

THE COMMUNITIES OF PYLOS

One of the most interesting problems in connection with the structure of the Mycenaean society is the evolution of tribal institutions towards the state. The relics of the tribal society come to be important once again when the palaces of Mycenaean Greece became destroyed in the catastrophe during the 13—12th centuries B.C. and the highly developed societies fell back into the previous situation.

With our present paper we should like to contribute to the solution of this great problem by making an attempt at elucidating one aspect of this intricate question, in particular to examine the status of some of the communities represented on the documents of the 13th century B.C. We should raise the question whether we can grasp the vestiges of this tribal system on the tablets of Pylos by examining the groups of people who played an eminent part in the economic and social life of the Pylian kingdom or by considering whether the same assemblies show the traces of the new situation which came about by the creation of a central power in Greece, and thus demonstrate the important changes in the structure of the Mycenaean society.

Previous studies have investigated either the remains of a supposed common Indo-European society¹ or some survivals which can be traced further in Classical Greece.² Others have pointed out the difficulty of finding any such relics owing to the very nature of written documents, i.e. they derive from the palace, from the centre of the state and therefore they record nothing but the affairs and transactions of the ruling dynasty which tries to repress the elements of the previous society.³

The oriental model for such communities can be found among the records of contemporary monarchies of the Near East, in Alalakh and Ugarit, where the interest of the state was generally the same: collection of taxes, land distribution etc.

It is especially instructive to study a list of villages, soldiers, working groups and

¹ E.g. L. R. Palmer, *The Interpretation of Mycenaean Greek Texts*, Oxford 1963, pp. 83sqq.; J. Puhvel, *A Mycenaean-Vedic Titular Coincidence*, *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachforschung* 79 (1964), 1sqq.; M. Lejeune, *Le ΔΑΜΟΣ dans la société mycénienne*, *Revue des Études Grecques* 78 (1965), 1sqq.

² C. Gallavotti, *Le origini micenee dell'istituto fraterico*, *La Parola del Passato* 16 (1961), 20sqq.; S. Luria, *Pakijanija, Inanija und Qoukoro*, *Listy filologické Suppl. (Eunomia)* 1957, 45sqq.; id., *Kureten, Molpen, Aisymneten*, *Acta Antiqua* 11 (1963), 31sqq.

³ For these restrictions see M. I. Finley, *Homer and Mycenae: Property and Tenure*, *Historia* 6 (1957), 133sqq.; id., *The Mycenaean Tablets and Economic History*, *The Economic History Review* 10 [1957/8], 128sqq.; Ф. Папазоглу, К вопросу о преемственности общественного строя в микенской и гомерской Греции, *Вестник Древней Истории*, 1961: 1, 23 sqq.

other communities published by Virolleaud⁴ and interpreted recently by Gordon.⁵ The groups of craftsmen have — in the same way as in the earlier Mesopotamia — been organised into guilds and were collectively responsible for taxation and other matters.

The working groups on the Pylian documents appear mostly on the An-tablets, but in most of the cases it remains uncertain whether or not they represent communities which are collectively responsible, since these arrangements of working men into groups can be only an enumeration of individual craftsmen or workers without necessarily forming constant corporations. The examination of other lists, however, (especially Jn, Ma, Na) leads to better results as they contain groups which can be found in the same series, where one can read about villages and officials.

The most obvious is the exceptional status of smiths.⁶ They occur both individually and in groups. It was suggested that the smiths of the Jn-tablets were organised in closed small communities. According to another authority *pa₂sirewija* and *kerosija* are connected with metal working. On the basis of these considerations we may take further steps to clear up other groups as well.

As regards other crafts, on the tablet Vn 10 — which lacks any ideogram — after the introductory words numbers show the contribution of *epiphuta*⁷ and *akosone* (ἀξονες).⁸ The contributors in the first half of the tablet are the *durutomo* (δουτόμοι “woodcutters”) and their destination is the chariot workshop (*amotejonade*). There is no indication of any destination in the second part; the contributor is *rousijo akoro*. Besides Ua 1413 the latter appears also on the Fr tablets (1220,1; 1226; as *pakijanijo akoro* on 1236) where it can be interpreted as either the destination or the contributor of oil. The interpretation from ἀγρός⁹ “field” as “Lousioi agroi” or as “countryside of Rouso” or “wasteland” are opposed by Gallavotti¹⁰ who has referred to another possible solution, ἄγορος or ἄγελος, both being sacral communities.

We should lay stress upon the same etymology; it is true that the form ἄγορος has been known only since Euripides, but the root ἀγειρ- with many varied formations provides the form needed.¹¹ The structure of tablet Vn 10 makes improbable the interpretation of *akoro* as ἀγρός and points to the meaning proposed by Gallavotti, but in a wider sense. This group is parallel to the *durutomo* of the first half of the tablet, i.e. a working group producing axles and other materials for chariotmaking.

A similar group can be traced on the Ma-tablets: besides the privileged smiths of the Ma 90,2 (*kakewe oudidosi*) we find the *kurewe* with the same indication. What can these *kurewe* be? Etymology does not help much for the interpretation;¹² the

⁴ Ch. Virolleaud, *Les villes et les corporations de royaume d'Ugarit, Syria* 21 (1940), 123sqq.

⁵ C. H. Gordon, *Ugaritic Guilds and Homeric ΔΗΜΙΟΕΡΓΟΙ, The Aegean and the Near East, Studies Presented to H. Goldman, New York 1956*, pp. 136sqq. On Hittite artisans see A. Goetze, *Kleinasiensien*, 1957², pp. 104sqq. (with literature).

⁶ M. Ventris — J. Chadwick, *Documents in Mycenaean Greek, Cambridge 1956*, pp. 135, 352sqq; C. Я. Лурье, Язык и культура микенской Греции, Москва—Ленинград 1957, p. 358.; and especially M. Lejeune, *Les forgerons de Pylos, Historia* 10 (1961), 409sqq.

⁷ *epiphuta* “saplings” (*Documents* 350, 392.) or “part of undercarriage (?)” (Palmer, *Interpretation* 418.); C. Gallavotti, *Lecture di testi micenei, La Parola del Passato* 11 (1956), 7.

⁸ Cf. E. Risch, *Un problème de morphologie grecque: l'accusatif pluriel des thèmes consonantiques en mycénien.*, *Bull. Soc. Lingu. de Paris* 53 [1957/8], 96sq.

⁹ E. L. Bennett, *The Olive Oil Tablets of Pylos, Salamanca 1958 (Suppl. Minos 2)*, 51.; Palmer, *Interpretation* 243, 247, 368.

¹⁰ *I documenti unguentari e gli dei di Pilo, La Parola del Passato* 14 (1959), 101.

¹¹ H. Frisk, *Griechisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, Heidelberg 1960, s. v.

¹² Either οκβλα or οκβλος, cf. E. Risch, *L'interprétation de la série des tablettes caractérisées par le mot o-ka, Athenaeum* 36 (1958), 342sq.

argument that it is an ethnic group¹³ derives from the fact that the same *kurewe* appear three times on the *oka*-tablets and once on Cn 3.4. But curiously enough our *kurewe* appear at different localities: at *pirute* (An 519,14; Cn 3.4) at *upijakirijo* (An 654,6), at *enaworo* (An 654,16). This fact suggests that the word *kurewe* appears to be a name for a trade or craft, which view is corroborated by the *kakewe* of the above mentioned tablet. The same applies to the *maranenijo* (Ma 393) who replace the *kakewe*, but in this case the lack of context on other tablets makes further speculation rather difficult.

Considering the Na-series of the tablets, a study of the structure of these records enables us to suspect the existence of other groups which in a sense form similar communities on the basis of common work. Immediately clear are the *kakewe* again; with *korokurajjo* at *wonoqewa* (Na 396), at *torowaso* (Na 405), and at *karadoro* (Na 543); with the *kekide* at *kupariso* (Na 514) and with *urupijajo* at *a₂kewoakiyo* (Na 928) the situation is the same as with *kurewe* above; they occur again on the *oka*-tablets at different localities.¹⁴ If they belong to a military organization, we find a parallel on Ugaritic guild lists where military units can be found among the taxpayers. But the lay-out of some tablets in this series suggests a possible connexion with groups of craftsmen again. One of the typical arrangements is shown on Na 106: the first word is a place name, *erinowo* (with the figure 24), the second is *kakewe* (with 6) apparently a group of craftsmen. The most frequent amount¹⁵ on these tablets is 30, in our case divided into two parts. The same combination (place name against *kakewe*) recurs on Na 252 (24 + 6), Na 425 (27 + 3), Na 923 (29 + 2, where the place is known also from the Jn-series), Na 941 (20 + 14); therefore at *ewitewijo* the *maratewe rawakesijo* is also a group (Na 245); similarly at *risapi* the *metore* (20 + 10 units but with the obscure word *ereuterose*, Na 924); and at *tamitana* the *kunaketai* (Na 248, 0 + 30 units), the etymological interpretation of which is undoubtedly *κωννητάι*. More important is the opposition between the village and the corporation of craftsmen; the ratio more than once is 1 : 2 or more in favour of the corporations and this proves the importance and independence of these communities.

Other suspected groups of the Na-tablets appear on Na 395: *keupoda*, on Na 568 *naudomo* (*ναυδομοί*) but the more complex construction of these records prevents further conclusions.

The analysis of the documents relating to agriculture and landholding illuminates the inner structure of the communities discussed. On a fragmentary tablet (An 830) the DA and the ideogram VIR appear and in the texts we read either about the *kekemeno*-land of different groups or about the *goukoro* of different places.¹⁶ The holders of *kekemeno* are the otherwise unknown *teupo*[at *esarewija* (DA 50) and the *koretere* at *aterewija* (DA 30). In the 4th line the word *maratisa* may also be a place name. The second half of the tablet takes into account the *goukoro* at *rawaratiya* (their number is 66), at *pi*+82 (60), *a₂kija* (60[+]). Very important is the qualifying word of the 12th line: *opidamijo*. The exact meaning of this word is

¹³ Palmer, *Interpretation* 304. Cf. *Documents* 191sq., 398.

¹⁴ *korokurajjo*: An 656.7, .18; 661.4, .5, .6; *kekide*: An 654.3, .15; 656.4, .13, .15; 657.8, .10, .13; *urupijajo*: An 519.11; 654.16, 661.12 (and also on Cn 3.6). For their interpretation see Palmer, *Military Arrangements for the Defence of Pylos, Minos* 4 (1956), 120sqq.; id., *Interpretation* 147sqq.; G. Pugliese Carratelli, *Sull'estensione del regno miceneo di Pilo, Studi Classici e Orientali* 7 (1958), 51sq.; H. Mühlestein, *Die o-ka Tafeln von Pylos, Ein mykenischer Schiffskatalog?*, Basel 1958, 15sqq.

¹⁵ Palmer, *Interpretation* 308.

¹⁶ T. B. L. Webster, *Demeter at Pylos?, Hommages à W. Deonna*, Bruxelles 1957, p. 533.

unexplained, but its connection with *damo* is generally accepted by most interpreters.¹⁷ Since the DA and the word *kekemeno* in the first 9 lines refer undoubtedly to landholding, it is obvious to think that the *qoukoro* are in the same context. The *opidamijo* indicates also close connection with the most important organisation of collective farming.

It results from the above that one of the characteristic features of collective landowning in the age of the Mycenaean palaces was the advance of some occupational groups in the collective administration of lands, i.e. the *damo* cannot be founded entirely on the original clan settlement; with the development of class society new groups and communities appear on the scene transforming the older state of affairs.

The same result can be reached by the interpretation of the cadastral lists, in particular by clearing up the role of the *damo* in the distribution of *kekemena* land.¹⁸ On the Ea-tablets the most important members of this community are the shepherds. Well known is the independent holding of *kekemena kotona* by two other shepherds (*sugota*, *qogota*) and by *meriteu* who belongs to the herdsmen. At *pakijane* the assembly of the *tejo doero* and *tejo doera* is very important to which several other persons are added who take part in the cult: *erita ijereja*, *wetereu ijereu*, *kapatija karawiporo* which is a religious action. The three slaves of *apimede* may be brought in the same connection. So it seems, that besides the *kotonooko* of this list a religious corporation stays in the centre of the *damo* in *pakijane*.

Sacral landholding plays a part also on Eq 213 where a *potinijawejo orojo* is to be found; the latter word is interpreted as "area, territory".¹⁹

We should like also to mention in this connexion the vexed question of the role of the demiourgos in the Mycenaean society.²⁰ Though no word for demiourgos can be found on the tablets, the occurrence of *damo* and many words with a second element *-woko* (= *Φοργος*) makes possible the existence of such an institution in the world of the tablets. If there were demiourgoi in the Mycenaean society, their name can perhaps take their origin even in this aspect of *damo*, namely in the specialized character of the landowning community.

It lies in the nature of the problem that we can draw no definite conclusions; what has been reached is more often than not something like guess work. But the indications discussed point to a society where the state reorganizes the inherited social system. Besides the territorial arrangement of the Pylian kingdom the tribal institutions are succeeded by regrouped communities; the groups of craftsmen (may we call them guilds?) are quite as important as villages and it seems that in the *damo*-community the common functions or common work played a more prominent part than kinship or tribal organization.²¹

¹⁷ *Documents* 390; Palmer, *Interpretation* 412. For the latest interpretation of *damo* see Lejeune, *Revue des Études Grecques* 78 (1965), 1sqq.

¹⁸ *Acta Classica Debreceniensis* 1 (1965), 9sq.

¹⁹ J. Puhvel, *Mycenaean o-ro-jo*, *Minos* 6 (1958), 61sqq.

²⁰ Palmer, *Interpretation* 86sqq.; K. Murakawa, *Demiourgos*, *Historia* 6 (1957), 385sqq., esp. 412sqq.; Ф. Папазоглу, *Вестник Древней Истории* 1961: 1, p. 38sqq.

²¹ For the interpretation of the occupational clans see G. Thomson, *Studies in Ancient Greek Society I, The Prehistoric Aegean*, London 1949, pp. 332sqq.