

HESPERIA

THE JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN SCHOOL
OF CLASSICAL STUDIES AT ATHENS

VOLUME 81
2012



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HESPERIA

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PRESTIGE AND INTEREST FEASTING AND THE KING AT MYCENAEAN PYLOS

ABSTRACT

In this article the author examines the politics of Mycenaean feasting through an analysis of three Linear B texts from the “Palace of Nestor” at Pylos that concern regional landholdings and contributions to a feast. Consideration of scribal practices, the political situation in Late Bronze Age Messenia, and historical parallels suggests that these tablets relate to the king of Pylos (the *wanax*) in his official and personal capacities. The scribal alternation between the title of the *wanax* and his name can consequently be seen as an effort to manipulate the dichotomy between his official and personal roles in order to emphasize his generosity.

Soon after the decipherment of Linear B, Michael Ventris and John Chadwick suggested that the man’s name *e-ke-ra₂-wo* (with graphical variants, *e-ke-ri-ja-wo*, [*e*]-*ke-ra₂-u-na*, and **e-ke-ra-<wo>*) was the personal name of the Pylian king, or *wanax* (Linear B *wa-na-ka*).¹ This proposal continues to be the object of considerable interest and debate.² The identification

1. Ventris and Chadwick 1956, pp. 71, 99, 120, 137, 265. For the variety in the spellings of this name, see Palaima 1998–1999. This personal name was at first wrongly understood as *Ekhe-lāwōn* (or *Hekhe-lāwōn*), a compound of the verb ἔχω and the noun λαῖφός (Ventris and Chadwick 1956, pp. 120, 265, 283). The sign *ra₂* represents *rya* or the geminate *rra* (confirmed by the spelling *e-ke-ri-ja-wo*), and it was quickly realized that a compound with ἔχω and λαῖφος could not motivate the use of this sign (Ventris and Chadwick 1973, pp. 395–396, 408, 454; see further Lejeune 1966; Leukart 1992). It has recently been suggested that *e-ke-ra₂-wo* is a compound of the noun ἔγχος and the verb **lawō*

(cf. Greek ἀπολάβω), yielding *Enkbella-wōn* (Ruipérez and Melena 1996, p. 139; Melena 2001, p. 73; Palaima 2004a, p. 230). Yet this interpretation presents several difficulties (for example, it cannot account for the spelling *e-ke-ri-ja-wo*), which are resolved by a new proposal by García Ramón (in prep.): *Enkherr’āwōn*, from the noun *ἐγγειρία (formed from the prepositional phrase ἐν χειρὶ; cf. ἐπιδημία from ἐπὶ δῆμῳ), meaning “undertake, attack” (cf. ἐγγειρέω).

For their valuable suggestions, I would like to thank Erwin Cook, Mike Galaty, Michael Lane, Kevin Pluta, Cynthia Shelmerdine, Jim Wright, and, in particular, both *Hesperia* reviewers. I am also indebted to

José Luis García Ramón, who graciously provided me with a manuscript prior to publication. Special thanks are due to Tom Palaima for encouraging me to study the *wanax* in the first place and for helping me see it through. I am grateful to Carol Hershenson and the Department of Classics at the University of Cincinnati for permission to reproduce photographs of Linear B tablets from Pylos.

2. In favor of the identification are Lindgren 1973, vol. 2, pp. 153–155; Chadwick 1975; Palaima 1995b, 1998–1999. Critics include Palmer 1963, p. 216; Wundsam 1968, pp. 77–79; Lejeune 1975; de Fidio 1977, pp. 131–135; Carlier 1984, pp. 60–62; 1998; Killen 1999, pp. 352–353; Petrakis 2008.

ultimately hinges on the interpretation of three Linear B texts, two of which record landholdings in the region of *sa-ra-pe-da* (Er 312, Er 880), and one of which stipulates donations of provisions for a large feast in the same region (Un 718).³ It is clear that these tablets are related: specifically, the foodstuffs for the feast are rendered on the basis of the landholdings. The common opinion is that Un 718 is in essence a taxation document that shows that landholders in the region of *sa-ra-pe-da* were required to contribute proportionally to the feast.⁴

Determining how these taxes were assessed has proven difficult, however, since the relative sizes of the plots of land do not correspond exactly to the sizes of the payments. Particularly troubling is the fact that *e-ke-ra₂-wo*'s contribution to the feast is out of proportion to his holdings. In this article, I attempt to resolve this issue by reinterpreting the relationship of the feasting contributions in Un 718 to the landholdings in Er 312 and Er 880 in terms of social strategies rather than administrative routines. I argue that *e-ke-ra₂-wo* was the personal name of the Pylian *wanax*, and that his payments of foodstuffs on Un 718 represented an obligation associated with the royal estate on Er 312. His extraordinarily large contribution to the feast can be explained as a means to display his munificence. The alternation between the king's title and name, I suggest, represents a distinction between two specific roles: official and personal. Thus, although the contributions to the feast were associated with an official royal property, the payments are disproportionately large and recorded against the king's personal name. Since the readership of these clay tablets would have been limited to a handful of scribes, I propose that the alternation between the king's title and personal name is the scribe's response to a specific social strategy, the goal of which was to associate the generosity of the king with his own person.

It is clear from the growing wealth of textual and archaeological evidence that feasting played an important role in Mycenaean society in economic, social, and religious terms.⁵ To date, the Mycenaean feast has been largely interpreted in terms of its *raison d'être* and its effect on society, rather than its internal constitution.⁶ As Palaima has pointed out, palatial feasts were the result of long administrative chains linking local communities, regional elites, and palatial elites, yet these individuals and groups did not necessarily share the same interests.⁷ Feasts were certainly arenas of competition for a diverse group of agents with different goals, statuses, and resources at their disposal.⁸ The unique relationship between Er 312,

3. Killen (2004, pp. 158–159) argues that Un 718 records religious offerings, contrary to the usual interpretation of Un 718 as a feasting text. He points out that it records few foodstuffs and includes two commodities (anointing oil and hides) that do not recur on other feasting records, but are elsewhere offered to deities. Un 718 still records a significant quantity of foodstuffs, however, including the three goods diag-

nostic of the feast: animals, grain, and wine (Weilharter 2008; see too Shelmerdine 2008a, pp. 402–403). Weilharter (2008, p. 419; cf. Burkert 1985, pp. 45–46) has also pointed out that while some of the goods on Un 718 were almost certainly offered to Poseidon—commodities such as perfumed oil and unguents were offered to deities on the occasion of ritual feasts, as Bendall (1998–1999) and Fappas

(2008) have shown—most of the foodstuffs must have been destined for human consumption.

4. E.g., Killen 2008, p. 166.

5. Bendall 2004; Halstead and Isaakidou 2004; Palaima 2004a; Wright 2004a, 2004b, 2004c.

6. Wright 2004b, pp. 125–129.

7. Palaima 2004a.

8. Dietler 2001, pp. 69–75; Palaima 2004a, pp. 225–226.

Er 880, and Un 718 allows for an analysis of the strategies at work in one particular Mycenaean feast, and consequently provides the opportunity to understand the relationship between feasting and the reproduction of political authority and social rank in the Mycenaean world.

THE NAME OF THE KING

The identification of *e-ke-ra₂-wo* with the *wanax* was based in large part on his prominence in the feasting text Un 718 (Fig. 1).⁹ A transcription of the text and a translation¹⁰ are given below:

PY UN 718

- .1 sa-ra-pe-da , po-se-da-o-ni , do-so-mo
 .2 o-wi-de-ta-i , do-so-mo , to-so , e-ke-ra₂-wo
 .3 do-se , GRA 4 VIN 3 BOS^m 1
 .4 tu-ro₂ , TURO₂ 10 ko-wo , *153 1
 .5 me-ri-to , v 3
 .6 *vacat*
 .7 o-da-a₂ , da-mo , GRA 2 VIN 2
 .8 OVIS^m 2 TURO₂ 5 a-re-ro , AREPA v 2 *153 1
 .9 to-so-de , ra-wa-ke-ta , do-se ,
 .10 OVIS^m 2 me-re-u-ro , FAR T 6
 .a -ma
 .11 VIN s 2 o-da-a₂ , wo-ro-ki-jo-ne-jo , ka-
 .12 GRA T 6 VIN s 1 TURO₂ 5 me-ri[
 .13 *vacat* [me-]ri-to v 1

TRANSLATION

- .1 at *sa-ra-pe-da* donation(s) to Poseidon
 .2 to the sheep-flayers¹¹ a donation of such an amount: *e-ke-ra₂-wo*
 .3 will give WHEAT 384 liters, WINE 86.4 liters, CATTLE^m 1
 .4 CHEESE 10 units, fleece HIDE 1
 .5 of honey 4.8 liters
 .6 *line left blank*
 .7 thus also the *dāmos* WHEAT 192 liters, WINE 57.6 liters
 .8 SHEEP^m 2, CHEESE 5 units, anointing oil ANOINTING OIL 3.2 liters,
 HIDE 1
 .9 and so much the *lāwāgetās* will contribute
 .10 SHEEP^m 2, flour GRAIN¹² 57.6 liters
 .11 WINE 19.2 liters thus also the *wo-ro-ki-jo-ne-jo ka-ma*
 .12 WHEAT 57.6 liters, WINE 9.6 liters, CHEESE 5 units honey[
 .13 [] of honey(?) 9.6 liters

9. Ventris and Chadwick 1956, pp. 264–266, 282–284.

10. This translation is after Palaima 2004a, p. 243. I have translated the ideogram GRA as wheat, although Ruth Palmer (1992) has argued that this identification is not secure, and has suggested that the evidence is more consistent with GRA representing barley and HORD wheat. The traditional identification is defended by Halstead (1995, pp. 232–233) and Killen (2004, pp. 163–169).

11. The word *o-wi-de-ta-i* is problematic. It was initially interpreted by Ventris and Chadwick (1956, p. 283) as *hō widesthai*, “as far as can be seen,” but Chadwick withdrew this proposal in 1973 and suggested a dative plural noun *owidertāhi*, “to the sheep-flayers” (Ventris and Chadwick 1973, p. 458). Another possibility is *owidetāhi*, “to the sheep-binders” (Aura Jorro 1993, p. 58; Leukart 1994, pp. 87–88). More recently, Brent Vine (1998, pp. 33–35) has proposed *owidetā(h)i*, “to the Invisible Ones,” a group of deities in parallel to Poseidon, perhaps the Nereids.

12. The commodity indicated by the ideogram FAR must be a grain, but it is uncertain which; for discussion, see Duhoux 2008, pp. 346–347; 2011, pp. 9–10, n. 17.

This document is an assessment text that records future donations for a feast from four distinct sources: two individuals, one identified by his personal name (*e-ke-ra₂-wo*) and the other by his title (*lāwāgetās*), and



Figure 1. Pylos tablet Un 718.
H. 19.7, W. 12.7, Th. 1.9 cm. Scale 1:2.
Photographic archives of the Program in
Aegean Scripts and Prehistory, University
of Texas at Austin. Courtesy Department of
Classics, University of Cincinnati

two corporate bodies (*dāmos*, *wo-ro-ki-jo-ne-jo ka-ma*).¹³ The prominence of *e-ke-ra₂-wo* is quite striking: he is the first contributor listed and he provides about half of the total foodstuffs for this feast, including the only bull (see Table 1). The rest of the foodstuffs will be provided by the *dāmos*, a regional corporate body that is chiefly associated in the Linear B texts with the supervision of landholdings and agricultural activities; the *lāwāgetās*, the second most important officer of the palatial administration; and the enigmatic *wo-ro-ki-jo-ne-jo ka-ma*, probably a collective body associated with landholding.¹⁴ The total amount of food recorded on Un 718 is adequate to feed well over 1,000 people; the wheat alone would have been sufficient to provide 990 daily rations for dependents of the palace.¹⁵ It seems clear, therefore, that *e-ke-ra₂-wo* is an important personage on a local level, if not in the kingdom as a whole.

As Palaima and Nikoloudis have shown, the structure of Un 718 is such that the scribe links the first two recipients and the last two recipients.¹⁶ The individuals, *e-ke-ra₂-wo* and the *lāwāgetās*, are listed first and

13. The word *wo-ro-ki-jo-ne-jo* could be an adjective derived from a man's name, **Wroikiōn* (Killen 1983a, pp. 83–84), or a toponymic adjective from the word *ῥῶξ*, “cleft” (Heubeck 1966). The term *ka-ma* is clearly a type of agricultural landholding in the Linear B texts (Aura Jorro 1985, pp. 309–310). Thus, the term *wo-ro-ki-jo-ne-jo ka-ma* literally refers to a landholding,

but as Nikoloudis (2008, p. 588) points out, *ka-ma* “could refer to both the land and the group of people working it” since it is the subject of the verb *do-se*. It should not refer to an individual, since Mycenaean scribes refer to individuals by personal name and/or official title.

14. On the *lāwāgetās*, see Sheldermine 2008b, pp. 129–131.

15. Women in the PY Ab tablets and men in MY Au 658 are allotted 19.2 liters of grain (GRA T 2) per month; see Ventris and Chadwick 1956, pp. 59–60; 1973, pp. 393–394; Palmer 1989. On issues of scale in Mycenaean feasting, see Bendall 2008.

16. Palaima 2004b, p. 271; Nikoloudis 2008.

TABLE 1. CONTRIBUTIONS RECORDED ON UN 718

	<i>e-ke-ra₂-wo</i>	<i>dāmos</i>	<i>lāwāgetās</i>	<i>w. ka-ma</i>	<i>Totals</i>
Wheat (liters)	384	192	—	57.6	633.6
Flour (liters)	—	—	57.6	—	57.6
Wine (liters)	86.4	57.6	19.2	9.6	172.8
Bulls	1	—	—	—	1
Sheep	—	2	2	—	4
Skins	1	1	—	—	2
Cheese	10	5	—	5	20
Anointing oil (liters)	—	3.2	—	—	3.2
Honey (liters)	4.8	—	—	1.6	6.4

third; both are subjects in clauses with the future verb *do-se* (δώσει, “he will give”) and its direct object *to-so do-so-mo* (τόσ(σ)ον δοσμόν, “so much of a contribution”). The corporate bodies, the *dāmos* and the *wo-ro-ki-jo-ne-jo ka-ma*, are listed second and fourth respectively, and are preceded by the word *o-da-a₂*, which means “and similarly.”¹⁷ Thus, *e-ke-ra₂-wo* and the *dāmos*, the two largest contributors, are grouped together, as are the *lāwāgetās* and the *wo-ro-ki-jo-ne-jo ka-ma*.¹⁸ This grouping, as well as the fact that the first in each pair is an individual while the second is a corporate body, suggests that the relationship between *e-ke-ra₂-wo* and the *dāmos* is analogous to that between the *lāwāgetās* and the *wo-ro-ki-jo-ne-jo ka-ma*. Nikoloudis argues on this basis that *e-ke-ra₂-wo* is the symbolic head of the *dāmos*, whereas the *lāwāgetās* is the symbolic head of the *wo-ro-ki-jo-ne-jo ka-ma*.¹⁹ The *dāmos* is an important local administrative body in charge of agricultural pursuits, and much if not all of the grain recorded in the Linear B texts was probably grown on land controlled by regional *dāmoi*.²⁰ The *wo-ro-ki-jo-ne-jo ka-ma*, on the other hand, appears only one other time in the Pylian corpus (see below).²¹ Thus, the importance of *e-ke-ra₂-wo* is confirmed by both the structure of the tablet and the quantities of staples that he provides.

It has long been noted that Un 718 is closely linked to Er 312 (Fig. 2), a text that records landholdings of the *wanax*, the *lāwāgetās*, the *telestai*, and the *wo-ro-ki-jo-ne-jo e-re-mo*:

PY ER 312

- .1 wa-na-ka-te-ro , te-me-no []
 .2 to-so-jo []pe-ma GRA 30
 .3 ra-wa-ke-si-jo , te-me-no GRA 10
 .4 *vacat*
 .5 te-re-ta-o ʔo-ʔo pe-ma GRA 30
 .6 to-so-de , te-re-ta VIR 3

17. Aura Jorro 1993, pp. 15–16.

18. The *-de* in line 9 (δέ) also clearly distinguishes between the first and second pair of contributors (Lejeune 1975, pp. 71–72; Nikoloudis 2008, p. 589).

19. Nikoloudis 2008, pp. 588–589.

20. Lejeune 1965 (= 1973, pp. 137–154) remains the best discussion of the Mycenaean *dāmos*. On agricultural production and the *dāmos*, see Killen

1998b; Halstead 2001, pp. 40–41.

21. For the suggestion that the *wo-ro-ki-jo-ne-jo ka-ma* represents a group of outsiders living in Messenia, see Palaima 1995b, p. 132; Nikoloudis 2008.



Figure 2. Pylos tablet Er 312.
H. 13.4, W. 9.3, Th. 1.2 cm. Scale 3:4.
Photographic archives of the Program in
Aegean Scripts and Prehistory, University
of Texas at Austin. Courtesy Department of
Classics, University of Cincinnati

- .7 wo-ro-ki-jo-ne-jo , e-re-mo
.8 to-so-jo , pe-ma GRA 16[
.9 *vacat*

TRANSLATION

- .1 The *temenos* of the *wanax*
.2 of so much seed WHEAT 2880 liters
.3 The *temenos* of the *lāwāgetās* WHEAT 960 liters
.4 *line left blank*
.5 Of the *telestai*, so much seed WHEAT 2880 liters
.6 And so many *telestai* MEN 3
.7 *wo-ro-ki-jo-ne-jo e-re-mo*
.8 of so much seed WHEAT 576(+) liters
.9 *line left blank*

Er 312 is connected to Un 718 by its scribal attribution and textual content. Both tablets are written by Hand 24, a scribe who only composes a small group of four documents.²² With regard to textual content, two of the entries on Er 312 and Un 718 line up nicely: the *lāwāgetās* and the bodies modified by the adjective *wo-ro-ki-jo-ne-jo*. There is only one *lāwāgetās* at Pylos, so the same official must be meant. The *wo-ro-ki-jo-ne-jo ka-ma* and *wo-ro-ki-jo-ne-jo e-re-mo* should also refer to the same entity, based on two factors: first, the adjective *wo-ro-ki-jo-ne-jo* appears only in these two texts, and second, in both cases the nouns modified by this adjective

22. Palaima 1988, pp. 89–90; 1998–1999.

TABLE 2. EQUIVALENCES BETWEEN ER 312 AND UN 718 PROPOSED BY VENTRIS AND CHADWICK

<i>Er 312</i>	<i>Un 718</i>
(1) <i>wanax</i>	(1) <i>e-ke-ra₂-wo</i>
(2) <i>lāwāgetās</i>	(3) <i>lāwāgetās</i>
(3) <i>telestai</i>	(2) <i>dāmos</i>
(4) <i>wo-ro-ki-jo-ne-jo e-re-mo</i>	(4) <i>wo-ro-ki-jo-ne-jo ka-ma</i>

refer to land.²³ Two of the entries on Er 312 also appear on Un 718, which encourages us to see a direct administrative connection between them, and to look for further links.

There may be a third equivalence between these documents, between the *telestai* (Er 312) and the *dāmos* (Un 718), although making this link requires some argument. The *telestai* are officials associated with landholding at Pylos and Knossos.²⁴ At Pylos *telestai* are usually associated with land designated as *ki-ti-me-na*, whereas the *dāmos* is associated with *ke-ke-me-na* land. While the meaning of *ki-ti-me-na* and *ke-ke-me-na* is unclear, the terms represent mutually exclusive categories,²⁵ which led Lejeune to reject the identification of the *telestai* with the *dāmos*.²⁶ The association of the *telestai* with *ki-ti-me-na* land is not exclusive, however. Carlier showed that the infinitive *te-re-ja-e* (“to accomplish”), which is contextually connected with the *telestai*, alternates with *wo-ze-e* (“to work”), which is regularly associated with *ka-ma* land, a subtype of *ke-ke-me-na* land under the jurisdiction of the *dāmos*.²⁷ Indeed, the verb *te-re-ja-e* and the title *telestās* derive from the same root, τέλος, suggesting that *telestai* were defined by the accomplishment of services with respect to landholding.²⁸ Since the verb *te-re-ja-e* alternates with *wo-ze-e*, the services of the *telestai* ought to be owed to the *dāmos*, not to the *wanax*, as was initially theorized by scholars under the influence of feudal theories of Mycenaean society.²⁹

The connection between the *telestai* and the *dāmos* is confirmed by prosopographical connections: six of the 13 *telestai* at *pa-ki-ja-ne* are designated as *ko-to-no-o-ko* (*κτοινωλόχοι, “holders of a κτοίνᾱ [plot of land]”).³⁰ This is important for two reasons: the *ko-to-no-o-ko* are holders of *ke-ke-me-na* plots of *dāmos* land,³¹ and they are interchangeable with the *dāmos* (PY Eb 297, Ep 704.5–6), suggesting that the *dāmos* was represented by (or consisted of) a board of *ko-to-no-o-ko*.³² At *pa-ki-ja-ne*, at least half of this board was composed of *telestai*.

In sum, there are good reasons to believe that the *telestai* and the *dāmos* are closely associated, suggesting that we should connect the *dāmos* on Un 718 with the *telestai* on Er 312. It is consequently tempting to equate the personal name *e-ke-ra₂-wo* with the *wanax*, as indeed Ventris and Chadwick did (Table 2).³³ Although the order of landholders in Er 312 is different from the order of contributors in Un 718, this variation can be attributed to the inclination of Hand 24 to group the holders of *temenē* together in the first two entries of Er 312. If the landholders on Er 312 are the same individuals and groups as the contributors on Un 718, then the contributions assessed for the feast on Un 718 should be related to the landholdings recorded on Er 312. In fact, the proportions of the

23. The term *ka-ma* indicates a type of landholding (see n. 13, above). The hapax *e-re-mo* seems to correspond to Greek ἐρημιον, “wasteland” (Aura Jorro 1985, p. 240), although Duhoux (2008, p. 308) suggests *helemon* (cf. ἔλος), “marshy ground.”

24. Carlier 1987.

25. See Aura Jorro 1985, pp. 337–339, 366–367; Lupack 2008, pp. 57–63.

26. Lejeune 1975, pp. 64–65.

27. Carlier 1987, pp. 67–68; see too Killen 1998b; Lupack 2008, pp. 67–72. On *te-re-ja-e*, see Aura Jorro 1993, pp. 336–337; on *wo-ze-e*, Aura Jorro 1993, pp. 451–452.

28. Carlier 1987; on the etymology, see Chantraine 1999, pp. 1101–1103.

29. Palmer 1955, pp. 37–41; 1963, pp. 85, 190–196; Ventris and Chadwick 1956, p. 234.

30. Carlier 1987, p. 71; Lejeune 1973, p. 144.

31. Aura Jorro 1985, pp. 392–393.

32. Lejeune 1973, p. 147.

33. Ventris and Chadwick 1956, p. 265.

TABLE 3. CONTRIBUTIONS IN UN 718 AND LANDHOLDINGS IN ER 312 ACCORDING TO LEJEUNE

<i>Contributor (Un 718)</i>	<i>Proportion of Contribution</i>	<i>Landholder (Er 312)</i>	<i>Proportion of Landholding</i>
<i>e-ke-ra₂-wo</i>	50%	<i>wanax</i>	39.5%
<i>dāmos</i>	33.3%	<i>telestai</i>	39.5%
<i>lāwāgetās</i>	11.1%	<i>lāwāgetās</i>	13%
<i>wo-ro-ki-jo-ne-jo ka-ma</i>	5.5%	<i>wo-ro-ki-jo-ne-jo e-re-mo</i>	8%

landholdings in Er 312 are quite close to the approximate proportions of the contributions recorded in Un 718 as calculated by Lejeune (Table 3).³⁴ The proportion of the contribution of *e-ke-ra₂-wo* is slightly greater in Un 718 than the proportion of the *wanax*'s landholdings in Er 312, but the contributions of the other three groups are roughly proportional to their landholdings.³⁵ Thus, it seems likely that the prospective contributions on Un 718 were calculated on the basis of the landholdings recorded in Er 312. This situation is paralleled by the Es series at Pylos, which records contributions of grain to Poseidon and other entities by various individuals on the basis of the size of their landholdings.³⁶

Such an interpretation is not without problems, however. Hand 24, the scribe who wrote Un 718 and Er 312, also wrote Er 880 (Fig. 3), a document that is clearly linked to Er 312, and concerns landholdings of *e-ke-ra₂-wo*.³⁷

PY ER 880

- .1 e-]ke-ra₂[-wo , ki-]ti-me-no , e-ke
- .2 sa-ra-pe-do[-i , pe-]pu₂-te-me-no
- .3 to-so [pe-ma] GRA 30[] *vacat*
- .4 to-so-de , []to , pe-ma GRA 42[
- .5 to-sa , we-je[-we]1100[
- .6 to-sa-de , su-za[]1000[] *vacat*
- .7 *vacat*
- .8 ku-su-to-ro-qa , to-so , pe-ma 94
- .9 *vacat*

TRANSLATION

- .1 *e-ke-ra₂-wo* has *ki-ti-me-no* [land]
- .2 at *sa-ra-pe-da*, having been planted
- .3 so much [seed] WHEAT 2880 liters[
- .4 and so much [] seed WHEAT 4032 liters[
- .5 so many vine [shoots]1100[
- .6 so many fig trees[]1000[
- .7 *line left blank*
- .8 all together so much seed 9024 liters
- .9 *line left blank*

A number of interpretive issues are raised by this tablet, all of which are aggravated by the text's fragmentary state. It is generally agreed that the text describes two plots of land, one with a fig orchard and another

34. Lejeune 1975, pp. 66–67. The percentages of landholdings are based on the assumption that the holdings of the *wo-ro-ki-jo-ne-jo e-re-mo* are GRA 6, the most probable figure; the maximum is 7, which would not substantially change the proportions.

35. That is, 33:11:6 corresponds very closely to 40:13:8.

36. Lejeune (1975, p. 61) compares the relationship of Er 312 and Er 880 to Un 718 to the Es series, as does de Fidio (1977). A recent review of Es 650 is provided by Del Frio (2005, pp. 166–172).

37. On the Er series, see Del Frio 2005, pp. 152–166. The Er series is characterized by the presence of the ideogram *120 (GRA) and a common hand and format (Bennett and Olivier 1973, p. 136; Palmer 1977, p. 46).



Figure 3. Pylos tablet Er 880.
 H. 16.4, W. 12.2, Th. 1.8 cm. Scale 2:3.
 Photographic archives of the Program in
 Aegean Scripts and Prehistory, University
 of Texas at Austin. Courtesy Department of
 Classics, University of Cincinnati

with a vineyard, both of which belong to *e-ke-ra₂-wo* in a region called *sa-ra-pe-da*.³⁸ The size and status of the landholdings (perhaps indicated in the lacuna in line 4) are crucial to the interpretation of this document. The sizes of these two fields are not completely preserved, but the totaling line, which is complete, indicates that their sum should be 94 units of seed grain (GRA).³⁹ There are six possible sizes for the two landholdings on lines 3 and 4: respectively, they are GRA 30 and 64, 32 and 62, 40 and 54, 42 and 52, 50 and 44, and 52 and 42.⁴⁰

Er 880 complicates the simple equation between the landholders of Er 312 and the contributors of Un 718. Lejeune argued that Er 312 and 880 formed a cohesive set referring to landholdings in the locality of *sa-ra-pe-da*, with Er 880 being the “header” of the set.⁴¹ If he is correct, it is possible that the contributions of *e-ke-ra₂-wo* in Un 718 should be related not to the *temenos* of the *wanax* on Er 312, but to the landholdings of *e-ke-ra₂-wo* on Er 880.

38. Palmer (1994, pp. 66–72) convincingly argues that there are two plots of land, both of which are of *ki-ti-me-no* type and planted, the first plot (lines 3 and 5) with vines, the second plot (lines 4 and 6) with fig trees. Del Frio (2005, pp. 154–161) argues that there is only one plot planted with both vines and fig trees, and that the other is unplanted, but this reading requires supplementing the lacuna in

line 4 with the unattested word [*a-pu₂-te-*]to, meaning “unplanted.” The identification of *sa-ra-pe-da* as a toponym is not without its difficulties, but is the most likely solution (Palaima 1998–1999, pp. 219–220), particularly given its ending, which suggests that it is related to later Greek πῆδον (Ventris and Chadwick 1973, p. 581; Aura Jorro 1993, pp. 282–283). The restored *sa-ra-pe-do[-i]* is the neuter plural locative

(Ventris and Chadwick 1956, p. 266; Lejeune 1975, p. 60).

39. This is the usual method for the calculation in Linear B of the size of a field (Duhoux 1974). It does not imply that grain was actually grown on these fields.

40. The first two possibilities are unlikely. See Del Frio 2005, pp. 165–166, correcting de Fidio 1977, p. 98.

41. Lejeune 1975, p. 60.

PLAYING THE NUMBERS

The introduction of Er 880 into the discussion creates the possibility for multiple hypothetical correspondences with Un 718. An important consideration is the numbers, since it seems clear that the quantities prescribed on Un 718 are somehow based on landholdings in the region of *sa-ra-pe-da*. That is, Un 718 is essentially a taxation document, behind which one should be able to find a rational system.⁴²

Lejeune criticized the equation of the landowners in Er 312 with the contributors to the feast in Un 718, in part because he found several features of this interpretation objectionable: the irreverence of the scribe (Hand 24), who dared to designate the king by his personal name; the identification of *e-ke-ra₂-wo* with the *wanax*; and the association of the *telestai* with the *dāmos*.⁴³ Lejeune argued that there is a better fit with the proportions of foodstuffs assessed on Un 718 if one assumes the following:

1. the assessment of *e-ke-ra₂-wo* on Un 718 is based on the plot recorded on Er 880.1–3, which he restores as GRA 50 in size
2. [*a-ki-ti-*]to, meaning “uncultivated,” is restored on Er 880.4 and this plot of land is assigned to the *dāmos*, restoring the size of the plot as GRA 44⁴⁴
3. the *temenos* of the *wanax* on Er 312.1–2 is tax-free
4. the landholdings of the *telestai* on Er 312.5–6 are tax-free

Lejeune’s scheme would allow us to generate proportions in landholding roughly equal to the assessments in Un 718 (Table 4).⁴⁵

These arguments are highly problematic, however. Lejeune’s method is to juggle the numbers in these texts until he finds a satisfactory solution, that is, one that avoids the identification of *e-ke-ra₂-wo* with the *wanax* and the *telestai* with the *dāmos*. On Er 880, this procedure involves hypothetically restoring numbers, supplementing lacunae in the text in more than one place, and making a series of unsupported hypotheses. The fragmentary numbers on Er 880 restored by Lejeune are the most likely restorations, although other values cannot be ruled out.⁴⁶ Moreover, Lejeune’s restoration of [*a-ki-ti-*]to in Er 880.4 is implausible: the adjective *ki-*]ti-me-no in Er 880.1 is probably dual in number, and it would therefore modify both the first and second plots in Er 880.3–4.⁴⁷ This reading would make the supplementation [*a-ki-ti-*]to impossible, since according to Lejeune, *a-ki-ti-to* is the opposite of *ki-ti-me-no*.⁴⁸ Even if [*a-ki-ti-*]to is the correct

42. Cf. Killen 1983b.

43. Lejeune 1975, accepted by Carlier (1984, pp. 55–63; 1998, p. 413).

44. The supplementation [*a-ki-ti-*]to was first suggested by Ventris and Chadwick (1956, p. 267).

45. Lejeune 1975, p. 70.

46. See the discussion in Palmer 1994, p. 68. De Fidio (1977, pp. 98–102) favors Lejeune’s (1975) reconstruction (GRA 50 and GRA 44) as the

most plausible. Bennett and Olivier (1973, p. 136) suggest GRA 54 as a reading for the second plot of land, but see the persuasive counterarguments in de Fidio 1977, pp. 98–99; Del Frio 2005, p. 157, n. 452.

47. Palmer 1994, pp. 66–72.

48. The argument is that *a-ki-ti-to* is an adjective with an alpha privative matching alphabetic Greek ἄκτιτος (*Hom. Hymn Dem.* 123), which means

“uncultivated.” The root element, *kti-*, is the same that is used to build the adjective *ki-ti-me-no*. Thus, *a-ki-ti-to* is the opposite of *ki-ti-me-no* (Foster 1981, pp. 83, 86–91). The attested usages of *a-ki-ti-to* are both in the Na series (Na 406, 926). Because *ki-ti-me-no* is not attested in the Na series, the opposition between it and *a-ki-ti-to* lacks contextual support.

TABLE 4. LEJEUNE'S PROPOSED READING OF ER 312, ER 880, AND UN 718

	<i>Plots on Er 880</i>	<i>Plots on Er 312</i>	<i>Percentage of Taxable Land</i>	<i>Contribution on Un 718</i>
<i>e-ke-ra₂-wo</i>	GRA 50	—	45.4%	50%
<i>dāmos</i>	GRA 44	—	40%	33.3%
<i>wanax</i>	—	GRA 30	—	—
<i>lāwāgetās</i>	—	GRA 10	9.1%	11.1%
<i>telestai</i>	—	GRA 30	—	—
<i>wo-ro-ki-jo-ne-jo ka-ma/e-re-mo</i>	—	GRA 6	5.4%	5.5%
Total land	GRA 94	GRA 76		
Total taxable land	GRA 94	GRA 16		

GRA = units of seed grain

reading, assigning such a plot to the *dāmos* is unmotivated by any indications in the text; indeed, the most reasonable reading of Er 880's header (with *ki-]ti-me-no* in the dual) indicates that both plots recorded belong to *e-ke-ra₂-wo*.⁴⁹ Furthermore, *a-ki-ti-to* is a specific juridical landholding term separate from *ke-ke-me-no*, the term associated with the *dāmos* plots in the Eb/Ep series at Pylos.⁵⁰ Even with all the changes Lejeune is forced to make in order for his hypothesis to cohere, the resulting scheme is not a very good fit for the assessments in Un 718 (see Table 4).

Pia de Fidio has attempted to resolve the difficulties by arguing instead that the *temenos* of the *wanax* and the second of the two plots held by *e-ke-ra₂-wo* are untaxed properties.⁵¹ She therefore accepts the equation of the *dāmos* with the *telestai*, but not of *e-ke-ra₂-wo* with the *wanax*.⁵² De Fidio makes use of very precise arithmetic to determine the relationship between the Er landholdings and Un 718. She relates the landholdings to the quantities of grain and wine, the only two foodstuffs provided by all four contributors, by reconstructing a system of equivalences between staple commodities. De Fidio derives an equivalency of one unit of wine to three units of wheat through a twofold operation. First, wine and barley are consistently allocated in a 1:6 proportion in the Knossos Fs tablets. Second, two units of wheat may be considered equivalent to one unit of barley, on the basis of PY An 128, which lists twice as much barley on the back as it does wheat on its front side; this equivalence may be corroborated by the fact that figs and barley are allocated in a 1:2 proportion in the Knossos Fs tablets, and figs and wheat are typically allocated in equal amounts in many ration tablets at Pylos (especially the Ab series). Having established that wine and wheat stand in a 1:3 proportion, de Fidio is able to relate the amounts of wine and wheat from Un 718 to the landholdings in the Er series (Table 5).

There are several problems with de Fidio's interpretation. Following Lejeune, she promotes the supplemental reading [*a-ki-ti-]to* under the entry for *e-ke-ra₂-wo*'s second plot in Er 880, which, as we have seen, is highly improbable. De Fidio restores its meaning as "uncultivated" and suggests that this plot is not subject to taxation precisely because it is not under cultivation.⁵³ In the two instances where the term *a-ki-ti-to* is attested, however, the land *is* subject to taxation (PY Na 406, 926),⁵⁴ which suggests

49. Palmer 1977, p. 47.

50. Since both *a-ki-ti-to* (Na 406, 926) and *ke-ke-me-no* (Na 395) are used in the Na series to modify plots of land, we may reasonably assume that the two terms are separate and exclusive; cf. Killen's 1992–1993 discussion of the similarly exclusive terms *o-u-di-do-si* and *e-re-u-te-ro* in the Na series.

51. De Fidio 1977, pp. 77–126; this argument is summarized and approved by Killen (1999, pp. 352–353).

52. De Fidio 1977, pp. 116–117.

53. De Fidio 1977, pp. 92–98.

54. See Killen 1992–1993 on tax exemptions in the Na series.

TABLE 5. DE FIDIO'S CALCULATIONS FOR ER 312, ER 880, AND UN 718

	<i>e-ke-ra₂-wo</i>	<i>dāmos</i>	<i>lāwāgetās</i>	<i>wo-ro-ki-jo-ne-jo</i> <i>ka-ma / e-re-mo</i>
(a) τ units of wheat (Un 718), or τ units of flour (Un 718) × 1.25	40	20	7.5	6
(b) s units of wine (Un 718) × 3	27	18	6	3
(c) Sum of (a) and (b)	67	38	13.5	9
(d) 7.5 × (c)	502.5	285	101.25	67.5
Expected size of landholding (= d/10)	50.25	28.5	10.125	6.75
Actual size of landholding	50	30	10	6[(max. 7)

τ is 1/10 of one volumetric unit; s is 1/3 of one liquid unit.

that *a-ki-ti-to* is a specific type of land or condition of landholding, rather than land that is uncultivated.⁵⁵ De Fidio's calculations, while extremely attractive, are problematic. Her scheme takes into account only two commodities, grain and wine. This procedure is logical given that these are the only staples provided by all four contributors, but it leaves out a good deal, such as the meat provided by the animals.

De Fidio's calculations are dependent on the equivalence between the grains and wine, but there are reasons to doubt her solution. First, it seems unlikely that the wheat-to-barley proportion proposed (one unit of wheat equals two units of barley) is correct.⁵⁶ Second, in order to accommodate into her scheme the flour provided by the *lāwāgetās*, de Fidio assumes that the grain indicated by the ideogram FAR is equal in value to wheat, and simply multiplies the quantity of flour by 1.25, a factor that attempts to account for the reduction in volume after the grain has been milled.⁵⁷ Whatever grain is indicated by FAR, however, it is almost certainly not wheat (or barley), so it is hazardous to assume that it is a virtual equivalent.⁵⁸ In the Knossos Fs series, in fact, which de Fidio used to establish her equivalencies, FAR is allocated in quantities one-sixth those of barley.⁵⁹ In sum, therefore, it seems likely that the apparent correspondence between the landholdings in the Er series and the quantities of grain and wine contributed on Un 718 is illusory, despite the elegance of de Fidio's solution.⁶⁰

Both Lejeune and de Fidio attempt to explain the connection between the Er texts and Un 718 as having to do with taxation. To be accepted, any such proposal must ultimately provide a convincing fit between the amounts of land and the feasting assessments. It could be argued that the percentages are tolerably close, but there is yet another problem: the percentages of the contributions on Un 718, calculated by Lejeune and subsequently accepted by scholars, are inaccurate. His calculations seem to

55. Ventris and Chadwick 1973, p. 470; see the discussion in de Fidio 1977, pp. 92, 98, n. 62.

56. Palmer (1989, pp. 97–98) has effectively demolished the argument for the equivalence $\text{HORD } 2 = \text{GRA } 1$ based on PY An 128, and shows that it is more likely that if the tablet does indicate an equivalence, it is $\text{HORD } 1 = \text{GRA } 1 + \text{NI } 1$. It is, moreover, difficult to

assume that one unit of GRA is equivalent to one unit of figs (NI) because the Pylian rations include equal amounts of each, since the figs were almost certainly less valuable supplements to the standard grain ration (Palmer 1989, pp. 98–103; Killen 2004, pp. 161–163).

57. De Fidio 1977, pp. 85–86.

58. Duhoux 2008, pp. 346–347; 2011, pp. 9–10, n. 17.

59. De Fidio 1977, p. 112.

60. Although research in Linear B has long been dependent on looking for patterns in the numbers recorded on the texts, this approach has not always been successful owing to simple coincidence; see, e.g., the effective critiques of the thesis of Godart (1970, 1992) by Thompson (1998, p. 233) and Rouge-mont (2009, pp. 339–345).

be based on the amounts of wine, the one commodity provided by every contributor, which is assessed at a ratio of 9:6:2:1. *e-ke-ra₂-wo* supplies 50% of the wine, the figure that Lejeune uses to estimate his total contribution to the feast (see Table 3). It is clear, however, that more than half of the other foodstuffs are to be provided by *e-ke-ra₂-wo*: he is slated to provide 60.6% of the wheat and 55.5% of the grain by volume (see Table 1). He also gives the only bull, which would have supplied 55%–85% of the meat and would have been the offering of greatest status.⁶¹ Complete accuracy is impossible given the difficulty of comparing and quantifying various commodities, but it is probably best to estimate *e-ke-ra₂-wo*'s contribution at about 60% of the total. This correction exacerbates the problems associated with previous solutions, since the landholding corresponding to this contribution would have to be GRA 69 in size, and no such plot or combination of plots exists.⁶²

Attempts to understand Un 718 as a straightforward taxation document by adjusting the numbers of the landholdings in Er 312 and Er 880 have been unsuccessful. This is not to say, however, that Un 718 bears no relationship to the Er texts, an assertion that would fly in the face of strong evidence to the contrary. All three documents were written by the same scribe (Hand 24), who wrote only one other document that we know of, a clay label for the basket that held Un 718 (Wa 731).⁶³ Er 880 and Un 718 both relate to activities in a place called *sa-ra-pe-da*, a toponym that appears only in these two documents; both also refer to the individual *e-ke-ra₂-wo*. Er 312 and Un 718 are connected to each other by their references to an entity described with the adjective *wo-ro-ki-jo-ne-jo*, which also appears only in these documents.

Thus, a nexus of associations, scribal and textual, binds these three documents together, and the rarity of some elements (*sa-ra-pe-da*, *wo-ro-ki-jo-ne-jo*, and Hand 24) in the Pylian corpus further strengthens the argument that these tablets must be related. It unfortunately also makes analysis more difficult, since it reduces how much we can say about each of the shared elements, and as a result the administrative and social contexts of the documents. The individual named *e-ke-ra₂-wo* provides an opportunity to mitigate this problem, however, since he is not only an important figure in two of the three documents concerned, but he also appears in tablets written by other scribes at Pylos. We can therefore compile and analyze a substantial dossier of his activities.

61. According to the figures provided in Jameson 1988, p. 95, and Reese 1987, p. 263, one bull would have supplied between 100 and 225 kg of meat, whereas one sheep would have supplied ca. 15–30 kg of meat. These estimates are consistent with the rough calculations by Bendall (2008, p. 85) and Halstead and Isaakidou (2004, pp. 146–147). De Fidio's (1977, p. 124) suggestion that one bull equals four sheep (rather than ca. seven sheep as implied by Jameson's and Reese's figures) seems designed to maintain

e-ke-ra₂-wo's contribution at half, but even if the amount of meat is the same, the bull was probably a higher-status sacrificial offering and its meat more desirable; see Burkert 1985, p. 55; Isaakidou et al. 2002, pp. 88–90.

62. If x = the size of the taxed plot, then $x/(x + 46) = 0.6$. The number 46 is the sum of the sizes of all the plots except those of *e-ke-ra₂-wo* and the *wanax*.

63. Lejeune 1975, p. 61; Palaima 1995b, p. 135; 1998–1999, p. 219.

WHO WAS *E-KE-RA₂-WO*?

Although Chadwick argued strenuously that *e-ke-ra₂-wo* was the Pylian *wanax*, most scholars of Mycenaean studies have rejected this identification.⁶⁴ Critics have claimed that *e-ke-ra₂-wo* was simply an important local landholder; Lejeune described him as “un notable, sans plus.”⁶⁵ Yet the total amount of land held by *e-ke-ra₂-wo* on Er 880—94 units of seed grain (GRA)—is by far the largest single landholding in all the preserved texts at Pylos.⁶⁶ These holdings are roughly comparable to the total quantities of land under direct palatial management within entire administrative districts, of which there are 16 in the Pylian kingdom.⁶⁷ Determining the size of *e-ke-ra₂-wo*'s holdings is complicated by the uncertainty about the absolute values of the Mycenaean units of measure and sowing density, but it is clear that his estates on Er 880 were substantial: at a minimum they covered 40 ha, but an estimate in the area of 100 ha is more probable.⁶⁸

Such extensive holdings, even if the minimum figures are used, are comparable in size to the largest estates of Classical Greece.⁶⁹ Their composition is also noteworthy: both estates had significant sections dedicated to orchards. The 1,000+ fig trees recorded on Er 880 would have made up an impressive orchard covering at least 10 ha, while the 1,100+ vine shoots would have been planted with trees on which the vines grew, in an area probably covering 1–4 ha.⁷⁰ Such orchards are very rare in the Linear B documentation: Er 880 is unique at Pylos and is paralleled by only a handful of tablets at Knossos that record vines and trees together.⁷¹ The estates of *e-ke-ra₂-wo* share with later Greek ornamental orchards the presence of, and indeed emphasis on, fig trees and vines; this emphasis, combined with the enormity of the fields, makes the estates more reminiscent of royal gardens than the farms of local aristocrats.⁷²

64. See n. 2, above, for references.

65. Lejeune 1975, pp. 63–64; see also Carlier 1984, p. 62; Petrakis 2008.

66. The next-largest landholding at Pylos is the royal *temenos* on Er 312 (GRA 30); after this are a group of plots around GRA 10 (Er 312.5–6, Ea 309, Eb 495/Ep 613.1–2, Eb 149/Ep 613.4–5).

67. The districts for which we have figures for plots under palatial management are *pa-ki-ja-ne* and *a-ke-re-wa*. The former had land totaling just over 103 units (Ed 411), the latter 94 (Eq 213). The Ea series, whose location is uncertain but ought perhaps to be placed at *ti-no* (Palmer 1963, p. 220), may have consisted of 137 units of land (Ea 59 *verso*).

68. The recent analysis of Lane (2009, pp. 112–113), which reviews the issues involved in converting Mycenaean indications of plot size to modern measurements, would result in

150.4–225.6 ha for *e-ke-ra₂-wo*'s total holdings, assuming a sowing density of 40–60 liters of wheat per hectare. A higher density of sowing—60–160 kg of wheat per hectare (Zarinebaf, Bennett, and Davis 2005, pp. 194–195)—would yield holdings of 43.5–116.1 ha, if 1 liter of wheat weighs 0.772 kg (Foxhall 1995, p. 241, n. 8; cf. Lane 2009, p. 113). According to the calculations of Duhoux (1974, pp. 31–33), *e-ke-ra₂-wo*'s holdings would cover 51.56 ha.

69. The largest estates in Classical Attica were 20–50 ha in size (Burford Cooper 1977–1978; Foxhall 1992, p. 157; Burford 1993, pp. 68–72). Hodkinson (2000, pp. 382–385) estimates the average holdings of wealthy Spartiates at ca. 45 ha.

70. Olive and fig trees are normally planted at 10 m intervals; consequently, there are 100 trees per hectare of cultivated land (Foxhall 2007, p. 79). The

term for the vine shoots on Er 880, *we-je-we*, corresponds to Greek *ὑίήν*, glossed by Hesychius as *τὴν ἄμπελον, ἢ υἰόν*; the latter term is glossed as *ἀναδενδράδα*, a vine that grows up trees. Such vineyards (*arbusta*) typically trained three to ten vines per tree (Palmer 1994, pp. 57–60); using these figures, one can estimate that the area covered would have been 1.1–3.67 ha. The figures for both the fig trees and the vine shoots are minima.

71. The relevant texts are Gv 862, 863, and 864; F(2) 841 also probably records orchards of fig and olive trees at Phaistos. See Hiller 1983, pp. 172–176; Killen 1987, pp. 174–177; Palmer 1994, pp. 45–49.

72. Greek and Near Eastern gardens typically included a variety of crops, but particularly trees grown in ordered arrangements; they were not purely ornamental, but practical working farms with ornamental elements

Other attestations of *e-ke-ra₂-wo* consistently confirm his elevated status.⁷³ On An 610, a text dealing with the military recruitment of rowers, he is personally responsible for furnishing 40 men, perhaps enough to man one or two ships.⁷⁴ By comparison, the only other certainly identifiable individual in this text who provides men gives half as many as *e-ke-ra₂-wo*. This contributor, **we-da-ne-u*, is one of the four “collectors” of Pylos and one of the most important administrators of the Pylian state.⁷⁵ *e-ke-ra₂-wo* also has a significant religious role: a feast in honor of Poseidon recorded on Un 853 is entirely provisioned by him. Despite the many lacunae in Un 853, the quantities of foodstuffs are roughly comparable to those on Un 718, and could have fed well over 1,000 people.⁷⁶ *e-ke-ra₂-wo* is also the recipient of aromatic substances on Un 219 along with other named individuals, religious officials, and deities, and of two animal hides in the Qa series, where he appears alongside a number of religious officials.⁷⁷

In sum, we may conclude that *e-ke-ra₂-wo* is one of the most important individuals for whom we have evidence in the Linear B texts. He is one of only 18 people at Pylos whose names occur in five or more tablets, and in each text in which he appears he is eminent. Moreover, his vast landholdings in *sa-ra-pe-da* set him apart from other prominent individuals, including individuals at the highest levels of palatial administration. Critics of the equation of *e-ke-ra₂-wo* with the *wanax* protest that the argument for identification rests on the dubious assumption that such a wealthy and powerful individual could not exist in a monarchy unless he

(Foxhall 2007, pp. 221–222, 245). The fig and vine are typical crops for ornamental orchards in Classical Greece (Foxhall 2007, pp. 219–232). On Near Eastern gardens, see Cook 2004, who cites evidence for Bronze Age Assyrian royal gardens and reviews the evidence for royal gardens from Sumer, Egypt, the Levant, and Greece. Although he endorses Stronach’s (1989) influential theory on the ideological functions of such gardens from the reign of Ashurnasirpal II (883–859 B.C.), and even extends them to the reign of Tiglath-Pileser I (1115–1076 B.C.), Cook emphasizes that they remained commercially valuable, working farms. A mid-7th-century B.C. relief from the North Palace of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh, the “Garden Party,” shows an arbustum in a scene of royal banqueting (British Museum ME 124920: Albenda 1974; Palmer 1994, p. 59).

73. For reviews of the activities of *e-ke-ra₂-wo*, but with different conclusions, see Lejeune 1975, pp. 63–64; Carlier 1984, pp. 56–62; see also Lindgren 1973, vol. 2, pp. 153–155; Chadwick 1975; de Fidio 1977, pp. 131–135.

74. Ventris and Chadwick 1956, p. 183; Chadwick 1987, p. 79. On the related text An 724, *e-ke-ra₂-wo* probably discharges five men who owe service as rowers; see Ventris and Chadwick 1956, pp. 187–188; 1973, pp. 431–432; Killen 1983b; Chadwick 1987, pp. 79–83; Palaima 1991, pp. 285–287.

75. “Collectors” are significant agents of Mycenaean palatial administration who are identified by personal name and are responsible for a variety of economic activities monitored by the palace, especially dealing with animal husbandry and textile production. **we-da-ne-u* is sufficiently prominent that he has been suspected of being the *lārwā-ge-tās* of Pylos (Lindgren 1973, vol. 2, pp. 134–136; 1979, p. 85; Chadwick 1976, p. 72; Shelmerdine 2008b, p. 130). The term *da-mi-ni-jo* on An 610 may refer to an individual who contributes 40 men. This word is probably a nominative plural ethnic modifier of these men, however, since *da-mi-ni-ja* appears to be a toponym on Aa 96 and Ad 697 (Aura Jorro 1985, pp. 152–153). Possibly *da-mi-ni-ja* is a scribal error

for *da-mi-ni-je-ja* (a possessive adjective formed from a man’s name, *da-mi-ni-jo*), in which case there would be work groups under the supervision or ownership of a man named *da-mi-ni-jo*; see Killen 1983a for adjectives of this type. The name *da-mi-ni-jo* belongs to a “collector” at Knossos and is counted by Olivier (2001) as one of the “international collectors” of the Mycenaean world.

76. Un 853 records two sheep, one goat (at least), six pigs, and 144 liters of wine, as compared with Un 718’s one bull, four sheep, and 172.8 liters of wine. On the possible relationship between Un 853 and Un 6, see Killen 1999, pp. 350–353.

77. Melena 2000–2001, pp. 380–384. Priests appear on Qa 1289, 1290, 1296, 1300, and possibly 1303; an individual on Qa 1299 is described as *Potnian*, i.e., associated with the deity Potnia. Five to six recipients in the Qa series are therefore religious officials, out of 16 reasonably complete recipients whose names are preserved on 28 texts.

were the king.⁷⁸ This is hardly the point, however; it is not only that *e-ke-ra₂-wo* has enormous holdings, but that they are precisely recorded in the Linear B tablets, and moreover by a scribe (Hand 24) who also records the privileged landholdings (*temenē*) of the Pylian king and the *lāwāgetās*.⁷⁹ It is also perhaps worth noting that *e-ke-ra₂-wo* appears in contexts that are parallel to those in which the *wanax* himself appears: both are seen primarily in religious records and to a lesser extent in military documents (although the *wanax*, unlike *e-ke-ra₂-wo*, is also associated with craft production).⁸⁰ Skeptics are forced to make a more radical assumption, namely that all extraordinary aspects of their interpretation of these texts, such as the curiously tax-free land of the *telestai* proposed by Lejeune, are due to purely local conditions in *sa-ra-pe-da*.⁸¹ If, however, one accepts this logic, then these regional variations can also be used to explain away the very problems that motivate the skeptics in the first place, such as the equation of the *dāmos* and the *telestai*.⁸²

It is clear that no amount of imaginative manipulation of the quantities recorded in Er 312, Er 880, and Un 718 can yield a satisfactory solution of the type advanced by Lejeune and de Fidio. Moreover, any interpretation must adequately account for the prominence of *e-ke-ra₂-wo*. We must therefore attempt to explain the evidence in other ways. We have an individual, *e-ke-ra₂-wo*, who possesses unprecedented landholdings and a consistently high status in multiple administrative texts. He holds more than three times as much land as the *wanax* in his official capacity at *sa-ra-pe-da*. Indeed, he has two estates that together nearly match the areal size of the more than 111 plots in *pa-ki-ja-ne*, a religious district located adjacent to the palace and containing land often thought to be notionally belonging to, or under the control of, the *wanax*.⁸³ *e-ke-ra₂-wo* is also a figure of some religious standing beyond the locality of *sa-ra-pe-da*.⁸⁴ As mentioned above, he is a recipient of aromatic substances alongside deities in Un 219, funds a feast for Poseidon in Un 853, and receives animal hides

78. Carlier 1998, p. 413; Petrakis 2008, p. 392. Chadwick (1975, p. 453) claimed that “*E-ke-ra₂-wo* is a man of the highest rank in Pylian society . . . it would be hard to find any other position that would account for the activities of *E-ke-ra₂-wo* other than that of king.” Petrakis (2008) suggests that *e-ke-ra₂-wo* is a local aristocrat or chief-tain of a region in the process of forging a special relationship with the palatial center, but I find his arguments for this scenario unpersuasive. The exclusive use of the personal name to identify *e-ke-ra₂-wo* is normal, and does not indicate that *e-ke-ra₂-wo* is outside the palatial sector; many prominent palatial officials are identified only by personal name, such as the “collectors.” Nor can I accept the argument that *sa-ra-pe-da* is “non-canonical” and therefore not

Pylian: many toponyms are not well attested in our documentation. For example, *ti-no* was probably an important place—perhaps it was the location of the landholdings recorded in the Ea series (Palmer 1963, p. 220)—yet this toponym appears in only two texts. The existence of a scribe dedicated to *sa-ra-pe-da* (Palaima 1998–1999) suggests that the region falls squarely within the palatial purview.

79. Palaima 1995b, p. 135; 1998–1999. The term *temenos* is attested only in Er 312, where it is associated with the *wanax* and *lāwāgetās*; the Homeric association of the *temenos* with *basileis* (*Il.* 18.550; *Od.* 17.299) suggests that it retained something of this royal exclusivity.

80. On the textual attestations of the *wanax*, see Carlier 1984, pp. 44–

101; Palaima 1995b, 1997, 2006. The *wanax* was not certainly associated with military matters until the discovery of a nodule at Pylos, Wr 1480, which records the delivery of handles of javelins modified by the sign *wa*, an abbreviation for *wa-na-ka-te-ro*, “royal” (Shelmerdine and Bennet 1995).

81. Lejeune 1975, p. 70; Carlier 1984, p. 61, n. 326; Petrakis 2008, p. 394.

82. Carlier (1984, p. 61, n. 326), realizing this problem, simply asserts that “l’exemption des *te-re-ta* est moins difficile à admettre que leur assimilation au *da-mo*.”

83. Palmer 1963, pp. 191–192; cf. Lupack 2008, pp. 44–50, 75–76.

84. On the important religious role of the *wanax*, see Palaima 1995b, 2006.

in the Qa series, a series with religious associations.⁸⁵ His activities cannot be adequately explained by identifying him as a local aristocrat.

Chadwick's proposal to identify *e-ke-ra₂-wo* with the *wanax* consequently remains the most persuasive interpretation. It has been further strengthened by Palaima, who provides additional corroborating evidence. He notes that Un 718 was found in an unusual findspot within the Archives Complex, to the left of the doorway into room 7, where newly written tablets awaiting processing in the Archives Complex were placed.⁸⁶ Several other documents were found there, including an entire set of tablets, the Ta series, which inventories furniture, metal vessels, and sacrificial implements, probably on the occasion of a feast.⁸⁷ The header of this series (Ta 711) reveals that this inventory took place when the *wanax* appointed a man named *Augēwās* to the important office of provincial governor (Linear B *da-mo-ko-ro*).⁸⁸ Palaima argues that the shared location, chronology, and subject matter of Un 718 and the Ta series suggest that they shared an administrative connection, namely that they both related to the affairs of the king in his official and personal roles, indicated by *wanax* and *e-ke-ra₂-wo*, respectively.⁸⁹ Thus, there are several independent lines of reasoning that support the identification of the individual named *e-ke-ra₂-wo* with the Pylian *wanax*: the clear importance of both figures, the close connection between Er 312 and Un 718, and the archaeological findspot of Un 718.

EXPLAINING *E-KE-RA₂-WO*

The hypothesis that *e-ke-ra₂-wo* is the *wanax* is therefore the most plausible explanation of the available data. Consequently, it is possible that the landowners of Er 312 are the contributors of Un 718, as originally envisioned by Ventris and Chadwick (Table 2). Indeed, for reasons of administrative simplicity, this is the most likely scenario. Since most Mycenaean land records were composed in order to track payments made by landholders in respect to their fields, a strong incentive existed for scribes to compose landholding texts with a view to these regular contributions.⁹⁰ In the Es series, for example, landholders and the sizes of their plots are recorded in a single tablet (Es 650), with their payments correspondingly recorded on a separate document (Es 644). The *wanax/e-ke-ra₂-wo* holds three large

85. Some have been troubled by the fact that *e-ke-ra₂-wo* (written *e-ke-ra-ne*) and the *wanax* (written *a-na-ka-te*) both appear on Un 219 (Palmer 1963, p. 216; Wundsam 1968, pp. 77–79; Petrakis 2008, p. 392), but these terms may refer to distinct personae of a single individual. It is also possible that *a-na-ka-te* has nothing to do with the *wanax*; see Lejeune 1972, p. 175, n. 1; Lindgren 1973, vol. 2, p. 153; Carlier 1984, pp. 57–58, 78–81; Aura Jorro 1985, p. 62.

86. Palaima 1995b, p. 134; 1998–

1999, p. 218; 2004a, pp. 232–233.

87. Killen 1998a; Palaima 2000; 2004a, pp. 232–234.

88. On the office of *da-mo-ko-ro*, see Carlier 1984, pp. 98–99.

89. Palaima 1995b, pp. 134–135; 2004a, pp. 232–235. Palaima's argument has been challenged by Petrakis (2008, pp. 393–394), but I find his counterarguments unpersuasive. There is no reason to assume that different scribes writing different documents should need to consistently use the same terminology, since the goal of

scribes is not interscribal consistency, but rather clarity with respect to their audience (an extremely limited number of administrators) and the immediate administrative context. Second, Petrakis's analysis of the findspots fails to take into account the nature of scribal practice: the presence of Er 312 in room 8 merely shows that it had been processed and filed (Palaima 1988, pp. 182–186; Pluta 1996–1997), not that it is unrelated to Un 718.

90. Bennett 1956; de Fidio 1977, pp. 63–73.

TABLE 6. REVISED COMPARISON OF CONTRIBUTIONS IN UN 718 AND LANDHOLDINGS IN ER 312

<i>Contributor (Un 718)</i>	<i>Proportion of Contribution</i>	<i>Landholder (Er 312)</i>	<i>Proportion of Landholding</i>
<i>e-ke-ra₂-wo</i>	60%	<i>wanax</i>	39.5%
<i>dāmos</i>	25%	<i>telestai</i>	39.5%
<i>lāwāgetās</i>	11%	<i>lāwāgetās</i>	13%
<i>wo-ro-ki-jo-ne-jo ka-ma</i>	4%	<i>wo-ro-ki-jo-ne-jo e-re-mo</i>	8%

plots at *sa-ra-pe-da*: the royal *temenos* (Er 312) and two estates, one with vines and another with fig trees (Er 880). Only one or two of these holdings must be the basis for the contribution of *e-ke-ra₂-wo* on Un 718, as the large scale of the plots belonging to the *wanax/e-ke-ra₂-wo* virtually excludes the possibility that his contribution was made on the basis of all three of his holdings.

From the perspective of the scribe, Hand 24, it would have made the most sense to compose Er 312 and Er 880 in such a way that the contributions on Un 718 were easy to calculate. The numerous erasures on Er 312 suggest that Hand 24 composed this text very carefully; although erasures are sometimes taken as signs of ineptitude, they are better seen as attempts by scribes to deal with novel or complex administrative situations, as Palaima has shown.⁹¹ If the contributions to the feast recorded on Un 718 were based on Er 312 only, then the scribe need only have consulted Er 312 to compose Un 718. If, on the other hand, the contributions were based on both Er 312 and Er 880, then some plots of land must have not been liable for taxation, since there are six plots of land in the two Er texts for four contributions on Un 718. We would, therefore, expect some indication of which plots were exempt from payment, as can be found elsewhere at Pylos.⁹² On this basis, we may rework the relationship between Er 312 and Un 718 (Table 6). The comparison of the proportions of landholdings and contributions in Table 6 shows that *e-ke-ra₂-wo* contributes more on Un 718 than the royal *temenos* should require him to, with the result that the others provide fewer goods. This is the opposite of the usual situation in Mycenaean land taxation, which requires the holders of smaller plots to pay proportionally more than holders of large plots.⁹³

It nevertheless remains unclear why Hand 24 should alternate between the official title of *wanax* and the personal name *e-ke-ra₂-wo*. From one perspective, this is unsurprising, as scribes regularly refer to the same individual differently in different texts; the same individual can be identified by name, office, or both, depending on what information the scribe felt was relevant to supply.⁹⁴ For example, a man named Klumenos (*ku-ru-me-no*, Greek Κλύμενος) is identified in three different ways:

1. by his personal name only (*ku-ru-me-no*), at An 654.1
2. by his office, district governor (*i-te-re-wa [ko-re-te]*), at Jo 438.25
3. by his personal name and two offices, namely as possessor of a share [of land] and provincial governor of *i-te-re-wa* (*mo-ro-qa, i-te-re-wa, ko-re-te*), at Aq 64.5⁹⁵

91. Palaima 1995a, 1999.

92. Killen 1992–1993.

93. Ventris and Chadwick 1973, pp. 457–458.

94. Lindgren 1973, vol. 2, pp. 191–193; Palaima 1995a, pp. 631–632.

95. The dense web of interconnections between the texts on which Klumenos appears makes it certain that the same individual is meant; Lindgren 1973, vol. 1, pp. 73–74; vol. 2, pp. 190–193; Nakassis 2006, pp. 218–224, 479.

Why so much variation? One cause may be that these three attestations appear on tablets written by three different scribes, but this cannot be the only explanation, since one scribe will regularly refer to individuals using different criteria, even on the same tablet. The scribe of Jo 438 (a member of Class i), for example, refers to individuals on this text by personal name only, title only, and by a combination of personal name and title.⁹⁶ It therefore seems likely that administrative concerns dictate the manner in which an individual is recorded. On An 654, one of the “*o-ka*” texts that document military arrangements for guarding the western coastline of Messenia, Klumenos’s status as district governor was not relevant. His personal name was presumably omitted on Jo 438 because it was not necessary; this document records payments of gold to the palace by important officials, including at least 11 other district governors.⁹⁷

On Jo 438, then, Klumenos was expected to provide gold to the palace, but seemingly in his capacity as governor of *i-te-re-wa*; indeed, one of the most important roles of district governors was to coordinate the payment of taxes to the palatial center (Jn 829, Nn 831). On Aq 64, Klumenos is identified by his name and two titles, namely *mo-ro-qa* and *ko-re-te*. The first of Klumenos’s titles, *mo-ro-qa*, is applied to the first four entries on Aq 64; the second, *ko-re-te*, is applied to the fourth and fifth entries, Klumenos and Perimos, who is the governor of a site identified with Nichoria (*pe-ri-mo, ti-mi-ti-ja, ko-re-te*).⁹⁸ The scribe has carefully organized these entries by the offices of the individuals recorded. This organization is logical inasmuch as the document relates to landholding, as shown by its vocabulary and formulae.⁹⁹ Landholding texts at Pylos typically record not only the personal name of the holder, but also the office held or some indication of the basis upon which the individual in question has been given access to his or her plot.¹⁰⁰ It seems likely then that in many (if not all) cases, the office held by an individual was recorded in a landholding document to indicate the reason for the allocation of the land to that person, as for example the men who are identified as royal craftsmen and who hold land in the Eb/Ep series in compensation for their service.¹⁰¹ The scribe of Aq 64 (Hand 21) presumably recorded both of Klumenos’s official titles for the same reason.

96. On Class i, see Palaima 1988, pp. 115–119.

97. Scribes tend to write only a toponym when recording information about the *ko-re-te* of a district; consequently, we know the names of only three out of the 16. The personal name of one *ko-re-te* is provided on Jo 438, *te-po-se-u*; this individual also seems to be the *da-mo-ko-ro* of the Further Province (On 300.12, see Carlier 1984, p. 99; Palaima 1995a, pp. 631–632), and this fact may have motivated the scribe to include both his personal name and his title on Jo 438, in order

to clarify what was a somewhat unusual situation.

98. Shelmerdine 2005.

99. Halstead (1999, pp. 323–324) has proposed that these texts concern the lending out of pairs of palatial plow oxen to individuals, probably for large grain-growing estates. This interpretation is based on the identification of the ideogram *171 as animal fodder (Piteros, Olivier, and Melena 1990, pp. 162–163), provided by the palace to maintain the oxen, but this is not accepted by all critics (Killen 1992, pp. 370–375).

100. One man (*o-pe-te-re-u/o-pe-to-*

re-u) was compensated (*ge-ja-me-no*) with land “on account of manslaughter” (*e-ne-ka a-no-qa-si-ja*), presumably of one of his kin members (Ea 805, Eb 294, Ep 704.1); another named *ke-re-te-u* holds land “on account of a/the horse” (*e-ne-ka i-qa-jo*, Ea 59.5). Both examples are discussed by Killen (1992, pp. 378–380). The fact that these *e-ne-ka* (Greek *ἔνεκα*) phrases appear in the same position as official titles suggests that they served a similar function: they specify the basis for the landholding.

101. Palaima 1997.

A scribe's decision to describe an individual by his personal name and/or title is therefore not arbitrary. Indeed, the extreme economy of Mycenaean scribal practice strongly suggests that the type of information included in a text should generally be regarded as significant. For Hand 24, it seems clear that the terms *wanax* and *e-ke-ra₂-wo* have different connotations, since the scribe is at pains to differentiate between them even though he has a very good reason not to, namely the administrative relationship between Er 312 and Un 718.¹⁰² Presumably the difference is one between the office (*wanax*) and the individual (*e-ke-ra₂-wo*); we might describe these respectively as "official" and "personal." The mere presence of such a distinction is significant, since it is largely absent in contemporary Near Eastern kingdoms. The reasons for this continue to be debated. Schloen has argued that the societies of the Bronze Age Near East can best be understood, following Weber, as patrimonial kingdoms, in which the chief organizing principle of social relations was the patriarchal household, so that the entire state is seen as a single household ruled by its master, the king.¹⁰³ Others suggest that these patrimonial features represent a royal ideology rather than a concrete social reality.¹⁰⁴

In any case, the evidence presented here strongly suggests that Mycenaean kingdoms were not patrimonial states, although they may have had many patrimonial features.¹⁰⁵ Rather, scribes could and did distinguish between the official and personal personae of the king. Specifically, Hand 24 recorded that the king in his personal capacity would provide contributions to a feast in respect to land held by his office. Such a situation is not unparalleled in other societies. The private finances of the Roman emperor (his *fiscus*) were technically separate from those of the state (the *aerarium*), but in practice this differentiation has been difficult to identify for both modern critics and ancient commentators, as the emperor controlled both (Cass. Dio 53.22.1–4).¹⁰⁶ While the theoretical distinction between the two is clearly implied by the language used in inscriptions and historiographical writing, de facto control of state finances by the emperor gradually led to this contrast disappearing from the legal vocabulary by the mid-3rd century A.D., when state revenues and expenditures belonged to the imperial *fiscus*.¹⁰⁷ Millar notes that prior to this late conflation of public and private funds, gifts paid from the imperial *fiscus* are especially linked to the emperor's generosity, as for example when Augustus contributed to the *aerarium* a year's worth of tribute from the cities of Asia damaged by earthquake in 12 B.C. (Cass. Dio 54.30.3), or Trajan's *alimenta*.¹⁰⁸ That is,

102. Note too that in one other case, Hand 24 seems to distinguish between two aspects of the same corporate body, since he writes *wo-ro-ki-jo-ne-jo ka-ma* on Un 718 and *wo-ro-ki-jo-ne-jo e-re-mo* on Er 312. It is difficult to evaluate the meaning of this alternation, given how little we know about this entity. Perhaps *e-re-mo* on Er 312 refers to the poor quality of the land (if it is not a specific but poorly attested juridical

term), whereas *ka-ma* on Un 718 explains the basis for the responsibility of this corporate body to contribute to the feast, since elsewhere in the Pylian texts particular obligations seem to be attached to *ka-ma* landholdings (Lupack 2008, pp. 59–60).

103. See Schloen 2001, where the patrimonial model of Weber (1978, pp. 1006–1069) is applied to the Bronze and Iron Age Levant.

104. See de Fidio 1992, pp. 195–196. Schloen (2001, pp. 265–267) argues against this view.

105. Deger-Jalkotzy (1983, 1987, 1988) has argued for the utility of Weberian patrimonialism for understanding the Mycenaean state, but see too the critique of de Fidio 1992, 2000.

106. Millar 1977, pp. 189–201.

107. Millar 1977, pp. 198–200.

108. Millar 1977, pp. 133–139, 200.

the use of his private funds allowed the emperor to engage in traditional reciprocal exchange, whereby he secured the personal allegiance of Roman elites and nonelites.

Roller has shown how important it was for Roman emperors to manipulate exchange in a variety of social contexts, in order to sustain their authority and to create social hierarchy through the subordination entailed by the gift-debt.¹⁰⁹ These highly personal exchanges were not one-time affairs, but had to be managed continually by the emperors throughout their rule. On the other hand, clumsy handling of exchange relationships by the emperor, for example through engaging in hostile reciprocity with aristocrats, often had disastrous consequences.¹¹⁰

Hand 24 therefore seems to specify that the contributions on Un 718 were provided by the *wanax* in his personal capacity and not in his official capacity as king. Linear B texts were internal documents read by a small group of administrators, so Hand 24's decision to write *e-ke-ra₂-wo* rather than *wa-na-ka* could not have had much of an impact.¹¹¹ Since his use of the king's personal name is not administratively expedient, it must result from an external influence of some kind upon the scribe, such as the context of the distributions for the feast.¹¹² That is, the meaningful alternation between *wa-na-ka* and *e-ke-ra₂-wo* probably reflects a social reality. I suggest that this reality was a social strategy of the king: the disproportionately large amount of goods dedicated by *e-ke-ra₂-wo* on Un 718 functioned as a conspicuous display of royal generosity within an important communal ritual context. Such "gifts" to the participants in the feast given on behalf of the *wanax* himself must have functioned to some extent to garner support, perhaps in a highly personal sense.

The audience for the *wanax*'s generosity would have been sizable but was probably limited to the region of *sa-ra-pe-da*. Although in absolute terms the foodstuffs listed on Un 718 could have provisioned a large group of feasters (about 1,000 individuals), that is a relatively minor feast by Pylian standards. The tablet Un 2, for example, which records the provisioning of a feast at the initiation of the *wanax*, located at a major religious center in the Pylian polity, records much greater quantities of foodstuffs than Un 718.¹¹³ The relatively small scale of the feast in Un 718 and its setting in the locality of *sa-ra-pe-da*, when considered in conjunction with my argument above that the feast was primarily financed by the *wanax* in his personal capacity, strongly suggest that it was a largely regional affair, in contrast to the large-scale feast in Un 2, whose audience may have been polity-wide. The fact that *sa-ra-pe-da* is dominated in our documentation by the estates of *e-ke-ra₂-wo* and the *temenē* of the *wanax* and *lāwāgetās*

109. Roller 2001, pp. 129–212.

110. Roller 2001, pp. 154–173; cf. pp. 193–212.

111. On the restricted nature of Mycenaean literacy, see Palaima 1987.

112. Similarly, Palaima (1998–1999) argues that certain spelling irregularities by Hand 24 are the result of external influence, in this case everyday

speech and different dialects within the Pylian kingdom.

113. Un 2 records 2.5 times more wheat than Un 718 and 3.4 times more wine, indicating a considerably larger feast. Un 2 also records more animals: one bovid, 32 sheep, four goats, and seven pigs appear on Un 2, compared with only one bovid and four sheep on

Un 718; see Bendall 2008, p. 97. For the interpretation of the text of Un 2, see Carlier 1984, pp. 91–94; Ruijgh 1999, p. 523; Palaima 2004a, pp. 223–224, 229. Lupack (2008, pp. 44–50) argues that there was a special relationship between the *wanax* and the religious center at *pa-ki-ja-ne*.

may indicate that the region was closely connected to the high officials of the palace and the *wanax* in particular.¹¹⁴ The participants in our feast may have consisted of the majority or perhaps even the entirety of the population of *sa-ra-pe-da*.¹¹⁵

The feast in Un 718 may have served to link *e-ke-ra₂-wo* to this regional population with ties of reciprocity, instead of the more impersonal obligations demanded by the palace and the *wanax*.¹¹⁶ Nevertheless, even official obligations may not have been entirely impersonal, since many of the regular exchanges recorded in the Linear B documents are described in language that in later Greek has to do with gift-exchange. All of these are words derived from the verb δίδωμι, “to give”: in Un 718, the foodstuffs assessed are called *dosmoi* that each contributor “will give” (*do-se*, δώσει), and taxes are called *a-pu-do-si*, “a giving over” (cf. Greek ἀπόδοσις).¹¹⁷ These terms may have retained connotations of reciprocity, since Liverani has shown that international tribute in the Late Bronze Age between kings of unequal status could equally be represented as reciprocal gift-giving; Homeric parallels exist as well (e.g., *Il.* 9.149–155).¹¹⁸ In theory, exchanges of all types in a purely patrimonial state would be mediated by personal relationships, and hence there would be no structural or conceptual difference between fiscal systems and reciprocal or redistributive exchanges.¹¹⁹

Mycenaean states are not patrimonial, however, as can be seen by the differentiation between the personae of the king, not to mention the precise and systematic way in which taxes were often assessed and collected, with deficits carefully calculated and recorded.¹²⁰ Rather, the generosity of *e-ke-ra₂-wo* evident in Un 718, like the generosity of the Roman emperor, is a manipulation of two ambiguities: one between his official and personal personae, and another between official, obligatory gifts and personal, reciprocal gifts. In Pierre Bourdieu’s terms, *e-ke-ra₂-wo* used the feast to convert material wealth into symbolic capital.¹²¹ Bourdieu’s concept of symbolic capital is useful because it may help explain the differences in terminology in the Linear B texts, namely the ellipsis between the official title of *wanax* and his personal name, *e-ke-ra₂-wo*. Through a strategy of misrecognition, the *wanax/e-ke-ra₂-wo* converted a compulsory contribution based on his landholdings into a show of generosity by arranging to contribute more material than was required. This gesture may have allowed him to claim

114. Further support is offered by the existence of a scribe (Hand 24) who seems to specialize in the affairs of *sa-ra-pe-da*.

115. The toponym *sa-ra-pe-da* is not one of the 16 administrative districts of the kingdom, and may be a locality within one of these districts. Whitelaw (2001, pp. 63–64) suggests that the Pylian kingdom was made up of ca. 150 communities, with a total polity population of ca. 50,000. A population of 1,000 for *sa-ra-pe-da*—approximately the number of people

that Un 718 could have provisioned—seems a reasonable figure.

116. *Contra* Bendall (2004, p. 111), who claims that “reciprocity normally functions where the social status of participants is roughly equivalent.” Anthropological exchange theory (Mauss 1990, pp. 71–78; Gregory 1994, pp. 920, 924–925) has always included asymmetrical relations under the rubric of reciprocity, and there are many such examples in the ancient Mediterranean, including cult practice in Greek religion (Parker 1998) and Roman patron-

client relationships (Saller 1982).

117. Duhoux (1968) reviews the relevant terms.

118. Liverani 2001. Morris (1986, p. 4) notes that “hierarchical relationships were personified through the medium of the gift” in Archaic Greek epic.

119. Schloen 2001, pp. 64, 79–83.

120. Perna 2004.

121. On symbolic capital, see Bourdieu 1977, pp. 171–183; 1990, pp. 112–121; Smart 1993. Dietler and Herbich (2001, pp. 252–253) apply this concept to the archaeological analysis of feasting.

that the additional foodstuffs were a personal gift; hence Hand 24 wrote *e-ke-ra₂-wo* on Un 718. The use of the personal name of the *wanax* on Un 718, coupled with his disproportionately large contribution to the feast, stresses the personal nature of his generosity. Like the later Roman emperors and Bourdieu's elite families, *e-ke-ra₂-wo* can pass up no opportunity for public display.¹²²

CONCLUSION

It has become abundantly clear over the past 20 years from study of the textual and archaeological evidence that feasting was central to the constitution of Mycenaean society. The extensive interest that the palatial authorities showed in the organization of feasts demonstrates that this practice was an important element in the Mycenaean political economy as well.¹²³ Exactly how feasting ceremonies articulated or reflected the hierarchical structure of the palaces, however, remains uncertain. From a large-scale, "macro" perspective, feasts—both those sponsored by the palaces and those that were not—can be seen as expressing and reinforcing palatial hegemony.¹²⁴ For example, Lisa Bendall has argued on the basis of the archaeological remains that there were several levels of feasting in Messenia that differed qualitatively from each other; the farther one is from the megaron in the Pylian palace, the less lavish the material correlates of feasting become.¹²⁵ Because there are indications that regional feasts were imitations of those that took place at the palace, she concludes that feasting in Mycenaean palatial society was an expression of its strict social hierarchy, and that "to participate in banqueting was thus to acquiesce in the inequalities inherent in the fabric of the Mycenaean social structure and to accept one's place in it."¹²⁶

Feasts can often operate as mechanisms to create and reinforce social and economic inequalities, so the evident emphasis that the Mycenaean ruling elites placed on the organization of feasts would seem to indicate that feasts could play, or be seen to play, an important role in the maintenance of palatial authority.¹²⁷ It can hardly be coincidental that the fresco program of the palace at Pylos includes a number of feasting scenes focused on the megaron: a sacrificial procession in the anteroom (room 5) must be connected to the lyre player and individuals seated on campstools in the megaron (room 6).¹²⁸ The presence of this feasting scene in the room in which the *wanax* sat implies a connection between feasting and royal authority.¹²⁹

122. A further factor motivating this behavior may be that *e-ke-ra₂-wo* was a new king (Palaima 1998–1999, p. 221), in which case he may have gone to extra lengths to consolidate his control.

123. Palaima 2004a; Nakassis 2010.

124. Wright 2004c, pp. 170–171.

125. Bendall 2004.

126. Bendall 2004, p. 128. Bendall

also refers here to participation in the Mycenaean *koiné* as a choice, suggesting that the acquiescence to palatial authority was a conscious decision made by individual Mycenaean.

127. Dietler 2001; Hayden 2001.

See also the articles in Bray 2003.

128. McCallum 1987; Wright 2004c, pp. 161–166; Bennet 2007.

Restudy of the fresco fragments from Pylos by Brecoulaki has led to the realization that the bull reconstructed by McCallum (1987, pp. 94–96, 132–133) in the megaron does not belong there, but is probably part of a larger composition fallen from an upper story (Brecoulaki, in Davis et al. 2005).

129. Bennet 2007, p. 13.

There is nevertheless a danger in interpreting all feasts from a top-down, palatial perspective, and much is to be gained by examining the variability in Mycenaean feasting. Cynthia Shelmerdine has recently stressed that the feasts attested in the Linear B documentation do not constitute a monolithic social practice: they were provisioned by a variety of groups and individuals, and they took place both at the palatial center and in outlying districts.¹³⁰ It is uncertain that all feasts in the Mycenaean world were sponsored by the state, and it seems likely that feasting was a widespread practice that operated in a variety of social contexts.¹³¹ Consequently, the relationship between feasting practices and the Mycenaean social order must have been complex, and we should not assume that all feasts operated according to the same logic and were subject to the same political strategies.

It follows that individual feasts should be analyzed, insofar as the evidence permits, as independent iterations of a shared cultural practice. That is, our attention should be drawn beyond typology and hierarchy and toward issues of practice and agency.¹³² Feasts are not simple reflections of the societies that perform them, but are complex practices subject to negotiation and manipulation, on the one hand, and constrained by traditional norms, on the other. Indeed, they are crucial social and political arenas for ruling elites who must work hard to maintain their legitimacy among the populace and sustain interpersonal relationships with regional elites. As the example of the Roman emperor discussed above shows, even in highly stratified societies, personal relations of reciprocity are essential to the maintenance of the ruler's authority.¹³³ Participants in the feast were not passive recipients of elite propaganda, however, but instead actively contributed to the process in various ways: some supplied materials, while most were present as consumers of food and drink. Even mere participation in a feast by individuals in the lower orders is an active choice that is subject to subtle manipulation, as James Scott's study of peasant resistance vividly illustrates.¹³⁴

The prospective feast recorded in Un 718 is distinctive in that the preserved documentation is relatively rich. We know the location of the feast, the religious recipient in whose honor it was held, the names of the contributors, the amounts they were expected to give, and the basis for their contributions. This situation is unique in the extant Mycenaean documentation. All feasting documents list at the very least the commodities requisitioned; they may also include toponym, occasion, contributor(s) or responsible agent(s), and some indication of the basis for the payment, but most do not record all or even many of these.¹³⁵ Consequently, Un 718 represents our best opportunity to understand how Mycenaean "commensal politics" operated in one particular historical context.¹³⁶

The analysis of Un 718 and related texts shows that these rituals were open to strategic manipulation by individuals: *e-ke-ra₂-wo* pays more than he has to as the *wanax* in a display of personal generosity. In this case, the individual in question happens to be the most important agent in the kingdom, the king. This is unfortunate insofar as it may encourage the view that feasts were entirely controlled and manipulated by calculating rulers. On the other hand, the very fact that he is willing to pay more than is strictly necessary demonstrates that the other participants were hardly

130. Shelmerdine 2008a.

131. Bendall 2004; Wright 2004c; Shelmerdine 2008a.

132. Dietler 2003, p. 272.

133. Dietler 2003, p. 272.

134. Scott 1985, pp. 18, 26, 174, 195–196, 229–230, 240, 290.

135. Palaima 2004a, pp. 220–229.

136. On the term "commensal politics," see Dietler 2001.

ciphers in a static hierarchy merely doing what is expected of them. After all, why would the *wanax* need to impress individuals who knowingly acquiesced to their inferior status? Mycenaeans were knowledgeable agents capable of manipulating a variety of social contexts for their own personal advantage. We may reasonably extend this observation to the other named individuals and collective organizations such as the *wo-ro-ki-jo-ne-jo ka-ma* who make small contributions to feasts: their participation in an important communal feasting ceremony may have conferred distinction upon them.¹³⁷ Archaeological evidence also supports the argument that feasting did not mechanically re-create and reinforce a rigid Mycenaean social order. Michael Galaty has suggested on the basis of his petrographic and chemical analyses of pottery from Messenia that the fine-ware kaolinite kylikes so closely associated with the palace could also have been used to upend social distinctions, when they were imitated and used outside official contexts. Some secondary centers, such as Koukounara, appear to have eschewed palace-made fine ware altogether.¹³⁸

It therefore seems that the ruling elite at Mycenaean Pylos were in a situation not unlike that described by Scott: “they may write the basic script for the play but, within its confines, truculent or disaffected actors find sufficient room for maneuver.”¹³⁹ Feasting was not a monolithic tool wielded exclusively by palatial elites, but a structured arena in which individuals with differential access to resources interacted with each other. The end result of their acts may have been the reproduction of a hierarchical social order, but it would be a mistake to deduce motivations from results, since this would ignore power struggles as well as the fact, pointed out by Anthony Giddens, that the unintended consequences and unacknowledged conditions of action are inherent to human agency.¹⁴⁰ Rather than reinforcing ideas about the static nature of the Mycenaean world, the study of feasting demonstrates how careful attention to specific social activities can reveal the ways in which such activities are socially reproduced through the strategic practices of knowledgeable agents. This observation is all the more important as feasts and other ritualized practices are not merely reflections of Mycenaean political authority and society, but active forces in their creation.

137. Palaima 2004a, p. 225; Sheldine 2008a, p. 405.

138. Galaty 2010.

139. Scott 1985, p. 26.

140. Giddens 1984, pp. 5–14.

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Dimitri Nakassis

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICS
125 QUEEN'S PARK
TORONTO, ONTARIO M5S 2C7
CANADA

d.nakassis@utoronto.ca