

## ‘Followers’ and ‘Watchers’ at Pylos and Knossos

Among the Linear B tablets discussed by Sigrd Deger-Jalkotzy in her admirable “E-qe-ta”<sup>1</sup> is the Knossos record **As 4493**. The tablet itself is missing, but Sir Arthur Evans’ photograph of it has survived, and allows the text to be established with reasonable confidence. This is given in “The Knossos Tablets”<sup>2</sup> as follows.<sup>3</sup>

**As <4493>**

( - )

- .1 ]e-pi-ko-wo , e-qe-ta , e-re-u-te[  
 .2 ]da-mo , / e-ro-pa-ke-u // VIR 1 ko-ki[  
 .3 ]-jo / ra-wo-po-qo , ze-ro[  
 Missing; text from Evans’ photograph.

In her discussion, Sigrd Deger-Jalkotzy<sup>4</sup> (hereafter S. D.-J.) connects this record with the *o-ka* ‘coast-guard’ records at Pylos, stressing in particular the verbal links between line 1 and (a) the *o-ka* tablets themselves and (b) two further records at Pylos, **Cn 3** and the label **Wa 917**. First, with ]e-pi-ko-wo here she compares *e-pi-ko-wo* ‘watchers’ in the heading of the *o-ka* tablets on **An 657.1**: *o-u-ru-to o-pi-a<sub>2</sub>-ra e-pi-ko-wo, hō wruntoi opihala epikowoi* ‘thus the watchers guard the coast’.

**An 657**

(S657 H 1)

- .1 o-u-ru-to , o-pi-a<sub>2</sub>-ra , e-pi-ko-wo ,  
 .2 ma-re-wo , o-ka , o-wi-to-no ,  
 .3 a-pe-ri-ta-wo , o-re-ta , e-te-wa , ko-ki-jo ,  
 .4 su-we-ro-wi-jo , o-wi-ti-ni-jo , o-ka-ra<sub>3</sub> VIR 50  
 .5 vacat  
 .6 ne-da-wa-ta-o , o-ka , e-ke-me-de ,  
 .7 a-pi-je-ta , ma-ra-te-u , ta-ni-ko ,  
 .8 a<sub>2</sub>-ru-wo-te , ke-ki-de , ku-pa-ri-si-jo VIR 20  
 .9 vacat  
 .10 a<sub>3</sub>-ta-re-u-si , ku-pa-ri-si-jo , ke-ki-de VIR 10  
 .11 me-ta-qe , pe-i , e-qe-ta , ke-ki-jo ,  
 .12 a-e-ri-qo-ta , e-ra-po , ri-me-ne ,  
 .13a o-wi-  
 o-ka-ra , -to-no VIR 30 ke-ki-de-qe , a-pu<sub>2</sub>-ka-ne ,  
 .14 VIR 20 me-ta-qe , pe-i , a<sub>3</sub>-ko-ta , e-qe-ta ,  
 .15 vacat

A striking characteristic of the *o-ka* tablets is the presence of *e-qe-ta, hek<sup>w</sup>etai* ‘Followers’, persons who appear to have close links with the central authorities, accompanying the contingents. Two of these are mentioned on **An 657**: *Āherik<sup>w</sup>hoitās*, the son of *Ke-ki*, on ll. 11–12 (*me-ta-qe pe-i e-qe-ta ke-ki-jo a-e-ri-qo-ta* ‘and with them the Follower A. the son of K.’), and *A<sub>3</sub>-ko-ta* on l. 14 (*me-ta-qe pe-i a<sub>3</sub>-ko-ta e-qe-ta* ‘and with

<sup>1</sup> Deger-Jalkotzy 1978.

<sup>2</sup> Killen and Olivier 1989.

<sup>3</sup> I have been able to re-check the “The Knossos Tablets” readings with the help of a copy of Evans’ photograph very kindly supplied by Richard Firth, and would not wish to suggest any changes.

<sup>4</sup> Deger-Jalkotzy 1978, 92–4.

them the Follower  $A_3$ .’). Thus the presence of *e-qe-ta* immediately following ]*e-pi-ko-wo* on **KN As 4493.1** appears, as S. D.-J. notes, to constitute a second link between it and the *o-ka* tablets. And a third link, she suggests, is provided by the term following *e-qe-ta*, viz. *e-re-u-te-re*, which despite it not being certainly complete can hardly be dissociated from the term *e-re-u-te-re* on the Pylos records **Cn 3** and **Wa 917**. We shall be returning to **Wa 917** in a moment; the text of **Cn 3** reads as follows.

**Cn 3**

(S608 H 1)

- .1 jo-i-je-si , me-za-na ,  
 .2 e-re-u-te-re , di-wi-je-we , qo-o ,  
 .3 a<sub>2</sub>-ra-tu-a , o-ka-ra<sub>3</sub> , BOS 1  
 .4 pi-ru-te , ku-re-we BOS 1  
 .5 e-na-po-ro , i-wa-si-jo-ta , BOS 1  
 .6 o-ru-ma-to , u-ru-pi-ja-jo , BOS 1  
 .7 a<sub>2</sub>-ka-a<sub>2</sub>-ki-ri-ja-jo , u-ru-pi-ja-jo-jo , BOS 1  
 .8–9 vacant

As S. D.-J. notes, there are clear connexions between this tablet and the coastguard records. As was first noted by Mühlestein and Palmer,<sup>5</sup> the references on ll. 3–7 of the tablet are all to contingents on the *o-ka* tablets. With the reference to *o-ka-ra<sub>3</sub>* at *a<sub>2</sub>-ra-tu-a* (l. 3), compare the reference to the troop of 110 *o-ka-ra<sub>3</sub>* men at *a<sub>2</sub>-ra-tu-wa* on **An 519.4**; with the reference to *ku-re-we* at *pi-ru-te* on l. 4, compare the reference to 50 *ku-re-we* men at *pi-ru-te* on **An 519.14**; etc. Moreover, as Ventris and Chadwick<sup>6</sup> note, it is plausible, in view of these other links with the coastguard tablets, to identify *di-wi-je-we* on **Cn 3.2** with the *e-qe-ta* of that name on **An 656.8–9**: *me-ta-qe pe-i e-qe-ta di-wi-je-u* ‘and with them the Follower *D*.’ The precise interpretation of **Cn 3** remains controversial; but S. D.-J. accepts Ventris’ and Chadwick’s plausible explanation of it in “Documents in Mycenaean Greek”, which is further developed by Chadwick,<sup>7</sup> that it refers to the sending of oxen to *Di-wi-je-u* by these contingents. The purpose of the deliveries also remains uncertain (sacrifice? food supply?); S. D.-J. is inclined to the first alternative, which is the one most widely accepted.

The term *e-re-u-te-re*, which it is likely to share with **KN As 4493**, is found on l. 2 of the record immediately preceding *di-wi-je-we*. Though it lacks a certain interpretation, it may be a title ‘inspector’ or the like, perhaps to be compared with Cretan *ereutās*. We shall be returning in a moment to discuss its relationship here to *di-wi-je-we*.

As we have seen, a third record on which *e-re-u-te-re* occurs, in this instance with *e-qe-ta*, and which S. D.-J. again links with **KN As 4493** and the coastguard tablets, is the label **Wa 917**, whose text reads as follows.

**Wa 917**

(S106 H 1)

- .1 ]o-da-sa-ṭo , a-ko-so[-ta  
 .2 ]e-qe-ta , e-re-u-te-re[

Unfortunately, like **4493**, the record is incomplete, and we cannot be certain how the various terms which it contains are related to one another. The various possibilities are discussed by S. D.-J.,<sup>8</sup> who plausibly suggests (i) that with ]*o-da-sa-ṭo a-ko-so[-ta*, *hō dasato Alxoitās(?)* ‘thus *A*. apportioned’ in l. 1 we should compare the similar phrases elsewhere involving the same major palace administrator *A-ko-so-ta*, such as *o-wi-de a-ko-so-ta* ‘thus *A*. saw’ (**Eq 213.1**), *o-do-ke a-ko-so-ta* ‘thus *A*. gave’ (**Un 267.1**); and (ii) that while complete certainty is impossible, and while their case (dat. sing., nom. plur. ?) remains unclear, *e-qe-ta* and *e-re-u-te-re* are best taken together, and that *e-qe-ta* should not be regarded as a description of *a-ko-so-ta*.

But whatever its precise interpretation may be, there would appear to be a good case for accepting S. D.-J.’s contention that the text should be connected with the coastguard tablets, both on the grounds on which she bases her suggestion, viz. the juxtaposition it shows of *e-qe-ta* and *e-re-u-te-re*, and for another reason.

<sup>5</sup> Mühlestein 1954; Palmer 1955, 20, 53.

<sup>6</sup> Ventris and Chadwick 1956, 207.

<sup>7</sup> Ventris and Chadwick 1973, 435–6.

<sup>8</sup> Deger-Jalkotzy 1978, 72–6.

As both Bennett and Olivier and Palaima<sup>9</sup> have noted, the hand and stylus of the label is S106 H 1. Now all the more complete tablets which have this hand and stylus are members of the **Na**, **Ng**, **Nn** flax series,<sup>10</sup> and it is plausible therefore to see a connexion between the label and those records. It may well be significant therefore that, as we have seen above, there is a link between the **Na** records and the coastguard tablets, by way of the coastguard contingents who appear in both series. Moreover, as we have also seen above, coastguard contingents are listed on **Cn 3**: which in turn makes it attractive, as both Ventris and Chadwick<sup>11</sup> and S. D.-J. have done, to compare *e-qe-ta e-re-u-te-re* on the label with *e-re-u-te-re di-wi-je-we* on that record, in view of the likelihood that *di-wi-je-we* there is the *e-qe-ta* of that name on **An 656**.

To sum up so far, then: there would appear to be a strong case for accepting S. D.-J.’s contention that there are significant similarities between **KN As 4493** and the coastguard and related records at Pylos, and hence that *e-pi-ko-wo* on **4493** is the same term as *e-pi-ko-wo* on the coastguard tablets and means ‘watchers’, probably ‘watchers’ of the coast.<sup>12</sup>

In his “Studies on Some Mycenaean Inscriptions from Knossos Dealing with Textiles”, however, J. L. Melena reaches a different conclusion.<sup>13</sup> Pointing out that the term *e-ro-pa-ke-u* followed by VIR 1 in line 2 is likely to be the masculine equivalent of the feminine textile trade-name *e-ro-pa-ke-ja* attested at Knossos and Mycenae, he argues that the context of **As 4493** is textile production rather than coastguard activity; and he suggests that *e-pi-ko-wo* here is a different term from *e-pi-ko-wo* on the coastguard tablets, and should be taken, not as *epikowoi* ‘watchers’, but as *epikorwoi* ‘supervisors of young apprentices’.

Now there is certainly no question that *e-ro-pa-ke-ja* is a textile trade-name. It is found in the ‘workgroup’ position on the Knossos cloth production record **Lc(1) 534**, in a further TELA context on **KN Ld(1) 595.1** and in parallel with the textile trade-name *a-ke-ti-ri-ja-i, askētriāhi* ‘(to the) decorators’, on **MY Fo 101**. It is also not unlikely that *e-ro-pa-ke-u* is its masculine equivalent; and it is possible that this is itself a textile trade-name.<sup>14</sup> Even if it is, however, this need not mean that **As 4493** cannot be connected with the Pylos coastguard records, and that *e-pi-ko-wo* cannot mean ‘watchers’.

The Knossos MAN record **As(1) 5941** reads as follows.

**As(1) 5941** + 8343 + *fr.* (103)

.1	]VIR 1	‘e-re-ta’	VIR[
.2	]VIR 1	‘e-re-ta’	VIR[
.3	]	‘e-re-ta’	[VIR

*inf. mut.*

Though this is a mere fragment, and contains little except ideograms and numbers, there can be no doubt that the men it records are textile workers, possibly male finishers, given that the scribe of the tablet is no. 103, virtually all of whose output is concerned with wool and the textile industry.<sup>15</sup> Now in the three surviving lines of the tablet we find a suprascript gloss *e-re-ta*, which is likely to refer to the particular men in the entries to the right of the term. It is difficult to doubt that this is *eretās* ‘rower’, as it is on the Pylos conscription records **An 1, 610, 724**, and as it is also likely to be on its other appearance at Knossos, on **C 902**;<sup>16</sup> and it is

<sup>9</sup> Bennett and Olivier 1976; Palaima 1988.

<sup>10</sup> On the likelihood that **Xn 1357**, in this hand and stylus, is part of an **Na** tablet, quite likely the record for the same area as is dealt with on **Nn 831**, see Killen 1992–93, 120 n. 30(ii).

<sup>11</sup> Ventris and Chadwick 1956, 207.

<sup>12</sup> Since it is not specified on **4493** that the ‘watchers’ are guarding the coast (*o-pi-a2-ra*), like those on the *o-ka* tablets, it remains just possible that their service involved some other form of look-out duty.

<sup>13</sup> Melena 1975, 37–42.

<sup>14</sup> It is not necessarily the case, however, that the masculine equivalent of a feminine trade-name refers to a worker in the same profession. Thus while *a-ke-te-re* on the Pylos **Jn** records may be *askētēres* and the masculine equivalent of the feminine *a-ke-ti-ri-ja / a-ze-ti-ri-ja, askētriai* ‘decorators’, the former refers to bronzesmiths, the latter to textile specialists.

<sup>15</sup> The only exception is five tablets in the **Gg(1)** series, **702, 704, 5552, 7369** and **8053** which record religious offerings of honey. Since, however, on one of these tablets, **Gg(1) 7369**, honey is combined with wool, this modest venture outside his normal sphere of activity is readily understandable.

<sup>16</sup> For discussion of *e-re-ta* here, and the suggestion that it refers to a group of rowers supplying an oxen for sacrifice, as may well also be true of the coastguard contingents on **PY Cn 3**, see Killen (forthcoming).

here presumably a note that the textile workers in question also act on a part-time basis as rowers, like the large number of land-holders who are recorded as providing similar service on the conscription records just mentioned. And if textile workers could act in a part-time capacity as rowers, there would presumably be no reason why the *e-ro-pa-ke-u* on **As 4493**, if he too is a textile worker, could not have served in a part-time capacity as a coastguard.<sup>17</sup>

If line 2 of **4493** does refer to the recruitment of a textile worker as a coastguard, it is possible that the record as a whole should be interpreted as follows: ‘Watchers to (?) the Follower acting as inspector: *X*. (name ending in *-da-mo*) the *e-ro-pa-ke-u* MAN 1; *X*. (name beginning *ko-ki*], cf. *ko-ki-da* MN **Sd 4403**) ... *Y*. men (ethnic ?): *Ra-wo-po-qo* (and ?) *Ze-ro*] (cf. *ze-ro* MN **Da 5218**) ...’. For a Follower and inspector probably named as an addressee, in this case of oxen, see **PY Cn 3**; for persons perhaps being sent to Followers (plural), see *do-qe-ja do-e-ra e-qe-ta-i e-e-to* **PY An 607.3**, which may be ‘slaves of (the goddess) *Do-qe-ja* have been sent to the Followers’. Obviously, however, given the very fragmentary nature of the text, any such translation has to be highly tentative.

**As <4493>**

( - )

- .1 ]ē-pi-ko-wo , e-qe-ṭa , e-re-u-ṭe[  
 .2 ]da-mo , / e-ro-pa-ke-u // VIR 1 ko-ki[  
 .3 ]-jo / ra-wo-po-qo , ze-ro[  
 Missing; text from Evans’ photograph.

There remains, however, a final point to make. If S. D.-J. is correct, as I believe she is, in seeing **4493** at Knossos as reflecting a similar situation to the **An** coastguard records at Pylos, this will have important implications. It is often suggested that the coastguard records form part of the case for seeing evidence in the tablets at Pylos that the palace there was facing an emergency, in the shape of an invasion by enemy forces that was destined to lead to the destruction of the palace later in the same year. If, however, a record at Knossos records similar dispositions, involving both watchers and a Follower described as an inspector or the like, this will clearly complicate the issue, since there is no evidence for any emergency at Knossos. S. D.-J., who accepts the ‘enemy attack’ hypothesis, suggests a way out of the difficulty:<sup>18</sup> that in both cases the watchers are guarding the coasts against the risk of piratical raids, but that at Pylos these precautions were overwhelmed by a much larger enemy invasion. This is certainly possible; but once it is accepted that the dispositions at both sites are purely routine measures (against piracy?), the case for taking the Pylos records as *themselves* evidence pointing to an emergency clearly falls away.

In short, then, **KN As 4493** and the Pylos coastguard records may well provide us with another example of the remarkable similarity between the different Mycenaean kingdoms from which we have tablets in terms of their administrative procedures and the technical terminology used by the scribes. Not only, for instance, do we find the same taxation procedures in use at Knossos, Pylos and Mycenae: the key terms used in connection with taxation are also the same at all three centres: (*a-pu-*)*do-so-mo* ‘assessment’, *a-pu-do-si* ‘payment’, *o-pe-ro* ‘deficit’. Also shared by two or more centres (and which we would doubtless have found common to them all if the relevant records had survived) are the titles of central and local officials (*e-qe-ta* ‘Follower’, *ko-re-te* ‘mayor’ or the like, *du-ma*, *a-to-mo*, *mo-ro-qa*, etc.); the terms for different categories of land-holding (*ki-ti-me-na*, *ke-ke-me-na*, *ka-ma*, etc.); and so on. These similarities, which seem to me far more striking than the occasional differences between the sites,<sup>19</sup> clearly call for an explanation. I must leave it, however, to others more competent than I am to discuss such matters to decide what that explanation is.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Note, however, that one argument which cannot be used against Melena’s interpretation of **4493** is that the findspot of the tablet points to a military context for it (cf. Deger-Jalkotzy 1978, 92). Although nearly all the records originally numbered 04- and now numbered 44- were found in the Arsenal at Knossos, this is not true of **4493**: see Olivier 1967, 205.

<sup>18</sup> Deger-Jalkotzy 1978, 39–40, 93.

<sup>19</sup> Killen 1999, 87–8.

<sup>20</sup> For one suggestion, see Olivier 2001 and J.N. Postgate’s comment on Olivier’s paper which follows it in the volume (see p. 160).

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