycenaean Age*, 186.

<sup>83</sup> Evans, *Palace of Minos* IV, 960: "The whole course of the excavations at Knossos has emphasized the fact that the 'house of Minos' was a sanctuary quite as much as a palace. It was in fact a home of a succession of Priest Kings."

<sup>84</sup> Mylonas, *Mycenae and the Mycenaean Age*, 162-166.

On the other hand, the role of the king in this ritual is uncertain. While many adhere to the view that the king was the high priest of his kingdom, it has been argued persuasively that the *wanax* was not the chief religious functionary of state.<sup>85</sup> Several facts point to the latter conclusion.<sup>86</sup> The argument that the sacral functions of the *wanax* were so important that the kingly title was retained for an official even when kingship itself was abolished has a major flaw. It was in Athens that continuity from the Bronze Age into the Dark Age was most complete. Hence, the title which would have been retained because of its Mycenaean religious affiliation was that of an *archon* called *wanax* not an *archon* termed *basileus*.

The fact that temples to the Olympians were built on the ruins of Mycenaean palaces does not attest to the religious importance of Mycenaean kings.

We have to remember that over the ruins of the palace both at Mycenae and Tiryns small houses were also built in Geometric times, used by the descendants of those who survived the catastrophe. It was natural for those people to build the temple of their god in the area in which they had their homes, and that was within the limits of the palace. Again the top of the Mycenaean citadels was the most appropriate place for a location of the protecting divinity of a settlement centered around that hill.<sup>87</sup>

Furthermore, certain indicators of the religious role of kings either are comparatively absent, the double axe for instance, or can be interpreted as secular rather than religious symbols, the Lion Gate for example. Moreover, objects such as gems showing ritual activity seem to depict priests and priestesses carrying out the ceremonial activity.

Although the argument that the *wanax* was not the chief religious functionary of his state is sound, it must be qualified. Using comparative evidence from other Indo-European peoples it seems more than likely that the earliest Greek leaders had priestly functions as well as military responsibilities and it is unlikely that this religious aspect of kingship disappeared completely during the Middle and Late Helladic periods. Moreover, cult apparatus was closely associated with the palaces, the homes of the *wanakes*. Surely we must envision a king who continued to execute certain cult activities at least within the palace.

How, then, do we reconcile the above evidence with the conclusion that the *wanax* was not high priest? A reconciliation is not far to seek if we recall that the ritual objects of the mainland were almost all borrowed from

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<sup>85</sup> Nilsson, *Minoan-Mycenaean Religion*, 484. Mylonas, *Mycenae and the Mycenaean Age*, 169.

<sup>86</sup> For Mylonas, discussion see *Ibid.*, Cpt. VII "Ceremonial Equipment and the Cult of the Dead".

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 169.

Minoan Crete.<sup>88</sup> The Mycenaean Greeks were greatly influenced by Minoan religious ceremony and borrowed trappings and, probably, types of priestly associations. While the imported rituals became a functioning part of Mycenaean civilization they did not have the power to submerge the original religious function of the king. The *wanax* undoubtedly continued to act as priest in older ceremonies while the new religious practices were supervised by priests and priestesses.<sup>89</sup> In effect, a dual religious practice evolved over the course of the Late Helladic period. We can, then, argue for the religious importance of Mycenaean kingship while accepting the view that the *wanax* was not divine or the chief religious functionary of the elaborated religious system.

Religion, consequently, provides another example of the nature of outside influence on the Mycenaean Greek civilization. Foreign influence made itself felt to a marked degree but in the form of outer trappings. The earlier bases of Greek institutions were preserved and remained strong under external appearances. Such a situation helps to account for the similarities between new Dorian settlements and Ionian communities with a continuous history from the Bronze Age into and through the Dark Age of Greek history.

There is a fifth possible base to the power of a king, namely, personal allegiance and, given our reconstruction of Mycenaean kingship, it is likely that ties of loyalty were a major factor in Mycenaean society. But likelihood is not proof and the nature of the evidence allows little more than conjecture. If a feudal structure is ever proven for the Mycenaean kingdoms, an affirmative answer will be possible.<sup>90</sup> For the present, however, it is wisest to limit discussion to general features of life which suggest the strength of personal ties of allegiance.

The usual picture of a Mycenaean kingdom suggests that the ruling class remained relatively small even though there are signs that the population increased during the period from 1400 to 1200 B. C.<sup>91</sup> If the lords of each

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<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 175.

<sup>89</sup> For a discussion of changes in the *polemarchia* of Athens see E. Badian "Archons and Strategoi", *Antichthon* (1971) 1-34, esp. 27.

<sup>90</sup> Especially Palmer, *Mycenaeans and Minoans, Achaeans and Indo-Europeans*.

<sup>91</sup> Vermeule, *Greece in the Bronze Age*, 156 f.: "The period from 1400 to 1200 B. C. (LH III A and B) is marked by many more chamber-tomb burials than before, each with greater numbers of gifts, suggesting that the population of Greece increased in the generations and that more middleclass members of society grew rich. There is no longer the dramatic contrast between the gold-guarding aristocracy and the anonymous peasantry, but apparently new merchant and professional classes developed as the supporting stratum which allowed each local prince to consolidate his power in different economic terms." The acropolis of Athens, which is large when compared with a number of the Mycenaean citadels, has been estimated to have held a permanent population of two or three hundred at most. *Ibid.*, 268.

kingdom remained few in number then conditions making possible personal relationships between the king and his fellows did exist.

Hittite documentation is also helpful in this regard. The position of the king in Hittite society from ca. 1750 to 1600 B. C. has been described as precarious with nobles attempting to retain their privileged position vis-à-vis the king who was endeavoring to establish his rule on the grounds of hereditary succession.<sup>92</sup> The power of the Hittite nobility is still to be seen in the period of the Middle Kingdom.<sup>93</sup> It is very likely that the Indo-European Mycenaean society retained the same duality of monarchy-aristocracy in which personal relationships were extremely important even though actual conditions of development differed.<sup>94</sup> The position of the *wanax*, then, would rest largely on his personal ability to retain the loyalty of the other members of the aristocracy. And, since he was a warrior aristocrat himself, his personal ability was demonstrable primarily through his leadership in war. The Indo-European culture of the Macedonians later reveals these same features in pronounced fashion.

The third type of evidence, Mycenaean graves, will not yield a definite answer to the question of the relative importance of aristocracy in the kingdoms. Both shaft graves and tholoi are considered to have belonged to the kings and the immediate members of the royal families while the chamber tombs are thought to have been used by the people in general.<sup>95</sup> However, even if the definition of tholoi as royal be accepted as a universal rule we are forced to re-define our notion of royalty for the mere number and distribution of tholoi throughout the mainland must indicate that there were a good many kingly families. The tomb at Vapheio, for example, is held to have been built for a prince although no palace has been discovered in the region.<sup>96</sup> It may be that the line of demarcation between warrior aristocrats and kings was not as precise as we are expecting and that local aristocrats lived and died in royal fashion and, hence, are now described as kings.

If this picture be correct, Mycenaean kingship was not absolute but limited. The most significant check on royal power would have been effected by his aristocratic peers. The tablets provide no hint of the existence of a formal council but it is *a priori* probable that such a council formed part of the Mycenaean political structure.<sup>97</sup> There is, at present, no certain archaeologi-

<sup>92</sup> O. R. Gurney, "Anatolia c. 1750 - 1600 B.C.", *CAH II vi* (Cambridge, 1965) 28

<sup>93</sup> O. R. Gurney, "Anatolia c. 1600 - 1380 B.C.", *CAH II xv(a)* (Cambridge, 1966) 13-26.

<sup>94</sup> That is, the Hittite kings succeeded for a time in unifying their kingdom while the Mycenaean did not.

<sup>95</sup> Mylonas, *Mycenae and the Mycenaean Age*, 110 and 111.

<sup>96</sup> Vermeule, *Greece in the Bronze Age*, 127.

<sup>97</sup> The term *qa-si-re-wi-ja* on the tablets may have been a local council. See above.

cal or written evidence for the existence of an assembly of the people.<sup>98</sup> It may well be, however, that the functions of the assembled warriors passed to a council when the Mycenaean invaders established control over a far larger subject population.

In summation, Mycenaean kingship appears to have been a limited, aristocratic rule. The Greeks seem to have entered the mainland in bands, probably tribal groupings whose cohesion was based upon ties of kinship. Leadership under such conditions would be determined primarily by personal ability with additional support derived from religion. That this was the case appears to be borne out by the nature of developments in the Middle Helladic period: the mainland witnessed the growth of local kingdoms with lords subduing the non-Greek population in the region.

With the process of settlement and control over increasingly larger segments of the population came the need for an organized system of administration. During the Late Helladic period the requirement of control was met by the elaboration of an administrative system which was modelled, at least in part, on that of Minoan Crete. But while centralization and wealth increased throughout the course of the Mycenaean Age, it would appear that the emphasis on personal leadership as a requisite for kingship was not eliminated. A comparison of the grave goods of the Shaft Graves and the later tholoi reveals no lessening of weapons placed in the burials. Rather, in addition to ruling by personal strength a portion of the power of the *wanax* now stemmed from his role as chief administrator of his realm.

As his kingdom grew in strength and wealth, both vis-à-vis the other Mycenaean kingdoms and in relation to the rest of the eastern Mediterranean world, the *wanax* came closer to approaching the position of kings in the ancient Near East. Increased centralization marks the nature of later Mycenaean society just as it does most second millennium societies in the Ancient Orient. However, Mycenaean kings appear to have differed from their counterparts elsewhere: they seem not to have been regarded as divine and their role as leaders in war was never overshadowed by their administrative position.

There is one final feature of Mycenaean kingship which distinguishes it from monarchy in other Bronze Age civilizations. As in later Greek history, political authority was divided: there was no King of Kings as became the norm in Mesopotamia and Egypt.

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<sup>98</sup> The archaeological evidence is given by W. McDonald, *Political Meeting Places of the Greeks* (Baltimore, Maryland, 1943) 36: "There is no positive evidence that the courts at Tiryns and Mycenae were used as agorai, and it is unlikely that they would have been under normal conditions."

For the view that the assembly dates to the Mycenaean era see Maddoli, "Damos e basilées".

Archaeological evidence argues against the theory of unity or even hegemony by one king and one kingdom.<sup>99</sup> The walls enclosing most of the citadels appear to be defensive fortifications against potential enemies, perhaps enemies near at hand.<sup>100</sup> The Mycenaean systems of roads, too, imply the existence of independent kingdoms: although a network of roads within each kingdom seems to have been extensive, there is no trace of systems connecting one region with another.

The Hittite references to Ahhiyawa may mean the land of the Achaean or Mycenaean Greeks; however, this is no confirmation of the theory of the overlordship of one king. The Hittites may have experienced contact with one Mycenaean king, a more venturesome one to be sure and, hence, inferred that he was the sole sovereign on the mainland of Greece.

Nor does the epic tradition reveal "the overlordship of Agamemnon."<sup>101</sup> It recalls, rather, a temporary overlordship for one particular expedition.<sup>102</sup> In similar fashion, the presence of the wall at the Isthmus may indicate temporary cooperation between kingdoms and temporary leadership by one king.

Finally, symptoms of disunity are apparent throughout the Late Helladic period.<sup>103</sup> Consequently, we should probably visualize a number of *wanaktes* ruling independently and on roughly the same level. The same bases which supported Mycenaean kingship — that is, leadership in war and an efficient administrative system — might advance the fortunes of one kingdom for a period of time. But this is a difference in the degree of success of a king and his kingdom, not a difference of position.

<sup>99</sup> I do not intend to enter the discussion generated by Finley, "The Trojan War", who disputes the view that a Trojan War in which a coalition of Achaeans fought against the people of Troy was an historical reality.

<sup>100</sup> Vermeule, *Greece in the Bronze Age*, esp. 265; contra Dow, "The Greeks in the Bronze Age", Part V "The Mykenian Hegemony".

<sup>101</sup> Desborough, *Last Mycenaeans*, 218, writes: "I am firmly convinced that there was one ruler over the whole Mycenaean territory, with his capital at Mycenae, although the tablets are of no assistance one way or the other in this matter, and although the overlordship of Agamemnon clearly envisioned by Homer can perhaps be explained simply as a military leadership for the purpose of waging war against Troy. The burden of proof must therefore depend on other evidence, the archaeological material taken in conjunction with the fairly frequent mention by the Hittites, in the fourteenth and much of the thirteenth centuries, of the king of a land called Ahhiyawa, which I believe to represent the entire Mycenaean orbit."

<sup>102</sup> Thomas, "A Mycenaean Hegemony?" 189 ff.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 185-189.