PROLEGOMENA TO THE STUDY OF GREEK CULT CONTINUITY

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The destruction of the Mycenaean palaces in L.H. IIIB and C (Furumark’s dating), that is during the thirteenth and twelfth centuries, marked the end of the Bronze Age on the Greek mainland. The upheavals here roughly were contemporary with events which disturbed a great deal of the Mediterranean area in the east and on the islands. In Greece, and particularly in the Peloponnese, the catastrophes of this period caused a widespread desertion of old-established sites when refugees fled east and west of the line of disaster: e.g. to the Ionian islands, into Arcadia, and to the east into Attica which appears to have escaped the physical devastation. Some two or three generations subsequently many of these abandoned and depopulated sites, according to archaeological study, were resettled by non-Mycenaean peoples who, in some instances, peacefully integrated with the remnants of the older inhabitants. The evidence for these events does not now concern us. Whoever these newcomers were, and whatever their precise beliefs and customs, we must accept as historical fact that signal portions of Mycenaean culture came to an end at this time.

With the destruction of the palaces went the peculiarly Mycenaean hierarchical society centred on them, on their king (wanax) and on the closely allied palace goddess. The effect of this change we may assume to have been swift and dramatic, for not only did the later Greek polis not show any obvious trace of this Bronze Age structure, but already in Homer a city was built on the post-Bronze Age principle. The focal point of the new polis no longer was the palace but the agora, the houses and temples enclosed by the city walls. Nausithous had built the first city for the Phaeacians: he had driven a wall about the houses and the agora flanking the precinct of Poseidon. In this set-up Alcinous’ palace sounds like an anachronism. Less easily gauged are the consequences on Greek culture, and particularly religion, after the collapse of the Mycenaean palace system with its attendant involved bureaucratic administration. New people in the Argolid, in the Peloponnese generally and farther north in Greece, portended, one might suppose, new religious concepts. These were bound to affect even those parts of the mainland which, like Attica, remained

2. E.g. op. cit. 231.
physically untouched. This point is not, however, acceptable without at least two reservations. First one would have to prove that the newcomers were racially and culturally entirely alien to the Mycenaeans, and secondly it is more than possible that, as in the case of Mycenaean and Minoan confrontion, the new popular elements took over and absorbed much of the older superior culture. The first is unlikely to be true in the light of the most recent archaeological research, while the second point is unanswerable so long as the migrants, or immigrants, at the end of the Bronze Age remain as nebulous in their nature as they are at present. As it is, the few features offered by the archaeologist in support of a cultural break at that time do not always argue the case strongly enough. If we ignore the few new artefacts, including bronze pins and fibulas, the remaining evidence regarding foreign intrusive elements chiefly consists of new forms of burial, notably cist and pithos burial which, too, might have had Mycenaean precedents.

It is a truism that religious beliefs constitute the most tenaciously conservative part of any society. Christianity survived the vicissitudes of the first four centuries of its existence, as well as the serious troubles which beset it in the last two hundred years of the Middle Ages. A good deal of the peculiarly Mediterranean flavour of Minoan and Mycenaean religion endured into the classical age and later. What changes there were in, for example, chthonic and Olympian cult bear witness to the dynamic development of Greek religion and not primarily to syncretism with new foreign elements. It would be misleading to speak of the destruction of the palaces, the symbols of Mycenaean empire, as the absolute end of all Mycenaean culture and beliefs. Also wrong, at least in part, is the idea occasionally advanced that the centuries of the dark age all but obliterated the memory of Mycenaean beliefs. Some of these managed to survive, albeit occasionally in distorted form, when rediscovery e.g. in the eighth century of old Mycenaean cult sites and tombs inspired the foundation of cult in honour of past heroes. A case in point are the hero and ancestor cults in Greece whose time of origin continues to be debated today. However, continuity did exist

4. Some of which at least might have been developed out of Mycenaean forms, Desborough, op. cit. 71.

5. Cremation occurred sporadically in the Mycenaean period in Pylos, Leukas, Argos, Rhodes and Attica as well as at Knossos and in Troy VI, see H. L. Lorimer, Homer and the Monuments, London 1950, 104 f.; Journal of Hellenic Studies 76 (1956), Arch. Suppl. 7; 16; 32. From about the eleventh to the end of the ninth century cremation became universal particularly in Attica. The reason for the widespread practice over this period may be due to the arrival of new racial elements. But this point, as well as the original provenance of this custom, are still obscure, cf. Desborough, op. cit. 71. At least one modern author suggests that cremation in Attica was due to overcrowding: the influx of refugees from the west left no room for inhumation, Webster, op. cit. 140; 290.

5a. On this point see A. J. B. Wace, Chamber Tombs at Mycenae (Archaeologia 82), Oxford 1932, 38, fig. 19; British School at Athens 25 (1921/3), Pl. 53 f.; 60; F. Schachermeyr, Anzeiger für die Altertumswissenschaft 19, 1 (1966), 30.

6. See, for example, Webster, op. cit. 137; Chester G. Starr, The Origins of Greek Civilisation, London 1962, 175, where further modern literature is cited.
both of gods and goddesses and of cult sites from Mycenaean until classical
times. This continuity included hero cult about a tomb like that of the
Hyperborean Maidens on Delos.\(^7\) The persistence of Mycenaean ideas is
paralleled by that of artistic motifs which e.g. in the decoration of Proto-
geometric pottery, about 1000 B.C., shows a continuation of ideas and
designs that ‘links firmly on to the sub-Mycenaean . . . and leads directly
toward the later Geometric style’.\(^8\) An almost unbroken progression of these
styles was discovered in Athens, the city untouched by destruction, in the
Kerameikos cemetery.

Whatever the political fortunes of the Mycenaens may have been at the
end of their age, it seems clear that contemporary with this event there
cannot have been an absolute break in the culture of these people; a dark
curtain of oblivion enshrouding their skills and beliefs.\(^9\) In religion there is
much evidence of continuity. In Crete the case is obvious in local centres
like Karphi where the population, avoiding danger in the plains, had
escaped into the mountains and there refused to abandon traditional
Bronze Age ritual. On the mainland, and on Aegean islands like Delos, many
old places of worship retained their sacred nature and, in at least some signal
instances, served the same kind of cult. Continuity in this connection can
be archaeologically shown for sites like Athens, Delphi, Eleusis, Amyclae
and others. The so-called Divine Child, the close associate of the chief
goddess who filled the stage in Bronze Age religion, is still evident in the
Athenian cult of Erechtheus or in the figure of Pluton in Eleusis. Amyclae’s
Hyacinthus, too, was an Aegean Bronze Age cult figure, although in
historic times he was eclipsed by Apollo. Still in post-classical times Potnia,
the Mycenaean goddess, was invoked in the hierophant’s cry at the celebra-
tion of the mysteries. The Linear tablets preserved the names of several
major deities who, already in the second half of the second millennium
B.C., had received offerings and worship. Among this list are Zeus, Poseidon,
Hera, Artemis and Athena; perhaps even Demeter, Apollo and Dionysus.
However, not only the major powers, which subsequently governed from
Olympus, survived the dark age, but also other figures passed into Greek
religion, albeit on a different level from the Olympians and probably with

\(^7\) On this see especially M. P. Nilsson, *Minoan-Mycenaean Religion*, Lund 1950,
612 ff.; *Geschichte der griechischen Religion*, Munich 1955, I, 380 f. The third edition of
this last work has not yet come to hand. Cf. the *trisherós* below.

\(^8\) Starr, *op. cit.* 89; see also A. D. Lacy, *Greek Pottery in the Bronze Age*, London 1967,
286.

\(^9\) Scholars in favour of such a total break at the end of the Bronze Age are wont to
cite the absence of written records during the dark age, proving, in their opinion, the
loss of a skill basic to any civilised society. Perhaps no examples of writing have yet been
found because of the workings of chance. All the same, one should bear in mind at least
the possibility that the knowledge of writing in Linear script survived until it was replaced
by the Phoenician alphabet. This is the argument of Wace, *Mycenae, Archaeological
History and Guide*, Princeton 1949, in substance supported by A. Severyns, *Grèce et
greatly reduced significance. These latter include the Wanax and Potnia who, unrecognised as cult figures by official religion, became plural beings and joined the group of chthonic deities in what, for want of a better term, we may call popular religion.

If we are bound to assume on linguistic, literary and archaeological evidence that basic religious material survived the dark centuries, the question arises how this material was transmitted to the historical age. We are, at present, less concerned with a detailed evaluation of changes in individual cults, even if this were possible, except insofar as we want to reaffirm the confident belief that the functions and import of e.g. Zeus, Poseidon and Athena could not fundamentally have altered between the eleventh and eighth centuries. Before cult changes can be discussed it is important to understand some basic traditional features of the developing Greek religion. It is a fact that all gods in the Mycenaean city, as well as in classical Athens, had a special place and sphere of influence in the community structure of the city. That is to say the political unity of, for example, Nestor's Pylos would have been unthinkable without Poseidon, or without the palace goddess, in their appropriate hierarchical position and receiving their special worship, which was administered by particular representatives of the community, at the appointed days. The same was true of the historical period when the cult of the gods was integrated in the political organisation of the _polis_ and administered by a chosen group of priests who cherished their rights like the Eteobutadae who were in charge of the cult of Poseidon and Athena Polias. The fact that, by and large, the same divine names were shared by Greek cities shows not only the excellent communications between them, but above all that the community structures, like the divine hierarchies, were shared. These are weighty claims to make which obviously for the generations of the dark age are not subject to written proof. But is it possible to assume that, for example, Athena was likely to retain her prominent position, and develop from the goddess of the palace, the centre of the old city, to the protectress of the classical _polis_ unless the religious concepts surrounding her had persisted, together with the structure of the city society administering the religious cult?

The arrival in Greece, at the end of the Bronze Age, of new peoples, whether racially related to the Mycenaeans or not, we noticed, disrupted the existing artistic and religious continuity, although the newcomers surely gave fresh impetus and direction to old styles. Also they effectively broke up many of the major cities. What, however, became of the displaced people, especially those who had not found refuge in Athens and subsequently migrated to the east? Those people, in fact, who had settled in the more inaccessible reaches of the Peloponnese and especially in Arcadia? Perhaps some of them temporarily reverted to a nomadic state, although the absence of architectural remains before 900 is not necessarily conclusive
evidence, because building during this period may have been too primitive to leave traces.10 The religious practice of such communities, however, was not likely to have signally differed from that of the people who continued to worship e.g. at Eleusis or Amyclae. Yet one thing is clear: with the major gods and their cults there must have survived the community, or group organization, which was associated with them. And it does not really matter whether the ties that bound these groups together were those of kinship or whether they were more military in nature designed for common defence or attack.

To follow this line of argument involves the acceptance of three consequences. Firstly we will be compelled to revise the prevalent notion11 that the curious tribal arrangement (with their various subdivisions into phratry and genos) found in Greek cities on the mainland and overseas had its origin at the end of the dark age, or at any rate not much earlier. Secondly we will seek in such group organisations within a community the decisive organ, as it were, which transmitted religious ideas through the dark into the historical age. Finally it is obviously important to find at least a trace in the extant Mycenaean records of communal organisations, call them genos, oikos, demos or what you will, which played a significant part in the city however much the latter might have politically differed from the classical polis. The first point is reasonably easy to establish, because Andrewes' proposal, in the absence of firm evidence, consists of an enlightened conjecture based on the ideas of the decline in the dark age of the wanax's position and the relative growth in importance of the basileus and the beginning of an aristocracy.12 The chain of events which led to the establishment of communal groups could well have been earlier, for already in the dark age these groups not only continued their religious heritage,13 but also managed to combine into 'amphictionies or religious leagues' which linked comparatively wide areas like Attica — Boeotia and Corinthia — Argolid.14

If we accept, as we reasonably might, that it was closely knit community groups or organisations which guarded their religious beliefs and transmitted them to the later polis, we are left with the task of identifying and naming such units and of integrating them in the structure of the city. This, alas, is quite impossible for all but the historical period. After the fifth century, indeed, inscriptive and literary evidence, mainly from the orators, is quite plentiful but tells us very little about earlier tradition and

10. See Starr, op. cit. 80.
history. What we know of Cleisthenes' reorganisation of Attica into ten tribes and thirty trittyes\(^{14a}\) does not materially help because this system was based on political motivation. Nor do we learn more from the notice in Aristotle that this system superseded an older arrangement in Attica of four tribes divided into twelve phratries and thirty clans.\(^{15}\) This neat arrangement, which represented in turn the four seasons of the year, the twelve months and thirty days of the months, was an invention of the fourth century and recalls the equally late similar arrangement of a Greek city in Egypt where tribes, phratries and demes were divided to fit the local year.\(^{16}\) All we may gather from such political innovation is that older established community groups, whether they were bound together by local or kinship bonds, represented so firmly entrenched a custom that still in the sixth and later centuries they provided a convenient basis on which the political system and franchise of a city could be designed.

Three group names in particular stand out. These were the phyle, the phratry and the genos. In historic times these, as we have seen, were integrated into a system according to which the phyle was the largest unit subdivided and, at that time, interdependent with the phratry and genos in this order. However, scholars have debated for a long time, and still continue to debate, whether such an arrangement was of old standing or imposed on three essentially unrelated groups. Into this argument we cannot now join, but content ourselves with citing some of the important literature where the various views are put forward and discussed.\(^{17}\) Another problem surrounding these groups is their age, that is to say the question whether they were new historical foundations or had substantially survived from earlier times. And, if the latter, what was the period of their origin. Prior to the sixth century we possess few accurate data and none of them can conclusively answer the problem. What evidence there is, particularly from the classical period, is all too easily manipulated to suit particular theories. This we shall try to avoid but confine ourselves to isolating some general points which have a bearing on prehistoric practice. A part of the

14a. Herodotus 5, 66; 69. Cf. the similar arrangement in Sicyon, Herod. 5, 68.
difficulty of this subject is due to the changes which must have occurred in the nomenclature of communal groups and their structure in the course of the dark age. This period saw the decline of kingship and the strengthening, rather than fresh emergence, of aristocratic rule by a few families that arrogated exclusive political power and possibly also the exclusive administration of communal cults.

The origin of the *phyle* as a communal institution is obscure. Traditional literary evidence dealing with events of the Late Bronze Age is explicit only about the DORIANS with regard to a system of *phylai*\(^\text{18}\). The three Dorian tribes, the Hylleis, Pamphyli and Dymanes, acted together as military units without obvious kinship bonds.\(^\text{19}\) A line from a Tyrtæus fragment still alludes to the arrangement at Sparta of the Dorian army according to the three tribes.\(^\text{20}\) During the migrations these three tribes continued as units which either individually founded settlements, as in Crete, or lived side by side in one city.\(^\text{21}\) This *phylai* system seemed to have been peculiar to the DORIANS. DORIC *phylai* obviously were known to the poet of the Homeric Catalogue,\(^\text{22}\) but otherwise clashed with the common Homeric usage of φυλή.\(^\text{23}\) Outside DORIAN custom there is no evidence that *phyle* was an early denomination of communities among the N.W. GREEKS, Ionians, Aeolians, Boeotians, Thessalians or elsewhere in Greece.\(^\text{24}\)

The history of the *phratry* presents an equally sticky problem. The word is an old and common Indo-European term which should consequently indicate the antiquity of the *phratry*. But, apart from Ionic dialect,\(^\text{25}\) φράττερ = 'brother' did not survive in Greek but was replaced by words like ἀδελφός, κοινήντεος.\(^\text{30}\) The *phratry* as a designation of a communal unit was, with the exception of Cos and Argos, unknown to DORIAN states which presumably called similar groups *hetaireiai*.\(^\text{27}\) Again there is no proof that *phratries* were homogenous groups by virtue of kinship. It can reasonably be argued that *phratries*, and indeed *gene*, at some date in the archaic period had a common ancestor imposed on them who is reflected in the patronymics which, with the suffix -idae, gives us the names Achniadae, Clytidae, Labyadae and, of course, the Alcmaeonidae, Boutadae and many others.\(^\text{28}\) By the sixth century *phratries* had become purely territorial units,


\(^{19}\) The Heracles-Hylleis connection is a special issue which we cannot discuss here.

\(^{20}\) Frg. 1 A 12 (Dich).


\(^{22}\) Where Tlepolemus is said to have colonised Rhodes τριχθα καταφυλαδόν, *II.* 2, 655; 668. Cf. the Δαρμίνας ... τριχτίκες in Crete, *Od.* 19, 177.

\(^{23}\) Andrewes, *ibid*.

\(^{24}\) Latte, 'Phyle' 995; 1000.

\(^{25}\) Cf. the Hesychius gloss φράττερ ἀδελφός.

\(^{26}\) See Latte, 'Phratry' 746; Andrewes, *Hermes* 89, 137.

\(^{27}\) Latte, 'Phratry' 746; *C.A.H.* III, 582.

convenient organisations for administrative purposes. Despite their decline into political bodies the phylae and phratries always retained a number of features and rights which belonged to them from the beginning. Some of these we shall mention in a moment. But first we should raise one other point. The subdivision of tribes into phratries and clans, as we find it in Aristotle, is an artificial one which could not have been very old. Phratries and tribes, and certainly phratries and clans shared certain features like land tenure, property rights, the administration of cults, which may well suggest that each group originally was independent. Phratries, already in Homer, also served as military units and above all as communities from which sinners could be excluded as from the family hearth. As community groups phratries again could have been as old as the phylai, although lacking proof we must leave this an open question. The fact remains that as late as the sixth century our sources are not very clear in their distinctions between phratry and clan, or genos, in Attica, nor about the distinction between the genos and a number of other groups which basically seem to have been similar units.

These blurred divisions quite probably are due to our own inadequate understanding of all the contemporary social conditions involved. This should not, however, alter the result that we are confronted with a great many community groups which need not originally have stood in any close relationship to one another but which transmitted some features of religious cult as well as continued certain rights vested in the community. These latter included legal rights, especially those concerning murder, or blood guilt within the community, and the common ownership of property as

29. For phratries = demes see Andrewes, The Greeks, 83.
30. C.A.H. III, 582, speaks of this event as occurring in Attica after synoecism. But the dates for this, p. 580, are made very wide: between 1000 and 700 B.C.
31. A case could perhaps be made out that phylai were peculiarly Doric and phratries Ionic, or at least non-Doric, institutions which came together only after the end of the Bronze Age. II. 2, 362 f., however, is a potent argument against such a supposition unless we assume that Nestor's phyla differed from the Doric phylai.
32. II. 2, 362 f.; 9, 63. Andrewes, Hermes 89, 132; 139 f., argues that Nestor's advice in II. 2 falls out of context and differs from the usual mode of Homeric fighting. The reason for this, he believes, is that phratries were instituted as late as 9th/8th century when loyal followers of competing aristocratic leaders banded together. He does admit, however, ibid., that phratries might have come to the mainland with the first Greeks but then subsequently disappeared.
33. To give two examples: a phratriy and genos may have the same law and carry a common membership register, Isaeus 7, 15—17; in the famous Demotionid decrees (IG II 1237) the oikos of the Dekeleies is understood as a phratry, although the former usually is counted as a subdivision of a phratry. On the law and decrees see Andrewes, J.H.S. 81, 5.
34. Groups parallel to the genos appear to be oikos, patra, patria, homagalaktes, orgeones and demes, cf. Latte, 'Phratrie' 747. Some of these do not, however, seem to have enjoyed equal standing, as witness the law (7th/6th cent.) cited by Philochorus (Phot., Sud. s.v. orpeúdèces) which compelled phratries to admit to their ranks orgeones and homagalaktes = gennetes.
well as land tenure. Religious cults originally were in the hands of the king or leader of the community like the phylobasileus, as must have been the administration of the land. In the course of the dark age, and sometimes later, these rights generally were usurped by individual aristocratic families (whose members earlier on obviously had provided the basileus) which henceforth, like a ‘Priesteradel’ exercised sole control of the great cults and festivals. Thus the Eumolpidae were in charge of the Eleusinian Mysteries, the Lycomidae of those in Phlya, the Phythalidae and the Poinemidæ supervised a cult of Demeter each, while the Hesychidae had a cult of the Semnæ. Occasionally, however, the single basileus lost merely his political power but retained the administration of cult and of his own land (temenea), as was the case with Battus in Cyrene. Precisely when these events occurred escapes us, nor can we overlook the possibility that an aristocratic vassal and his family could have been in charge of a community cult from before the social revolution. Generally, however, the trend was to pass religious cult into the hands of an aristocratic oligarchy. The result was both the exclusion of the common people from cult — cf. Philochorus’ law — and conversely a general multiplication of cults into an unwieldy number which, on the advent of democracy, were cut down in number and thrown open to the people. Nevertheless, whatever the eventual internal adjustments within a group, it is quite plain that cult could not have been transmitted across the ages if it had not been preserved and continued by community organisation. This does not mean to say that each larger group, perhaps representing a settlement, was concerned with the worship of only one major deity destined after synoecism to join the gods of other tribes or phratries. Already the Mycenaean city had contained the various cults of both major and minor gods who could have been accommodated in the worship of one community. Quite possibly though family or genos or oikos divisions within a larger group contributed, as it were, to the latter those divine figures that had been in their particular care. These points can be illustrated from the classical and post-classical cult practice of phratries. From this it appears that the major gods, as city gods, like Zeus, Poseidon, Artemis and Athena received cults which were shared by all phratries. Beside these, however, we find the collective φρότροποι θεῶι, φρήτορες θεῶι which, in certain circumstances, evidently could refer to any or all Hellenic gods. Phratri cult also included figures like the Tritopatreis, that is ‘Ahnengeister’ who, in the beginning, had more naturally belonged to units smaller than the classical phratri. The last figures in particular

36. Latte, ‘Phyle’ 1010 with sources; ‘Phratrie’ 753; Andrewes, ibid.
37. Pollux VIII, 111.
38. Herod. 4, 161.
40. Cf. IG XIV, 721 (Naples), but very late (empire).
41. Zacyadae in Athens, IG II² 2615.
42. See also below.
suggest that cults of family groups might at one time have been transferred to larger units, as happened, in fact, in Chios as late as the fourth century. Despite the considerable body of evidence on this question it is still impossible to construct a historical sequence of cult development within a phratry or similar group, in view of the enormous accretion of new cults which must have found their way into the ranks of a phratry at comparatively late dates.

Here we are not aiming at a comprehensive outline of historical Greek tribal organisation. What has so far been said should, however, establish (a) the vagueness in the relationship between individual groups, (b) the great age of some of them, (c) their function as organs transmitting from perhaps prehistoric times not only religious cult but also old community rights concerning law, property ownership and land tenure. With these points in mind it will be useful to consider the Mycenaean written evidence for some record of a Bronze Age community organisation which might, as we could expect, bear comparison with the historic tribes, phratries and gene. It is as well to say at the outset of the search that, however likely a kinship basis was at least in what seemed to be the smallest units like genos, oikos, orgeones and homogalaktes, we cannot hope to establish its precise nature or degree, and therefore had best leave this problem to one side. Much less can we expect to make any anthropological deductions about the nature of the early societies in Greece, that is to say we may not lightly describe the social structure of individual communities as matrilineal, patrilineal or even originally totemistic. In addition to the use of patronyms, establishing in good Homeric fashion the descent of individual persons, some other evidence for kinship groups does exist on the Linear tablets, but it is weak as we shall see. What does quite strongly emerge, however, from the extremely difficult evidence of the Mycenaean script is the existence in the social structure of the city of one or more communal groups with apparently clearly defined rights of property and the administration of religious cult. These, indeed, recall historic practice.

The most valuable evidence in this connection derives from a series of tablets (the E series) discovered in the Archive Room at Pylos and dealing with land tenure. These documents naturally describe the conditions of social organisation in Pylos and the outlying districts, but they also are a

43. Syll. 987.
44. E.g. Leto, worshipped by the Demotionidae at Athens — Syll. 921; 125; Apollo Hebdomaeus who received cult from the Achnaides, also in Athens — Syll. 923.
45. On these identifications see Thomson, Stud. Anc. Grk. Soc. ch. IV. Professor Hammond-Tooke has kindly pointed out to me that matrilineal descent is purely a matter of inheritance (from mother's brother) and not of terminology. Thus to call members of a group homogalaktes ('of the same milk') is no indication that that group must have been matrilineally oriented. The subject of totemism is so little understood that it might well be thought fruitless to apply the description to any society, least of all the Greek.
fair reflection on similar arrangements which obtained at other Mycenaean centres, because the latter shared some technical terms. 46 The Pylian records are full in their way but, like many of our later sources on the same subject, they assume a familiarity with the system which we do not possess, so that the material is liable to become obscure and the interpretation hazardous. A detailed analysis here would violate the bounds of this essay, and we may be content with a reference to a few modern discussions of the subject while picking out particular features of special interest to this topic. 47

In general Pylian land fell into two major categories, the kotona kitimena and the kotona kekemena: 48 the former probably being privately owned and 'leased' land and the latter consisting of 'common' land. Beside these two larger divisions there were also the private temena of the wanax and lawagetas. It is, however, not entirely clear whether the kitimena were the exclusive property of one single individual rather than of a group, however small, and whether the temena of the highest officers of the community were not, rather than separate property, portions of land integrated in, or part of, a larger estate which belonged to the perquisite of the king together with special religious functions. These kinds of temena king Battus possessed in Cyrene, 49 Alcinous in Scharia and Odysseus in Ithaca. 50 The relationship between private and common land is uncertain, although there does appear to be a clear distinction between the kitimena and the kekemena. The former, the private land, it seems, could be held by any person who, however, even when he 'leased' the land to another, carried the technical title of tereta. Public land, on the other hand, was exclusively administered by the damos, the people, in this sort of context also evidently a technical term for a 'commune'. 51 Now an interesting fact is that the Pylian register also describes as tereta a person holding land from the dartws, thereby in some, as yet inexplicable, way relating the so-called common and private land. To the tereta we shall return immediately below.

The land thus 'leased' from the damos is called ktoina — land (kotona) by

46. E.g. korete and tereta at Knossos and Pylos.
48. For the morphology of these words see Palmer, Interpret. 186 ff.
49. Herod. 4, 161.
50. Od. 6, 293, near a sacred grove of Athena. Od. 11, 185, Telemachus administers the royal temena in Ithaca during Odysseus' absence.
51. On the kama, another uncertain kind of land, and the kamaewes ('holders of kama'), see e.g. Brown, Historia 5, 400; Ventr.—Chadw., Docs. 261; Palmer, Interpr. 190; 194, 202 etc.; Mycen. Min. 104. 163
the records, and the tereta, in charge of damos land, becomes a holder of ktoina — kotonooko or kotoneta. The difference, if any, between the last two terms is not obvious: both are holders of common land, and it is within the bounds of possibility, though this cannot in any way be proved, that the kotoneta were associated by ties of kinship. That kinship should have played a part in this context is not, however, of vital concern to our purposes. In any case the degree of kinship underlying any communal group is an elusive problem for most periods of Greek history. We can learn much more from the term ktoinetai itself, if indeed our reading is correct, because it survived in some form in inscriptions of historical times primarily in Rhodes (Syme). The word, as we saw, described a person in Pylos who held public land from the damos. Therefore we may suggest, although again there can as yet be no certainty, that the same person stood in some relationship to, or perhaps was a member of, the Pylian community which was the damos. For it is in this sense that the word κτοινέτας appears in Rhodian inscriptions, designating a ‘member of a κτοίνα’. The ktoina in Rhodes was a localised community, very much like the Attic demos and, we suspect, not very dissimilar from the Pylian damos. This feature also appears from a gloss in Hesychius who probably further alludes to the sacral rights of such a community. If, therefore, we are moving on the right path, there is every indication that already in Pylos the ktoinetes was the equivalent of the demotes or phyletes, that is a member of a community with all that entails. This must, however, remain a suggestion, for the Mycenaean Greek evidence is everything but conclusive, and we can only surmise that kotoneta and kotonooko, though perhaps not synonymous terms, in principle describe members of the same group. It is also well to remember that so far kotoneta occurs only once, so that we cannot really accurately control the proposal that these persons were the same as the historical ktoinetai. For all that, however strong our caution and reserve in interpreting the Mycenaean material, the collective weight of the Pylian land tablets creates the overwhelming impression that in Pylos, and by implication in other cities, communal groups either

53. Ventr.-Chadw., Docs. 264, for some reason deny that these words are synonymous.
54. The second part of ktoin etai recalls the Homeric εται = ‘kinsmen and dependents of a great house’, e.g. Il. 6, 239; Od. 15, 273; Il. 9, 464. Subsequently εται came to designate a special kind of citizen, cf. the inscription (6th c.) from Olympia, SIG 9.8. Still enigmatic is the Pylian etonijo describing a particular kind of land holding and probably containing the same root ετα, cf. Brown, Historia 5, 397.
55. IG XII (1). 694, 14; 157, 9; XII (3). 1270 A 13 (Syme).
56. IG XII (1). 694, 1033 etc.
57. Hesych. s.v. κτοίνα: χαρίσεις προγονικῶν ἵππεων(ἥρεων?), ἢ δῆμος μεμερισμένος.

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separately or as integrated units played a vital part in the structure of the city.

Two words which particularly strengthen this impression are the Mycenaean *tereta* and *damos*. *Tereta*, we noticed, described persons holding both *kitimena* and *kekemena* (under certain circumstances), that is ‘private’ land and land of the *damos*. What does *tereta* mean? In Mycenaean *tereta* is always associated with the holding of land, and the title in Palmer’s words ‘is a tenure-bound status word’. Generally it is equated with the Greek τελεστά, τελεστής (cf. τελετής, τελεστήρ) which occurs with two chief meanings: (1) ‘initiation priest’, or ‘the person initiated’, (2) a special class of citizen or possibly official as distinct from the ἔτας. Therefore Brown and Chadwick agree on the interpretation of the Mycenaean *telestas* as ‘initiation priest’. Whether this technical term, on analogy with Hittite practice, also described a member of the nobility can, though likely, quite frankly no longer be determined. What is important, however, is that the office of priest and membership of a particular group of citizens are compatible terms precisely in the context of organised communal groups which, together with certain legal rights and rights of land tenure, continued sacral functions that had always been in their care. Although, in their brevity even historical inscriptions may leave the door open to a variety of interpretation, there is little doubt that the sixth century Elean record, which divides the citizen body into ἑτάς, τελεστάς and *damos*, is describing communal organisations whose names were ‘evidently of great antiquity’. Accordingly it is eminently reasonable to argue that the Mycenaean *telestas* already possessed the two signal rights of a community like the tribe, *genos* or *phratry* member, namely those concerned with sacral office and land tenure. Perhaps we should also learn something from the interesting correspondence between Mycenaean and later Greek practice of including particular occupations, or their representatives, within these communities, although it may yet be too early to draw definite conclusions from the Mycenaean evidence. However this may be, the Pylian *telestai* clearly

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64. *SIG 9* (Olympia).
65. Palmer, *Interpr.* 191. ἑτάς in a similar context also occurred in an Arcadian inscription — *IG 5* (2). 20. The question of kinship, again, regarding ἑτας outside Homer is unanswerable.
alluded to the kind of community organisation which we hoped to find mentioned in the Mycenaean archives and which could have served as one transmitting organ of, among other features, religious material. And it matters little in this respect whether the precise nomenclature of this group survived outside the conservative religious strongholds of Elis and possibly Arcadia. Finally the exact relationship of the _telesta_ to the _damos_ cannot be defined, but the former may have been a group in its own right which at least in one text (PY Un718) appears 'to be equated with the _damos_'.

In the Mycenaean _damos_ we inevitably recognise the closest parallel to later communal groups like the _phyle_. _Damos_ was not a loose description of the inhabitants of a city but a technical term which described 'both the land and the community attached to it'. The leader of a _damos_ was styled _korete_ or _damokoro_, titles which most likely were equivalent to that of βασιλέως and which can be compared, if not identified, with the later φυλοβασιλέως. As a collective body the _damos_, like the historical _phyle_, _phratry_ etc., exercised some apparently well-defined juridical (land tenure disputes) and religious functions. It has been remarked that the majority of references to the _damos_ on Pylian tablets do not apply to the city centre, but to _Pakija_, one of the nine outlying districts which altogether represented the loosely knit city of Pylos. This kind of loose arrangement survived through the dark age until synoecism, and was still well remembered by Thucydides. Such a village system, which we can now see existed in the Bronze Age already, would have represented a federation, as it were, of _damoi_ communities with their worship, land and rights. These features persisted into the classical _polis_, although the primitive unwalled villages themselves perished without a trace. This _damos_, then, at such an early date was a social unit with apparently a particular topographic location. The _damos_ most frequently referred to on the Pylos tablets was at _Pakija_, one of the nine surrounding villages. This name, however, is generally spelled in a nominative plural form (Pakijanes) 'which looks more like a clan or tribal name than primarily a place name' and recalls the forms Hellanes or Acarnanes. Locality and community names were not incompatible and may be paralleled, albeit very much later, by e.g. the Amykliaeis _phyle_.
outside Sparta.77 Much more significant, however, is that the Pylian evidence most elegantly ties up with Homer’s division of Pylos into nine demoi. The passage (Od. 3, 5–8) is fully discussed by Thomson78 who shows that, on the occasion of a sacrifice to Poseidon, Nestor’s Pylos was divided into nine hedrai, or separate areas, ‘marked out for the nine groups into which the people were divided’. These groups Thomson calls demoi and equates them with clan groups. Homer’s memory served him well, for he not only recalled the nine Pylian districts but also Poseidon, one of the chief gods of the Bronze Age city, who possibly is the same god as the theos of a number of Pakjka records.79

If then, at least in outline, we have clear evidence of the existence and prominent position in Mycenaean society of community groups, whether allied through kinship or not, we are able to point to the probable vehicle which continued religious material through the difficult years of the dark age after the collapse of palace culture. The communities which represented the demoi no doubt persisted, although their humble villages disappeared, and they eventually provided the basis of the later political city. It is doubtful whether the progress was as simple and ran along such straight lines, but we cannot know this. Nevertheless, until we are in possession of more telling evidence to the contrary, we should not lightly assume that social or rather political revolutions did basically harm the religious tradition embodied in the various communities.

There are, for example, arguments, put forward by Gardner, Cary and Andrewes,80 according to which e.g. the historic Attic phratries, gene etc. directly descended from military organisations formed during the tenth, ninth or eighth century, a period of unrest, when the king’s power declined and individual aristocrats formed companies of loyal followers or hetairaioi. This picture is said to be reflected in the system of fighting in the Iliad. A feature of these hetairoi groups in classical times was that they drew their members from the aristocracy — áριστονήν — and that many of them had an eponymous ancestor imposed on them whose kinship relationship with the other hetairoi might have been fictitious, but whose origin was also aristocratic. There is much in this thesis81 which is plausible in the light of some of the Homeric evidence and later Greek practice. Furthermore the primarily military and aristocratic character of these groups seemingly is at variance with the bureaucratic arrangement of the Mycenaean army as

77. IG V (1). 680; 683. Cf. the gloss in Hesych.: Δήμην ἐν Ἐπάργε φυλή, καὶ τόπος. The last quotation does, however, suggest a secondary development after the Dorian (Dyanemes) settlement of this area.
79. On this theos see Vent.-Chadw., Docs. 235.
80. C.A.H. III, 585; cf. 688 (F. E. Adcock); Andrewes, Hermes 89, 138 ff.; J.H.S. 81, 14 f.
81. For a diametrically opposed view see e.g. Thomson, Stud. Anc. Grk. Soc. 106 ff.
set out in the Linear B tablets. Considering the general historical vacuum of the dark age, we will not quarrel with the belief that communities, tribes or gene, possessed important military functions. The tradition concerning the Doric tribes is sufficient evidence for that. What does seem unlikely, however, is that, if we assume a dramatic break in community organisation some time during the dark age, so much in the way of religious practice and cult names could have survived this event. For this reason alone we may distrust the conclusion that a decisive break in the dark age marked off the old world from the new. In addition, the Mycenaean tablets record traces of figures and conditions which also may contradict the suggestion described.

The strongest indication that the hetairoi, as noblemen who rendered military service to a local aristocrat or basileus, were not a phenomenon thought up in the dark age comes from the Mycenaean term egeta. The word is translated by επιτρης which Palmer equates with the Homeric έπιτρης ‘companion of the king’ (Lat. comes, ‘count’), precisely the sort of figure that is thought to belong to the dark age.82 Concerning this egeta there are two other major points of interest to us. Firstly he was a nobleman as well as a military official who quite likely stood in some sort of relationship to the damos as holder of land,83 and secondly the egeta had important religious functions.84 This hetairo prominent figue on the so-called Pylian military tablets as a commander of contingents of military personnel who are guarding the coast.85 These contingents could conceivably have represented localised damoi, for some of them are given ethnic names or are associated with a particular place.86 The hetairo aristocratic status is evident from his Homeric-type patronymic, a distinction altogether uncommon on other Mycenaean records.87 Although the present information does not allow us to assign the egeta a definite station in a Mycenaean community, he does appear to fulfil the important requirements of a high official in a clan or tribal group in his capacity as a military officer and priest and in his relation to a basileus. He also seems to prove that the question regarding the date and circumstances of the formation of aristocratic clan and phratry groups must yet remain open.

However, our prime concern is to give some substance to the belief that

83. Although he is never expressly said to hold kekemen.
84. Brown, Historia 5, 396; Palmer, Interpr. 152; Mycen. Min. 144.
85. Ventr.-Chadw., Docs. 188 ff.
86. Cf. Webster, Mycen. to Homer 21.
87. Ventr.-Chadw., Docs. 121; Palmer, Mycen. Min. 144. The patronymic suffix -das, -dai, common in the names of historic phratries and clans, is almost totally absent in Linear B, Ventr.-Chadw., Docs. 94; Webster, Mycen. to Homer 156; 163. Other patronymic forms do occasionally occur, like the ‘splendid figure’ Alectryon, son of Eteocles Palmer, Mycen. Min. 105; Ventr.-Chadw., Docs. 92; 418.
the reason for the survival of certain major gods, like Athena, Artemis or Poseidon, and of religious concepts and cults, as at Eleusis, can be found not only in the continuity of cult sites but also in that of the communities administering the cults. No doubt the nomenclature of communal groups changed through the ages, new names were added or older societies subdivided into smaller units until eventually this system declined into a political tool of administration. Yet at no stage of their life did these groups lose all trace of their principal concern with property, juridical and especially religious matters. The Greek system of these closely knit societies goes back to Mycenaean times. The Pylian damos is proof of that as well as the figure of telestas and, to a certain extent, that of hepetes. We must remember, too, that these are only the most obvious examples gathered from a peculiarly difficult source. More material and further work will inevitably bring to light fresh evidence. Of this we already have some indication from Mycenaean words like trisheros, 'clan ancestor', the typical figure of a clan hero,\(^{88}\) worokijonejo which may be = ὀργεωνικός from ὀργεῦνες,\(^{89}\) dopota (on the same tablet as tiriseroe) = δοσπότης, 'Herr des Hauses',\(^{90}\) and the house or oikos itself as a kinship, or at least clan, unit.\(^{91}\)

88. Occurring on the 'Oil' tablets of Pylos, Fr 1204; Tn 316, Ventr.-Chadw., Docs. 289; Palmer, Interpr. 263. On the trisheros see especially B. Hemberg, 'TRIPATOR und TRISHEROS', Ermos 52 (1954), 172—190. Cf. the cult of the Tritonatres worshipped by the Zacyadæ phratri in Athens, sources in Hemberg, op. cit. 174 n. 11.

89. E.g. Ventr.-Chadw., Docs. 265; Stella, Cív. Micen. 265 ff., who does, indeed, connect the word with the Mysteries. This identification with the orgones community is rejected by Palmer, Interpr. 214.

90. Hemberg, op. cit. 179 f.

91. woikode = 'to the house of . . . neus' (KN As 1519), Ventr.-Chadw., Docs. 412. This tablet introduces the summation of a list of ten men who might have belonged to the same oikos. On the oikos, anchisteia ('household') community see Thomson, Stud. Anc. Grk. Soc. 109 ff.; on oikos as a subdivision of phratri see Latte, 'Phratrie' 747 and bibliography in n. 17 above.
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