

ESF Exploratory Workshop on

**Palatial Economy in the Ancient
Near East and in the Aegean:
First Steps Towards a
Comprehensive Study and Analysis**

Sèvres (France), 16-19 September 2010

Convened by:
**Pierre CARLIER, Francis JOANNES
and Françoise ROUGEMONT**

SCIENTIFIC REPORT

Co-sponsored by the university of Paris Ouest Nanterre La Defense

1) Executive summary:

The ESF Exploratory Workshop on *Palatial Economy in the Ancient Near East and in the Aegean* took place at the CIEP (Centre International d'Études Pédagogiques) of Sèvres in the magnificent XVIIIth century building of the former china manufacture of Madame de Pompadour. The meetings took place in the main conference hall of the CIEP, and all the participants who did not live in the Paris area were accommodated at the CIEP, where we also had all our meals (except the closure dinner). Thus, the participants had the possibility of continuing informal conversations in the garden (the weather was splendid) and in the various meeting-places of the CIEP.

The participants were 26 in all: 25 speakers and the ESF representative Bernard Palme. Half of the participants were assyriologists, half mycenologists. Even if there had been previously many individual contacts, it was the first meeting between the two groups of scholars. Discussions, formal and informal, soon created a feeling of familiarity and at the end of the Workshop the fusion between the two groups was complete.

As all the participants arrived on September 16 before dinner, it has been possible to begin our working session on September 17 at 9.00. Twenty-five papers in two days could look as a very intensive program; in fact, it was not too exhausting because we did not need to move from one place to another, and because every speaker kept to his speaking time ; there has been always time for questions and discussions.

The palace is acknowledged as the central institution both in the ancient Near East during three millennia , and in the Aegean during part of the 2nd millennium B.C. Contacts and discussions between experts in Aegean epigraphy and in Near Eastern written documentations have been developed in various occasions during the last fifty years. However, there has never been any systematic inventory nor any comprehensive tentative to analyse all the main aspects of palatial economy and to compare all palaces from the Aegean world and the Near Eastern regions. The task is especially difficult because of the variety of both languages and scripts to master in order to come to a precise understanding of the Near Eastern written evidence.

The first aim of the workshop has been to gather experts of the relevant fields of research and to offer them the occasion to give the other participants an objective and systematic overview of the evidence available in their field.

The historical interpretation of the texts has been influenced by different schools of thought, which sometimes correspond to different countries. This meeting has allowed the confrontation of experts of different *corpora* as well as of different historical approaches. One of the predominant models of interpretation has been the redistribution model developed in particular by Karl Polanyi, Moses Finley and Leo Oppenheim. The workshop has been the occasion to reexamine the redistributive model as well as potential alternative interpretations.

As the Near Eastern evidence is much richer and diverse than the Aegean one, it would have been impossible to compare thematically the Near East taken as a whole and the Aegean world, and it would have had little interest to present the Aegean palaces one after another. It is why we chose to ask assyriologists to analyse the best known palatial systems from the 3d millennium B.C. to the neo-babylonian period, while Aegean epigraphists were requested to give an in-depth analysis of the economies of Mycenaean palaces. The papers of the assyriologists followed a roughly chronological order, while those of the Aegean epigraphists followed a mainly thematic order. To make comparisons and discussions easier, we managed to have groups of Near Eastern papers and groups of Aegean papers alternating.

Nearly all the speakers considered the other group of scholars as their main audience. Avoiding too specialized topics, both group of scholars presented their evidence as clearly as possible, in order to make comparisons and discussions easier. The interaction between the

two sets of papers has been important. During this workshop, assyriologists insisted on themes which specially interested the mycenologists, the economy of cult or the control of the territory for instance, while mycenologists were more attentive to possible local differences between Aegean palaces than is usual in their field.

Every participant learnt much from the others' papers, but also from the questions and suggestions which followed his own paper. The observations of Bernard Palme as a papyrologist allowed further comparisons.

For the main conclusions, see under 3.

2) Scientific content of the event.

The first session began with the presentation of the ESF programs by the ESF Representative, Bernard Palme. In an introductory paper, Pierre Carlier gave a short history of the use of the expression "Near Eastern economy" in the field of Aegean studies; the Polanyan model of redistributive economy may be questioned, and P. Carlier suggests to come back to Ventris and Chadwick's initial attitude: to compare the Mycenaean texts with the Near Eastern texts, but to do it quite systematically. Then we had three papers about the Mycenaean land-system by three of the best specialists in the field, Pia de Fidio, Maurizio Del Freo and Julien Zurbach. The three of them not only summed up the data very clearly, but they also suggested new interpretations. Pia De Fidio suggested that some religious tributes of Pylos were intended for big sacrifices, M. del Freo did not exclude that all the Pylian texts we have about land may deal with sacred lands, while J. Zurbach suggested a dynamic interpretation of the evidence : the pression of the palace to extend its control on land is obvious, the strong resistance of the rural communities too, but we have also to note the emergence of a landed elite which tries to get independent both from the palace and from the villages. As Michael Jursa, for personal reasons, wanted to speak on the first session, the first paper on the Near East dealt with the latest evidence, the neo-babylonian period. It was rather an advantage, because his analysis, which underlines the importance of the market, was echoing the discussion on Polanyi.

The first two papers of the first afternoon, by Artemis Karnava and Helena Tomas dealt with the undeciphered scripts of Minoan Crete, the so-called "Minoan hieroglyphic" and the Linear A, and on the possibility of reconstructing the palatial economies of Minoan Crete. Helena Tomas insisted on "the messy state" of linear A texts, but during the discussion, some colleagues suggested that the Minoans did not need the tabular presentation of the Mycenaean scribes because they were more familiar with writing. The third paper, by John Bennet, outlined the way in which place-names are identified in Linear B and explored what insights they can offer into the geographical extent and structure of the Mycenaean polities of late Bronze Age Greece and Crete. Then, Lucio Milano dealt with the impressive documentation from the Ur III period (120 000 tablets, but "a nightmare for research") and suggested that rational control by the administration is not necessarily "despotism". Michael Tanret considered the Old Babylonian period as the moment when "we see the loosening of the grasp of the institutions, in favour of the development of a private sector"; the palace acquires goods not only through taxation, but also through trade. Brigitte Lion and Françoise Rougemont analysed the evidence from Nuzi in the 14th century; Nuzi is a provincial town of the kingdom of Arrapha, which was itself part of the Mitanni empire. Dealing both with linear B and cuneiform documentation, F.Rougemont compared the organization of the textile industries at Nuzi and in the Aegean world. In the last paper of the afternoon, Eva Cancik studied the role of the palaces in the Middle Assyrian Empire: every provincial palace was a copy of the Assur palace. Before beginning the discussion, we had a second coffee-break.

On the morning of the second day, the first two papers of Hedwig Landenius Enegren and Yannis Fappas dealt with the two sectors of Mycenaean economy which were most tightly controlled by the palace, the textile industry and the perfume production. Then, Susan Lupack and Jörg Weihartner analysed the relations between palaces and sanctuaries; J. Weihartner suggested that part of the economic activities of the Mycenaean sanctuaries may have remained outside palace control. Dealing with Ugarit, W. van Soldt gave a critical summary of the theories about Ugaritic economy, and insisted on the question of land property. Coming back to the Mycenaean economy, Massimo Perna suggested a new hypothesis about the Ma tablets of Pylos: the taxation would not involve the whole districts, but only special types of land. J.N. Postgate and Mario Fales gave two complementary papers on the medio-assyrian and neo-assyrian documentation: while the former insisted on the economic aspect of the empire, and in particular of the provincial deliveries to the "house of Assur", the latter underlined in his conclusion the progressive emergence of big private households. Going back two millennia earlier, Giovanna Biga gave a very clear presentation of the Ebla evidence, and underlines the palatial control of trade in this first palatial system of the 3rd millennium B.C. The last paper was a precise analysis of the economy of cult in neobabylonian palaces by Stefan Zawadski.

After the concluding papers of Sigrid Deger-Jalkotzy and Francis Joannès and the discussion on follow-up activities under the guidance of Bernard Palme, very fruitful exchanges continued till late in the night at the restaurant "La salle à manger".

3) Assessment of the results, contribution to the future direction of the field

During the Workshop, most mycenologists suggested new interpretations of the textual evidence, and most assyriologists offered new historical insights. However, if the contribution of this Workshop for both fields of study is very significant, the most important point is that the dialogue between assyriologists and mycenologists enlightened the palace phenomenon in both areas.

As Francis Joannès reminded us in his conclusion, the palace is indeniably the central institution, in the Near East from the 3rd to the 1st millennium, in the Minoan world from 2000 to 1450 and in the Mycenaean world (at least in the 14th and 13th centuries). However, the extent of palatial control much varies in the Near East, and if the redistributive model of Polanyi may be considered as valid for the 3rd millennium, it is less pertinent in the neobabylonian period. For the interpretation of Mycenaean palatial economies, discussion is going on. J. Bennet remains more Polanyan than P. Carlier, while Sigrid Deger-Jalkotzy insists on the usefulness of the Weberian household model.

New insights on the economy of cult were specially important during this Workshop. Situations differ: sometimes, it is obvious that the palace tries to control a previously independent temple economy, sometimes that it concedes some palatial incomes to the sanctuaries. Very often, the interpretation of the evidence is difficult, notably in the Mycenaean world.

One other salient fact which appeared during the Workshop is that there are many palaces without king. In the Mitannian and the Assyrian empires, for instance, most palaces are simply provincial imitations of the only kingly palace, and seats of simple governors. As J. Postgate underlined, this fact should lead mycenologists to ask whether palaces are all capitals of independent kingdoms: that is an important contribution to the old problem of the Mycenaean empire.

Of course, some important questions were only very briefly evoked during the Workshop, for instance the economy of war or the role of the marginal zones partially or completely independent from palatial control: we will have to insist on these points during our next meetings.

The Acts of the ESF Workshop *Palatial Economy in the Ancient Near East and in the Aegean: First Steps towards a Comprehensive Analysis and Study* have been accepted for publication in the Italian collection *Biblioteca di Pasiphae*. The contributors will send their texts before the end of December 2010, to Julien Zurbach who has accepted the important task of collecting the texts ; the manuscript will be transmitted "ready to print" to the editor in late March 2011. We hope that the volume will appear before the end of 2011.

As we already made clear in our preliminary program, our aim is to prepare an inventory of the ancient palaces on the model of the *Inventory of Greek poleis* directed by Mogens Hansen. At the end of the Workshop, we had a vivid discussion on this project. No one contested its usefulness, but some colleagues argued that it was premature to begin preparing this inventory now because we needed some time to list all the aspects of the palaces and to build the questionnaire, and because it was important to take into account Egyptian and Anatolian palatial systems.

As a next step, J. Postgate suggested that we organize a colloquium on Late Bronze age (1600-1100) palatial systems and their interactions, with the participation of Egyptologists and experts of ancient Anatolia. His suggestion was unanimously accepted.

This conference will take place in 2013. We will ask for ESF support in the frame of the Research Conferences.

On the other side, Pia de Fidio intends to organize at Salerno in late 2011 or early 2012 a Symposium dealing with theoretical problems, "Aegean and Near Eastern Late Bronze Age economies and societies: shifting methodological approaches", but it remains to be confirmed.

4) Final programme

FINAL PROGRAMME

Friday 17 September 2010

09.00-09.30	Presentation of the European Science Foundation (ESF) B. Palme [Standing Committee for the Humanities (SCH)]
09.30-12.45	Morning Session
09.30-10.00	Second Thoughts on Mycenaean Economy P. Carlier (University Paris Ouest La Defense, Nanterre, France)
10.00-10.30	A Reassessment of Taxation on Sacred Lands in the Linear B Corpus P. De Fidio (University of Salerno, Fisciano, Italy)
10.30-10.45	<i>Coffee Break</i>
10.45-11.15	Thoughts on the Mycenaean Land-Registers of Pylos M. Del Freo (CNR, ICEVO, Rome, Italy)
11.15-11.45	Land Records in the Mycenaean Archives J. Zurbach (ENS, Paris, France)
11.45-12.15	Palatial Economy in the Neo-Babylonian Documentation M. Jursa (University of Vienna, Austria)
12.15-12.45	Discussion

12.45-14.00	<i>Lunch</i>
14.00-19.00	Afternoon Session
14.00-14.30	Old Palatial Crete: One or Two Economies? A. Karnava (Rethymno, Crete)
14.30-15.00	Epigraphical Features of Economic Texts in Linear A H. Tomas (University of Zagreb, Croatia)
15.00-15.30	Palaces and Their Regions: Geographical Analysis of Territorial Exploitation in Late Bronze Age Crete and Greece J. Bennet (University of Sheffield, United Kingdom)
15.30-15.45	<i>Coffee break</i>
15.45-16.15	The Economic Administration of Ur III L. Milano (University Ca' Foscari, Venice, Italy)
16.15-16.45	Palatial Economy in Babylon at the Beginning of the Second Millennium M. Tanret (University of Gent, Belgium)
16.45-17.15	Palatial Economy at Nuzi B. Lion (University of Tours, France)
17.15-17.45	Wool Allocations in Nuzi and in the Mycenaean World F. Rougemont (CNRS, UMR 7041, Nanterre, France)
17.45-18.15	Middle-Assyrian Texts Concerning the Palatial Economy E. Cancik (Free University of Berlin, Germany)
18.15-18.30	<i>Coffee break</i>
18.30-19.30	Discussion
19.00	<i>Dinner</i>

Saturday 18 September 2010

09.00-12.45	Morning Session
09.00-09.30	Palatial Economy: The Occupational Designations in the Mycenaean Archives H. Landenius Enegren (Sweden)
09.30-10.00	Oil and Perfumes in Palatial Economy Y. Fappas (Museum of Thebes, Greece)
10.00-10.30	Assessing Religious Hierarchies and their Economic Influence on Mycenaean Society S. Lupack (London, UK)
10.30-11.00	The Role of the Sanctuaries in the Mycenaean Palace Economy: A Reassessment of the Textual Evidence in the Light of Recent Studies J. Weilharter (Mykenische Kommission, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Vienna, Austria)
11.00-11.15	<i>Coffee Break</i>
11.15-11.45	The Palace Economy in Ugarit W. van Soldt (University of Leiden, Netherlands)
11.45-12.15	Regular Offerings to the Assur Temple, in Theory and in Practice J. N. Postgate (University of Cambridge, UK)
12.15-12.45	Discussion

12.45-14.00	<i>Lunch</i>
14.00-18.45	Afternoon Session
14.00-14.30	About Mycenaean Fiscality M. Perna (Napoli, Italy)
14.30-15.00	Palatial Economy in the Neo-Assyrian Documentation M. Fales (University of Udine, Italy)
15.00-15.30	Palatial Economy in Ebla: the Textual Documentation G. Biga (University La Sapienza, Rome, Italy)
15.30-16.00	The Economy of Cult and the Neo-Babylonian Palace S. Zawadzki (University of Poznan, Poland)
16.00-16.15	<i>Coffee Break</i>
16.15-16.45	Concluding Observations S. Deger-Jalkotzy (Mykenische Kommission, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Vienna, Austria)
16.45-17.15	Concluding Observations F. Joannès (University of Paris I Pantheon Sorbonne, Paris, France)
17.15-18.00	General Discussion
18.00-19.15	Discussion on follow-up activities
19.30	Closure dinner at the restaurant <i>La salle à manger</i> (Sèvres)

5. Final List of Participants

Convenor:

1. **Pierre CARLIER**
Département d'histoire
Université Paris Ouest Nanterre La
Défense
32 allée du lac supérieur
78110 Le Vésinet
France
pierre.carlier@mae.u-paris10.fr

Co-Convenor:

2. **Francis JOANNES**
Université Paris I Panthéon Sorbonne
MAE boîte 17
21 allée de l'université
92023 Nanterre Cedex
France
francis.joannes@mae.u-paris10.fr

Co-Convenor:

3. **Francoise ROUGEMONT**
CNRS UMR 7041
MAE boîte 16
21 allée de l'université
92023 Nanterre Cedex
France
francoise.rougemont@mae.u-paris10.fr

ESF Representative:

4. **Bernhard PALME**
Institut für Alte Geschichte und
Altertumskunde,
Universität Wien
Dr. Karl Lueger-Ring 1
1010 Wien
Austria
bernhard.palme@univie.ac.at

Participants:

5. **John BENNET**
Department of Archaeology
University of Sheffield
Northgate House
West Street
Sheffield S1 4 ET
United Kingdom
d.j.bennet@sheffield.ac.uk

6. **Giovanna BIGA**
Università di Roma 'La Sapienza'
Dipartimento di Scienze dell'Antichità
Via Palestro 63
Address line 2
00185 Rome
Italy
vanna.big@gmail.com
7. **Eva CANKIK**
Freie Universität Berlin
Institut für Orientalistik
Hüttenweg 7
14195 Berlin
Germany
cankikfu@zedat.fu-berlin.de
8. **Pia DE FIDIO**
Faculty
Università di Salerno
84084 Fisciano (SA)
Italy
pdefied@tin.it
9. **Sigrid DEGER-JALKOTZY**
Österreichische Akademie der
Wissenschaften
Mykenische Kommission
Dr Ignaz-Seipel-Platz 2
1010 Wien
Austria
Sigrid.Jalkotzy-Deger@oeaw.ac.at
10. **Maurizio DEL FREO**
CNR, ICEVO
Via Ascanio Rivaldi 31
00151 Rome
Italy
delfreo@tiscalinet.it
11. **Mario FALES**
Università di Udine
Dipartimento di Storia e Tutela dei Beni
Culturali
Via Antonini 8
33100 Udine
Italy
mario.fales@gmail.com
12. **Yannis FAPPAS**
Museum of Thebes
Threpsiadou 1
32200 Thiva
Greece
johnfappas@hotmail.com

13. **Michael JURSA**
 Universität Wien
 Institut für Orientalistik
 Spitalgasse 2 Hof 4
 1090 Wien
 Austria
michael.jursa@univie.ac.at
14. **Artemis KARNAVA**
 2 Kolokotroni Street
 74136 Panorama Atsipopoulou
 Rethymno
 Greece
artkarnava@yahoo.gr
15. **Hedvig LANDENIUS-ENEGREN**
 214 avenue Louise
 1050 Bruxelles
 Belgium
hedvig.enegren@skynet.be
16. **Brigitte LION**
 Université de Tours
 153 rue Menilmontant
 75020 Paris
 France
brigitte.lion@mae.u-paris10.fr
17. **Susan LUPACK**
 Flat 5, Ashley Court
 Frognal Lane
 London NW3 7DX
 United Kingdom
susanlupack@mac.com
18. **Lucio MILANO**
 Università Ca' Foscari di Venezia
 Dipartimento di Scienze dell'Antichità e del
 Vicino Oriente
 Dorsoduro 3484/D
 30123 Venezia
 Italy
l.milano@unive.it
19. **Massimo PERNA**
 Università Suor Orsola Benincasa
 Via Francesco Crispi 72
 80121 Napoli
 Italy
massimo-perna@rdm-web.com
20. **J. N. POSTGATE**
 University of Cambridge
 Faculty of Oriental Studies
 Sigdwick Avenue
 Cambridge CB3 9DA
 United Kingdom
jnp10@hermes.cam.ac.uk
21. **Michel TANRET**
 Universiteit Gent
 Talen en Culturen van het Nabije Oosten
 en Noord-Afrika
 Afd. Assyriologie
 Sient-Pietersplein 6
 9000 Gent
 Belgium
michel.tanret@ugent.be
22. **Helena TOMAS**
 Department of Archaeology
 Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
 University of Zagreb
 Ivana Lucica 3
 10 000 Zagreb
 Croatia
htomas@ffzg.hr
23. **W. VAN SOLDT**
 Universiteit Leiden
 TCMO - Assyriologie
 POB 9515
 2300 RA Leiden
 Netherlands
w.h.van.soldt@hum.leidenuniv.nl
24. **Jörg WEILHARTNER**
 Mykenische Kommission
 Österreichische Akademie der
 Wissenschaften
 Dr Ignaz Seipel Platz 2
 1010 Wien
 Austria
joerg.weilhartner@oeaw.ac.at
25. **Stefan ZAWADZKI**
 Adam Mickiewicz University Poznan
 ul. Szeherazady 21
 60-195 Poznan
 Poland
stefanzawadzki@wp.pl
26. **Julien ZURBACH**
 97 avenue de Royat
 69300 Chamalières
 France
julien.zurbach@gmail.com

6) Statistical informations on participants:

- Age:

60 and more : 5 (2 women, 3 men)

50-59 : 7 (1 woman, 6 men)

40-49 : 6 (3 women, 3 men)

30-39 : 7 (4 women, 3 men)

- Global repartition between women and men:

10 women, 15 men

- Countries:

The participants came from 11 European countries:

France : 5

Austria : 3

Belgium : 1

Croatia : 1

Germany : 1

Greece : 2

Italy : 6

Netherlands : 1

Poland : 1

Sweden: 1

United Kingdom : 3

-Scientific specialities:

Assyriologists: 11

Mycenologists: 13

One participant (F. Rougemont) may be considered as both mycenologist and assyriologist.