

argues that topography had an even more direct impact upon settlement and land use regimes. In the Early Saxon period the distinction between ‘river and wold’ was most prominent, with communities tending to settle the lighter soils of the lowland river valleys rather than the uplands which are typically characterised by heavier soils. Only during the Middle Saxon period, he argues, did settlement become more stable, with nucleated villages occurring in some areas through the coalescence of multiple nuclei.

Despite the environment forming the common thread around which the book is weaved the reader is encouraged to consider the impact of human action in shaping the landscape, albeit human action undertaken within the constraints of physical conditions. Indeed, the fifth chapter is dedicated entirely to tenurial developments, with an emphasis on the relative fluidity of social boundaries before the Conquest. This ‘gradient of freedom’ indicates that many of the manors we meet in the Domesday Book may have developed ‘from below’ rather than solely from the influence of all-powerful lords. *Environment, Society and Landscape* also benefits from Williamson’s most recent work in Northamptonshire, research which has been more comprehensively published in *Champion: the Making and Unmaking of the English Midland Landscape* — with Robert Liddiard and Tracey Partida (Williamson *et al.* 2012). In the current volume, Williamson uses the regional case study to reassert key themes presented earlier in the narrative: nucleation and the lordly hand in village planning are seen as largely fabricated, and the distinction between ‘two countrysides’ of woodland and champion misconceived.

The text may have benefited from more regular figures, perhaps some with colour, in addition to photographs of the landscapes discussed. This is only a minor criticism, however, and the maps and plans that are included are both clear and beneficial to the narrative. In addition to the case study on Northamptonshire, the concepts developed in the course of the book are aided by further assessments from the author’s familiar East Anglian stomping ground. Indeed, it is the ability to draw from such a vast knowledge base that really sets this volume apart — a strength which reflects Williamson’s current status as one of the leading scholars of early medieval settlement archaeology. The sheer depth and quality of the research also ensures that *Environment, Society and Landscape* will become a key reference work for archaeologists, and its accessible style should see it deployed by academics in related disciplines. It is Williamson’s willingness to challenge some of the truisms of early medieval settlement and landscape research that is perhaps most welcome, his arguments presented with an understanding and ability possessed by few. Definitive explanations to many of the issues raised will no doubt remain elusive, but it is through work such as this that we are likely to be better placed to engage with our steadily growing body of data, and better positioned to comprehend the lived ex-

perience of rural communities during the early medieval period.

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Individuals and Society in Mycenaean Pylos, by Dimitri Nakassis, 2013. Leiden & Boston: Brill; ISBN 978-90-04-24451-1, hardback £105, US\$171 & €123, xviii + 448 pp., 18 figs., 42 tables

John G. Younger

Nakassis’s prosopographical study of the personal names in Linear B tablets from the palace at Pylos originates from his 2006 PhD dissertation at the University of Texas. Five chapters give an introduction to, a commentary on and an analysis of the equally long appendix that lists every personal name (certain or dubious, fragmentary or complete), the document in which it occurs and, in most cases, a short description of the person. There is a bibliography, an index of subjects, and an index of the tablets with the pages where it is discussed.

Chapter 1, ‘Paupers and Peasants and Princes and Kings’ (pp. 1–27), presents the premise of the book. The traditional model of Mycenaean ‘society was based on the understanding that Mycenaean palaces virtually monopolized and coordinated all production, consumption, and exchange’ (p. 1). The assumption has been that there was a ‘direct correspondence between the economic order ... and the social order’, but it is now ‘clear that Mycenaean administrative texts recorded a fraction of the economic activity that took place within their territories’ (p. 2). The earlier prosopographical study of the Pylos texts, *The People of Pylos* by Margareta Lindgren (1973), assumed that the appearance of the same name in different contexts belonged to separate people who had separate duties. Nakassis argues differently: ‘it is better to think of individuals as located not at fixed ranks within a hierarchy but

along a continuum of palatial standing and involvement' (p. 26).

Chapter 2, 'From Proper Names to People Proper' (pp. 29–72), gives an overview of the Pylos texts: there are more than 1000 written by some 32 different hands, literacy was very restricted, and the scribes were the intended readers of the texts. They therefore knew their subjects intimately; the total population of the kingdom was only about 50,000. Nakassis assumes that most people had several duties, as people do today, and that they could move about as modern Greek farmers do today. Thus, the farmer *wana-ta-jo* holds land at Sphagianes (*pa-ki-ja-ne*) in the north of the Hither Province and receives bronze at *ro-u-so* in the south — if they are the same person. The author then lays out his methodology for assessing whether people with duplicate names are one person or different people; his 'analysis does not depend on any one prosopographical identification, but rather on the cumulative effect of extensive patterns of plausible prosopographical identifications' (p. 69).

This takes us to Chapters 3 and 4, which are based on the Appendix, 'A Prosopography of Mycenaean Pylos' (pp. 187–414). It begins by advising us that the names have been 'compiled from the most recent versions of the texts available (the fourth volume of *The Palace of Nestor*, currently in preparation)' (p. 187). Since *PN IV* has not yet been published, we must trust Nakassis's readings where they differ from the standard published sources (and occasional updates). Sometimes this is confusing; for instance, the author cites a new tablet Un 616, but its text is found on An 261 *verso*; and Nakassis's Vn 34 must be a renumbered version of the standard Vn 1191.

The appendix lists 964 separate names that account for some 875 individuals (a minimum of 742, a maximum of 1115) who are mentioned some 1683 times in the tablets (156). These individuals account for less than 2 per cent of the total population. Of these names, some 700 are certain and different (153); of these 469 appear in only one text, but 231 appear in more than one text and 183 appear in more than one series (class) of texts.

It is the latter two groups of people on which Nakassis focuses, since different texts, especially those in different classes, usually have different reasons for mentioning people. The author's goal is to determine whether a name mentioned in more than one document belongs to the same individual or to different people (the 'prosopographical identification' of a name). His conclusion is that it is very probable that all separate citations of the same name refer to the same person in different capacities; in fact, there are only two instances where it can be proved that the same name mentioned more than once belongs to more than one individual (for instance, *du-ni-jo* appears twice on the same tablet, An 192, but modified by different terms, apparently titles: by *du-ma* on line 3, and by *a-no-ke-wa* on line 5).

Consequently, the central Chapters 3 and 4 methodically examine the texts that carry duplicate names and assess whether the 'prosopographical identifications' of

them are tenuous, possible, probable or certain (the results are summarized in the Appendix). So, Chapter 3 examines duplicate names in a variety of series, starting with names in the Jn series ('smiths': men being allotted small amounts of copper/bronze) that duplicate amongst the names of herdsmen (Cn), men on military patrol (the five *o-ka* tablets), and in lists of personnel (A- series) and land-holders (E- series). The second part of Chapter 3 examines the names of herders (Cn) that duplicate in other series.

Chapter 4 operates similarly, analysing the names that duplicate across the *o-ka* tablets, the Aq 'diptych' (Aq 64 and Aq 218), and other series, and, in part two, the names of land-holders (E-) that also duplicate across a variety of other series.

Both Chapters 3 and 4 contain numerous separate discussions of these duplicate names. Their 'prosopographical identification' is counted as certain if, for instance, the same cluster of names occurs on different texts (e.g. 14 names listed as 'with' a man, *a-ta-o*, occur on the personnel list An 340 and five of these names, including *a-ta-o*, occur on two Jn tablets as smiths). The 'prosopographical identification' is probable if the duplicate names appear in duplicate contexts; for instance, five names that appear as smiths in Jn tablets (with or without an allocation of metal) appear on An 1281, where the men are being assigned to five other individuals (three women, one man, and one *po-|ti-ni-ja i-qe-ja* 'Potnia of horses?'); furthermore, three of these men have servants who receive barley on Fn 50.

Chapter 5, 'From Social Structure to Social Activity' (pp. 153–86), presents conclusions, notably that 'most recurring names represent individuals involved in multiple activities within palatial purview' (p. 154). In some of these multiple activities, the named persons must have been actively involved; others, they must have delegated to other people. For instance, an man like *po-ro-u-te-u* cannot have been a smith in the southwest of the Hither Province and have tended goats in the northern Further Province at the same time (the surviving tablets date only to a five to seven month period: p. 22); perhaps he delegated one of these duties to a servant or kinsman. So did some Homeric heroes who 'own flocks that they regularly visit, but the actual herders are slaves and dependents' (p. 160, citing passages like *Iliad* 5.313, where Aphrodite visits Anchises while tending his cattle).

Nakassis envision these named people in the Pylos texts as separate individuals who 'multitask' (p. 168). Many of them are important officials with titles like *telestai* (land-holding supervisors), priests/priestesses, and *hek^wetai* ('followers', military and religious personnel), but they also farm, herd animals, guard the coast, receive bronze, and contribute textiles and grain. In other words, regardless of the work they did, these named people constitute Pylos's elite (pp. 165–80); no matter how menial their work may seem to us, they received benefits (*onāton*) from the palace, including status (pp. 174–5). And apart from their connection with the palace, they must also have had considerable

outside resources in order to manage their multiple responsibilities (p. 116).

Nakassis's methodology seems sound and his conclusions are convincing. In fact, the reviewer was convinced half-way through Chapters 3 and 4. The repetitious arguments for each 'prosopographical identification' (most concluding with the tag, 'I therefore find the prosopographical identification of names that recur in XXX texts' certain/probable/possible/tenuous) are to be expected in a dissertation, but a book could have dispensed with half of these in order to wrestle with some of the interesting implications.

So, having accepted the conclusions early on, this reviewer found himself pondering further questions. Why do not more names clearly designate separate individuals? Was the stock of available names really so small or was there a conscious and deliberate effort to give individuals separate names? Nakassis moots the idea of an elite stock of names (p. 45); Killen and Olivier have proposed that 'collectors' at several palaces shared 'international names' (p. 8), like *koma-we* who worked at Pylos, Knossos, and probably Thebes

(p. 59) and *ku-pi-ri-jo* at Pylos and Knossos. And finally, if each elite individual had a separate and unique name, who assigned them these elite names? Was it the scribes, in order to facilitate the accounting process? Is that why all but one of the repeating names in the Na and Nn series (table 4.15) end in -e-u?

In short, this book is thought-provoking and certainly ground-breaking. Pylos now looks ordinary and recognizable, even like the university where this reviewer multitasks with his colleagues.

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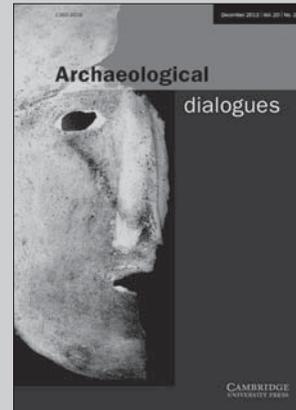
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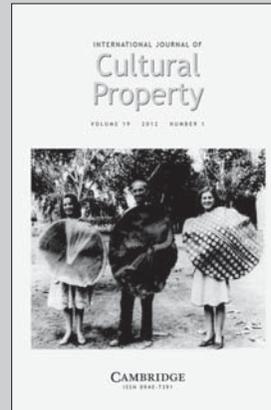
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