

SOTEROULA CONSTANTINIDOU

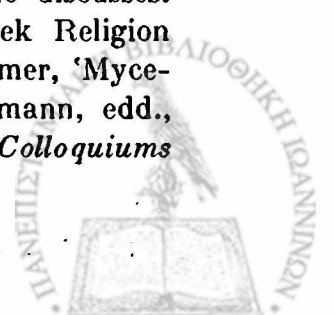
XENIA AND LEKHESTROTHERION: TWO MYCENAEAN FESTIVALS*

More than thirty-five years after the decipherment of Linear B, religion is still considered as one of the most obscure fields of Mycenaean studies, of which we wonder whether we know a lot, or our information relies on conjectures rather than certain evidence¹. In his paper entitled 'What do we know about Mycenaean religion?' John Chadwick² agrees that there is a lot to say about it, although he also

* Modern works cited frequently have been abbreviated as follows: 'Les institutions' = F.R. Adrados, 'Les institutions religieuses mycéniennes', in M.S. Ruipérez, ed., *Acta Mycenaea*, Salamanca 1972, 170-203; *The Origins* = B.C. Dietrich, *The Origins of Greek Religion*, Berlin-New York 1974; *Les mentions* = M. Gérard-Rousseau, *Les mentions religieuses dans les tablettes mycéniennes*, Rome 1968; *An Introduction* = J. T. Hooker, *Linear B. An Introduction*, Bristol 1980; *Linear B* = *Linear B: A 1984 Survey. Proceedings of the Mycenaean Colloquium of the VIIIth Congress of the International Federation of the Societies of Classical Studies* (Dublin, 27 August-1st September 1984), edd. A. Morpurgo-Davies and Y. Duhoux, Louvain-la-Neuve 1985; *Interpretation* = L. R. Palmer, *The Interpretation of Mycenaean Greek texts*, Oxford 1963 (repr. 1969); *FA* = H.W. Parke, *Festivals of the Athenians*, London 1977; *The Perfume Industry* = C. Wright Sheldermine, *The Perfume Industry of Mycenaean Pylos*, *SIMA* 34, Göteborg 1985; *Festivals* = E. Simon, *Festivals of Attica. An Archaeological Commentary*, Wisconsin 1983; *Docs*² = M.G.F. Ventris - J. Chadwick, *Documents in Mycenaean Greek*, Cambridge 1973².

1. The difficulties in interpreting religious terms in the Mycenaean documents, due to the doubtful information they provide so that various interpretations of one and the same word are put forward, are emphasized by W.K.C. Guthrie, 'Early Greek religion in the light of the decipherment of Linear B', *BICS* 6 (1959), 35. He believes that «a large question-mark» must follow almost every word with a religious significance. In her book, *Les mentions, (passim)*, Rousseau strictly implements the following method: A question-mark denoting uncertainty of evidence and interpretation precedes the larger number of the words she discusses. Cf. I. Baumbach, 'The Mycenaean contribution to the study of Greek Religion in the Bronze Age', *SMEA* 20 (1979), 143-4, 158 ff. See also L. R. Palmer, 'Mycenaean Religion: Methodological Choices', in A. Heubeck and G. Neumann, edd., *Res Mycenaeae: Akten des VII Internationalen Mykenologischen Colloquiums in Nürnberg vom 6.-10 April 1981*, Göttingen 1983, 338-66.

2. See *Linear B*, 191-202, esp. 191-2.



notices that the lack of proper religious texts, those that can reveal a system of the people's religious 'thought processes', make us wonder «in what sense can we talk of religion in connexion with Agamemnon or thirteenth-century Mycenae?»¹.

However, the whole truth must be told. There is not a single Mycenaean text which records a prayer or a hymn, even the simplest one. Not even one which gives the details of a myth, that describes clearly a ritual ceremony or openly alludes to the nature and function of gods. Instead, those Mycenaean words that have been ascribed a religious significance have to do with methods of religious behaviour and not with motives. The offering-lists² are, of course, very important evidence for defining the piety of the Mycenaeans as «the central ritual of Greek religion, from the pouring of libations onwards, is the offering to the god...»³. Such religious acts are almost certainly attested in the Linear B texts. Moreover, these texts include a relatively large number of words with almost unquestionable religious significance. Among them exist the very familiar divine names of the Olympian pantheon like Zeus and Hera -the fact that both appear in the same line of PY Tn 316 as recipients of offerings is remarkable, as it shows that they were already linked together in the Mycenaean period. Other gods mentioned are Poseidon, Hermes, Athena and perhaps Apollo and Artemis; or lesser divinities like Eileithyia, Erinys, *Dopota*, *Ipeme-deja*⁴. Some other words denote religious offices and titles, like *ijereu*,

1. *Ibid.*, 191.

2. Animals -most probably for sacrifice- oil, honey, cheese, wine, wool, wheat etc. are, according to the tablets, the most common offerings to deities: e.g. KN Fp 1+31, Gg 702; PY Fr 1219, 1220, Un 718; TH Of 36. Gold vessels and human beings are also listed among the Mycenaean offerings, though the latter seems to be only in exceptional cases as in PY Tn 316: see *Docs*², 284-9, 458-64; cf. *Interpretation*, 261-8; *Les mentions*, 176-7. The problem, however, of distinguishing divine and human recipients in these offering-lists still remains unsolved as the scribes seem to be more interested in listing the information which comes to them, instead of being bothered about intermingling human and divine names: see PY Un 219; TH Of 28, 36.

3. J. Gould, 'On making sense of Greek religion' in P.E. Easterling and J. V. Muir, edd., *Greek Religion and Society*, Cambridge 1985, 16.

4. Cf. Adrados, 'Les institutions', 170. «Non seulement nous retrouvons dans les tablettes les noms des principaux dieux grecs, mais encore ils apparaissent parfois localisés justement là où nous y attendions: Poseidon à Pylos, Eileithyia à Amnisos, Zeus au Mont Dicté». Yet, there is no agreement among scholars as far as the certain divine names are concerned. While the presence of the names of Zeus, Hera and Poseidon in the tablets is certain, other deities seem, according to some views, to be mentioned under their epithets or other titles and functions: e.g. *enuwarijo*=

ijereja, *ijerowoko*, *karawiporo* (ἱερεὺς, ἱέρεια, ἱεροΦεργός, *κλαΦιφόρος)¹. However, all of the above information is inadequate for reconstructing the religious ideology of the Mycenaean society. How, then, are we to «make sense» of Mycenaean religion?

The linguistic uniformity of the Mycenaean texts imposed by «scribal schools or a dominating aristocracy»² may suggest uniformity in other areas too, as that of religion -although religious differences may co-exist with linguistic uniformity as well. A religious uniformity or *κοινή* is partly seen in the religious similarities between the texts which come from different places, like those of Pylos and Thebes or even Pylos and Knossos. These similarities, however, must not be taken to support a 'homogeneous «Minoan/Mycenaean» religion', the two components of which have long been accepted as different³. A linguistic continuity of Mycenaean religion is suggested by certain religious allusions in the Linear B texts which survived into classical Greek religion. Apart from names of gods, many other words like the above mentioned (ἱερεὺς, ἱέρεια, ἱεροφουργός, *κλαΦιφόρος) as well as θεός/ -οί, ἱερός, etc.), belong to later Greek religious vocabulary⁴ though not all necessarily with the same religious meaning. Most of them, however, suggest a parallel use with later times.

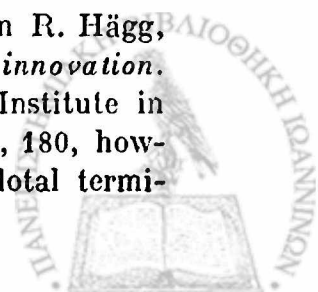
Enyalios for Ares, *wanakate*= *Anakes* (Ἀνακες) for Dioscouri, *gerasija*= *Θηρασία, an epiklesis of Artemis. Similarly, *ereutere*= Ἐλευθήρη, is taken as an epiklesis of Apollo and *Pajawone* = Παϊάφων as a distinct divinity, later identified with Apollo: see *Les mentions*, 256 ff.

1. See Chadwick, 'What do we know about Mycenaean religion?', 194. For the religious texts of Linear B tablets see *Docs*², 275-312 and additional commentary, 456-85; *Interpretation*, 235-68; *Les mentions*, (*passim*); Guthrie, *op. cit.*, 35-57; J. Chadwick, *The Mycenaean World*, Cambridge 1976, 84-101; *Linear B*, 151-62.

2. A. Morpurgo-Davies, 'Mycenaean and Greek Language' in *Linear B*, 84 f., 97 f.

3. See R. Hägg, 'Mycenaean religion: The Helladic and the Minoan components', in *Linear B*, 203-5, for a distinction between «Mainland Mycenaean' and 'Knossian Mycenaean religion'»; cf. J.C. Van Leuven, 'Aspects of Mycenaean Religion', *BICS* 22 (1975), 203-4. For similarities based on the information derived from the texts of Pylos and Thebes see S. Constantinidou, *Religious relations between the Pylos and Thebes tablets*, unpubl. M.A. report, University of London 1978, 1-31.

4. See *The Origins*, 176 ff.; cf. *idem*, 'Tradition in Greek religion', in R. Hägg, ed., *The Greek Renaissance of the eighth century B.C.: Tradition and innovation*. Proceedings of the Second International Symposium at the Swedish Institute in Athens, 1-5 June, 1981, Stockholm 1983, 85. Adrados, 'Les institutions', 180, however, believes that there is inconsistency and obscurity in the sacerdotal termi-



It is, thus, permissible that the evidence of the tablets must be regarded as very important for the definition of the early stages of Greek religion, for the existence of certain elements of the gods' nature and the cults of classical *polis* seem to come from a much earlier period, as early as the Mycenaean. And many religious practices of that period had survived and influenced those of Archaic and Classical Greece¹. The same applies to festivals which were central facts of ancient Greek religion. Their collective character was not restricted to an expression of piety but was associated with the need for a change from everyday activities: such as being entertained and merrymaking. A human need that was recognised since ancient times², and may apply to every society and to all periods of human existence. Do 'festivals', then, constitute a category of entries in the Mycenaean documents? How much can be said about the collective religious behaviour of the Mycenaean people?

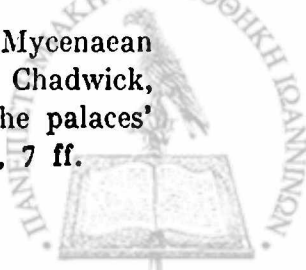
The tablets impressively reveal a detailed bureaucratic system imposed by the palaces on the group of towns or settlements of their region. This centralized organization was based mainly on an agrarian economy, where incomings and outgoings were extensively recorded³. Obviously a two way process was taking place in the palace trans-

nology as for example *ijereu* and *ijereja*. The scribes do not clearly attach them to specific divinities apart from some exceptions, like the 'priestess of the winds' (*anemo ijereja*) and perhaps the priestess of Potnia, if this is what is exactly alluded to by *i-je-re-ja pa-ki-ja-na*. On the other hand some words seem most possibly to belong to the religious functionaries as for example *ka-ra-wi-po-ro* (*κλή-Φιφόροι), *ka-ru-ke* (κάρυκει), etc.

1. For tradition and continuity in ancient Greek religion see B.C. Dietrich, *Tradition in Greek Religion*, Berlin and New York 1986, XI-XV, 41 f. and *passim*. The Mycenaean inheritance, however, seems not to be confined to the cult level but refers to the mythological sphere too according to Nilsson's theory on the «*Mycenaean Origin of Greek mythology*»: see Chadwick, 'What do we know about Mycenaean religion?', 193.

2. See P.A. Cartledge, 'The Greek religious festivals' in *Greek Religion and Society*, *op. cit.*, 100 f., 127. However, perhaps in ancient Greece this was excessively manifested in the large number of public festivals, though this does not mean that all 'festival days' were not 'working days' for the Athenians: J.D. Mikalson, *The Sacred and Civil Calendar of the Athenian Year*, Princeton and London 1975, 201 ff.; cf. Cartledge, *op. cit.*, 98 f.

3. For the 'social structure and the administrative system' of the Mycenaean centres, which can be inferred from the evidence of the tablets see J. Chadwick, *The Mycenaean World*, *op. cit.*, 69-83, esp. 70. For the revelation of the palaces' control at the main Mycenaean centres see also *The Perfume Industry*, 7 ff.



actions with the surrounding population. It was a process of contributing and benefiting economically¹. It is reasonable that this interaction of the palace with the regional towns should have functioned in other levels than that of the economy. In a society of the Mycenaean type, where the central power is gathered in palatial centres, while the people of the surrounding country contributes to the palace various commodities and receives allocations by it, various celebrations of a religious character may take place within or outside the fortified premises and most probably be controlled or supervised by the Mycenaean palaces.

The two Mycenaean words, *ke-se-ni-wi-jo* and *re-ke-to-ro-te-ri-jo*, that will be examined below, have been considered by L. R. Palmer² as parts of one and the same festival. He interprets *ke-se-ni-wi-jo* as ξενίῳ ('at the Xenia'), the genitive plural of the name of a festival meaning 'The Entertainment, Banquet' and brings it into connection with *re-ke-e-to-ro-te-ri-jo* (PY Fr 1217) which is, according to him, 'The Preparation of the Couch'. He thus sees a joint festival of an *hieros gamos* followed by a ritual banquet, both associated with the fertility of the human and natural world. Moreover, for methodological reasons Palmer's³ view about Mycenaean religious survivals in later Greek religion is very important. Such a comparison is certainly necessary, especially for those survivals which are associated with fertility cults or the concept of fertility in general⁴. In our survey, however, the comparative method will be confined as much as possible to the analogies which the so-called Mycenaean festivals do, or may, present in certain features with the classical Greek festivals. Caution is also needed in applying ritual patterns known from other contemporary Near Eastern civilizations to the Mycenaean religious reality, although the existence of such influence is a possibility. This is because no strong elements in support of the imposing of other civilizations' religious patterns to the Greek culture have been shown⁵.

1. *The Perfume Industry*, 4.

2. *Interpretation*, 251.

3. *Some New Minoan-Mycenaean Gods*, Innsbrucker Beiträge zur Sprachwissenschaft, (*Vorträge und Kleinere Schriften* 26), Innsbruck 1981, 15.

4. Guthrie, *op. cit.*, 36; Van Leuven, *op. cit.*, 204. Chthonic and nature cults belonged to the early strata of ancient Greek religion and did not easily enter the Olympian divine sphere unless they abandoned or transferred these features to popular religion: see *The Origins*, 189-90.

5. See Guthrie, *op. cit.*, 36-7; cf. also *The Origins*, 168: «Especially hazardous in the present state of our knowledge seems to be the practice of closely comparing

Nevertheless, the interpretation of those Mycenaean words which have been described as 'festivals' is the most disputed and uncertain. Unfortunately they are not defined by the contexts in which they appear. Interpretations of a single festival, *dipisijoi* for example, vary from a festival for the dead, *Διπίους*, to a designation of the priests or attendants of a goddess called **Διπία* or a god **Δίπιος*. It has also been interpreted as a place-name. In the same way *re-ke-to-ro-te-ri-jo* and *to-no-e-ke-te-ri-jo* have been explained as names of festivals as well as epithets of Poseidon¹. Nonetheless, most of the above interpretations are based on morphological grounds. Nearly all the words described as festivals have the ending *-a*, like the names of the *heortai* in the Classical period, e.g. Panathenaia², while others end in *-te-ri-jo* as many very well-known classical festivals like Anthesteria, Plynteria, Kallynteria etc. Others have festival significance because of their etymological association with words which appear to function as recipients of offerings, like *wa-na-se-wi-jo* and *di-pi-si-je-wi-jo*. In the same way the various month-names which appear in the tablets - among these are KN Fp 5: *di-wi-jo: Δίφιος*, after the name of Zeus and KN Fp 1: *de-u-ki-jo: Δεύκιος*, PY Tn 316. 1: *po-ro-wi-to: *Πλωφιστός*- possibly derive from the festivals celebrated during these months³. The two words that will be discussed below have been regarded as festival entries of the Mycenaean religious calendar.

a) *ke-se-ni-wi-jo* / *ke-se-nu-wi-ja* (*ξενφίων* / *ξένφια* = *ξέφια*).

It is found in the following texts and in various contexts⁴:

Near Eastern with Mycenaean ritual features, as they apparently are described in the Linear B texts»; J.T. Hooker, 'The *wanax* in Linear B texts', *Kadmos* 18 (1979), 111.

1. Cf. 'Les institutions', 180. For a review of the various interpretations put forward for each festival see Rousseau, *Les mentions*, 61-4; see also L. Baumbach, *Studies in Mycenaean Inscriptions and Dialect (1965-1978)*, Rome 1986, 306 and F.A. Jorro and F.R. Adrados, edd., *Diccionario Griego-Español*, Anejo I. *Diccionario Micénico*, Volumen I, Madrid 1985, s. v. *di-pi-si-jo-i*.

2. For this ending see J.D. Mikalson, 'The *Heorte* of Heortology', *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 23 (1982), 214.

3. See Chadwick, 'What do we know about Mycenaean religion?', 201; *Interpretation*, 250 f.

4. See the following editions of the Linear B texts: for Pylos: E.L. Bennett - J.-P. Olivier, *The Pylos tablets transcribed I-II* (Rome 1973, 1976); for Knossos: J. Chadwick, J.T. Killen, J.-P. Olivier, *The Knossos tablets*, Cambridge 1971⁴; *Corpus of Mycenaean Inscriptions from Knossos*, edd. J. Chadwick, L. Godart,



- PY Fr 1231.2 *ke-se-ni-wi-jo* [] OIL S 1 [(*ξενΐων*)
 PY Fr 1255.2 *Jnu-wi-jo* (it has been restored as *ke-se-Jnu-wi-jo*)
 KN Ld 573.2 *pa-we-a, | ke-se-nu-wi-ja* (*ξένΐα*)
 KN Ld 574.2 *pa-we-a, | ke-se-nu-wi-ja* [(*ξένΐα*)
 KN Ld 585+ fr. 2] *ke-se-nu-wi-ja*
 KN Ld 649+ 8169.2 *pa-we-ja, | ke-se-ne-wi-ja*
 See also
 PY Cn 286.1 *a-pa-re-u-pi, ke-se-nu-wo*

The Theoxenia, ritual meals in honour of gods and heroes, belong to the house cult and are particularly associated with the Dioscouri and their cult in Cyrene and Sparta (Paus. 3.26. 2-4). It is believed to be a very early rite already practised in the Bronze Age¹. The antiquity of the participation of the god in ritual meals, set in his honour, together with the mortals, is probably alluded to by Hesiod in the myth of Prometheus (*Th.* 535-57; *Op.* 42 ff.). The deceit of Prometheus over the distribution of the meat - when bones wrapped in fat went to gods and flesh and other good parts of the animal to men- and the details of this myth, are irrelevant here apart from a very important point: that all started during a feast where gods were invited, i.e. a *θεοξένια*.

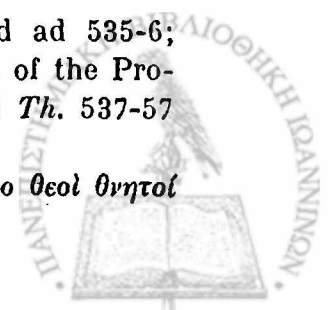
The myth has been considered as aitiological, as an explanation for the distribution of the sacrificed animal between men and gods thereafter, but also how fire was stolen by Prometheus and given to men and finally how evils came to mankind through a woman, Pandora, and made life very hard². A *θεοξένια* was then the starting point of the everlasting dispute between men and gods over sacrifice and fire, or rather over boundaries between human and divine. It marks a time when the established religious order was overthrown since the division of meat and the settlement, or rather the separation over sacrifice³, also meant the end of the peaceful co-existence of men and

J.T. Killen, J.-P. Olivier, A. Sacconi, I.A. Sakellarakis, vol. 1 (1-1063), Cambridge and Rome 1986; for Thebes: T.G. Spyropoulos and J. Chadwick, *The Thebes tablets II*, Salamanca 1975.

1. See M. P. Nilsson, *The Mycenaean origin of Greek mythology*, Berkeley 1932 (repr. New York 1963), 77; *idem*, *The Minoan-Mycenaean Religion and its survival in Greek Religion*, Lund 1950², 541. For the house or domestic cult of the Dioscouri, see Dietrich, *The Origins*, 168 n. 201, 186 ff.

2. See M.L. West, *Hesiod Theogony*, Oxford 1966, ad 507 ff. and ad 535-6; *idem*, *Hesiod Works and Days*, Oxford 1978, ad 47-59. For a discussion of the Prometheus myth see also C.J. Rowe, *Essential Hesiod*, Bristol 1978, ad *Th.* 537-57 and ad *Op.* 42-105.

3. West, *Hesiod Theogony*, ad 535-6, *Th.* 535-6, ... ὅτ' ἐχθροῦτο θεοὶ θνητοί



gods and their joint participation in ritual meals (cf. Hes. *fr.* 1. 6-7 (M.-W.); Paus. 8.2.4)¹. The myth obviously alludes to a remote past, when all this happened, and at the same time establishes the antiquity of the Theoxenia ritual (cf. *Od.* 8.76; *Il.* 9. 534-7). There is also sufficient evidence for the Theoxenia, in later Greek sources, in connection with the Dioscouri (Pind. *Ol.* 3.1 and *Scholia* ad loc.), Apollo (*Schol.* ad Pind. *Ol.* 9. 146; Paus. 7. 27. 4) and Leto at Delphi (Polemo ap. Athen. 9. 372a). Sappho's hymnic invocation of Aphrodite (*fr.* 2 L.-P.) refers to such a ritual meal, along with those features of a personal relationship to the goddess and a subjective experience which is very familiar in Sappho's poetry². The Theoxenia is also known as *Θεοδαΐσια* in Callimachus and is associated with Crete (*fr.* 43.86 Pfeiffer) and Dionysos (Hsch. s.v. *Θεοδαΐσιος* and *ἡρόχια*).

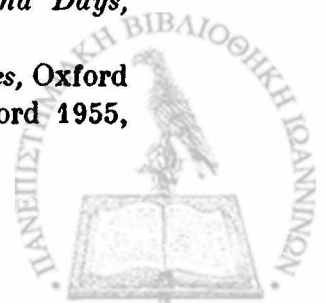
Let us examine, however, the position and meaning of *ke-se-ni-wi-jo* within the context of the tablets where it is found. PY Fr 1255 is not helpful for such an investigation as *Jnu-wi-jo* is the only preserved text; however, the restoration to *ke-se-Jnu-wi-jo* seems to be correct. Another PY Fr tablet (1231), which will be discussed later, includes the same word. The word occurs also in the Knossos L series which deal with inventories of cloths. There *ke-se-nu-wi-ja* is used to describe *pa-we-a*, the Mycenaean writing of *φάσFεα* (Hom. *φᾶσος*), which means textiles, or most probably «pieces of cloth of a particular variety» in the Mycenaean period³. *ΞένFια* in KN Ld (649, 573, 574, 585), means those that are designed for the *ξένFοι*, i.e. presents for the guests

τ' ἄνθρωποι / Μηκῶνη..., most probably refers to such a settlement: see West, *ibid.*, and Rowe, *op. cit.*, ad 535-7. For the separation or differentiation of gods from men given by the two versions of the same story in the *Theogony* and the *Works and Days*, see J.-Pierre Vernant, 'Le mythe prométhéen chez Hésiode' in *Mythe et société en Grèce ancienne*, Paris 1974, 177-94, esp. 179.

1. *Op.* 108: *ὡς δόμθεν γεγάσι θεοὶ θνητοὶ τ' ἄνθρωποι*, could perhaps be associated with *Th.* 535-7 and a period when men 'lived like gods' (see *Op.* 112), since both had a common origin. Line 108 seems to be relevant to the Golden Age which opens the Myth of Ages in the next line of the *Works and Days* and must be «taken... as an introduction» which «puts the degeneration of the human race in a special perspective, viz. in the perspective of a growing estrangement of men from the gods ...»: W. J. Verdenius, *A commentary on Hesiod Works and Days*, no. 1-382, Leiden 1985, 78.

2. See C.M. Bowra, *Greek Lyric Poetry. From Alkman to Simonides*, Oxford 1936 (2nd rev. edn 1961), 195 f.; D.L. Page, *Sappho and Alcaeus*, Oxford 1955, 34-44, 128.

3. *An Introduction*, 96.

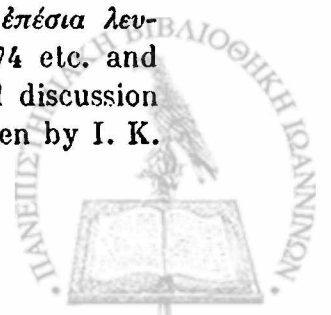


of the palace or even simply clothes for the ξένφοι (foreigners?); a meaning 'of foreign type' seems less probable. Most scholars have accepted one of the above interpretations. The word denotes the destination rather than the provenance of the textiles recorded in the above tablets. Moreover, Homeric passages that stress the importance of the offering of various garments to guests, as an act of hospitality (*Od.* 8. 387 ff., 15. 104 ff.), suggest the interpretation of *ke-se-ne-wi-ja* / *ke-se-nu-wi-ja* in the Knossos textile tablets as 'designed for the guests'¹. However, it does not seem that this interpretation allows any further comments concerning Mycenaean hospitality. As far as *ke-se-nu-wo* is concerned, mentioned in PY Cn 286.1, although it cannot be distinguished from its previously discussed adjectival forms, it may mean ξένφος, foreigner, or simply represent a proper name, Ξένφων.

A different situation appears in the Pylos Fr series. The tablet Fr 1231 shows the word with a different spelling, as *ke-se-ni-wi-jo*. It refers to the oil which is disposed to *di-pi-si-jo-i*, most probably a place-name, for a divine recipient called Potnia. That *dipisijoi* is not a recipient is indicated by its position before or after a recipient in the PY Fr series: e.g. Fr 1219.2: *wa-na-so-i*, *po-se-da-o-ne*; Fr 1220.2: *di-pi-si-jo-i*, *wa-na-ka-te*; Fr 1227: *wa-na-ka-te*, *wa-na-so-i* etc.² It is for Potnia, for the 'Lady' or the 'Mistress', that the issuing of oil is recorded in Fr 1231. Potnia is perhaps the most discussed religious word of the Linear B texts; she predominates in the offering-lists usually as an independent entity or sometimes accompanied by other words which qualify it. These are probably places (*upojo potinija*, *da-pu2-ritojo potinija* etc.), festivals, according to some views (e.g. *wa-na-so-i*), or they may even represent the name of an Olympian goddess as

1. Ventris and Chadwick, *Docs*², 477, give the following interpretation: 'provided for or given as gifts to guests' and see a parallel use for denoting destination in the words *wa-na-ka-te-ra*, 'for the *wa-na-ka*' (attested in the Lc series, e.g. Lc 525) and *e-qe-si-ja*, 'for the *e-qe-ta*', other high officials, applied to *pa-we-a* in the Ld series (see Ld 571, 572, 575). It is noticed that the above words are not found in those cases where *ke-se-nu-wi-ja* appears too, as for example in Ld 573 and 574. See also *Les mentions*, 129-31, for the various interpretations of *keseniwijo* / *kesenuwijo*. For other adjectival forms in the Mycenaean texts applied to *pa-we-a* or to textiles in general with reference to their colour, quality, decoration and destination see KN Ld 572.2: *pa-we-a e-qe-si-ja re-u-ko-nu-ka*: φάσφεα ἐπέσια λευζώνυχα, 'clothes for the *e-qe-ta*, with white ὄνυχες': cf. Ld 571, 573, 574 etc. and Ld 584, 587, 591, 598, 599, 649 for other descriptive adjectives. A full discussion of the adjectives describing textiles in the Mycenaean tablets is given by I. K. Prombonas, *Ἀνθολογία μυκηναϊκῶν κειμένων*, Athens 1983, 114 ff.

2. *The Perfume Industry*, 73 ff.



is the case of KN Gg 705.1 (*a-ta-na-po-ti-ni-ja*: 'Αθήνα πότνια or 'Αθήνας πότνια). However, the mention of Potnia in the above series together with other undoubted divine recipients of oil, like Poseidon (Fr 343, 1219, 1224), is another indication pointing to her divine rather than her human status. Her presence in the tablet implies the oil's ritual significance¹. Thus, *ke-se-ni-wi-jo* / *ke-se-nu-wi-jo* is associated with the oil being dispatched to Potnia, and to an unknown recipient in Fr 1255 since this tablet is not well preserved².

A ritual meal for the deity, in this case probably for Potnia, could take place in the Mycenaean times as in later cult-practice. Therefore, the interpretation of *ke-se-ni-wi-jo* as ξενίῳ (= 'during the Xenia'), the genitive plural of ξένια, a parallel to the Theoxenia ritual, seems most plausible. The fact that most words interpreted as festival-names are attested in the same series, the PY Fr oil tablets³, supports a similar interpretation for this word as well. Nevertheless, the mention of *wanakate* in the Fr tablets does not confirm the above festival's association with the Dioscouri who were called *anakes* and were particularly associated with the Theoxenia in later periods. For Dioscouri are not mentioned in the Linear B tablets⁴, while *wa-na-kate* is most probably a recipient in the dative case of the word *wanax* whose divine or human status is still a matter of controversy⁵.

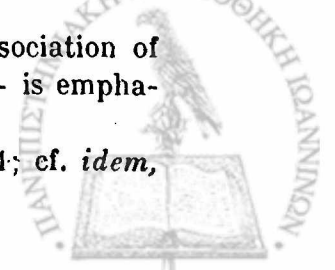
1. Cf. *ibid.*, 124. Gérard-Rousseau, *Les mentions*, 188-90, does not accept that *po-ti-ni-ja* in Fr 1231 as well as in 1235 is the name of a goddess but a designation of the queen in a parallel use to that of πότνια in the Homeric poems and to that of Πάναξ in the same series of tablets. For Potnia see J. Chadwick, 'Potnia', *Minos* 5 (1957), 117-29.

2. See *The Perfume Industry*, 79 f. for all the possible purposes of the oil recorded in the above Fr series; see also *Docs*², 477 f.

3. See Fr 343.2 (*re-ke-to-ro-te-ri-jo* = λεχιστροτηρίω / -ων); cf. 1217.2 (*re-ke-e-to-ro-te-ri-jo*), Fr 1202 (*me-tu-wo ne-wo* = μεθύων νέῳ, 'at the Festival of the New Wine'), Fr 1222 (*to-no-e-ke-te-ri-jo* = στοροεργητήριω, 'the Lamentation'), etc. For less probable identifications with festivals see Fr 1215.1 (*wa-na-se-wi-jo* = Φανασηῶν, 'Festival of the Wanassa'), Fr 1221 (*wa-na-se-wi-ja* = Φανασσία), Fr 1218.2 (*di-pi-si-je-wi-jo* = Διπισηῶν, 'at the festival of the dead'): see Palmer, *Interpretation*, 250 ff.; A. Leukart, 'Götter, Feste und Gefäße' in *Res Mycenaeae*, *op. cit.*, 244 ff. For the interpretation of *to-no-e-ke-te-ri-jo* as the name of a festival called Θρονοελκτήρια see I.K. Prombonas, 'Η μυκηναϊκή έορτή *Θρονοελκτήρια (*to-no-e-ke-te-ri-jo*) και η επιβίωσις αυτής εις τους ιστορικούς χρόνους', Athens 1974.

4. *The Origins*, 168 n. 201; but see also 188 n. 326 where the association of *keseniwi-jo* with Potnia in PY Fr 1231 *-potinija dipi[si]joi keseniwi-jo* is emphasized.

5. See *Docs*², 480; Hooker, 'The *wanax* in Linear B texts', 400-111; cf. *idem*,



b. *re-ke-to-ro-te-ri-jo* / *re-ke-e-to-ro-te-ri-jo*

PY Fr 343 a. *e-ti-we,*
 po-]se-da-o-ne re-ke-to-ro-te-ri-jo OIL [
 PY Fr 1217.2 *re-ke-e-to-ro-te-ri-jo*

As has been mentioned above, the Pylos Fr series is the group of tablets where most festival-names are found. It is thus reasonable that in this group we must try to reconstruct the Mycenaean sacred calendar. Palmer¹ has already associated the previously discussed word *ke-se-ni-wi-jo*, with *re-ke-to-ro-te-ri-jo* (Fr 343), which has a variant spelling, *re-ke-e-to-ro-te-ri-jo*, in Fr 1217. The latter is a compound word whose first component, *λέχος*, is in the dual number (*λέχεε*). It has been transcribed as *lekhe-stroterion* (*λεχεστροτήριον*), an obvious Greek formation (cf. *Il.* 9.621: *στορέσαι...λέχος*). It does not, however, clearly denote a festival as there is no exact equivalent in Greek festival names. Literally it means 'the making of the bed'². The possibility of *re-ke-to-ro-te-ri-jo* being the Mycenaean name of the sacred wedding, a rite believed to be of great antiquity³, will be examined below. *Re-ke-e-to-ro-te-ri-jo* may be taken as an orthographic variation explained by the fact that the two tablets are assigned to different scribal hands; it does not seem to be a scribal error⁴.

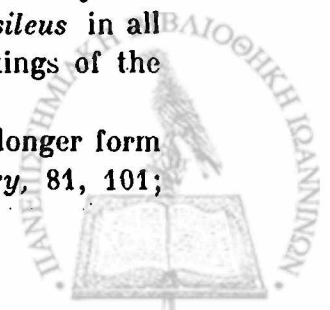
'Titles and functions in the Pylian state' in J. T. Killen, J.L. Melena, J.-P. Olivier, edd., *Studies in Mycenaean and Classical Greek presented to John Chadwick*, *Minos* 20-22 (Salamanca 1987), 257-67.

1. *Interpretation*, 251. But see also *Docs*², 479 f. for other suggestions concerning etymology. In fact there is a confusion as far as the interpretation of the two words is concerned: *Lekhestroterion* has also been explained as a ritual banquet, like *keseniwijo*: see Prombonas, 'Η μυκηναϊκή έορτή, *op. cit.*, 66-9.

2. For a different interpretation of *re-ke-to-ro-te-ri-jo* see Adrados, 'Les institutions', 186. He takes it as an epithet of Poseidon, an interpretation based on the mention of the god's name, together with the above word, in Fr 343. Such an epithet, however, associates Poseidon with fertility cults which are somehow alien to the god's nature.

3. To the most ancient festivals belong the Eleusinian Mysteries, the Arrephoria, the Panathenaia, the Lenaia and the Anthesteria, most probably originating in the Bronze Age. The importance of the role of the *archon basileus* in all these celebrations has been explained as derived from that of the kings of the above period: see *Festivals*, 92 ff., 106.

4. Chadwick, *Docs*², 480, however, believes that «the origin of the longer form must remain obscure». For the scribal hands see *The Perfume Industry*, 81, 101; cf. T.G. Palaima, *The Scribes of Pylos*, Rome 1988, 70 ff., 123.



I shall proceed by examining the word within its context. The oil allotment of Fr 343 is undoubtedly a religious context since Poseidon is the divine recipient. And the other form of the word, *re-ke-e-to-ro-te-ri-jo* (PY Fr 1217) is also found in association with *pa-ki-ja-na-de* (i.e. to *Pa-ki-janes*) which seems according to the evidence to be the main religious centre of Pylos¹. What mainly makes us accept that *Pakijana* is a very important religious centre is PY Tn 316 which refers to a religious act held there as well as at other various shrines of Pylos; the word's association with *ijereja* in the E tablets supports this view². Thus, the destination entry in Fr 1217, which is *Pakijana*, also denotes the ritual use of the oil recorded.

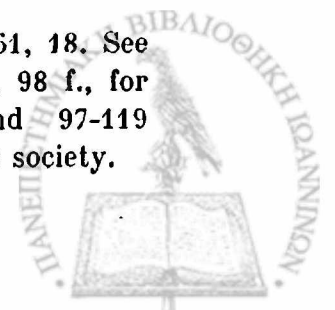
The religious concept of the union of the god, or a mortal, with the goddess, survives in our earliest literary source, the Homeric poems. There, Demeter is united with Iasion in Crete (*Od.* 5.125-7). In the *Theogony*, a place is given to the above union among Hesiod's genealogies of gods; their offspring was Ploutos (*Th.* 969-72). The story has been ascribed «an allegorical and poetic interpretation of the rewards of successful soil cultivation»³. The sacred marriage itself appears, thus, as the mythological background of an 'agrarian', as has been characterized, ritual. *νειῶν ἐν τριπόλῳ*, (*Od.* 5. 127; *Th.* 971), the place where Iasion and Demeter were united, both in the *Odyssey* and the *Theogony*, alludes to Ploutos' association with agriculture and its goddess as well as to the symbolic significance of the ritualistic sexual union in association with the earth and agricultural practices⁴. Thus, mythology, Homeric and Hesiodic, contribute most important evidence, as I regard the above mention of Demeter's and Iasion's love, a reason for assigning such a myth and ritual to the Mycenaean period. The reason is that many of their elements go back to earlier periods.

1. For Palmer, *Interpretation*, 231, 267 f., *pa-ki-ja-ne(s)* is one of the two main religious centres of Pylos and the main cult-place of Potnia; another was the 'town' itself with the Posidaion Shrine. Cf. *An Introduction*, 160. Rousseau, *Les mentions*, 167 ff., agrees that *Pakijana* is a very important district in the Pylos territory, and probably the religious centre of Pylos itself, but she also assumes that in the same word a divine name is concealed.

2. Cf. *Les mentions*, 167.

3. G.E. Mylonas, *Eleusis and the Eleusinian Mysteries*, Princeton 1961, 18. See also I. Perysinakis, 'Hesiod's treatment of Wealth', *Μῆτις* I, 1(1986), 98 f., for wealth's establishment «as a social power» first in the *Theogony*, and 97-119 for the importance of wealth as a concept and function in the Hesiodic society.

4. M.L. West, *Hesiod Theogony*, 423.



The same ritual of an *hieros gamos* is said to form part of the Eleusinian Mysteries too, probably enacted by the Hierophant and the priestess during the *dromena*. The birth of a divine child to the goddess has also been associated with the same rites. He is the Kouros or Brimos who may be identified with Ploutos, also mentioned in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* (line 489)¹. Nevertheless, the subject has been much debated. The existence of an *hieros gamos* ritual in the secret ceremonies of Eleusis is based mainly on late evidence, i.e. on statements of early Christian Fathers and cannot be supported by the literary or archaeological evidence. Nowhere in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* is such a ritual reflected. On the other hand, the 'agrarian' character of the rite itself, the association of Demeter with the mythological background of the *hieros gamos* in connection with Iasion and Crete and the mention of Ploutos, their legendary son, in the *Hymn* makes the existence of such a ritual in the cult of Demeter at Eleusis very probable². Having this possibility in mind we should also add that the Eleusinian Mysteries is one of the most ancient festivals. It seems to go back to Mycenaean times, when the cult of Demeter probably existed at Eleusis and fertility-cults were widespread in Mycenaean Greece³.

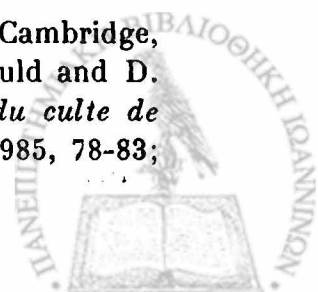
In historical times the rite was associated with the festival of the Anthesteria which is in fact the most clear evidence we have about its celebration. The central act of the day of the Wine-jars was the sacred wedding of Dionysos and the *baslinna*, the wife of the *archon basileus*. It took place in the Athenian Boukoleion on the day of the Choes⁴. The festival itself is regarded as one of the oldest Greek festivals. That this was known in the Mycenaean period is probably sug-

1. See N.J. Richardson, *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, Oxford 1974, 26 ff. and ad *Dem.* 489; Mylonas, *op. cit.*, 311-6 does not accept that the divine child of Eleusis can be equated with Ploutos as the latter does not belong to the traditional Eleusinian divinities.

2. However, Mylonas, *op. cit.*, 270 ff., denies any association of the *hieros gamos* with the cult at Eleusis, while Richardson, *op. cit.*, 27 n. 2, does not discuss the subject as he finds «the evidence confused and probably impossible to disentangle».

3. Mylonas, *op. cit.*, 19; *Festivals*, 106; Richardson, *op. cit.*, 18.

4. See L. Deubner, *Attische Feste*, Berlin 1932, 100; A. Pickard-Cambridge, *The Dramatic Festivals of Athens*, Oxford 1953, 2nd rev. edn by J. Gould and D. M. Lewis, Oxford 1968, 11-2; H. Jeanmaire, *Dionysos. Histoire du culte de Bacchus*, Paris 1951 (repr. 1970), 51-5; M. Daraki, *Dionysos*, Paris 1985, 78-83; *FA*, 112-3; *Festivals*, 96-8.



gested by the stories about the madness of the women of various Mycenaean centres like Thebes, Orchomenos and Tiryns because of their kings' resistance to the cult of Dionysos¹. Another famous sacred wedding was that of Zeus and Hera celebrated in the month Gamelion².

According to the above the *hieros gamos* is associated with the concept of fertility, but also it symbolizes or underlies the importance of decay and renewal of nature in the process of the vegetation cycle³. The literary, and to some extent the archaeological, evidence points to an early origin of the rite of the sacred wedding, most probably as early as the Bronze Age. The same concept and rite have their parallels in contemporary Eastern religious ideas. The union of the priestess with a male god or that of the king with a goddess was regarded as a very early oriental practice⁴.

But to return to *re-ke-to-ro-te-ri-jo*: the word fits perfectly the Greek word *λεχεστροτήριον*. In fact it is in the genitive plural, *λεχεστροτηρίων* (*λεχε-* or *λεχε(ε)-στροτηρίων*) > *λέχος* + *στροώνυμ* = 'make the bed', a translation which has no sense in a Mycenaean tablet unless it refers to a ritual act, i.e. a sacred marriage⁵. Thus, *lekhestroterion* may well represent the Mycenaean name of the *hieros gamos*. However, the tablets do not reveal the identity of the god and the goddess involved in the rite. It is not even possible to assume whether the king, the queen or the priestess of some deity participated too. On the other hand, divine names like those of Zeus and Hera, coupled on a Pylos tablet (Tn 316), and the close association of Potnia and *Wanax* in the texts may present them as likely participants in the *ιερός γάμος* although other divine couples might be mentioned in tablets that have not survived. As far as *wanax* is concerned, the debate over his sta-

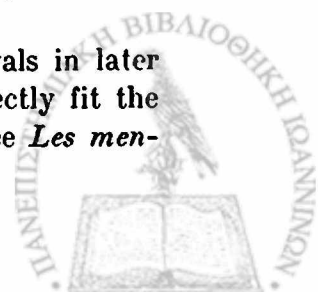
1. *Festivals*, 97-8.

2. See *FA*, 104; *Festivals*, 16. See also *The Origins*, 225 for Hera's and Zeus' *hieros gamos* on the island of Samos, and 16, 34, 39 for the sacred marriage as a feature of vegetation cult and a common ritual in the East but also in Minoan and Mycenaean religion.

3. Nilsson, *Min. Myc. Rel.*, 403, 555 f.

4. See *FA*, 113; *The Origins*, 39; W. Burkert, *Greek Religion. Archaic and Classical*, Oxford 1985 (Engl. transl. of *Griechische Religion der archaischen und klassischen Epoche*, Stuttgart 1977), 108. In the Anthesteria, however, the *Basileus* might have impersonated Dionysus in the ritual act.

5. This case, the genitive plural, is used for a reference to festivals in later Greek, though I think that a dative singular *λεχεστροτηρίῳ* would perfectly fit the purpose as well. For a review of the various etymologies of the word see *Les mentions*, 202.



tus continues. While there is no clear evidence for suggesting his divinity, it seems that he was at the top of the religious hierarchy, perhaps a priest-king, or in some cases the god himself.

The existing evidence excludes Dionysos from those deities who may be associated with an *hieros gamos* in the Mycenaean period, as he is not clearly named in the tablets. The genitive of the name Dionysos appears on two fragments from Pylos (Xa 102, 1419: *di-wo-nu-so-jo*: ΔιΦωνώσοιο), but this does not necessarily mean that it refers to the god; it could be simply any proper name. On the other hand, one of his most important festivals, the Anthesteria and its ceremonies are believed to have some analogies with Mycenaean rites or festivals which are alluded to in the Linear B tablets¹. Moreover, another festival of Dionysos, the Oschophoria, is also believed to go back to Mycenaean times because of its vegetational aspect².

Relevant to the whole question is the presence of Poseidon's name, together with *re-ke-to-ro-te-ri-jo* in PY Fr 343. He is the chief god of Pylos in the Mycenaean period; an importance which is also reflected in the Homeric poems. A sanctuary of Pylos is called after him, Posidaion. Poseidon's close association with Potnia does, according to some views³, confirm his identification with the male *paredros* of this goddess. He has also been identified with the *wanax*, a title which is applied to him from Homer onwards⁴. Poseidon was not connected with the sacred marriage in later Greek cult, a fact which does not, however, exclude him from being a candidate for the male participation in the Mycenaean ritual of the *hieros gamos*.

'Festivals' do, then, constitute a category of entries in the Mycenaean documents. The Mycenaean state was interested in revering divine cults. This is shown by the number of offering-lists among the texts which are sometimes written on the basis of months. It seems

1. *Interpretation*, 58, 240. Thus, *me-tu-wo ne-wo* (Fr 1202) has been interpreted as 'The festival of the New Wine' and was compared to the Athenian Pithoigia; *di-pi-si-jo-i* (Fr 1219, 1220, 1222, 1232 etc.) has been interpreted as the 'Festival of the Thirsty (Dead)' which has its parallel in the religious events of the Anthesteria: the Chytroi, the third day, was dedicated to the dead. Likewise, *re-ke-to-ro-te-ri-jo* may refer to an *hieros gamos*, an important event on the Choes, etc.

2. *Festivals*, 91 f.

3. *The Origins*, 177. See also *ibid.*, 181 n. 276 for Potnia identified with *mate-re teija*, the Divine Mother of PY Fr 1202, and 188 ff. for an evaluation of the results of the various discussions concerning Potnia.

4. *The Origins*, 177 esp. n. 249, 185..



more plausible that the offerings were made by the people of the Mycenaean centres than by the palace itself. The latter's role was rather confined to the supervision of the cults of the various divinities in the form of festivals and other celebrations fixed to a sacred month-calendar whose consistency cannot be clearly determined. 'Festivals' were officially controlled activities, as was everything which was recorded in the Mycenaean archives.

The discussion of the Mycenaean words *ke-se-ni-wi-jo* and *re-ke-to-ro-te-ri-jo* shows that these are most probably the names of festivals later known as *Theoxenia* and *hieros gamos*. My examination was based on analogies from the Greek religion of later periods. For cult-continuity to exist within certain place limits and within very closely related cultures seems to me stronger than contemporary foreign influence upon cult-practice. Links with later religion should be investigated because it has been shown that, «in spite of the evolution in Greek thought and art, the religious ceremonies did indeed tend to remain static»¹. Mycenaean religious practices cannot, therefore, be illustrated unless the comparative method is used bringing together, to the extent that is possible, linguistic, literary and archaeological evidence, contemporary or of later times. Nevertheless, unless new, complete and more specific information is revealed by tablets, our knowledge on Mycenaean festivals will continue to have a fragmentary character while we shall be investigating solutions in the religious continuity known to us from later sources.

Though with no exact equivalent in later Greek festival-names, these two Mycenaean words are obviously Greek in formation and etymology, which points to ritual acts that survived in historical times and are thus offered for the investigation of their antiquity: *Ἑβνια* and *λεχεστρωτήριον* may represent two early stages of the human ritual behaviour related to vegetation and fertility: a) the ritual banquet symbolizes the continuity and renewal of vegetation, and b) the sacred marriage the continuity of life, through sexual union and fertility. In both rites the spreading of the couch (*kline*), for the ritual feasting and marriage respectively, appears as a common element. The custom originates in agrarian cults: beddings of leaves and twigs of various trees, the *stibades*, were set for the ritual banquet in honour of certain gods. Such rites were part of very important festivals like the Hyakinthia of Amyklai and the Thesmophoria of Atti-

1. *Festivals*, 105.



ca¹. A thrice-ploughed corn field was the place where the sacred marriage of Demeter and Iasion took place in Crete; this may point to an association of the *stibas* with the agrarian character of the sacred marriage.

This does not necessarily mean, however, that the two festivals were celebrated at the same time, although both might have taken place in the spring. They were perhaps among those which had been celebrated shortly before the fall of Pylos. The evidence of the tablets indicates a time in early spring for that event as there are no records referring to the harvest or the shearing of wool. Moreover, the mention of a month-name *po-ro-wi-to* in Tn 316 interpreted as *Πλω-Φιστός*, 'the month of sailing' or 'navigation', is a further evidence for early spring as the time of the destruction of Pylos².

We know that in the absence of proper religious texts we shall never be able to reconstruct the *belief system* of the Mycenaean religion. Gaps concerning its content and substance will remain in any theories put forward. We are, however, in a position to create a further step towards reconstructing Mycenaean cult. The information of the tablets reflects acts and practices which seem to correspond with the later Greek cult ordinance: offerings to certain divinities are listed in kind and order as in the Classical calendars; in some cases a month's name introduces the recording of various offerings; and festivals correspond in morphology -and probably in context- with later Greek festivals³. In the above I have been researching the Greek rather than the Eastern counterparts of two Mycenaean festivals. Obviously, many religious events, festivals and cult practices still escape us in the attempt to establish an overall picture of the religion of this period. It must also be said, however, that more positive solutions can be given on the query 'What do we know about Mycenaean Religion'*.

1. See L. Gernet - A. Boulanger, *Le génie grec dans la religion*, Paris 1932 (repr. 1970), 36 ff.; Burkert, *op. cit.*, 107. I thank Dr Ariadni Gartziou-Tatti for drawing my attention to the possible relevance of the *stibades* with the rites under discussion.

2. J. Chadwick, *The Mycenaean World*, 191-2.

3. Burkert, *op. cit.*, 45.

* I wish to thank Mr J.T. Hooker for reading this paper and for his valuable suggestions.



ΣΩΤΗΡΟΥΛΑ ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΙΔΟΥ

Π Ε Ρ Ι Λ Η Ψ Η

ΞΕΝΙΑ ΚΑΙ ΛΕΧΕΣΤΡΩΤΗΡΙΟΝ: ΔΥΟ ΜΥΚΗΝΑΪΚΕΣ ΓΙΟΡΤΕΣ

Στην εργασία αυτή εξετάζονται δύο λέξεις των μυκηναϊκών κειμένων, οι *ke-se-ni-wi-jo* και *re-ke-to-ro-te-ri-jo*, που μεταγράφονται ως ξενίων και λεχεστρωτηρίων και διερευνάται η πιθανότητα να αποτελούν τα μυκηναϊκά ονόματα των λατρευτικών τελετών που μας είναι αργότερα γνωστές ως θεοξένια και ιερός γάμος. Ένας μεγάλος αριθμός λατρευτικών πράξεων, ιδιαίτερα όσες συνδέονται με την αντίληψη της γονιμότητας και της ευφορίας, θεωρούνται ότι προέρχονται από πολύ πρώιμες εποχές και ότι επέδρασαν σ' εκείνες της αρχαϊκής και κλασικής περιόδου. Η εξέταση, επομένως, του θέματος βασίστηκε κυρίως σε αναλογίες από την ελληνική θρησκεία μεταγενέστερων εποχών και στη διερεύνηση των ελληνικών παρά των ανατολικών προτύπων των μυκηναϊκών γιορτών.

Τα θεοξένια, το τελετουργικό γεύμα προς τιμήν κάποιου θεού στο οποίο συμμετέχει και ο ίδιος, συνδέθηκαν με τους Διόσκουρους αλλά και τον Απόλλωνα και άλλους θεούς. Υποστηρίζεται ότι, η αρχαιότητα του εθίμου καθώς και η παρουσία της Πότνιας -μάλλον αυτόνομης θεάς στη μυκηναϊκή περίοδο- μαζί με τη λ. *ke-se-ni-wi-jo* (ξενίων) σε μια από τις πινακίδες, την ΡΥ Fr (1231), κάνουν πολύ πιθανή την ταύτιση αυτής της λέξης με τα θεοξένια.

Η δεύτερη λέξη, *re-ke-to-ro-te-ri-jo*, μεταγράφεται ως λεχεστρωτηρίων ή λεχεστρωτηρίω και αναφέρεται μάλλον στην τελετουργία του ιεροῦ γάμου, που επίσης ανάγεται σε πολύ πρώιμες εποχές. Παρ' όλα αυτά, η ακριβής φύση της και οι θεότητες που συμμετέχουν δεν αποκαλύπτονται από τα κείμενα. Αν και τα δύο ονόματα που εξετάσαμε δεν μπορούν να ταυτιστούν ακριβώς με εκείνα μεταγενέστερων γιορτών, η ετυμολογία τους τα συνδέει με λατρευτικές πράξεις που επιβίωσαν στην ιστορική περίοδο. Τα ξένια και ο ιερός γάμος φαίνονται να αντιπροσωπεύουν δύο πρώιμα στάδια της ανθρώπινης τελετουργικής συμπεριφοράς, που συνδέονται με τη βλάστηση και τη γονιμότητα: α) το τελετουργικό γεύμα συμβολίζει τη συνέχεια και την ανανέωση της βλάστησης και β) ο ιερός γάμος τη συνέχεια της ζωής διαμέσου της ερωτικής ένωσης και της γονιμότητας.

