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ON THE 'MILITARY' CHARACTER OF THE O-KA TABLETS*

Since Leonard Palmer proclaimed in 1956 the so-called *oka* tablets as "perhaps the most important historical document yet discovered in Linear B script"¹, probably no other single set of Linear B documents has drawn more attention than these six tablets from Pylos (An 519, 614, 654, 656, 657, 661). The circumstances of the destruction of the Pylian kingdom², its military organisation³, taxation system⁴ and geography⁵, and the sources of the Homeric 'Catalogue of Ships'⁶ are some but by no means all of the topics that have been discussed in connection with this group of texts. The military character of this set seems now to be generally accepted, on the grounds of the translation of the main heading, and of the analysis of the formal structure of the texts. Let us examine carefully each of these considerations.

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¹ L. R. Palmer, Notes on the Personnel of the *o-ka* Tablets (Pylos 1952), *Eranos*, 54, 1956, 3-4.

² L. R. Palmer, *Achaean and Indo-Europeans*, Oxford 1955; *Military Arrangements for the Defense of Pylos*, *Minos* 4, 1956, 120; J. Chadwick, *The Mycenaean World*, Cambridge 1976, 178-179.

³ J. Chadwick, *op.-cit.* 175-177; M. Lejeune, *La civilisation mycénienne et la guerre*, *MPM* III, 61-69.

⁴ L. Deroy, *Les leveurs d'impôts dans la royauté mycénienne de Pylos*, Rome 1968.

⁵ S. Hiller, *Studien zur Geographie des Reiches um Pylos nach den mykenischen und homerischen Texten*, Wien 1972, 35-52; R. Schmitt-Brandt, *Die OKA-Tafeln in neuer Sicht*, *SMEA* 7, 1968, 69-96; D. A. Was, *The Kingdom of Pylos, its Topography and Defence*, *Anatolica* 3, 1969/70, 147-176.

⁶ H. Mühlestein, *Die Oka-Tafeln von Pylos, Ein mykenischer Schiffskatalog?*, Basel 1956, 41-42; J. Kerschensteiner, *Pylostafeln und homerischer Schiffskatalog*, *MSS* 9, 1956, 34.

The heading of the whole set, which is found on An 657, reads:

o-u-ru-to o-pi-a₂-ra e-pi-ko-wo

In this phrase the first syllable *o-* only can be safely interpreted as the introductory particle *o-/jo*, which frequently opens the headings of separate tablets or whole set of texts⁷, but all the rest raises serious difficulties of interpretation. *E-pi-ko-wo* is found on KN As 4493, and a closely related form (maybe even a variant) *o-pi-ko-wo* on PY Jn 881. Both texts are small fragments and contribute little to the understanding of the word. As 4493 will be discussed later in connection with a word, *e-qe-ta*, which is also found both on that tablet and in the *o-ka* set. Meanwhile, it is relevant to point out that the occurrence of both words in As 4493 connects it with the *o-ka* set, while the occupational term *e-ro-pa-ke-u* connects it with the 'textile' tablets KN Lc 534 and Ld 595 where the corresponding feminine form *e-ro-pa-ke-ja* is found⁸. The Pylian tablets Jn 881 and Jn 829 comprise a small 'set' of two, introduced by the heading of Jn 829 and dealing with the delivery of bronze by different officials⁹. In Jn 829 *ko-re-te* and *pō-ro-ko-re-te* are listed, while in what remains of Jn 881 *o-pi-ko-wo* and *o-pi-su-ko* are found¹⁰. If *o-pi-su-ko* means "those in charge of figs", and since *ko-wo* in Linear B normally represents the Greek word for boy (κόρφο), *o-pi-ko-wo* probably means "those in charge of boys", hence "foremen". *E-pi-ko-wo* may easily be the phonetic variant of this word¹¹, but its traditional interpretation as ἐπίκοφοι (from κοφέω, "to hear") – "overseers"¹² – is of course equally possible, and the difference in meaning between the two interpretations is minimal.

-u-ru-to and *o-pi-a₂-ra* are hapaxes, and therefore, even if their etymology could be firmly established, their meaning in the Mycenaean dialect cannot be fully understood without safe contextual support. The

⁷ F. Bader, *Particules d'énumération mycéniennes*, *Minos* 15, 1974, 164–194; M. Lejeune, *Pré-mycénien et proto-mycénien*, *BSL* 71, 1976, 199–202; J. T. Hooker, *Non-Greek Elements in the Linear B Tablets*, *IF* 73, 1968, 72–80.

⁸ For this word see: J. P. Olivier, *En marge d'une nouvelle édition des tablettes de Mycènes*, *Kadmos* 8, 1969, 49; L. A. Stella, *La civiltà micenea nei documenti contemporanei*, Roma, 1965, 185; J. Melena, *Studies on some Mycenaean Inscriptions from Knossos dealing with Textiles*, *Minos* (Supplement) 5, 1975, 37–40.

⁹ For this text see: J. T. Hooker, *Linear B, An Introduction*, Bristol 1980, 107–112.

¹⁰ For these words see: M. Lindgren, *The People of Pylos*, Uppsala 1973, II, 105–106.

¹¹ For the problem of *epi-/opi*-alternation see: M. Gerard, *L'emploi et le sens d'opi en mycénien*, in L. Deroy, op. cit. 89–109; J. T. Killen, *The Knossos o-pi tablets*, *Atti Roma*, 1968, 636–643; A. Morpurgo-Davies, *Mycenaean and Greek prepositions: o-pi, e-pi etc.*, *Res Mycenaeae*, 1983, 287–310.

¹² M. Lindgren, op. cit. II, 44.

root **a₂r-* is found in the words *a₂-ri-e* (An 724) and *a₂-ri-sa* (Eq 213), and in several geographical and personal names (*a₂-ru-wo-te*, *a-pi-a₂-ro*, *a₃-ki-a₂-ri-jo/ja*). *A₂-ri-e* is probably a designation of men listed as “absent rowers” (*e-re-ta a-pe-o-te*), and *a₂-ri-sa* is a description of fields (*a-ro-u-ra a₂-ri-sa*). *O-pi-a₂-ra* seems to be related to these words in the same way as *o-pi-da-mi-jo* (An 830, Cn 608) is to *damos* (“people”), in which case it would mean “the territory where *a₂-ri-sa* – fields are located and which *a₂-ri-e* – people inhabit”; or it can be understood as a collective term for the inhabitants of such a territory. Some connection with the sea (ἄλς) is possible, considering that *a₂-ri-e* are rowers, but by no means obligatory¹³.

-u-ru-to is probably a verbal form (3 pl. pres. med.?) and the same root seems to be found in the word *e-pi-u-ru-te-we* on Ub 1318¹⁴, where it indicates the ‘destination’ of two deer-skins (*e-ra-pe-ja e-pi-u-ru-te-we* E2). Ub 1318 is a record of a leather workshop where different animal skins (*di-pte-ra*, *wi-ri-no*, *e-ra-pe-ja*) are listed against their ‘destinations’ which stand in the dative or in the nominative: though, besides the undoubted datives¹⁵ and nominatives¹⁶, several words can be interpreted in either way¹⁷. *E-pi-u-ru-te-we* falls into this last category; but since both personal names and names of ‘objects’ are found in all three groups, we cannot even decide whether it is an occupational term or the name of a leather object. Two Greek roots *Fqu* – “to protect” and “to draw” – have been proposed as possible etymologies for both words¹⁸, but neither derivation can be decisively proved, or help us to make sense of these words in a given context.

It seems that at the present stage of understanding of Mycenaean Greek no unambiguous translation of this sentence is possible, and any far-reaching conclusions are hardly justified when they are based on

¹³ *o-pi-a₂-ra* is usually interpreted as ἑφαλα – “those parts near the sea”, i. e. “the coastal regions” in accusative plural neutrum. See O. Panagl, Mykenisch OPIA₂RA = elisch ἐπίλαρον?, SMEA 13, 1971, 156–165; for the interpretation of *a₂-ri-e* see J.-L. Perpillou, La tablette PY An 724 et la flotte pylienne, Minos 9, 1968.

¹⁴ On this tablet see C. J. Ruijgh, Observations sur la tablette Ub 1318 de Pylos, Lingua 16, 1966, 130–152.

¹⁵ *au-ke-i-ja-te-we*, *mu-te-we* (personal names), *ka-tu-re-wi-ja-i*, *a-re-se-si*, *ti-ri-si ze-u-ke-si*, *pe-di-ro-i* (“objects”).

¹⁶ *me-ti-ja-no* (PN), *e-ma-ta*, *we-ru-ma-ta* (neut. pl.).

¹⁷ *wo-di-je-ja*, *a-pe-i-ja* (female names), *o-ka*, *o-pi-de-so-mo*, *to-pa* (?).

¹⁸ “to draw, to pull” – P. Wathelet, Les verbes ἐρύω et ἔρυσμαι en mycénien et dans les formules de l’épopée grecque, Studia Mycenaea, Brno, 1966, 105–111; “to protect, to supervise” – F. Bader, Vocabulaire et idéologie tripartite des Indo-Européens: La racine **swer* – “veiller sur” en Grec, BSL 66, 1977, 148–204.

such a loose foundation. Even if we accept the traditional translation, “supervisors protect (in what sense?) the coastal regions”, this contains nothing ‘military’ and is open to different interpretations.

It is not difficult to understand however why most scholars have urged a ‘military’ interpretation of this phrase; for the hierarchical structure of the teams after which the whole set is named (*o-ka*), and the decimal round numbers of their personnel, certainly give the impression of military units¹⁹.

However, despite many efforts the precise structure of these units has never been fully elucidated. Each tablet records the personnel of two teams introduced by subheadings, which consist of a personal name in the genitive, the word *o-ka*, and, in five cases at least, a place-name which indicates the location of the team. Since An 614 is a small fragment and seems to be a record of the absent members of *o-ka* personnel (*a-pe-e-si*), we have ten such teams. Each *o-ka* is sub-divided by a blank space into several paragraphs which, theoretically, may consist of three elements:

1) a list of personal names (conventionally called “officers”), including one with the title of *mo-ro-qa*²⁰ (An 519.2);

2) a list of unnamed persons (“soldiers”) represented by the ideogram VIR and numbered from 10 to 110 (though in one case, An 656.4, without a number). They are invariably called by one of the six following words, *i-wa-so*, *ke-ki-de*, *ko-ro-ku-ra-i-jo*, *ku-re-we*, *o-ka-ra₃* (with a variant, *o-ka-ra*, on An 657.13), and *u-ru-pi-ja-jo*, which are frequently specified by ethnics and/or an additional place-name in the locative (*a₂-ru-wo-te*, *a₃-ta-re-u-si*, *po-ra-i*, *u-wa-si*) or allative (*ne-do-wo-ta-de*, *wa-wo-u-de*). Five such groups are called *pe-di-je-we* (An 654.14 “plainsmen”), two groups are designated *o-*34-ta*²¹ (An 519.11, 654.3), one group is said to be *ne-wo* (An 656.15, “young”), and in one case the word *sa-pi-da* stands instead of the ideogram and number (An 656.4);

3) the phrase *me-ta-qe pe-i e-qe-ta* (μετά-τέ σφεις ἐπέτας) – “and with/among them the follower”. All ‘followers’ but one (An 661.13) are

¹⁹ This is the main weakness of Deroy’s ‘tax-collecting’ theory: it is hardly possible to imagine the ‘army’ of 800 tax-collectors organised in military-looking fashion in any society other than our own.

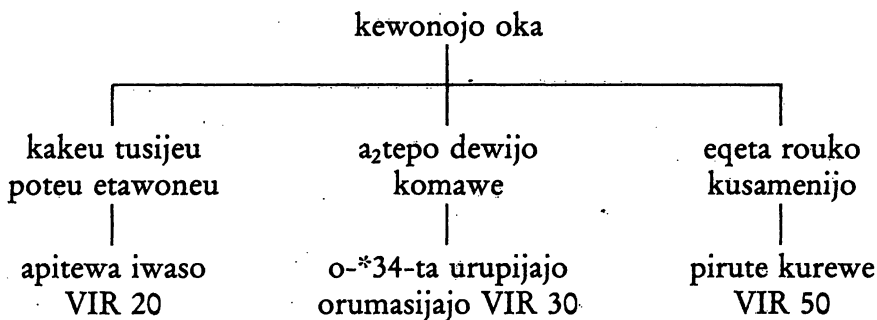
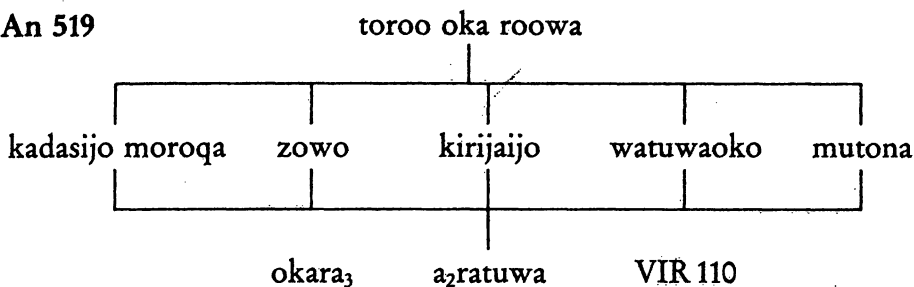
²⁰ M. Lindgren, op. cit. II, 99–100.

²¹ This word was usually regarded as some people’s collective designation (M. Lindgren, op. cit. II, 110), but A Thebes it (and the variant *o-*35-ta*) was found in the position of the personal name (Of 33 *o-*34-ta-o do-de*, Ug 3 [*pe-pi-te*]-*me-no-jo o-*35-ta*).

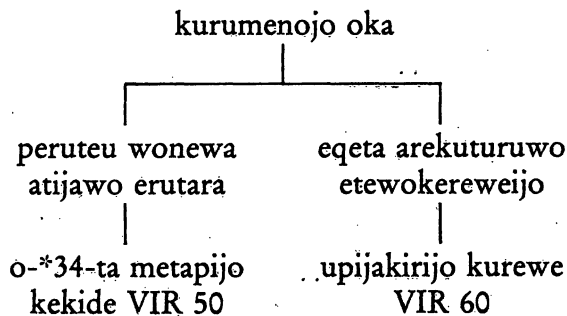
named, and their names are frequently specified by patronymics and ethnics. One *e-qe-ta* appears to be called by an ethnic only, *pe-re-u-ro-ni-jo* (An 656.16, "from Pleuron").

In practice, most groups of 'soldiers' are accompanied either by 'officers' or by a 'follower', which probably means that the pronoun *pe-i* refers only to the last group of 'soldiers', and *e-qe-ta* holds the same position in the hierarchy of *o-ka* as the whole group of 'officers'. Thus, the tablets An 519, 654, 657 and 661.1–7 have the following structure:

An 519



An 654



tatiqowewo oka

towa?	pokiroqo	perino	deukarijo	rapedo	daqoro	perirawo	enowaro
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kekide VIR 10	urupijajo VIR 10	kurewe VIR 20	iwaso VIR 10	okara ₃ VIR 10
tosode	pediewe	wawoude		

An 657

marewo oka owitono

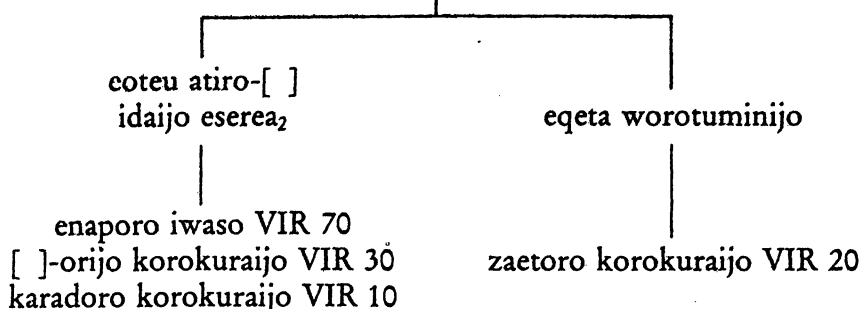
aperitawo	oreta	etewa	koxijo	suwerowijo
owitonijo	okara ₃	VIR 50		

nedawatao oka

ekemedede apijeta marateu taniko	eqeta kekijo	aeriqota erapo rimene	a ₃ kota eqeta
a ₂ ruwote kekide kuparisijo VIR 20	a ₃ tareusi kuparisijo kekide VIR 10	okara owitono VIR 30	kekide apu ₂ kane VIR 30

An 661.1–7

ekinojo oka



An 656 and 661.9–13 have a more complex structure: three groups of ‘soldiers’ are accompanied both by ‘officers’ and by *e-qe-ta* (An 656.2–9, 12–16; An 661.10–13). At first sight it seems that the *e-qe-ta* holds a position intermediate between those of the ‘commander’ of *o-ka* and the ‘officers’. However, in two cases different locations are indicated for the *o-ka* itself and for the group of ‘soldiers’ accompanied by *e-qe-ta*, and in the third case the ‘soldiers’ are called *wa-ka-ti-ja-ta ke-ki-de sa-pi-da*, without either ideogram or number. The word *sa-pi-da* here probably explains the absence of this group, though it may simply be another indication of place.

To show the structure of these texts, we must take into account the location of each subgroup of personnel as well as its hierarchy.

If this is the structure of the *o-ka* units, the ‘general impression’ of their military character needs some confirmation from other evidence, and conspicuously from any military texts or group of texts of similar structure. Webster²² made an attempt to identify such texts, and he pointed to one small group of cuneiform documents from Alalah (AT 180–182), known also as the “SA.GAZ-texts”, as the only close parallel. These texts are the lists of named warriors, among them several charioteers (*bēl^{giš} narkabāti*) under the heading: *šābū^{meš} lū SA.GAZ bēl kakki^{meš}*. However, any resemblance between them and the *o-ka* tablets exists only in Wiseman’s English translation of this sentence: “armed forces of the (amel) SA.GAZ”²³. Later it was proved by Bottéro²⁴ and Green-

²² T. B. L. Webster, *From Mycenae to Homer*, London, 1958, 21 n. 6.

²³ D. J. Wiseman, *The Alalakh Tablets*, London 1953, 71. The texts were published in cuneiform in D. J. Wiseman, *Supplementary Alalakh Tablets*, JCS 8, 1954, 11–12.

²⁴ J. Bottéro, *Le problème des hapiru*, CSA 12, 1954, 32–42.

An 656

location	waparojo oka	
newokito	erikowo	eqeta diwijeu
	a ₂ dijeu akiwonijo	wowija korokuraijo VIR 20
sapida? (<i>absent</i>)	eqeta pereqonijo areijo	
	wakatijata kekide	
	duwojojo oka	
akerewa	a ₂ kunijo perimede	eqeta kaesameno apu ₂ ka
	pu ₂ tija	korokuraijo VIR 80
porai	eqeta dikonaro adaratijo	
	apu ₂ kane kekide VIR 20	
uwasi	pereuronijo eqeta	
	kekide newo VIR 10	

An 661.9-13

location	ekomenatao oka
timito akei	ma-[]-u roqota ake-[]-u akewato
nedowotade	eqeta
	a ₂ kaa ₂ kirijo urupijajo VIR 30

berg²⁵ that the logogram *SA.GAZ* should be read *hāpiru* which signifies not the title of the commander but the type of the warriors. Hence the new translation accepted by CAD: "weapon-carrying *SA.GAZ* soldiers" (VI p. 84).

Thus, the *SA.GAZ* texts from Alalāḥ are to be compared rather with the list of charioteers (*a-ni-o-ko*) from Knossos (V 60) than with the *o-ka* tablets, since they lack a hierarchical structure. This feature is typical of other Near Eastern economic archives, where soldiers are mentioned frequently, but in a limited number of contexts: as recipients of food-rations, as land-holders, in quotas of conscripts from specific villages, or in lists of the distribution of weapons (especially in Ugarit²⁶); but never in actual military formations, which are found in entirely different types of document — royal letters, orders and instructions²⁷.

Because of the great importance of this observation, which concerns the very nature of the Mycenaean archives, let us clarify the point. The Hittite texts KBo XVI 66, KUB XXXI 33 and 62²⁸ are apparently similar to the *o-ka* tablets, in that they consist of repeated paragraphs written according to a formula:

"PN, man of GN, under him so many soldiers" (KBo XVI 66 and KUB XXXI 33), or: "so many soldiers from GN, in front of them PN" (KUB XXXI 62).

However, these are the texts of the oaths (*li-in-ki-ja*, KUB XXXI 62 I 38) taken by Kaška — mercenaries of the Hittite king — and are used as adjuncts to the treaties with their tribal chiefs. Nothing of this sort has been found in the Linear B archives, and such documents cannot be expected there, since they belong to a different type of archive, which I would call 'chancellery' as opposed to 'economic'. The relationship between the Hittite and Mycenaean archives can be called, to use a linguistic term, that of 'complementary distribution': no economic documents were found at Boghazköi, and no literary texts, letters, treaties or other chancellery documents have been found among Linear B texts. The Hittite economic texts were probably written on wooden tablets in the Luwian hieroglyphic script²⁹ and did not survive. This practice of

²⁵ M. Greenberg, *The Hab/piru*, AOS 39, 1955, 19–22, 64–65.

²⁶ PRU VI 131, 141; KTU 4.624. M. Helzer, *The Internal Organization of the Kingdom of Ugarit*, Wiesbaden 1982, 104–105, 109. Texts of this type are parallel to S series from Pylos, Knossos and Tiryns.

²⁷ J. M. Sasson, *The Military Establishments at Mari*, *Studia Pohl* 3, 1969, 7–22.

²⁸ Published by E. von Schuler in *Die Kaškaer*, Berlin 1965, 140–145.

²⁹ These documents are mentioned in the Hittite cuneiform texts where they are called ^{gi}HUR — "wooden carvings" as opposed to *dubba* — "clay tablets" (KUB XXI 38,

managing the chancellery archives and the economic archives through different staffs of scribes, and sometimes even in different languages, was widespread in the Ancient Near East³⁰, and we have good reasons to believe that, if the Linear B script were used for purposes other than economic, such hypothetical documents would have been written on some perishable material³¹. Hence it is unlikely that any 'important historical document' will be found in the Pylian archive.

If we turn to non-military texts in economic archives from the Near East, very close parallels to the *o-ka* tablets can easily be found, notably in the so-called *erín* texts from the period of the Third Dynasty of Ur. Ironically, in the early days of Sumerian studies, these texts, like the *o-ka* tablets, were regarded as lists of soldiers³². The word *erín* itself, and its Akkadian equivalents *šābu* and *ummānu*, indeed, mean "soldier" or "army" (in a collective sense), but only in literary texts³³. In Sumerian and Akkadian economic texts these words have no connection with the military sphere at all, but are used as designations of workers of a certain type and of their work-teams³⁴. Since the largest number of *erín* texts of different kinds come from the time of Ur III, it may be best to restrict our comparisons to that period (the last century of the third millennium B.C.)³⁵.

The structure of lists of *erín* is described by Maekawa: "The basic unit in an *erín*-troop was the group of ten people (*nam-10*) whose foreman

I 19–20). See: H. G. Güterbock, *Das Siegel bei den Hithitern*, Symbolae Koschaker, Leiden 1939, 36. The only surviving examples of this sort of document are so called Kululu lead-strips (S. Erdem, *Le strisce di piombo di Kululu*, *Studia Mediterranea*, Pavia 1979, 143–164).

³⁰ This problem was discussed at length during one of the sessions of the XXX Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale at Leiden in 1983. Thus, in the Neo-Assyrian empire the chancellery archive at Nineveh was managed in Akkadian while the economic documents were probably written in Aramaic, and they did not survive (S. Parpola, *The Imperial Archives of Nineveh*); in the Achaemenian empire, on the contrary, the economic archives of the royal estates at Persepolis were managed in Elamite, but the imperial chancellery at Susa worked in Aramaic (J. C. Greenfield, *Archives in the Achaemenid Empire* according to literary and epigraphic sources).

³¹ J. Chadwick, *The Mycenaean World*, 28; J. Weingarten, *The Use of the Zakro Sealings*, *Kadmos* 22, 1983, 8–13.

³² A. Deimel, *ŠL II* 3, 758.

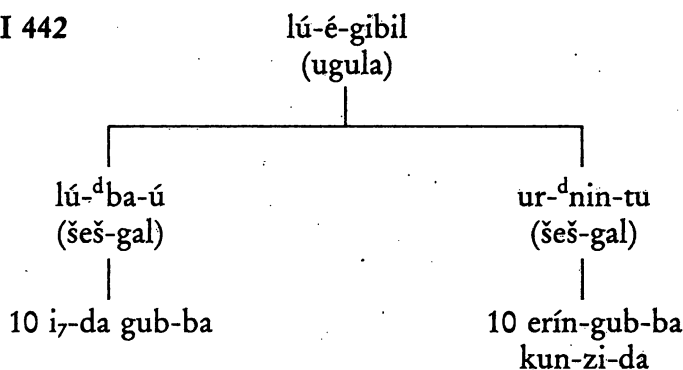
³³ CAD 16, 45–55; W. von Sohden, *AHW*, 1414–1414.

³⁴ *Ibidem*. The real soldiers in Sumerian economic texts are usually specified as *erín-ugnim* (MVN III 257, VII 130) and *šābū bēl kakkē* in Akkadian.

³⁵ The main studies of *erín* in Ur III documents are: I. Gelb, *Prisoners of War in Early Mesopotamia*, *JNES* 32, 1973, 70–98; K. Maekawa, *The Erín-People in Lagash of Ur III Times*, *RA* 70, 1976, 9–44; M. Sigrist, *Erín-un-íl*, *RA* 74, 1979, 101–120.

was called *šeš-gal* (-nam-10). As an ideal type, an *erín*-troop was composed of ten nam-10 groups and was directed by an inspector (*nu-bandà*)³⁶. Both of the titles of the supervisors – *šeš-gal* (“big brother”) and *nu-bandà* (Akkadian *lāputu*) – like the word *erín* itself, are borrowed from the military vocabulary, where they designate certain ranks of officers. Both workers and supervisors may be listed named³⁷ and unnamed³⁸, or supervisors only may be named³⁹. The last type of record is the most relevant for our purpose, and the text MVN VII 442 can be used as a simple example: it records two groups of irrigation workers, one of them stationed on the main canal (*i₇-da gub-ba*) and the other on its side-ditch (*erín gub-ba kun-zi-da*). Three supervisors are involved: one with the title *ugula* is in charge of both groups and two *šeš-gals* under him, each in charge of 10 *erín*-workers.

MVN VII 442



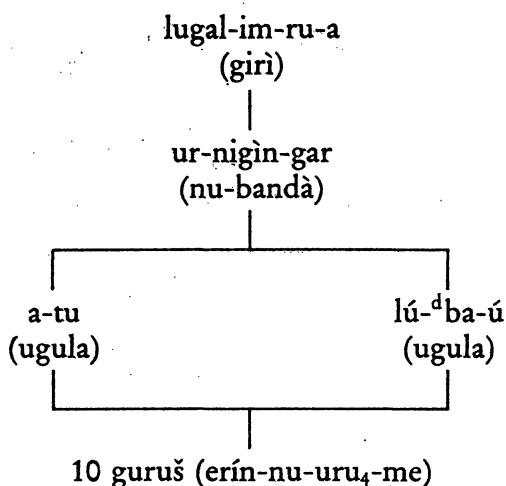
Structurally, the *o-ka* tablets differ from this text in only one respect: the named supervisors are there listed together, so that we do not know how many people each one is responsible for. However, this type of record can be found among *erín*-texts as well. For example, MVN VI 469 has the following structure:

³⁶ K. Maekawa, op. cit. 16.

³⁷ CT X 14612; HCL II 112; RTC 398.

³⁸ MVN VI 37; IX 147.

³⁹ MVN IV 25, VI 216, 279, 353, 362, 387, VII 144, 317, 442; TUT 139; UET III 1161; BM 14633, 16238.



This text belongs to a set of twenty-three⁴⁰, issued during the 36th year of Šulgi and dealing with transactions of barley rations from the granary-keeper (*ka-gur*₇) Ad-da-mu on behalf of several teams of workers (*gurus*), described also as “not-ploughing *erín*” (*erín-nu-uru*₄-*me*), through two officials (Lugal-im-ru-a and Ur-^dBa-ú) called *giri*, which is not a title but a bureaucratic term meaning “through, via”⁴¹. The complete structure of the manpower unit under the responsibility of Lugal-im-ru-a can be reconstructed from the texts MVN VI 183, 189, 469, 472; VII 75, 245. It includes four *nu-bandà* (Ur-gar, Ur-nigìn-gar, KA.KA and Na-ba-ša₆), six *ugula* (Ku-li, Ur-mes, A-tu, Lú-^dBa-ú, Ur-ša₆-ga and Lú-dingir-ra) and 26 *gurus*.

In another text, BM 14633 (unpublished), on a higher level of administration two *giri* officials are jointly responsible for two groups of workers called *èš-didli-me* (“those in individual shrines”) and *erín-é-AB-me* (“*erín* in é-AB temple?”), both at Girsu, in the district of Lagash. They include three types of workers: *še-nu-tuku* (“those not having barley”), *nu-dab*₅ (“those not drawing wages”) and *gurus-še-ba* (“men with barley rations”), and are divided among eight *nu-bandà*. The structure of the text is represented in the following table:

⁴⁰ MVN VI 157, 176, 177, 180, 183, 185, 186, 188, 189, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 220, 446, 469, 472; VII 75, 81, 201, 245, 473.

⁴¹ Sh. T. Kang, *Sumerian Economic Texts from the Drehem Archive*, 1972, 257–260.

BM 14633

giri Ur- ^d Lama dumu sag-du ₅ and Ur- ^d Lama son of Lú- ^d Nin-gír-su				
èš — didli — me				
Nim-mu (nu-bandà)		Igi-zu-bar-ra (nu-bandà)		Lú- ^d Utu (nu-bandà)
41 še-nu-tuku 5 še-ba 4 nu-dab ₅		26 še-nu-tuku 5 še-ba 4 nu-dab ₅		24 še-nu-tuku 7 še-ba 3 nu-dab ₅
erín — é — AB — me				
Na-ba-ša ₆ (nu-bandà)	A-hu-a (nu-bandà)	Ur-ša ₆ -ga gu-za-la (nu-bandà)	Ur- ^d utu (nu-bandà)	Ur-ša ₆ -ga son of Lugal-igi (nu-bandà)
6 še-nu-tuku	19 še-nu-tuku	19 še-nu-tuku	50 še-nu-tuku	10 še-nu-tuku 1 nu-dab ₅

This paramilitary hierarchical structure and the military titles of supervisors (*nu-bandà* and *šeš-gal*) are so typical of the lists of *erín* that, even when a small group of *erín* is attached to the team of millhouse workers (TUT 134), they are listed unnamed (the only such persons in the text), so that they appear only through the names of four *šeš-gal* with two *erín* under each.

Erín were distinguished from the rest of workers of the Ur III period in that they were never specified by occupational terms, but frequently by ethnics⁴²; and in that they were frequently listed together with oxen and in connection with the fields on which they were working⁴³. This type of text may be represented by BM 13661 (unpublished) which has a very complicated structure. Two large groups of workers are there recorded: one under Sanga-^dNin-gír-su worked on the field (*a-ša*) En-nu-lum-ma, and another, under Á-gu-gu, on the field (*a-ša*) Lugal-nam-tar-ri. The first group consisted of *erín*, *ša-gu₄* (ox-drivers), *un-íl*⁴⁴ and *guruš-hun-gá* (hired men), and the second of *dumu-dab₅-ba*⁴⁵. Each one of these five categories of workers worked under a separate supervisor, but both fields were also subdivided into 13 smaller plots (*gán*), so that the work-teams were distributed not only among the supervisors but also among these plots. To leave aside *un-íl*, *guruš-hun-gá* and *dumu-dab₅-ba*, the structure of the teams of *erín* and *ša-gu₄* (in the total they are listed together) is tabulated overleaf (p. 150).

This paramilitary structure of the work-teams and the use of the military terminology in a non-military context were not restricted to ancient Mesopotamia. I have chosen the material from Ur III only because this period is the best documented: but the Egyptians, for example, preferred a 'naval' terminology: during the Old Kingdom period the work-teams of private households (*pr dt*) were called *šwt*-, literally "the crew of the ship". They were even subdivided into *s*; – "watch-es" – called according to the parts of the ship: "bow" (*w; dt*), "stern"

⁴² L. Oppenheim, Catalogue of the Cuneiform Tablets of the W. Eames Babylonian Collection, AOS 32, 17.

⁴³ MVN VI 305, VII 418; NAT 450; BM 13661, 13769, 15406 (unpublished). *Erín* are so closely associated with oxen that their rations are usually called *ša-gal-erín* – "the fodder for *erín*", and the overseers of oxen are called *nu-bandà-qu₄* – "the captains of oxen".

⁴⁴ This social class seems to be opposed to *erín*, see: M. Sigrist, *op. cit.*

⁴⁵ Literally, means "seized men". This term has to be compared with such expressions as *hé-dab₅-me*, which frequently describes large groups of *guruš*-workers, and *i-dab₅* ("he seized"), which usually introduces the names of supervisors. Perhaps it means not "arrested men" as usually interpreted, but "conscripted" as opposed to "hired" (*lu-hun-gá*).

BM 13661

fields	oxen ⁴⁶	men				
a-ša	gu ₄ -numun	sanga ^d -nin-gír-su (ugula)				
en-nu-lum-ma		ša-gu ₄				
		erín				
		lugal-ti	a-kal-la	ur ^d -nanše	lugal-sipa	ir-mu
gán lú ^d -nin-gír-su	4	5	7	4	4	3
gán ur ^d -ša-ra ^d -ba-ú	3			12		
gán ur ^d -nin-giš-zi-da	2					15
gán lugal-dumu-še	2	[]	6		13	14
gán ur ^d -ba-ú	2					
gán ^d nin-mar ^{ki} -ka	1			7		11
gán lú-inim-ni	1	5		5	6	
gán ur-(ki)-gu-la	1	5				9

⁴⁶ All oxen but one are called in this text *gu₄-numun* – “oxen for sowing”, and most of them are further specified as “purchased” (*gán-ba*) or “hired” (*hun-gá*). One ox is called *gu₄giš-diri* – “and additional ox in the yoke”.

(*imt ndst*), “starboard” (*imy-wrt*) and “larboard” (*t; wr*)⁴⁷. These two unrelated examples may indicate a reality common to several ancient societies, of organizing workers, recruited for compulsory corvée service, in paramilitary fashion.

In fact, if we set out to find parallels to the *o-ka* tablets among non-military texts, we do not need to go far beyond Pylos. For a long time the *o-ka* tablets were artificially dissociated from the rest of the Mycenaean lists of personnel and were regarded as unique in the Linear B corpus. From the formal point of view, lists of personnel in the Linear B archives can be classified into three large groups: lists of names, lists of unnamed persons, and lists of both named and unnamed persons. The *o-ka* tablets belong to the third or mixed type, and among the documents of this group can be found several texts of a very similar hierarchical structure.

The Pylian text An 261 is written (on the obverse) according to a formula:

PN₁ (gen.) *ke-ro-si-ja* PN₂ (nom.) VIR 1

The reverse gives the total for each *ke-ro-si-ja*⁴⁸:

PN₁ (gen.) *ke-ro-si-ja* VIR x (number)

Four heads of *ke-ro-si-ja* (PN₁) and nineteen of their members (PN₂) are listed by names on the obverse, but the totals on the reverse are much higher — 68 unnamed men are numbered against the four names. In other words, the hierarchy of *ke-ro-si-ja* includes three levels (p. 152):

- 1) four heads of *ke-ro-si-ja*;
- 2) 19 named subordinate supervisors;
- 3) 49 unnamed workers who appear only through the totals.

The first four lines of PY An 129 and the second part of KN As 1517 (Vs 11–13, Rs 1–2) deal with a certain occupational group called in both cases *za-mi-jo*, and they have a very similar structure:

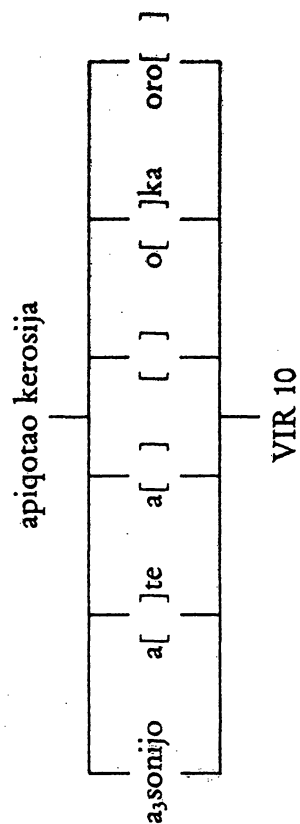
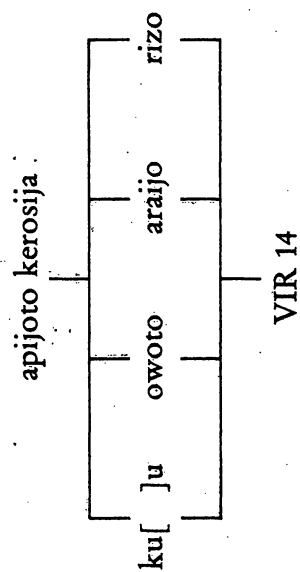
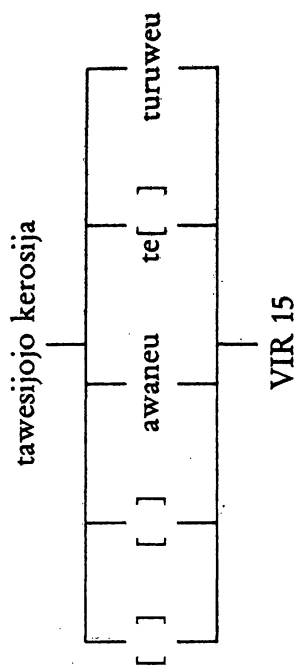
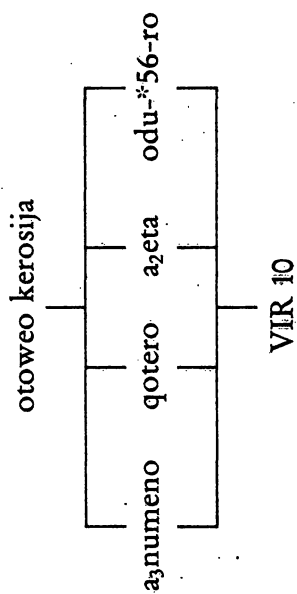
PY An 129. 1. *pa-ro ti-ki-jo*
 2. *a-ta-ro-we* VIR 1
 3. *pe-re-wa-ta* VIR 1
 4. *za-mi-jo pu-ro-jo* VIR 10

“At Tikijo: Atarowe one man, Perewata one man, *zamijo* from Pylos ten men”.

⁴⁷ LD II 14, 107; Mar. Mast. D 60 p. 343; Sh. S 16; O. Д. Берлев, Трудовое население Египта в эпоху Среднего Царства, М., 1972, с. 8–9.

⁴⁸ These totals are repeated on the reverse of An 616.

An 261



KN As 1517 Vs. 11. o-pi e-sa-re-we to-ro-no-wo-ko

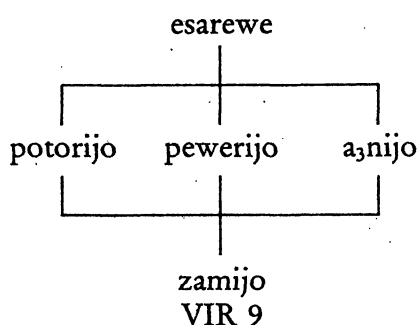
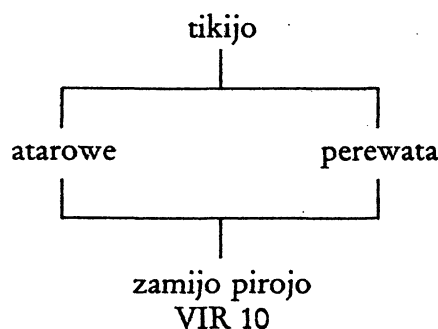
12. po-to-ri-jo 1 pe-we-ri-jo 1

13. a₃-ni-jo 1

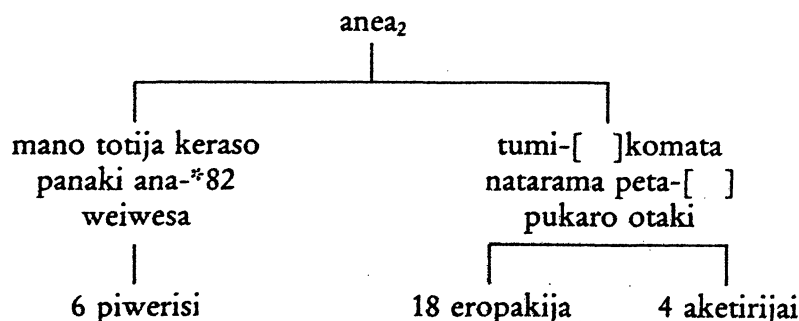
Rs. 1.

2. za-mi-jo VIR 9

"At the disposition of Esareu the chair-maker (or chair-makers): Potorijo one (man), Pewerijo one (man), Ainijo one (man), *zamijo* nine men".



MY Fo 101 is a ration-list, which records the distribution of olive oil to thirteen named women and three groups of women called only by the following occupational terms (in the dative plural): *pi-we-re-si*, *e-ro-pa-ke-ja* and *a-ke-ti-ri-ja-i*. One woman (Anea₂) receives three small units (V) of oil, the rest of the named women one unit each, and the groups of unnamed women six, eighteen and four units respectively. If one small unit of oil were the standard ration for one woman, we have here one head of the whole group, twelve named supervisors and twenty-eight female workers:



Many details are unclear in these four texts (we do not know what *ke-ro-si-ja*⁴⁹ stands for, nor the meaning of most of the occupational terms⁵⁰) but none of them has ever been regarded as 'military', to say nothing about the list of women from Mycenae.

The purely structural approach which has been used up to this point, though it makes the military interpretation of *o-ka* tablets increasingly improbable, has not revealed the real occupation of the *o-ka* personnel. Occupational terms are lacking on the *o-ka* tablets, and in their stead are found five unintelligible words, probably of non-Greek origin; but some valuable information can be drawn from the connections of the *o-ka* tablets with other documents in the Pylian archive.

The clearest relationships exist between the *o-ka* tablets on the one hand and, on the other, the N series dealing with flax⁵¹, Cn 3 which is a list of oxen, and Aq 64-218. The subject of this last-mentioned text is disputed, but, as we shall see later, it is probably also connected with oxen. The cross-references between the *o-ka* tablets and the N series are as follows:

An 519.1	ro-o-wa	Nn 228.2	ro-o-wa SA 35
An 519.8	a-pi-te-wa i-wa-so VIR 20	Na 1021	a-pi-te-wa []
An 656.13	ke-ki-de po-ra-i VIR 20	Nn 228.6	po-ra-pi SA 10
An 657.7	ma-ra-te-u	Na 245	ma-ra-te-we ra-wa-ke-si-jo o-u-di-do-si SA 10
An 657.8	ke-ki-de ku-pa-ri-si-jo VIR 20	Na 514	[ku]-pa-ri-so ke-ki-de e-ko-si SA 30
An 675.10	ku-pa-ri-si-jo ke-ki-de VIR 10		
An 654.3	me-ta-pi-jo ke-ki-de VIR 50		
An 654.15	wa-wo-u-de ke-ki-de VIR 10		
An 656.4	wa-ka-ti-ja-ta ke-ki-de sa-pi-da	Na 103	[ke]-ki-de SA 16

⁴⁹ The Greek *γεγονοία* ("council of elders") is possible etymologically, but not semantically. M. Lindgren, op. cit. II, 78-79.

⁵⁰ For *za-mi-jo* see: M. Lindgren, op. cit. II p. 60; for *pi-we-ri-si* — ibid p. 117-118; *e-ro-pa-ke-ja* — see note 8; *a-ke-ti-ri-ja-i* — M. Lindgren, op. cit. II, 17-18.

⁵¹ For N-tablets see: E. D. Foster, The flax impost at Pylos and Mycenaean landholding, *Minos* 17, 1981, 67-121.

An 656.15	ke-ki-de ne-wo VIR 10		
An 657.13	ke-ki-de-qe a-pu ₂ -ka- ne VIR 20		
An 661.3	e-na-po-ro i-wa-so VIR 70	Na 1027	e-na-po-ro SA 7
An 661.5	ka-ra-do-ro ko-ro-ku- ra-i-jo VIR 10	Nn 228.6	e-na-po-ro SA 33 []
An 661.4	[]-o-ri-jo ko-ro-ku- ra-i-jo VIR 30	Na 543	ka-ra-do-ro ko-[ro]- ku-ra-i-jo e-ko-si SA 30
An 661.6	za-e-to-ro ko-ro-ku- ra-i-jo VIR 20	Na 516	[]-ko-ro-ku-ra-i-jo e-ko-si SA 10
An 614.4	[ko-ro]-ku-ra-i-jo VIR 1[]	Na 396	wo-no-qe-wa ko-ro- ku-ra-i-jo e-ko-si SA 30
An 656.7	wo-wi-ja ko-ro-ku-ra- i-ja VIR 20	Na 405	to-ro-wa-so ko-ro-ku- ra-i-jo e-ko-si[]
An 656.18	a-ke-re-wa ko-ro-ku- ra-i-jo VIR 80	Na 928	a ₂ -ke-wo-a-ki u-ru-pi- ja-jo e-ko-si SA 10
An 519.11-12	u-ru-pi-ja-jo o-ru- ma-si-ja-jo VIR 30		
An 654.16	u-ru-pi-ja-jo VIR 10	Na 361	ti-mi-to-a-ke-e SA 50
An 661.12	a ₂ -ka-a ₂ -ki-ri-jo u-ru- pi-ja-jo VIR 30		
An 661.10	ti-mi-to a-ke-i		

All three terms which describe the unnamed members of the *o-ka* personnel (*kekide*, *korokuraijo* and *urupijajo*) are found in the Na tablets (sometimes with the same ethnics) in connection with the formula “*e-ko-si* SA x (numeral)” – “they have so much flax”. According to the most plausible explanation of this formula, offered by Chadwick⁵², it refers to a holding of land-plots which produce (or need for a sowing) a certain amount of flax. This view is supported by the use of the land-holding term *a-ki-ti-to* with the word *e-ke* at Na 926, 1086, and the use of the similar formula “PN *e-ke to-so-de pe-mo* GRA x (numeral)” – “PN have so much seed” – in the land-survey Es 650.

Several place-names known as locations of *o-ka* units (Enaporo, Porapi, Roowa, Timito-akei and possibly Apitewa) are found in the Na Tablets with another formula – “GN SA x (numeral)” – or on Nn 228 which has a heading “*o-o-pe-ro-se ri-no o-pe-ro*” – “they owe flax (as)

⁵² Documents², 470.

a deficit" – followed by a list of place-names recorded according to the same formula. All these texts refer to the tax-duties of different villages, though in the Na tablets the amount of flax actually contributed is recorded, while Nn 228 is the summary of a deficit in tax-payment.

Finally, on Na 245 a group of people called *maratewe rawakesijo* (nom.pl.) – "*maratewe* belonging to the *lāwāgetas*" – from Ewiteweiyo is recorded as those who "do not give" (*o-u-di-do-si*) ten SA-units of flax, while on An 657 the same word in the singular is used as a name of one of the 'officers' in the *o-ka* of Nedawata. Since another group of people mentioned on Na 568 who did not pay their tax is *na-u-do-mo* (ship-builders), this word is probably an occupational term used on An 657 as a proper name⁵³.

Cn 3 is the text most obviously connected with the *o-ka* tablets:

Cn 3

e-re-u-te-re di-wi-je-we	An 656 e-qe-ta di-wi-je-u
a ₂ -ra-tu-a o-ka-ra ₃	An 519 o-ka-ra ₃ a ₂ -ra-tu-wa VIR 110
pi-ru-te ku-re-we	An 519 pi-ru-te ku-re-we VIR 50
e-na-po-ro i-wa-si-jo-ta	An 661 e-na-po-ro i-wa-so VIR 70
o-ru-ma-to u-ru-pi-ja-jo	An 519 u-ru-pi-ja-jo o-ru-ma-si-ja-jo VIR 30
a ₂ -ka-a ₂ -ki-ri-jo u-ru-pi-ja-jo	An 661 a ₂ -ka-a ₂ -ki-ri-jo u-ru-pi-ja-jo VIR 30

All five groups of people, who are certainly the same as in the *o-ka* tablets, are listed on Cn 3 against one ox (BOS 1) under the heading:

- Cn 3. 1 jo-i-je-si me-za-na
2 e-re-u-te-re di-wi-je-we qo-o

Like many other sentences in Mycenaean Greek, this one permits several different interpretations. Most probably it says that somebody sends (*-i-je-si* 3 pl.pres.) oxen (*qo-o* acc.pl.) to Diwijeu, whose title is *ereuter* (*di-wi-je-we e-re-u-te-re* dat.sing.), while the syntactical position of *me-za-na* is uncertain⁵⁴. The use of the proclitic *jo-* which opens the sentence shows that this could be the first tablet in a set, of which the others did not survive or were never written. At Knossos oxen are frequently called *we-ka-ta* – "working" – (Ce 50, 59; C 1044, 1582, 5734; in abbreviated form *we* in Ch 896), but no such texts have been re-

⁵³ M. Lindgren, op.cit. II, 93–94.

⁵⁴ It could be the collective designation of all five groups of people listed in the lines 3–7, or the place-name.

cognized in the large and well-preserved Pylian archive; which is surprising, especially since even among the only six fragments found at Tiryns one is a list of oxen (Cb 4). Perhaps Cn 3 fills the gap, and the oxen recorded there were used for ploughing and not for food⁵⁵ or sacrifice⁵⁶, as is usually supposed.

Another text, closely associated with the *o-ka* tablets, which may confirm this view is Aq 64-218. These two tablets constitute a single document which is subdivided into four sections by headings:

- 1) [*qa*]-*si-re-wi-jo-te* – “those holding office of *qasireu*”⁵⁷;
 - 2) *o-da-a₂ ko-to-na e-ko-te* – “those having *kotona* (kind of land-holding)”;
 - 3) *o-da-a₂ a-na-ke-e o-pe-ro-te* – “those owing to lead up (men)”;
- and
- 4) *o-da-a₂ e-ke-jo-to a-ko-to-no* – “those . . . without *kotona*”⁵⁸.

Two first sections are written according to a formula: “PN (followed by a title, ethnic of patronymic) *to-to we-to o-a-ke-re-se / o-u-qe a-ke-re-se* ZE 1 *171 x (from 0 to 12)” – “PN took / did not take this year one pair, x *171”⁵⁹. The third section has the structure: “PN VIR 1” (“PN one man”), and the fourth section, “PN ZE 1” (“PN one pair”).

The following names, titles and ethnics are common to Aq 64-218 and *o-ka* personnel:

Aq 64

ku-ru-me-no mo-ro-qa i-te-re-wa ko-re-te

An 659 *ku-ru-me-no-jo o-ka*

An 519 *ka-da-si-jo mo-ro-qa*

*pe-ri-me-de-o i-*65 po-so-ri-jo-no te-ra-ni-ja*

An 656 *pe-ri-me-de*

po-ki-ro-qo e-qe-o a-to-mo

An 654 *po-ki-ro-qo*

⁵⁵ Documents², 206.

⁵⁶ L. R. Palmer, *The Interpretation of Mycenaean Greek Texts*, Oxford 1963, 176. The real sacrifices, however, are recorded at Pylos (Un 6, 219, 718, 853) according to a different formula, which always includes the name of the deity.

⁵⁷ Etymologically, the Greek βασιλεύς (“king”), but certainly not semantically. M. Lindgren, *op. cit.* II, 126–130.

⁵⁸ The meaning of the word *e-ke-jo-te* is unknown. See M. Lindgren, *op. cit.* II, 18–19.

⁵⁹ The direction of the movement of the commodities (*171) is uncertain: *a-ke-re-se* could be the aorist of ἀγρέω – “to take”, or the future of ἀγείρω – “to collect”, but the past tense is preferable, since the alternation of the positive and negative forms of the verb shows that it is the record of the results of some inspection, rather than the estimated “norm”. For an entirely different interpretation of this text, see: M. S. Ruy-perez, *Une charte royale de partage des terres à Pylos*, Minos 4, 1956, 146–164.

<i>e-ta-wo-ne-u</i>	An 519 <i>e-ta-wo-ne-u</i>
<i>ne-qe-u e-te-wo-ke-re-we-i-jo</i>	An 654 <i>e-qe-ta a-re-ku-tu-ru-wo e-te-wo-ke-re-we-i-jo</i>
<i>me-wi e-ru-ta-ra me-ta-pa</i>	An 654 <i>a-ti-ja-wo e-ru-ta-ra o-*34-ta</i>
<i>ki-e-wo</i>	<i>me-ta-pi-jo ke-ki-de VIR 50</i>
Aq 218	
<i>ne-wo-ki-to i-je-[re]-u da-i-</i>	An 656 <i>wa-pa-ro-jo o-ka ne-wo-ki-to</i>
<i>ja-ke-re-u</i>	
<i>[ro]-u-ko ku-sa-me-ni-jo me-</i>	An 519 <i>e-qe-ta ro-u-ko ku-sa-me-ni-jo</i>
<i>ta-pa</i>	
<i>a-e-ri-qo-ta[]o-wi-to-no</i>	An 657 <i>a-e-ri-qo-ta e-ra-po ri-me-ne</i>
	<i>o-ka-ra o-wi-to-no VIR 30</i>
<i>a₃-ko-ta a-da-ra-[ti-jo]</i>	An 656 <i>e-qe-ta di-ko-na-ro a-da-ra-</i>
	<i>ti-jo</i>
	An 657 <i>a₃-ko-ta e-qe-ta</i>
<i>pa-ku-ro₂ de-wi-jo</i>	An 519 <i>a₂-te-po de-wi-jo</i>
<i>[a]-ka-re-u e-ko-me-na-ta-o</i>	An 661 <i>e-ko-me-na-ta-o o-ka a-ke-</i>
<i>*34-te</i>	<i>[re]-u</i>
<i>[]ke-ki-jo</i>	An 657 <i>e-qe-ta ke-ki-jo</i>
<i>ma-ra-te-u a-pu-ka</i>	An 656 <i>e-qe-ta ka-e-sa-me-no</i>
	<i>a-pu₂-ka</i>
	An 657 <i>ma-ra-te-u</i>

Seven of the men here are almost certainly the same persons as those in the *o-ka* tablets (Kurumeno, Pokiroqo, Etawoneu, Rouko, Aeriqota, Aikota and Marateu), while five others are most probably sons (Posorijono, son of Perimede) and brothers (Neque and Arekuturuwo, Aikota and Dikonaro, Pakuro₂ and A₂tepo, Akareu and Ekomenata⁶⁰) of the members of the *o-ka* staff.

The best interpretation of Aq 64, in my opinion, was offered by Melena⁶¹ and it includes several important observations:

1) the verb *akerese* refers to the ideogram *171 and not to the sign ZE (when *171 is absent, this verb takes a negative form, *ouqe akerese*);

2) the syllabic sign ZE is used here as an abbreviation of the word ζεύγος, "a pair", as in all other references in Linear B, where it stands for a pair of wheels (PY Sa, Sh series; KN Sg, So series), of oxen (KN Ce, Ch, C series) or of horses (KN Sc series);

⁶⁰ Only if the word *34-te really means "brother" (*pra-te*); C. Gallavotti, *Le origini micenee dell'istituto fraterico*, PP 16, 1961, 20-39; M. Lindgren, *op. cit.* II, 162-163.

⁶¹ J. L. Melena, *Ku-pa-ro en las tablillas de Cnoso*, *Emirita* 42, 1974, 332-333.

3) the ideogram *171, which is closely associated with galingale on KN Ga 464 and 519 (written ideographically PYC on Ga 464 and phonetically *ku-pa-ro* on Ga 519), means some kind of measure unit (pack?) of this marsh-plant. Since it is known from PY Fa 16 and classical sources (Od. IV 603, Hesych. κύπειρον) that galingale was used as fodder for horses⁶², Aq 64 probably records the distribution of fodder for some animals – horses, if the context is military, or oxen if it is agricultural. The latter possibility is more likely, since agricultural terminology is found on Aq 64-218 (*kotona ekote, akotono*), and by comparison with the parallel text KN C 902. This text is written according to a formula: “GN *ko-re-te*/PN BOS 1 *ne* *170 12”. The title *ko-re-te* (local mayor⁶³) is found six times, and in six other cases personal names or unknown titles appear (*si-pe-we, da-nu-wo, e-ra-ne, u-wo-qe-we, e-re-ta, we-re-we*); *ne* is probably an abbreviation of *ne-wo* – “young” – (it is associated with oxen also on Ch 896). The ideogram *170 is found only in this text and its meaning is unknown. Thus, if on Aq 64 different officials (at least two of them *ko-re-te*) are listed as recipients of fodder for one pair each of some unidentified animals, here the officials of similar rank are listed against one ox and 12 units each of some unidentified commodity. Since twelve is the maximum number of *171 at Aq 64, it is possible that C 902 is the record of the estimated ‘norm’ for each official, while Aq 64 records the actual distribution.

In short, the texts of the N-series, Cn 3 and Aq 64-218, connect the *o-ka* tablets with agricultural activity, and specifically with the cultivation of flax and work with ploughing oxen.

A further item of information about the *o-ka* tablets can be drawn from the analysis of the position and functions of *e-qe-ta*⁶⁴, a title found twelve times in the *o-ka* set. There is currently a curious discrepancy concerning the position of *e-qe-ta* at Pylos and Knossos: at Pylos *e-qe-ta* is generally regarded as the military title⁶⁵, mainly on the basis of the military interpretation of the *o-ka* tablets; while, according to Melena, “*e-qe-ta* of Knossos are closely related to the Cretan system of produc-

⁶² I fail to see any reason for the ‘deification’ of all the horses mentioned at Pylos, as did Palmer (see his *Some New Minoan-Mycenaean Gods*, Innsbruck 1981, 14–15).

⁶³ M. Lindgren, *op. cit.* II, 84–86.

⁶⁴ The principal studies of this title are: S. Deger-Jalkotzy, *E-QE-TA*; *Zur Rolle des Gefolgschaftswesen in der Sozialstruktur mykenischer Reiche*, Vienna 1978; N. van Brock, *Notes mycéniennes*, RP 34, 1960, 222–225; M. Lindgren, *op. cit.* II, 47–48; G. Pugliese Carratelli, *Equeta, Minoica*, 1958, 319–326; A. M. Ticchioni Jasink, *L’e-qe-ta nei testi micenei*, SMEA 17, 1976, 85–92.

⁶⁵ S. Deger-Jalkotzy, *op. cit.*

tion, perhaps as supervisors of the manufacture and distribution of goods . . . The denomination *e-qe-ta* may apply to those responsible for the different workshops in the same way as it applies to the supervisors of labour teams working on different crafts at Knossos⁶⁶.

However, the functions of *e-qe-ta* at Knossos cannot be very different from those at Pylos, since on both PY Wa 917 and KN As 4493 this word is found in a very similar context:

Wa 917. 1. []o-da-sa-to a-ko-sa-[ta]

2. []e-qe-ta e-re-u-te-re[]

As 4493. 1. []e-pi-ko-wo e-qe-ta e-re-u-te-[re]

2. []-da-mo/e-ro-pa-ke-u//VIR 1 ko-ki-[]

3. []-jo/ra-wo-po-qo ze-ro[]

For a proper understanding of these two tablets, we need to examine three more texts, PY An 607.3-4, Cn 3.1-2 and KN Fh 364:

An 607. 3. MUL 6 do-qe-ja do-e-ra e-qe-ta-i e-e-to

4. te-re-te-we MUL 13

Cn 3 1. jo-i-je-si me-za-na

2. e-re-u-te-re di-wi-je-we qo-o

Fh 364 a. [do-]ke a-ku-tu-ru-wo[

b. [e-]re-u-te-si OLE[

All these five texts have a similar syntactic structure: the verb, the subject, the titles — *eqeta* (Diwijeu on Cn 3 is *eqeta* according to An 656) and/or *ereuter*⁶⁷, are both in the dative singular (PY Cn 3, Wa 917; KN As 4493) or plural (PY An 607; KN Fh 364), and the logical object of the verb. The verbs are: *e-e-to* — “they were sent” — on An 607, *i-je-si* — “they send” — on Cn 3, *-da-sa-to* — “he allocated” — on Wa 917, *do-ke* — “he gave” — on Fh 364. (On As 4493 the verb is probably lost through the fracture at the beginning of line 1.) The logical objects of these verbs are thirteen women (*do-qe-ja do-e-ra* MUL 13) on An 607, oxen (*qo-o*) on Cn 3, one or more men (VIR 1) described by the occupational term *e-ro-pa-ke-u* on As 4493, olive oil (OLE) on Fh 364, and probably the flax on Wa 917, since this clay-label is closely associated with the N-series by the scribal hand (No. 1)

⁶⁶ J. L. Melena, *Minos* (Supplement) 5, 1975, 46.

⁶⁷ See: M. Lindgren, *op. cit.* II, 50–51. It seems hard to dissociate this title from the verb *e-re-u-te-ro-se* — “he released” (*ἡλευθέρωσε*) — because of the connection between Wa 917 and Na series, where this verb is found (Na 395, 527, 568, 924). It could be a title of the official who exempted certain categories of people from tax-paying or compulsory work.

	An 607	Cn 3	Wa 917	As 4493	Fh 364
The verb	e-e-to	-i-je-si	-da-sa-to	[]	[do]-ke
'the recipient'	e-qe-ta-i	e-re-u-te-re di-wi-je-we	e-qe-ta e-re-u-te-re	e-qe-ta e-re-u-te-[re]	[e]-re-u-te-si
'the object'	do-qe-ja do-e-ra MUL 13	qo-o	flax?	e-ro-pa-ke-u VIR 1	OLE
'the subject'		me-za-na?	a-ko-so-ta	e-pi-ko-wo?	a-(re)-ku-tu-ru-wo

and the 'stylus' (No. 106). The subject is certain only on Wa 917 and Fn 364: on Wa 917 it is Akosita, the well-known Pylian 'collector'⁶⁸; on Fn 364 the otherwise unknown *a-ku-tu-ru-wo* should probably be read as *a-(re)-ku-tu-ru-wo* – Ἀλεκτροῦών⁶⁹. On An 607 the logical subject is absent since the verb is in the passive; on Cn 3 it is uncertain (*me-za-na*, or the people mentioned in the lines 3–7, or both); and on As 4493 the subject could be *e-pi-ko-wo* if the verb were transitive, or it could be the collective description of the men listed in the lines 2–3 if the verb were intransitive or passive. To clarify the above, the structure of these five texts is shown in the table on p. 161.

Thus, *e-qe-ta* appears in a clearly occupational context as a recipient of men, women (both specified by occupational terms), oxen, oil and flax, both at Pylos and Knossos. The word *e-pi-ko-wo*, which connects once again the discussed type of records with the *o-ka* tablets, only closes the circle.

Finally, KN B1055 can be regarded as a Knossian equivalent of the Pylian *o-ka* tablets. This text has a heading *ko-no-si-jo e-qe-ta* ("followers from Knossos") followed by at least eight personal names, with a large break in the middle and a total: *to-so pa-te VIR 213* ("altogether, 213 men"). Regardless of the actual size of the break, 213 names cannot be written on the one tablet, and it follows that the only reasonable solution is that offered by Chadwick⁷⁰: as in the *o-ka* tablets, several named persons are recorded here, together with unnamed ones who appear only through the total, and the heading probably refers only to the named personnel. This interpretation confirms our conclusion that *egeta* were supervisors of the work-teams, and not 'liaison officers', on the *o-ka* tablets as well. It seems that the vision of the Old German 'Gefolgschaft' rather than the evidence of the texts themselves has guided the study of the position of *egeta* at Pylos.

Conclusions

The following features are common to the *o-ka* tablets and the Sum-erian *erín* texts:

- 1) the hierarchical structure of the teams;
- 2) the absence of occupational terms;

⁶⁸ M. Lindgren, *op. cit.* I, 23–25.

⁶⁹ Found as a personal name at PY An 654, Es 644, 649, 650. A. Morpurgo, *Lexicon*, 15, 34.

⁷⁰ *apud* J. L. Melena, *Minós* (Suppl.) 5, 1975, 34–35.

- 3) the specification of the workers by ethnics;
- 4) the careful indication of the locations of the teams;
- 5) the association with ploughing oxen (through Cn 3 and probably Aq 64-218). This comparison, as well as the parallels between the *o-ka* tablets and other Linear B documents in respect of formal structure and cross-references and the study of the term *eqeta*, reveal nothing military in the *o-ka* documents, but connect them with some sort of agricultural work, probably ploughing. If this interpretation is correct, the *o-ka* tablets fill a considerable gap in the information recorded in the Pylian archive. We are now at last in a position to return to the heading of the *o-ka* tablets at An 657: I have no intention of challenging its traditional etymologies, uncertain as they are, but it probably means "the overseers supervise the coastal areas (?)", without any military connotation.