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# THE WANAX IN LINEAR B TEXTS

It would be fair to say that the majority of writers on the subject regard one point as absolutely fixed in the political structure of Mycenaean Pylos, and of Knossos too, for that matter: namely that the head of the state was a functionary known in the texts as *wa-na-ka*, the *Ῥάναξ*.<sup>1</sup> (The divergent interpretations of this term will be considered after a quotation of the texts). The use of *wa-na-ka-te-ro*, an adjective formed from *wa-na-ka*,<sup>2</sup> will also call for discussion.

The word *wa-na-ka* appears in the following important texts from Pylos:

Ta 711.1	o-wi-de pu <sub>2</sub> -ke-qi-ri o-te wa-na-ka te-ke au-ke-wa da-mo-ko-ro
Un 2.1	pa-ki-ja-si mu-jo-me-no e-pi wa-na-ka-te
.2	a-pi-e-ke o-pi-te-ke-e-u
Na 334	wa-na-ka e-ke pi-ka-na e-re-u-te-ra SA 40
Fr 1215	wa-na-ke-te wa-na-se-wi-jo we-a-re-pe sa-pe-ra ra
Fr 1220	ro-u-si-jo a-ko-ro pa-ko-we OLE + PA V 4 di-pi-si-jo-i wa-na-ka-te OLE + PA S 1
Fr 1227	wa-na-ka-te wa-na-so-i S 1 V 1
Fr 1235	wa-]na-so-i wa-na-ka-te pa-ko-[we ] OLE + PA 1 wa-na-so-i po-ti-ni-ja pa-ko-we OLE + PA V 1

Only one occurrence at Knossos is worth mentioning:

Ga 675	wa-na-ka-te pe-ma AROM 10
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<sup>1</sup> On the spelling and declension of *wa-na-ka*, cf. S. Luria, *Klio* 42, 1964, 47 and O. Panagl, *Kadmos* 10, 1971, 125-134.

<sup>2</sup> The formation is discussed by M. Lejeune, *Mémoires de philologie mycénienne* II, 1971, 275-278.

The word *wa-na-ka-te-ro* is used in three different ways:

(i) As a description of craftsmen:

PY Eo 276.2~En 74.3 pe-ki-ta ka-na-pe-u wa-na-ka-te-ro  
 PY Eo 160.3~En 74.23 pe-ki-ta ka-na-pe-u wa-na-ka-te-ro  
 PY En 609.5 a-tu-ko e-te-do-mo wa-na-ka-te-ro  
 PY Eo 371 ke-ra-me-wo wa-na-ka-te-ro<sup>3</sup>

A kind of sub-class is formed by the occurrence of the word on an inscribed jar from Thebes: TH Z 839 ka-u-no o-du-ru-wi-jo wa-na-ka-te-ro where *ka-u-no* may be regarded as a man's name, *o-du-ru-wi-jo* as an ethnic or patronymic, and *wa-na-ka-te-ro* as a descriptive adjective. It is highly likely that a similar formula is to be recognized on TI Z 29.<sup>4</sup>

(ii) As a description of cloth (feminine singular or neuter plural?):

KN Lc 525.a wa-na-ka-te-ra TELA<sup>3</sup> + TE 40 LANA 100[

(iii) As a description of the word *te-me-no* in a text of unique interest:

PY Er 312.1 wa-na-ka-te-ro te-me-no  
 .2 to-so-jope-ma GRA 30  
 .3 ra-wa-ke-si-jo te-me-no GRA 10  
 .4 *vacat*  
 .5 te-re-ta-o to-so pe-ma GRA 30  
 .6 to-so-de te-re-ta VIR 3  
 .7 wo-ro-ki-jo-ne-jo e-re-mo  
 .8 to-so-jo pe-ma GRA 6[

The words *wa-na-ka* and *wa-na-ka-te-ro* are not defined by the contexts in which they appear. A meaning can be suggested for them only by comparing the Homeric word ἄναξ; but, as this is applied both to chieftains and to gods and as no plausible etymology has ever been proposed for it, comparison of the Homeric use does not enable us to approach very close to the meaning of Mycenaean *wa-na-ka*.

Those writers who regard the *wa-na-ka* as the head of the Pylian state usually rely for this interpretation on the aggregate of the above-mentioned texts, and above all on Er 312, which appears to present a

<sup>3</sup> Apparently anomalous: *wa-na-ka-te-ro* in this text may arise from a scribal error (for *wa-na-ka-te-ro-jo*), or it may represent a genitive singular in -ω, or it is nominative singular neuter used as a substantive. The last interpretation seems the most likely.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. L. Godart and J.-P. Olivier, *Tiryns VIII*, 1975, 38-43.

kind of 'hierarchy', with the *wa-na-ka* at the top.<sup>5</sup> In the customary manner of the E tablets, amounts of wheat designate areas of land. The formulation presented by this text is certainly very striking, for two principal reasons: first because it is only here that a *wa-na-ka-te-ro te-me-no* and a *ra-wa-ke-si-jo te-me-no* are mentioned and second because the *te-me-no* of the *wa-na-ka* is much larger than that of the only other official who has a *te-me-no*. The *wa-na-ka-te-ro te-me-no* can hardly represent anything else than the τέμενος of the Φάναξ. In the second entry is found the analogous expression *ra-wa-ke-si-jo te-me-no*, namely the τέμενος of the *ra-wa-ke-ta* or λαφαγέτας. The phrase *wa-na-ka-te-ro te-me-no* finds a close equivalent in the τέμενος βασιλῆϊον which Hephaestus depicted on the shield of Achilles (Σ 550); and the *te-me-no* or τέμενος may be understood, in conformity with its derivation, as a parcel of land cut off and set aside for the *wa-na-ka* as his perquisite.<sup>6</sup>

The foregoing inferences about Er 312 are quite sound, but they by no means serve to establish this text as a proof of the proposition that the *wa-na-ka* stood at the head of the state. It does, indeed, go some way towards establishing the *status* of the *wa-na-ka*, but it enables nothing to be said for certain about his *functions*; and a knowledge of his functions would be of far greater significance, since it is quite possible for an office-holder to continue to enjoy high status long after his functions have become purely honorific. In other words, our need is for a text which will say what the *wa-na-ka* does, not merely what privileges he enjoys. As we shall now see, none of the occurrences of *wa-na-ka-te-ro* will help in this respect.

When *wa-na-ka-te-ro* is used in sense (i) above, its significance is ambiguous. It might mean, for instance, 'attached to the service of the god'; and that meaning has been assumed by F. R. Adrados in a number of papers.<sup>7</sup> Alternatively, it could do no more than designate a craftsman as being 'of the *wa-na-ka*', that is 'royal'; but we have no means of telling whether the craftsman so called is engaged on work for the *wa-na-ka* or has been invested with a privileged appellation, like the holder of a royal warrant in England. I see no way of making a final decision. Arguing along the lines advocated by Adrados, we can

<sup>5</sup> E. g. K. Wundsam Die politische und soziale Struktur in den mykenischen Residenzen nach den Linear B Texten, 1968, 16–20.

<sup>6</sup> For the meaning and derivation of τέμενος, cf. Jacqueline Manessy-Guitton, IF 71, 1966, 14–38; and H. van Effenterre, REG 70, 1967, 17–26.

<sup>7</sup> E. g. Minos 10, 1969, 140–141.

reconstruct a perfectly credible situation, in which three out of thirty-two lease-holders work on behalf of some shrine, while the remainder work on their own account. The distribution is reminiscent of that of the bronze-smiths in the PY Jn tablets, a few of whom are called *po-ti-ni-ja-we-jo*, leaving us to infer that the majority not so specified have no connection with *po-ti-ni-ja*. If, on the other hand, the *wa-na-ka-te-ro* in the E texts is thought to refer to a human *wanax*, it is important not to outrun the meagre evidence. I fear that L. R. Palmer does so when he presents the following argument:

"Who is the granter of *ki-ti-me-na* land corresponding to the *damos* for the *ke-ke-me-na* land? A clue is given by the designation *wa-na-ka-te-ro*, which occurs a number of times among the holders of this type of land. It is applied to a fuller (En 74.3), an *e-te-do-mo* (En 609.5), a potter (Eo 371). The lands in question are at *pa-ki-ja-ne(s)*, where there was a shrine of *po-ti-ni-ja*, and the predominance of religious personnel among the holders was apparent from the beginning. Furthermore, we have evidence for a close connexion between the *wanax* and Potnia. All this suggests that in the En set we have records relating to the estate of the *wanax* at *pa-ki-ja-ne(s)*, and that the *wa-na-ka-te-ro* personnel owe service to him. As we shall see below, when we turn to the Ea set, we shall find that the terms *te-re-ta* and *wa-na-ka-te-ro* disappear and instead the designation *ra-wa-ke-si-jo* makes its appearance. Thus our pure diagnosis has revealed the *te-re-ta* as holders of land owing service to the *wanax*".<sup>8</sup>

Two assumptions made here are unwarranted. The first is that, just as lease-holders have their leases from the *da-mo*, so must the *te-re-ta* have theirs from somebody; and the only available person is the (human) *wanax*. But that is to beg the whole question of the status of the *wanax*; for the texts provide no grounds for thinking that the *wanax* was a grantor of lands. The *te-re-ta* may, for all we know, have been independent shepherds and artisans, holding their estates by immemorial tenure, without reference to the *wanax*. The second baseless assumption involves the question of 'feudalism'. The texts in question provide exceptionally poor evidence for the operation of a feudal system at Mycenaean Pylos. Of the two elements necessary in a feudal relationship, benefit bestowed by the lord and service given by the retainer, the benefit remains entirely in the realm of theory, while the service (though perhaps implied by a description such as *ke-ra-me-u*),

<sup>8</sup> The interpretation of Mycenaean Greek texts 1963, 191-192.

if rendered at all, was rendered on terms which are totally unknown; and it is upon the terms of service that a truly feudal society rests.<sup>9</sup>

The use of *wa-na-ka-te-ro* in sense (ii) is also ambiguous. It might describe cloth produced for the *wanax* in his own workshops; or it could have a much vaguer, commendatory meaning 'fit for a *wa-na-ka*'.<sup>10</sup> The latter meaning would be analogous to that of *e-qe-si-ja*, an adjective found elsewhere in the Knossos cloth-tablets, which describes cloths as 'appropriate to an *e-qe-ta*', *vel sim*.

There remains a serious (and usually unnoticed) objection to the belief that Er 312 must refer to the head of the Pylian state. Even if we find the equation *wa-na-ka* =  $\text{F}\acute{\alpha}\nu\alpha\chi$  virtually certain and consider that, in view of the parallelism seen in Er 312 between *wa-na-ka-te-ro* and *ra-wa-ke-si-jo*, the *wa-na-ka* meant here is more likely to be a human than a divine  $\text{F}\acute{\alpha}\nu\alpha\chi$ , there is still nothing to show that this was *the*  $\text{F}\acute{\alpha}\nu\alpha\chi$ . Unfortunately, the exact reasons the scribe had for writing this tablet are unknown; nor can we tell where the plots of land were situated.<sup>11</sup> En 609, which locates forty *da-ma-te* at the place *pa-ki-ja-na*, is the only text of the E series which gives any indication of place; and, while it would be a great mistake to assume that all the other E tablets, including Er 312, are necessarily concerned with *pa-ki-ja-na* as well, it is no less erroneous to exclude the possibility that they have some purely local reference and in no way allude to great dignitaries of the whole state. Such an allusion would, in any case, hardly be compatible with the second half of Er 312: a part which is, admittedly, separated from the first by a blank line. Here reference is made to three *te-re-ta* who together own (and, perhaps, actually occupy) a plot equivalent in size to that of the *wanax* himself. (What the *te-re-ta* were is uncertain, but the E tablets offer no hint that they enjoyed more than local standing). It follows that, if three *te-re-ta* have

<sup>9</sup> Chadwick's retraction of the term 'feudal' as applied to Mycenaean society is greatly to be welcomed: Documents in Mycenaean Greek 1973<sup>2</sup>, 444.

<sup>10</sup> In a somewhat similar way,  $\mu\acute{\upsilon}\rho\omega$  is called  $\beta\alpha\sigma\iota\lambda\eta\tau\omega$  ('fit for royalty?') by Sappho, fr. 94.18–20 (Voigt).

<sup>11</sup> M. Lejeune, starting from the premise that Er 312 was written by the same scribe who wrote Er 880, Un 718, and Wa 731 (and only these), infers that all four texts are concerned with the same place, namely *sa-ra-pe-da*: Minos 14, 1973, 60–62. But the inference is invalid, since it is not even certain that *sa-ra-pe-da* is a place-name at all (it might just as well refer to a type of cultivated land, as Palmer and others have suggested); nor do I understand why, because, a scribe refers to a place by name in two texts, he is necessarily speaking of the same place in other texts, which do not mention the name.

a plot as large as that of the *wanax*, then this *wanax* may just as well be a local chief as the head of the whole kingdom: a local chief who indeed occupied a higher rank than that of the *ko-re-te-re*, the *du-ma-te*, and so forth, but who held no great office of state.

Comparison may aptly be made with PY Na 334, with its mention of *wa-na-ka*.<sup>12</sup> The purpose for which the Na texts were drawn up has not yet been clarified. They record the assessment of amounts of SA at various named places. It has been deduced from Nn 228 that SA is a representation of *ri-no*, i. e. 'linen' or 'flax':

- |    |                            |
|----|----------------------------|
| .1 | o-o-pe-ro-si ri-no o-pe-ro |
| .2 | u-ka-jo SA 20 . . . . .    |

From the facts we know, we might easily deduce that SA is equivalent to *ri-no*; but we do not know all the facts. If the equivalence is insisted on, it is very hard to explain the exaction of amounts of 'linen' from such a large number of places. For what purpose was the 'linen' required, and who had made it? Many serious difficulties of terminology also impede understanding of the Na texts. For example, the verb *e-ke* or *e-ko-si* is sometimes used to indicate that a person 'is in possession' or 'is in occupation'; but what he possessed or occupied is beyond our power to determine. Again, words containing the stem of the word for 'free' are sometimes added: the adjectives *e-re-u-te-ra* and *e-re-u-te-ro*, or the verb *e-re-u-te-ro-se*. Whether these words can really mean (as they are often supposed to mean) 'excused payment', or the like, is far from certain. Even if they are able to bear this meaning, the syntax remains difficult. It is doubly unfortunate, from our point of view, that both of the acute problems of meaning occur in Na 334. Here, the assessment is referred to *pi-ka-na*, a place-name which nowhere recurs in the Pylos tablets. In the upper line we read *wa-na-ka e-ke*: 'the *wanax* has, holds'. The remaining word, *e-re-u-te-ra*, is presumably in the neuter plural; but we cannot tell whether it is the object of the verb *e-ke* or expresses a comment, without grammatical connexion with the rest.<sup>13</sup> In other words, it is impossible to answer any of the crucial questions: is the *wa-na-ka* the bestower or the beneficiary of the 'exemption' (if that is, indeed, the sense conveyed by *e-re-u-te-ra*); does he even have any connexion with the word *e-re-u-te-ra*? In this state of uncertainty, it seems necessary to

<sup>12</sup> The fragmentary text Na 1356 appears to have a similar structure.

<sup>13</sup> I cannot share Lejeune's confidence in asserting that the first alternative must be the correct one: *Mémoires* I, 1958, 147.

leave open the possibility envisaged by Ventriss and Chadwick: 'the place may conceivably have a *wanax* of its own'.<sup>14</sup> So it may; and so may the place, wherever it is, referred to in Er 312.

For a number of reasons, then, it is impossible to accept the commonly-held belief that the first line of Er 312 must refer to the head of the Pylian state: (i) the *wa-na-ka* may be a purely local dignitary, and no more; (ii) the text speaks only of the status of the *wa-na-ka* and has nothing to say about his functions; (iii) it is possible that the *wa-na-ka-te-ro te-me-no* describes the precinct of a divine and not a human *wanax*.

Turning to PY Ta 711.1, we find a text which is free from these ambiguities. The *wa-na-ka* mentioned here cannot be an official of purely local standing: he is associated with an inspection of utensils many of which are so precious as to make it practically certain that they were kept in the treasury of the Pylian palace itself. Again, Ta 711 displays the *wa-na-ka* not as a mere office-holder enjoying a certain status but as a person of authority who acts in a certain way in exercise of that authority. The precise nature of the action conveyed by the verb *te-ke* is disputed; but it is unquestionable that the action was felt to be a significant one. Finally, the use of *te-ke*, whatever its precise meaning, effectively excludes the possibility that the subject of the verb is the divine *wanax*.

Attempts to define more narrowly the meaning of Ta 711.1 are rapidly frustrated by our ignorance of Mycenaean usage. Palmer has long maintained that the inspection was carried out 'when the *wa-na-ka* buried *au-ke-wa da-mo-ko-ro*', the last two words expressing the name of the person (obviously an important person) who was buried; the list of objects which follows on this and on the other tablets of the Ta set would then refer to the contents of the tomb.<sup>15</sup> It is held by other writers that 'the *wa-na-ka* appointed *au-ke-wa* as *da-mo-ko-ro*'.<sup>16</sup> No decisive argument has yet been advanced in favour of either interpretation.<sup>17</sup> The demonstration that *da-mo-ko-ro* means an official of some kind and is not a personal name<sup>18</sup> does not, of itself, overturn Palmer's thesis. His interpretation

<sup>14</sup> Documents 300

<sup>15</sup> E. g. *Minos* 5, 1957, 79–87 and Interpretation 340–342.

<sup>16</sup> E. g. Documents 335, 497.

<sup>17</sup> A well-balanced summary of the conflicting views is contributed by Margareta Lindgren, *OpAth* 8, 1968, 61–72.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. J.-P. Olivier, *Minos* 8, 1967, 118–122 and A. Heubeck *Atti Roma* II, 1968, 611–614.

of *te-ke* as  $\theta\eta\kappa\epsilon$  in the sense of 'buried' is not susceptible either of proof or of refutation, since it is impossible to know whether this verb could have such a meaning in Mycenaean Greek. On the other hand, the meaning 'appointed' would be irreproachable *in terms of classical Greek*, which constantly uses  $\tau\acute{\iota}\theta\eta\mu\iota$  in this sense.<sup>19</sup> But, whether the items listed form the furniture of a 'tomb' or of a 'reception-room', it is difficult to understand what connexion might obtain between an inspection by the person named *pu<sub>2</sub>-ke-qi-ri*, the appointment of *au-ke-wa* by the *wa-na-ka*, and the compilation of such a list. The difficulty can be met, at least in part, by assuming that the writer of the tablet was not purporting to describe the contents of *au-ke-wa*'s 'tomb' or 'reception-room'. In fact, it may be surmised that the only connexion is a temporal one and that the scribe fixed the date of this detailed inspection, or stock-taking, by reference to an event of striking importance.<sup>20</sup> This surmise would carry with it the implication that the appointment of a *da-mo-ko-ro* (or the burial of one, for that matter) was such an event; and, in default of more detailed information about the status of the *da-mo-ko-ro* than is available at present, the argument cannot be taken any farther.

The opening of PY Un 2 is useless for the determination of the status or the function of the *wa-na-ka*. No plausible meaning has yet been assigned to the participle *mu-jo-me-no* (if it is a participle), and no confidence can be reposed in either of the two current interpretations.<sup>21</sup> The verb *a-pi-e-ke* presents a notorious ambiguity so far as its prefix is concerned; and it is unknown whether the stem of *o-pi-te-ke-e-u* is related to  $\tau\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\chi\omicron\varsigma$ , to  $\sigma\tau\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ , or to some other word. All this is most unfortunate, since there can be little doubt that the tablet does refer to the participation of the *wa-na-ka* in some activity: probably a sacrifice, in view of the list which follows in lines 3–6.<sup>22</sup>

It is now time to consider the mentions of *wa-na-ka* in the Pylos Fr texts, which record the disbursements of amounts of oil. Each Fr tablet contains some or all of the following items: the destination of the oil, expressed by a place-name suffixed with allative *-de* or by an ethnic adjective functioning as a neuter substantive; the recipient(s), expressed

<sup>19</sup> Its use in classical Greek proves nothing for Mycenaean; but some encouragement is given by a similar use of the cognate verb *dadhíre* at *Rgveda* 7.31.12. The two uses of  $\tau\acute{\iota}\theta\eta\mu\iota$  are discussed by E. Benveniste, *Problèmes de linguistique générale* 1966, 291–292 and W. Dressler, *IF* 75, 1970, 308.

<sup>20</sup> I follow the suggestion of S. Hiller, *Eirene* 9, 1971, 72.

<sup>21</sup> E. g. Interpretation, 258–259; Documents, 221, 440–441.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Lindgren *op. cit.* (n. 17) 72–76

by a noun in the dative case; the occasion on which the oil is to be used, shown by a word ending in *-ja/-jo*; the type of oil; and the amount of oil. We are concerned here principally with the four tablets which indicate the *wa-na-ka* as being the recipient: the word appears in the dative as *wa-na-ka-te*, except that in Fr 1215 the scribe has erroneously written *wa-na-ke-te*. If it were simply a question of the allotment of oil to *wa-na-ka*, we might be inclined to consider him the divine *wanax* without more ado, in view of the presence elsewhere in this set of the recipients *po-se-da-o-ne* (Ποσειδάωνει) (Fr 343, 1224) and *ma-te-re te-i-ja* (Μάτρηι θείῃ) (Fr 1202). It would, however, be unwise to reach such a conclusion on this evidence alone, in view of the Linear B texts in which both human and divine recipients figure in the same list (e. g. KN Fp 1, PY Un 219). If, on the other hand, the human *wanax* is referred to in the Fr texts, that fact would provide some confirmation of the view, expressed above, that different persons enjoyed the title of *wanax* in different parts of the Pylian state. The problems become more acute, however, when a word which is, or could be, in the dative case is juxtaposed with the dative *wa-na-ka-te*: for instance, Fr 1220.2 reads *di-pi-si-jo-i wa-na-ka-te* and Fr 1227 *wa-na-ka-te wa-na-so-i*.

Palmer has been the only one to put forward a comprehensive and internally consistent interpretation of the Fr tablets as a whole. He deduces from the common occurrence of words in the dative to denote recipients of oil that when a word appears in the dative it must indicate the recipient: hence *di-pi-si-jo-i* and *wa-na-so-i* are classed as recipients, no less than *wa-na-ka-te* or *po-se-da-o-ne*. Palmer's treatment of *wa-na-so-i* is of the most far-reaching importance in the present context because, whatever its own merits may be, it has exercised a great influence on other writers. As we have seen, in conformity with his own rule that a word in the dative must everywhere signify the recipient, Palmer finds it necessary to understand *wa-na-so-i* in this sense. When we come to a text such as Fr 1227, we have to ask how this meaning of the word can be fitted into the context of an allotment of oil 'to the *wanax*'. Palmer observes that the cult-title of the mother-goddess is often simply 'the Queen' in eastern sources (especially in Hieroglyphic Hittite). In the vegetable-cults, 'the Queen' is linked with a youthful consort who dies and is resurrected. Since the Greek translation of 'the Queen' was *wanassa*, the Mycenaean name of her consort would have been *wanax*. The association of the *wanax* with *two* queens is confirmed by the discovery of the famous ivory from Mycenae, which depicts a group of

two goddesses with a boy. Hence the translation of Fr 1227 is: 'to the King and the two Queens'. Palmer goes on to infer that the *wanax* in question was in fact Poseidon, since he is the god whose functions most closely approach those of the Mesopotamian 'lord'. As for *po-ti-ni-ja*, she is identified as the forerunner of Artemis, because of her association with the god of the waters. The same association leads to the understanding of *di-pi-so-i* (fr 1220) as 'the thirsty ones': an interpretation supported by reference to the Anatolian practice of symbolizing the vegetable-god as a tree which withers and comes to life on receiving offerings of water. In consequence, the Fr tablets are viewed as a group recording the issue of oil for use at a spring-festival.<sup>23</sup>

Palmer's exposition of his theory, especially in so far as it touches on the question of *wa-na-so-i*, suffers, on the one hand, from an over-rigid insistence on the validity of a self-imposed scribal 'rule' and, on the other, from slipshod argumentation. In fact, there exists no 'rule' to the effect that, because the writer of the Fr tablets sometimes expresses the recipient of oil in the dative case, he is necessarily referring to the recipient whenever he uses the dative. There are not even any firm grounds for supposing that *wa-na-so-i* is in the dative at all, save that the theory requires a dative in this place.<sup>24</sup> As the word *wa-na-so-i* is not attested in Mycenaean outside the Fr set, its meaning can be arrived at only by determining its function within the context of these tablets. We next have to see whether Palmer has determined it successfully. A fundamental flaw in his reasoning is apparent at the very beginning, for he takes as his starting-point not the Mycenaean material in its totality but the situation in what he calls (with reprehensible vagueness) 'the Orient'.<sup>25</sup> The relevance to our problem of the titles of Anatolian divinities is nowhere demonstrated, and indeed it is indemonstrable in the present state of knowledge. 'The picture of an Aegean Oriental *κοιμή*' which Palmer claims has emerged from his analysis<sup>26</sup> is by no means his own invention; but the interpretation of the Mycenaean documents ought to 'emerge' from a consideration of this picture, not *vice versa*. Nor, so far as the present case is concerned, does reference to Anatolian sources lead to very encouraging results. There is no sound methodological basis for simply

<sup>23</sup> For a full exposition of the theory, see TPS 1958, 3–16; cf. also Interpretation 247–258.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. E. Risch, SMEA 1, 1966, 57

<sup>25</sup> TPS 1958, 6

<sup>26</sup> Interpretation 256

translating Anatolian into Greek terms, because our information about elements that were possibly shared by the religion of the two areas is not nearly detailed enough. But, even if it could be granted that the procedure is legitimate, it does not yield the result claimed. For, on Palmer's own showing, the Anatolian sources speak of a 'Queen' and a young god who dies and is resurrected. Him we might regard, from the view-point of later Greek, as Adonis, say, or as Apollo or Dionysus: it is disconcerting to be told that he is Poseidon, one of the elder gods of the Hellenic pantheon, who shared the universe with Zeus and Hades. In some way which is not explained, the Anatolian dyad has become transformed into a triad comprising one god and two goddesses. The only such triad known in later Greek cult is that of Demeter, Persephone, and Iacchus. This, admittedly, constitutes a parallel of a sort; but a parallel only, which does not speak in favour of the continuity of a triadic cult from the Bronze Age into the classical period. The cult of Iacchus (and therefore of the whole triad) is purely Attic<sup>27</sup> and can tell us nothing of value about other triads which might have been worshipped centuries earlier in other parts of Greece; nor is there the slightest resemblance between Poseidon and Iacchus, the latter of whom (but, most emphatically, not the former) is an example of a 'dying god'. Although they were closely associated in the Eleusinian cult as practised in the Attic period, the three members of the triad were always perceived as distinct entities: for example in the parodos of the *Frogs* they are addressed separately, and they are said to have had separate statues in the Pompeion at Athens.<sup>28</sup> Three monuments from Mycenaean Greece do, however, depict a connected group of two female figures with a boy, and these are cited by Palmer as illustrations of his postulated triad.<sup>29</sup> Two of these groups come from Mycenae itself: the masterpiece in ivory found by Wace in the vicinity of the palace<sup>30</sup> and the terracotta figurine from a chamber-tomb excavated by Tsountas.<sup>31</sup> A third example, also in terra-

<sup>27</sup> Cf. P. Foucart, *Les mystères d'Éleusis*, 1914, 110–113; and F. Graf, *Eleusis und die orphische Dichtung Athens in vorhellenistischer Zeit* 1974, 54–58.

<sup>28</sup> According to Pausanias 1.2.4.

<sup>29</sup> In Palmer's latest observation on the subject, these three pieces have become 'the numerous Mycenaean representations of two women with a boy', *Gnomon* 48, 1976, 441.

<sup>30</sup> Wace himself made it clear that the group *might*, not *must*, represent a divine triad. 'Since this [group] and the other objects found with it were so near the shrine, although at a lower level, they might well be votives. It is conceivably possible that they all once formed part of the treasure of the Mycenaean shrine and that the group may represent the divinities to whom it was dedicated' – *Mycenae* 1949, 84.

cotta, is reported from a tomb at Voula in Attica.<sup>32</sup> But there is nothing about these groups, or about the context in which they were found, to suggest that they must have had any sacral connotation: the sacral significance has been arbitrarily foisted upon them by writers such as Palmer, and Picard before him, in support of theories already formed.

A long time has been spent in examining Palmer's exposition of the Fr tablets, because it provides a good example of the very way in which a group of Linear B texts should not be interpreted: namely by the assembly of heterogeneous pieces of evidence, not one of which has been shown to be relevant to the documents in question. Given this faulty method, we can feel no surprise that the argument fails completely to substantiate the claim that the *wa-na-ka* mentioned in these texts has been proved to be a divine *wanax* in close association with two goddesses. The word *wa-na-so-i* has not yet been explained satisfactorily, although the suggestion that it is a locative stands the best chance of being correct. Still, the issue with which we are immediately concerned is that of the divinity of the Mycenaean *wa-na-ka*. Since the entire structure of Palmer's argumentation is so suspect, no one part of it is credible in the absence of corroboration. As, in the present case, there is no such corroboration, we have no reason to think that the *wa-na-ka* was regarded by the writer of the Fr tablets as a divinity; although I am fully aware of the likelihood that the Mycenaeans drew no such sharp distinction between the 'secular' and the 'religious' as seems natural to-day. Thus, it is entirely possible that an earthly ruler was considered to occupy a place mid-way between the world of men and the realm of the gods.<sup>33</sup> The question remains whether the Pylian state contained one *wanax* or a multiplicity of dignitaries called by that title. On the whole, the second alternative seems more likely. Otherwise, there might have been a 'great' *wanax* around whom revolved satellite *wanaktes*. In any event, the Fr tablets make it seem probable that the counterpart of the *wa-na-ka* is *po-ti-ni-ja*; and in this context (not necessarily in others) she, like him, is more likely to have been human than divine.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. G. E. Mylonas, *The Aegean and the Near East: studies presented to Hetty Goldman* 1956, 120 pl. XV 9.

<sup>32</sup> Not yet published, so far as I know.

<sup>33</sup> To that extent, I am in agreement with P. Walcot's thesis as set out at *SMEA* 2, 1967, 53–62; but it has not yet been proved, or even persuasively argued, that the Mycenaeans borrowed any of their beliefs from the Egyptians or that the later accounts of the birth of Heracles are relevant to the nature of Mycenaean kingship.