Crafts, Specialists, and Markets in Mycenaean Greece

Introduction

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Abstract

Past models of Mycenaean political economies have overemphasized the role of redistribution, thereby discouraging research into other modes of exchange. New perspectives have effectively questioned the hypothesis that palatial control over the economy was absolute, however. Consequently, it is now possible to imagine significant economic production and exchange outside of palatial purview, especially given the long and well-established history of craft specialization in the Aegean beginning in the Early Neolithic. In other parts of the world, Mesoamerica in particular, archaeological studies of craft specialization in early states have led scholars to infer the existence of regional markets much earlier than expected, leading to a reconsideration of the relationship between political and economic organization.*

INTRODUCTION: THE ATHENIAN AGORA—EX NIHILO?

Perhaps no scene better captures the essence of political and economic organization in classical antiquity than that of the Athenian Agora, with merchants peddling their specialized wares in crowded streets bursting with people. Here is an excellent example:[1]

> καὶ ὡς ὁ Εὔβουλος δ' ἐν Ὀλβίᾳ ἔφη· ἐν τῷ γὰρ αὐτῷ πάνθ' ὁμοῦ πωλήσεται ἐν ταῖς Ἀθήναις, σῦκα, κλητῆρες, βότρυς, γογγυλίδες, ἄπιοι, μῆλα, μάρτυρες, ῥόδα, μέσπιλα, χόρια, σχαδόνες, ἐρέβινθοι, δίκαι, πυός, πυριάτη, μύρτα, κληρωτήρια, ὑάκινθος, ἄρνες, κλεψύδραι, νόμοι, γραφαί.
>
> And as Euboulos says in *Olbia*, everything will be sold together in the same place at Athens—figs, summoners, bunches of grapes, turnips, pears, apples, witnesses, roses, medlars, haggises, honeycombs, chickpeas, lawsuits, beestings, beestings pudding, myrtle-berries, allotment machines, wild hyacinth, lambs, water-clocks, laws, indictments.

In ancient Athens, the relationship between politics and economics was intimate and direct: just as the prices of goods were to a large extent dictated by political concerns, courts of law also were located physically within and around the marketplace of the Agora. But market-based exchange systems such as that which existed in classical Athens do not emerge ex nihilo. Like Greek political institutions based on democratic principles, economic institutions such as craft specialization and market systems developed over time. But where did the complex political-economic system that resulted in the bustling market of the classical Agora come from? Was it the coincidence of processes that began just a few hundred years before, during the Early Iron Age? Or did it have deeper roots, extending back into the Mycenaean palatial systems of the Late Bronze Age?

One critical component of the Athenian market system—craft specialization—clearly can be traced back to the Bronze Age.[2] The specialized crafts of Mycenaean Greece are well documented textually and archaeologically.[3] Builders, potters, weavers, metallurgists, perfumers, glassworkers, and fullers all appear in the Linear B texts,[4] and the fruits of their labor have been recovered through archaeological excavations and surveys. Many of these specialized crafts can be

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[1] Ath. 14.640b–c (Euboulos fr. 74) (translation modified from Wycherley 1957, 185). Euboulos is a Middle Comedy poet of the mid fourth century B.C.E.

[2] Perlès and Vitelli 1999; Parkinson and Pullen (forthcoming).

[3] E.g., Shelmerdine 1985; Schon 2007.

[4] Shelmerdine 2008, 141–44.

documented much earlier than the Mycenaean period, in the Early Helladic and even in the Neolithic.

But how was craft specialization organized during the Late Bronze Age, and how were specialized craft goods exchanged? For a generation after the decipherment of Linear B, Mycenaean palaces were characterized as powerful redistributive centers whose primary role was to extract labor and materials from a wide economic hinterland and thereby support production and distribution of those specialized craft products.[5] In recent years, however, the influence of the Mycenaean palaces has been significantly redefined.[6] Rather than being portrayed as strong centers, the rulers of which controlled nearly every aspect of the political economy, the Mycenaean palatial elite now are understood to have been savvy statesmen who managed to gain some limited political benefits by directing very specific aspects of the palatial economy. This revisionist perspective, which derives in large part from data collected through regional surface surveys but also from new readings of Linear B texts, depicts Mycenaean palaces not as omnipotent, highly centralized redistributive centers but as cogs in more delicate, networked sociopolitical systems that were dependent on economic activities they could not completely control. Although the downgrading of the extent of palatial control over the Mycenaean economy has been significantly discussed in recent years,[7] there has been little effort to redefine how goods and products would have been exchanged in Mycenaean states, either within or outside the palatial context, in the absence of top-down systems of redistribution. How, for example, did the typical Mycenaean acquire a pot, or a metal tool, or a bolt of cloth, if not from the palace itself?

This Forum, which focuses on craft specialization and markets, builds on a colloquium organized at the 110th Annual Meeting of the Archaeological Institute of America (Philadelphia, 2009), which focused on the nature of redistribution in Aegean palatial systems. In that colloquium, published as a Forum in the *AJA*, we argued that it was much more interesting to compare and contrast how resources were mobilized and redistributed within different palatial systems than to simply characterize all Aegean palaces as "redistributive centers."[8] In a similar vein, we hope here to encourage discussion about how specialized crafts were produced and exchanged within various Mycenaean polities—Pylos, Mycenae, Knossos—with the expectation that there were differences, and that these might reflect quite different regional developmental trajectories and, ultimately, different forms of sociopolitical organization.[9]

We also ask whether markets could have been a part of the Mycenaean economy. Although Mycenaean regional markets were hypothesized by Chadwick, his suggestion has not enjoyed scholarly support.[10] Scholars have inferred the presence of pre- and protohistoric markets in several other parts of the world, such as Mesoamerica and China, where different kinds of archaeological evidence suggest not only that they appeared much earlier than previously thought but also that they played key supporting roles in the emergence of state institutions. We are not arguing here that all Mycenaean courtyards were open-air marketplaces; rather, we suggest that the recently revised, scaled-back model of Mycenaean political economies now opens sufficient theoretical room for us to consider the Bronze Age precursors to the classical agora. To this end, we believe that discussions about the identification and organization of prehistoric markets in other parts of the world can be instructive and will help shed some light on how Mycenaean political economies formed and operated.[11]

In this introductory article, we discuss how these two important components of the ancient economy—craft specialization and markets—have been approached in the Aegean and in other parts of the world. We argue that there is evidence for craft specialization in the prehistoric Aegean dating back into the Neolithic. We also demonstrate that by the beginning of the Bronze Age, many sites, usually coastal, functioned as exchange centers for different products of skilled—if not specialized—labor. This deep history of specialized production and differential distribution of various products, both utilitarian items and prestige goods, suggests that an incipient market system likely was in place on the Greek mainland by the end of the Bronze Age. We argue that previous models of Mycenaean palatial organization, which emphasized the top-down dominance of the palaces as redistributive centers that monopolized the distribution of specialized craft goods, discouraged investigations of other potential methods of exchange, including market-based systems. The failure to investigate alternative methods of distribution and exchange has resulted in a lack of variability in modeling different Mycenaean

[5] Killen 1985, 2008.
[6] Galaty and Parkinson 2007a.
[7] E.g., Galaty and Parkinson 2007b.
[8] Galaty et al. 2011.
[9] Shelmerdine 1999.
[10] Chadwick 1976, 158. The majority view is represented by Killen 2008, 173–74.
[11] E.g., Feinman and Garraty 2010; Garraty and Stark 2010.

polities, such as the Pylian polity in Messenia and the Knossian polity on Crete. Despite the obvious differences in how these palatial systems came about and functioned within their regional contexts, the top-down model of palatial organization has encouraged a perception of Mycenaean states as having more or less similar systems of political and economic organization. Variations are often argued away as the results of differential deposition and preservation, or explained in largely managerial terms—so, for instance, peculiarities at Knossos are chalked up to a preexisting "Minoan" administrative heritage.[12]

Although the elites of different Mycenaean states used similar bureaucratic tools, such as Linear B, and management techniques, such as the *ta-ra-si-ja* system, as archaeologists and textual scholars alike have described, they operated in quite different geographic and historical contexts and met dissimilar social and political challenges. By examining the variability within these different environments, we can learn a great deal about how they came to be, how they operated, and how they ultimately failed. If we do not, then we will further isolate study of the palaces from research into sociopolitical and economic processes.

The other articles in this Forum address the issues we raise here. The next two articles, by Hruby and Aprile, discuss craft production and the evidence for market exchange in the Mycenaean state centered on Pylos. Hruby examines the palatial center, and Aprile the regional town of Nichoria. The final article, by Pullen, investigates the Argolid and discusses the variability exhibited in the organization of craft specialization within and between Mycenaean states. Shelmerdine, the first discussant, is an Aegean prehistorian who has made a career of integrating the study of Linear B with archaeology, and Feinman, the second, is an anthropological archaeologist who studies the political economies of early states and markets in Mesoamerica and China.

CRAFTS, SPECIALISTS, AND MARKETS IN ANCIENT ECONOMIES

Our anthropological and archaeological understanding of the relationship among craft specialists, markets, and the political organization of ancient societies has changed dramatically in the last few decades. Within the framework of the New Archaeology, which derived much of its normative perspective on social types from the ethnographic writings of Elman Service, Marshall Sahlins, and Morton Fried, craft specialists—and their specialized products—were expected to be associated with the emergence of hierarchical chiefdoms and states.[13] But archaeological research in several parts of the world has demonstrated that specialized craft goods were produced in a wide variety of different social contexts—including among egalitarian, mobile hunter-gatherers[14] and sedentary, agricultural tribal societies.[15] In addition, advances in the study of craft specialization and its relationship to political and economic organization have given archaeologists a methodological toolkit for modeling craft specialization at different social and geographic scales as well as a lexicon for discussing it.[16]

By contrast, the study of ancient markets is just getting off the ground.[17] Throughout the second half of the 20th century C.E., markets were presumed to be a modern phenomenon with historical roots no deeper than the Industrial Revolution. However, most scholars now agree that Polanyi's narrow characterization of markets as specifically associated with disembedded capitalist systems is misleading and hinders our ability to examine how economic systems developed. Many authors have argued not only that Polanyi's substantivist/formalist distinction creates a false dichotomy between embedded and disembedded economies but also that his narrow definition of markets as explicitly capitalist is similarly false.[18] All economies are embedded, albeit to varying extents, and correspondingly markets—especially if defined more broadly—are not necessarily exclusively capitalist. Nor does market exchange require strict equivalencies of value and currency.[19] While these theoretical advances gradually have had a positive impact on our ability to study how economic systems developed in recent times, corresponding methodologies for studying ancient markets are just beginning to take shape.

CRAFT SPECIALIZATION IN THE ANCIENT AEGEAN

The relationship of specialized craftsmen and their products to political institutions has been the topic of much discussion among anthropological archaeologists since the 1980s.[20] Within the Aegean, Renfrew

[12] Shelmerdine 1999, 564.
[13] Peregrine 1991.
[14] E.g., Burch 2005.
[15] Parkinson 2002.
[16] E.g., Clark and Parry 1990; Costin 1991.
[17] Feinman and Garraty 2010.
[18] E.g., Smith 2004; Garraty 2010; Garraty and Stark 2010; see also Polanyi 1944.
[19] See the extensive discussion in Feinman and Garraty 2010.
[20] E.g., Clark 1986, 1987, 2003; Brumfiel and Earle 1987; Clark and Parry 1990; Costin 1991.

allotted specialization a causal role in *The Emergence of Civilisation*.[21] As a result of the emphasis that has been placed on this topic, especially by scholars such as Costin, we have both a good methodological toolkit and an adequate vocabulary for discussing the organization of craft production.[22] Costin's well-known model defines several dimensions of craft production—context, concentration, scale, and intensity. As she notes, definitions of specialized production have varied widely—from Clark and Parry's broad definition,[23] which includes any form of production in which goods are transferred from the producer to a nondependent, to her own more restricted definition:[24]

> [S]pecialization is a differentiated, regularized, permanent, and perhaps institutionalized production system in which producers depend on extra-household exchange relationships at least in part for their livelihood, and consumers depend on them for acquisition of goods they do not produce themselves.

Viewed from her perspective, specialization is not a binary (present/absent) organizational state. Craft specialization occurs in degrees and includes many different organizational types. This approach has been widely adopted because it provides a comparative framework for discussing both diachronic change and local differences in the organization of craft production. Costin's model works well to explain the evolution of specialized production and exchange systems in the Aegean, for example.

Perlès has argued that evidence for craft specialization within the prehistoric Aegean dates to the Early Neolithic, when itinerant craftsmen produced obsidian blades on sites in the Thessalian Plain.[25] These specialists need not have been full-time. They could have worked in concert with other specialists—seafarers—who transported the raw material from its source on the island of Melos. Perlès also argued that specialists at Franchthi Cave in southern Greece produced large quantities of cockleshell beads in Early Neolithic contexts.[26] Importantly, there is not much evidence for specialization in the production of ceramics throughout the Early Neolithic, which probably were produced and consumed by individual households (i.e., the so-called Domestic Mode of Production).

By the beginning of the Bronze Age in some parts of the Greek mainland, a different pattern emerged, whereby the production of obsidian blades became a regionally organized specialized activity that occurred only at specific sites, usually near the coast. In contrast to the production of flakes, which were produced by nonspecialists in domestic contexts, the specialized production of blades was restricted to specific sites that provided blades to other sites.[27] This pattern emerged in different periods on the Greek mainland from the Final Neolithic through the Early Bronze Age and persisted in some regions, such as Messenia, even through the Late Bronze Age as Mycenaean palatial systems grew up around them. At the same time, some forms of pottery, such as pithoi, may have been produced by specialists.[28]

In Costin's terms, the pattern of blade production during the Bronze Age was likely independent (context), occurred only at specific sites within regions (concentration), was probably kin-based (scale), and was most likely a part-time activity (intensity).[29] Runnels and Hartenberger have argued that at some sites, such as Lerna, obsidian blade production during the Early and Middle Helladic periods was part-time and attached to elite groups and that it once again became an independent craft during the Late Helladic period.[30] Parkinson has argued that in Late Helladic Messenia obsidian blade production persisted at the site of Romanou even as the Palace of Nestor began to exert control over other aspects of the regional economy.[31]

In contrast to the specialization in the production and distribution of obsidian blades on the Greek mainland, the production of ceramics likely remained mostly a domestic, nonspecialized activity until the Bronze Age.[32] Throughout the Bronze Age, the production and exchange of various goods, such as pottery, became more specialized but differed in context, concentration, scale, and intensity. Likewise, how these specialized craft systems were organized varied from region to region. In all cases, though, craft specialization contributed to the highly focused political economies associated with Mycenaean palatial systems, which all eventually supported several full-time, specialized, attached craft industries.

But the various ways in which those crafts were organized within and integrated into different Mycenaean states varied considerably. For example, Galaty has argued that only some specific ceramic types, such as kylikes, were produced by attached specialists with

[21] Renfrew 1972.
[22] Costin 1991, 2001.
[23] Clark and Parry 1990.
[24] Costin 1991, 4.
[25] Perlès 1990a, 1992, 2001.
[26] Perlès 1990b.
[27] Parkinson 2010.
[28] Parkinson and Pullen (forthcoming).
[29] Costin 1991.
[30] Runnels 1985; Hartenberger and Runnels 2001.
[31] Parkinson 2007.
[32] Perlès and Vitelli 1999.

workshops at or near the Palace of Nestor at Pylos.[33] But this contrasts with the pattern in the Argolid, where Shelton has documented an extensive workshop at Petsas House that was in the process of being integrated into the palatial economy during Late Helladic IIIA.[34] Åkerström's early work on the Mastos pottery workshop in the Berbati Valley suggests that it was attached to the palatial center at Mycenae.[35]

Elsewhere, Pullen and Parkinson have argued that by the later Bronze Age specialized ceramic production was more heavily sponsored (context) and more nucleated (concentration), occurred on a greater scale, and was more intensive in the Argolid than in Messenia.[36] Tighter control of specialized crafts in the Argolid also occurred with other products, including gold, ivory, exotic stone, glass, and bronze artifacts.[37] We argue that these different patterns in the organization, distribution, and consumption of specialized ceramics are indicative of important differences in the evolution and organization of the political economies in these regions. The palatial system in Messenia emerged within a context of relative isolation, where one site, Pylos, quickly became the dominant, primary center, but in the Argolid, sites such as Lerna, Asine, Tiryns, Argos, Prosymna, and Midea were closely placed competitors to Mycenae during its rise to regional prominence. Although Mycenaean palatial systems in both regions, Messenia and the Argolid, focused on the production and distribution of elite goods, intensive peer-polity interaction in the Argolid could have encouraged more intrusion on the part of the palace into the local political economy, resulting in the concentration of more specialized workshops attached to the palatial centers. Craft production was not the only economic activity that preceded the formation of the palace. Halstead and Killen have shown that forms of agricultural production that were monitored closely by Mycenaean palaces actually suggest vibrant, well-organized, and independent (i.e., not controlled) systems of production not documented in the Linear B tablets.[38] Many other such productive systems must have predated the palace. Because these systems were not uniform prior to the emergence of the palaces, there is no reason to believe that their relationship to political authority was uniform across the Mycenaean world.

Our point here is that there is ample evidence for various specialized craft activities throughout the Greek Bronze Age and, in the case of obsidian blade production, back into the Neolithic. The organization of these specialized craft activities and the way in which they related to emergent political institutions varied over time and space. By investigating how specialized crafts were organized within different Mycenaean states, we can learn more about how they emerged and operated within their different regional contexts.

THE DISTRIBUTION OF SPECIALIZED CRAFTS IN THE PREHISTORIC AEGEAN: MARKETS AND MARKETPLACES?

In contrast to the study of craft production, the study of preindustrial markets has been hindered by an adherence to Polanyi's overly rigid assertion that markets are associated exclusively with disembedded capitalist systems.[39] Especially within the ancient Mediterranean, the reiteration of Polanyi's ideas through the work of Finley resulted in what Garraty has referred to as an "out of sight, out of mind" attitude toward the investigation of ancient markets.[40] Polanyi's substantivist/formalist dichotomy, which was echoed in Finley's polarizing primitivist/modernist dichotomy, did a grave disservice to the study of ancient economic systems by overplaying the differences between modern and ancient economic and political systems.[41] As Granovetter and others have argued, all economies—past and present, Western and non-Western—are, and have been, embedded to varying degrees.[42] Whereas Polanyi and Finley developed a polarized economic typology, the application of which discouraged analysis of how modern economic systems developed, many scholars now promote a more gradualist approach that examines the degree to which ancient economies were embedded and their relationship to broader political and social processes.[43]

The relatively recent attention paid to these theoretical issues leaves us with underdeveloped methodologies for studying ancient economic systems, especially markets, using archaeological data sets. But over the last decade significant headway has been made in this regard, especially in Mesoamerica, where a nascent methodology for exploring ancient markets is beginning to take shape. Perhaps not surprisingly, markets

[33] Galaty 2010.
[34] Shelton 2010.
[35] Åkerström 1968.
[36] Parkinson and Pullen (forthcoming); see also Galaty 1999, 2010.
[37] Voutsaki 2010, 100–4.
[38] Halstead 1988, 1992; Killen 1998.
[39] Polanyi 1944.
[40] Finley 1999; Garraty 2010.
[41] Finley 1999.
[42] Granovetter 1985; Feinman and Garraty 2010, 173.
[43] Feinman and Garraty 2010; Feinman and Nicholas 2010.

and market-like systems are turning up much earlier than previously expected in several parts of the world.

One crucial theoretical development was a reworking of the definition of the term "market." In contrast to Polanyi's rigid definition of market exchange as "an economic system controlled, regulated, and directed by markets alone,"[44] we follow Feinman and Garraty's broader definition, which builds on concepts proposed by Pryor and Granovetter:[45]

> We conceptualize market exchange as economic transactions where the forces of supply and demand are visible and where prices or exchange equivalencies exist. In theory, market exchanges may be atomized/impersonal or personal/embedded. However, in practice, all market transactions presuppose social relationships among the parties to an exchange and so are embedded.

This broader definition of market exchange shifts the focus away from the portrayal of markets as things that emerge on their own in industrialized capitalist settings and instead places the focus on how market systems become institutionalized in different social contexts.

We find this approach compelling not only because it emphasizes social process over presence/absence but also because it decouples the direct associations between market exchanges, marketplaces, and regional market systems. Whereas market exchanges can have a long history in a region, only in some cases do they result in spatially discrete marketplaces and regional market systems. We argue that formal marketplaces emerge only when market exchanges become institutionalized and integrated into a political system.

These theoretical shifts have permitted the emergence of a methodology, albeit nascent, for identifying market exchange in archaeological contexts. Hirth outlined four approaches for detecting market exchange:[46]

1. The contextual approach, which assumes the existence of a market system based on logical inference—for example, that a market system is necessary for provisioning a large urban center or system of centers.
2. The spatial approach, which examines the relationship between empirical patterns and idealized spatial configurations and is similar to the comparison of actual settlement systems to those predicted by central place theory.
3. The configurational approach, which focuses on the identification of physical evidence of marketplaces in site plans and architecture.
4. The distributional approach, which examines the spatial effects of marketplace provisioning at the household level to infer the presence of market exchange.

Stark and Garraty added another to this list:[47]

5. The regional production-distribution approach, which focuses on the distributional scale of craft goods in relation to their location and levels of production.

As Feinman and Garraty have pointed out in their recent review, all these approaches suffer from the problem of equifinality, since "[i]t is rarely, if ever, possible to rule out alternate exchange mechanisms for observed archaeological patterns."[48] They advocate a multiscalar approach that incorporates data from the household, site, and regional levels.

We suggest that these theoretical and methodological developments can be helpful in modeling prehistoric exchange in the Aegean. Unfortunately, two of the methodological approaches are dependent on data from household contexts, which are all but nonexistent in the prehistoric Aegean. The lack of household data is especially problematic in the Late Bronze Age on the Greek mainland, where most evidence derives from archaeological or textual information from (usually primary) centers or from surface surveys. The exception that proves the rule is Nichoria, which is why Aprile's analysis in this Forum is so important. The absence of similar comparable data from various Mycenaean contexts effectively eliminates our ability to employ fully Hirth's approach and forces us to rely exclusively on the spatial distributions of sites and materials and on the positive identification of marketplaces in the archaeological record.

But to deny altogether the existence of market exchange, as defined here, throughout the prehistory of the Aegean seems to us to be based on a blind adherence to a false dichotomy rather than on any empirical reality. For example, the centralized production and regional distribution of obsidian blades during the Early Helladic, discussed above, could be evidence of incipient market exchange. We suspect that it was unlikely that these centers (e.g., the Fournoi Focus in the Argolid, Romanou in Messenia) provisioned regions exclusively with obsidian blades; rather, they likely also served as Polanyi-esque "ports of trade"—centers for

[44] Polanyi 1944, 68.

[45] Feinman and Garraty 2010, 171; see also Pryor 1977; Granovetter 1985.

[46] Hirth 1998, 2009.

[47] Stark and Garraty 2010.

[48] Feinman and Garraty 2010.

the production and distribution of other specialized craft products, such as ceramics. And the persistence of that pattern of organization into the Late Bronze Age in regions such as Messenia (and perhaps also at Korphos in the Corinthia) may suggest that those market exchanges continued to occur along with, and in a complementary fashion to, the palatial economy.

Given the revisionist model of Mycenaean palatial economies, not as top-down, overly centralized, totalizing, and redistributive but rather as characterized by very selective production and distribution of particular kinds of (mostly elite) goods, we wonder whether marketplaces might not be identified in various regional contexts. Palaces, for example, which all boast courtyards, may have served as marketplaces in addition to whatever other functions they had. But courtyards and open spaces also occur at secondary Mycenaean centers, such as at Nichoria and Iklaina in Messenia, and they may well have served as regional marketplaces.[49] Several authors have argued convincingly for feasts at Mycenaean palaces, events presumably sponsored by the palatial elite.[50] But could the construction of courtyards at palaces represent an attempt by the palatial authorities to bring within their ambit those parts of the economy that operated independently by providing a more central, formalized venue for the exchange of specialized goods? There is certainly textual evidence that the palatial authorities exchanged staple goods with named individuals for imports and other craft products, so proximity to these hypothesized markets may have been an important element of the political economy.[51]

CONCLUSION: CRAFTS, SPECIALISTS, AND MARKETS IN THE ANCIENT AEGEAN

To understand how fully blown market systems like that of the Athenian Agora came to be, we must assume theoretical perspectives that permit markets to be viewed not as narrowly defined, disembedded economic institutions but rather as parts of the political economy, with idiosyncratic histories and a variety of different configurations and degrees of embeddedness. There is an overwhelming amount of evidence for craft specialization in the Aegean, especially by the end of the Late Bronze Age. More recent models of Mycenaean palatial economies propose that only some specialized crafts were closely controlled and monitored by the palaces and that many other goods and products were produced and exchanged outside the palatial sphere. Many crafts, such as the production of textiles, were closely monitored by the palace and were also practiced outside of direct palatial management. Others, such as the potting industry, met a huge demand, with very little palatial involvement. People must have acquired metal tools and pottery somehow, if not via the palace. We argue that market exchange is a plausible mechanism by which those goods and products were distributed.

Our current ability to explore this problem is hindered significantly by the near-total lack of evidence from Mycenaean households, especially from nonpalatial settings. Household evidence has proven critical in detecting early markets in Mesoamerica, and we suspect that household archaeology may have a similar impact on our understanding of Aegean palatial economies.

Finally, by making some theoretical room for the existence of market exchange in the Aegean Bronze Age, it will be possible to examine more accurately the degree of political centralization of different parts of the economy (i.e., their embeddedness) over space and time. Such a perspective will, we believe, facilitate a better understanding not only of the variability exhibited between different Mycenaean palatial economies (e.g., between Messenia and the Argolid, discussed above) but also of how those different regions changed over time. Market exchange, for example, may help explain the shift in the number of so-called exotic goods from Mycenae and other sites on the Argive Plain to Tiryns throughout the Late Helladic period. Perhaps Tiryns' ideal location at the mouth of the Argolic Gulf, a center for trade and exchange, permitted it to draw more foreign trade as palatial control weakened throughout the region. A similar process could account for a similar pattern on the island of Crete between Knossos and Kommos in LM IIIA–B.

At a broader temporal and geographic scale, analyzing the degree of embeddedness of market systems has been helpful in modeling the changes that occurred elsewhere throughout the eastern Mediterranean. For example, Galaty et al. have argued that as political control over economic systems contracted in Egypt and the Near East there was a corresponding increase in long-distance exchange throughout the eastern

[49] On Mycenaean courts, see Cavanagh 2001.

[50] Säflund 1980; Shelmerdine 1998, 84, 87–8; Whitelaw 2001, 58.

[51] Mycenaean palatial administrators occasionally "purchased" goods. Texts recording these exchanges use the transactional term *o-no /onon/*, meaning "benefit" (Chadwick 1964; Lejeune 1964). The importance of these texts to the interpretation of the Mycenaean economy is discussed by Bennet and Halstead (forthcoming).

Mediterranean.[52] This occurred at least twice—once during the First Intermediate Period in Egypt, which is associated with the increase of foreign materials into Crete during Middle Minoan IB, and again during the Iron Age, after the collapse of many Bronze Age centers. We wonder whether similar processes also occurred at the regional scale: perhaps as the power of individual palatial centers over local systems of production and distribution waned, markets flourished.

The remainder of the articles in this Forum encourage our colleagues to reconsider the relationship between craft specialization and markets in Aegean prehistory. In so doing, we hope these articles will make a modest contribution to our understanding of how specialists and their crafts were integrated into, and independently complemented, the ancient political economy.

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