

DID THE MYCENAEANS BELIEVE IN THERIOMORPHIC DIVINITIES?*

Certainly Mycenaean religion is *not* a neglected subject. During the last decades our knowledge of this subject was enriched by the excavations at the Cult Centre at Mycenae,¹ the Lower Citadel at Tiryns,² the Sanctuary at Phylakopi³ as well as Thebes⁴ and Khania.⁵ The available new data in some cases support, while in other change radically, what we had already known about the religion of the Mycenaeans.

There are three basic sources for the study of Mycenaean religion: archaeological data e.g. sanctuaries, objects used in religious practices, iconography, which has links to the previous category and Linear B documents.

The aim of this paper is to give emphasis to the Linear B texts with religious connotations and to discuss the argument that in the Mycenaean pantheon theriomorphic divinities might have existed.

Theriomorphism is a feature well-attested in contemporary civilizations. Specifically, it plays an important role in the Egyptian pantheon. An important number of divinities during the Bronze Age and later were theriomorphic e.g. bull, ram, crocodile, cat, jackal,

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<i>Aegaeum</i> 5	<i>Aegean seals, sealings and administration. Proceedings of the NEH-Dickson Conference of the Program in Aegean Scripts and Prehistory of the Department of Classics, University of Texas at Austin, January 11-13 1989</i> , edited by T. Palaima, <i>Aegaeum</i> 5 (1990).
<i>Florent Studia Mycenaea</i>	<i>Florent Studia Mycenaea. Akten des X. internationalen mykenologischen Colloquiums in Salzburg vom 1.-5. Mai 1995. BAND I. S. DEGER-JALKOTZY, S. HILLER, O. PANAGL (eds), (1999).</i>
MYKENAÏKA	<i>Actes du IXe Colloque international sur les textes mycéniens et égéens organisé par le Centre de l'Antiquité Grecque et Romaine de la Fondation Hellénique des Recherches Scientifiques et l'École Française d'Athènes, 2-6 octobre 1990</i> , edited by J.-P. OLIVIER, <i>BCH Suppl.</i> 25 (1992).
<i>Tractata Mycenaea</i>	<i>Tractata Mycenaea. Proceedings of the eighth international colloquium on Mycenaean studies, Ohrid 15-20 September 1985</i> , edited by P. ILIEVSKI and L. CREPAJAC (1987).
TITHEMI + MIKHA	<i>TITHEMI + MIKHA: The Tablets and Nodules in Linear B from Tiryns, Thebes, Mycenae, Midea and Khania</i> (A revised transliteration by J.L. MELENA and J.-P. OLIVIER, 1993).

1 W. TAYLOUR, "Mycenae 1968," *Antiquity* 43 (1969) 91-97; ID. "New light on Mycenaean religion," *Antiquity* 44 (1970) 270-279; Γ. ΜΥΛΩΝΑΣ, *Το θρησκευτικόν κέντρον των Μυκηνών* (1972); E. FRENCH, "Cult places at Mycenae," in *Sanctuaries and Cults* 41-48; G.E. MYLONAS, "The Cult Centre of Mycenae," *ProcBritAc* 67 (1981) 307-320; C.W. SHELMEARDINE, "Review of Aegean Prehistory VI: The Palatial Bronze Age of the Southern and Central Greek Mainland," *AJA* 101 (1997) 571-573.

2 K. KILIAN, "Zeugnisse mykenischer Kultausbübung in Tiryns," in *Sanctuaries and Cults* 49-58; ID. "Mycenaeans up to date, trends and changes in recent research," in *Problems in Greek Prehistory* 134-135 and fig. 9; SHELMEARDINE (*supra* n. 1) 543, 573.

3 C. RENFREW, "The sanctuary at Phylakopi," *Sanctuaries and Cults* 67-80; C. RENFREW *et al.*, *The archaeology of cult. The sanctuary at Phylakopi* (1985).

4 V. ARAVANTINOS, "Tebe micenei: recenti scoperte epigrafiche ed arceologiche (1993-1995)," *SMEA* 38 (1996) 179-190; ID. "New archaeological and archival discoveries at Mycenaean Thebes," *BICS* 41 (1996) 135-136.

5 Y. TZEDAKIS and E. HALLAGER, "The Greek-Swedish excavations at Kastelli, Khania 1980," *AAA* 16, 1-2 (1983) 3-17; E. HALLAGER *et al.*, "New Linear B tablets from Khania," *Kadmos* 31 (1992) 61-87.

lion, hippopotamus.⁶ The case of the Egyptian gods is complicated as the forms of each god were numerous.⁷ They could be human, animal or even a combination of both, varying with the situation. However, the predominance of the animal form is obvious as the cult statues, the special buildings and the tombs used for the burials of these specific animals prove. In addition, a variety of sacred animals, which were kept in temple complexes and buried in vaults and catacombs, occurred.⁸ As for the Hittites, they conceived the gods in human terms. Occasionally the divinities were represented by sacred animals, but there is no indication of the existence of theriomorphism.⁹

For the Aegean it is worth mentioning at the beginning that every scholar dealing with Mycenaean religion based on the Linear B evidence faces a series of major problems. First of all a linguistic problem arises, as scholars in many cases do not agree with the transcription or with the meaning of words mentioned in the tablets. In the case of documents with possible religious connotations the interpretation becomes more difficult, as several contradictory opinions may exist. In this paper the widely accepted interpretation is used. Another problem related to the Linear B texts and Mycenaean religion derives from the nature of the texts themselves. There is not a single text recording a prayer, a hymn or a myth that could throw light on the belief system of the Mycenaean. What is presently available is lists of offerings to divinities, sanctuaries and cult personnel. Although the available data should not be underestimated, any effort to approach the actual religious beliefs based only on the textual evidence seems to be difficult and risky. It is worth keeping in mind that the Linear B documents are associated with the central administration, that means they record the activities the palace is interested in. There is no reference to domestic cult, which was not under the control of the palaces. It should also be noted that the textual material is fragmentary. On the Greek mainland only at Pylos¹⁰ and Thebes¹¹ was a great part of the archive uncovered. The important sites of Mycenae,¹² Tiryns¹³ and Midea¹⁴ have given us few texts which do not allow to reconstruct up to a satisfactory degree the involvement of the central administration in religious affairs.

Taking into consideration all the above, in this paper we shall emphasize not only the documentary evidence, but also the iconographical and archaeological data.

- 6 K.A.D. SMELIK and E.A. HEMELRIJK, "Who knows not what monsters demented Egypt worships? Opinions on Egyptian animal worship in Antiquity as part of the ancient conception of Egypt" in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* II.17.4 (1984) 1852-2000.
- 7 D.P. SILVERMAN, "Divinity and Deities in Ancient Egypt," in B.E. SHAFER (ed.) *Religion in ancient Egypt. Gods, Myths and Personal Practice* (1991) 9-30.
- 8 J. BAINES, "Society, morality and religious practice," in SHAFER (ed.) (*supra* n. 7) 123-200.
- 9 J.G. MACQUEEN, *The Hittites and their contemporaries in Asia Minor* (1986) 111, 119-120; H. HOFFNER, Jr, "Hittite Religion," in M. ELIADE (ed.) *The Encyclopedia of Religion* VI (1995).
- 10 E.L. BENNETT Jr and J.-P. OLIVIER, *The Pylos tablets transcribed*, Part 1 (1973); ID. *The Pylos tablets transcribed*, Part 2 (1976).
- 11 L. GODART and A. SACCONI, *Les tablettes en linéaire de Thèbes* (1978); T. SPYROPOULOS and J. CHADWICK, "The Thebes tablets II," suppl. *Minos* 4 (1975); J. CHADWICK, "Linear B Tablets from Thebes," *Minos* 10 (1969) [1970] 115-137; J.L. MELENA and J.-P. OLIVIER, "TITHEMI: The Tablets and Nodules in Linear B from Tiryns, Thebes and Mycenae," suppl. *Minos* 12 (1991); V. ARAVANTINOS, L. GODART and A. SACCONI, "Sui nuovi testi del palazzo di Cadmo a Tebe. Note preliminari," *RendLinc* s. 9, v. 6 (1995) 1-37; V. ARAVANTINOS, "The Mycenaean inscribed from Thebes: preliminary notes," in *Tractata Mycenaea* (1987) 13-27; ID. "The Mycenaean inscribed from Thebes: problems of context and function," in *Aegaeum* 5 (1990) 149-174.
- 12 A. SACCONI, *Corpus delle iscrizioni lineare B di Micene* (1974).
- 13 L. GODART, J.T. KILLEN, J.-P. OLIVIER, "Eighteen More Fragments of Linear B Tablets from Tiryns," *AA* (1983) 413-426.
- 14 G. WALBERG, "A Linear B Inscription from Midea," *Kadmos* 31 (1992) 93; K. DEMAKOPOULOU *et al.*, "Excavations and Restoration Work in Midea 1990-1992," *OpAth* 20 (1994) 19-41; K. DEMAKOPOULOU, "Mycenaean Citadels: Recent Excavations on the Acropolis of Midea in the Argolid," *BICS* (1995) 151-161; See also *TITHEMI + MIKHA*.

Animals and anthroponyms that derive from animals are mentioned in many texts from Pylos, Mycenae and Knossos which record the flocks and personnel controlled by the palaces.¹⁵ It has been suggested that in three cases we do have animals as recipients of offerings and that these animals were probably treated as divinities: *i-qa* (horse) and *qa-wi-ja* (cow) are mentioned at Pylos (Fa 16 and Tn 316 respectively), *ku-ne* (dog) and *qa-we* (ox) at Mycenae (Fu 711).

The case of MY Fu 711, which was uncovered in 1968 in a section of the northeastern slope of the acropolis of Mycenae, is complicated.¹⁶ The tablet seems to record the allocation of quantities of barley, figs and flour to individuals. Among others, the term “dog” and “ox” occur in dative. The word dog is followed by an ideogram related to flour, while the ox on the verso is not followed by any ideogram. What made L.R. Palmer relate this fragmentary document to theriomorphic divinities and cult personnel is the suggested reading on line 10 of the recto, where no name was preserved, of the entry CYP+O,¹⁷ which was a well-known perfume ingredient.¹⁸

CYP+O occurs on Fa 16 from Pylos, too and it is accompanied by the term *i-qa*, which is widely accepted as the Mycenaean word for horse. Palmer later proposed again that *i-qa* could have been a horse deity who received offerings.¹⁹ The theory about the occurrence of theriomorphic divinities was probably supported by the interpretation by Chadwick of the word *qa-wi-ja* [as “she of the cow.” The term occurs in probably the most famous list of divinities in the Mycenaean archives, PY Tn 316 and was interpreted as a goddess who receives a gold goblet and two women.²⁰

However, the evidence available is quite problematic. The doubtful reading of an aromatic substance in a fragmentary document (MY Fu 711), which also mentions two species of animals in different lines, cannot prove the existence of theriomorphic divinities. In the case of the term dog, which was followed by an ideogram, one could argue that here offerings to an animal may occurred. But we cannot come to the same conclusion for the term ox. So, we have serious objections to regard MY Fu 711 as a list of offerings to gods and persons related to cult. As for the Pylos tablet, we cannot exclude the possibility that *i-qa* was simply a personal name (Hippas or Hippon) indicating a secular recipient or even contributor of CYP+O. At this point we should mention that CYP+O is frequently contributed among other commodities destined for use at a ceremonial banquet, as the evidence from the tablets and the sealings suggest.²¹ As for *qa-wi-ja* [, it has been proposed that it could be an epithet describing the offerings to the divinities and not a divine name.

So, the documentary evidence we had for the existence of theriomorphic divinities until the beginning of the 90's was quite doubtful. However the uncovering between 1993 and 1995 of about 238 new tablets below the level of the road of Pelopidou Street at Thebes brought to light again the question of theriomorphism.²² A group of at least 30 tablets includes animals among the recipients of various products.²³ The words for the animals occur in dative and

15 Docs² 195-213; F. AURA JORRO, *Diccionario micénico*, Vol. I (1985) 285-286, 383-384, 402 and Vol. II (1993) 27.

16 G. MYLONAS, “A new tablet from Mycenae, MY Fu 711,” *Kadmos* 9 (1970) 48-50.

17 L.R. PALMER, “Studies in Mycenaean Religion,” *Innsbrucker Beiträge zur Kulturwissenschaft*, Vol. 22 (1983) 283-287.

18 C.W. SHELMEERDINE, “The perfumed oil industry at Pylos,” in *Pylos comes alive* (1984) 81-83.

19 L.R. PALMER, *Mycenaean Greek texts* (1963) 277.

20 J. CHADWICK, *The Mycenaean world* (1976) 95.

21 J. KILLEN, “Observations on the Thebes sealings,” in *MYKENAÏKA* (1992) 365-380; R. PALMER, “Wine in the Mycenaean palace economy,” *Aegaeum* 10 (1994) 101-113.

22 Forthcoming publication of the tablets by V. ARAVANTINOS, L. GODART and A. SACCONI under the title *Thèbes. Fouilles de la Cadmée I. Les tablettes en linéaire B de la Odos Pelopidou*.

23 ARAVANTINOS (*supra* n. 4) 179-190; ID. “Mycenaean Texts and Contexts at Thebes: The Discovery of the New Linear B Archives on the Kadmeia,” in *Florent Studia Mycenaea* (1999) 68-69; ID. “Από την αυγή του Ελληνικού πολιτισμού: Οι νέες Μυκηναϊκές επιγραφές από την Καδμεία (Θήβα),” in *Η ιστορία της Ελληνικής γλώσσας και γραφής. Από τη δεύτερη στην πρώτη Χιλιετηρίδα π. Χ. : Διακοπή ή Συνέχεια*, *Ohlstadt* 3-6-1996 (1998) 189; L. GODART and A. SACCONI, “Les dieux thébains dans les archives mycéniennes,” *CRAI* (1996) 99-113; Y. DUHOUX, “Aux sources du bestiaire grec: les zoonymes mycéniens,” *Publications de la Faculté des Lettres et Arts et Sciences Humaines de Nice* 38 (1997) 173-202.

in most cases are complete. In many cases they are accompanied by a term that indicates a toponym or a person with religious connotations.²⁴ It should be noted that, when an ideogram survives, we have small quantities of the same substance destined for a specific species. Specifically, *mules* occur twice in the new archive (*e-mi-o-no-i*) and they receive quantities of wine. The term is followed by *63-*te-ra-de*, which has been interpreted as a place associated with cult or as a festival, to which a large quantity of agricultural products was sent. Dogs occur 6 times and receive quantities of barley and flour. The term dog is accompanied by *ma-ka* and *ko-wa*, which according to the preliminary study of the archive comprise together with *o-po-re-i* members of a divine triad.²⁵ At this point it should be mentioned that in some cases, together with *ko-wa*, offerings are sent to *a-pu-wa*, a term which according to L. Godart, could be interpreted as Ἀρτυίαι,²⁶ the “dogs of Great Zeus” as Apollonios argues.²⁷ If this interpretation is correct, we could possibly have the name of some of the mythical creatures represented on Aegean Bronze Age art e.g. sphinxes.²⁸ In the new tablets we have also references to *snakes* (*e-pe-to-i*) which receive wine. The term occurs 6 times and it is mainly associated with *63-*te-ra-de*, but also with *ma-ka* and *to-pa-po-ro-i* the “carriers of big baskets”²⁹ or, as Louis Godart has recently suggested, “the torch-bearers.”³⁰ The Theban archive has provided us with more surprises. Geese are mentioned as recipients of olive oil (at least 5 times) in most cases in association with *a-ko-da-mo*, an officer “responsible for (ceremonial) gatherings.” In addition, *birds* occur twice as recipients of quantities of flour along with the “carriers of kernoi” (*ke-re-na*) and the “feeders of the horses” (*i-qo-po-qo-i*).³¹ The alternative interpretation of *ke-re-na* as “cranes”³² adds to the list of recipients of offerings at Thebes a waterbird which in the following centuries had associations with divinities and cult performances.³³ Finally, pigs are mentioned twice as recipients of olive oil in association with *a-ko-da-mo* and the dogs.

So, it can hardly be denied that animals which receive offerings in the tablets from Thebes are in a context which has close associations with the religious sphere. The question which arises is whether these animals were treated as divinities or not. As the documents can give us no more information except for the kind of offerings made to the animals, I will focus on the iconography in order to come to some conclusions on the matter of theriomorphism.

An important number of representations on gold rings, seals and wall-paintings relate animals and birds to cult scenes; lions, ducks, monkeys, bulls, goats, horses as well as mythical creatures, like griffins, sphinxes and demons, are depicted on Late Bronze Age Aegean art in scenes related to cult.³⁴ It should be noted that the majority of these scenes are dated to the early phases of the Late Bronze Age and, consequently, they are not contemporary with the tablets. However, they could provide a proof for the possible role animals played in religious matters. What we notice is that animals, mainly bulls and goats, are depicted in some cases on a

24 ARAVANTINOS (*supra* n. 11) 27, 29.

25 ARAVANTINOS, GODART and SACCONI (*supra* n. 11) 26-29; L. GODART and A. SACCONI, “La triade tebana nei documenti in lineare B del palazzo di Cadmo,” *RendLinc* s. 9, v. 7 (1996) 283-285; M. LEJEUNE, “Sur les offrandes thébaines à Mère Terre,” *Mémoires de philologie mycénienne*, 4me série (1969-1996), *Inc. Graeca* (1997) 279-281.

26 L. GODART and A. SACCONI, “Les archives de Thèbes et le monde mycénien,” *CRAI* (1998) 898-898.

27 Arg 2.288 to 2.290

“Οὐ θέμις, ὦ νιεῖς Βορέω, ξιφέεσσιν ἐλάσσαι
Ἄρτυίαις, μέγαλοιο Διὸς κύνας · ὄρκια δὲ αὐτῇ
δώσω ἐγὼν ὥς οὐ οἱ ἔτι χρίμψουσιν ἰοῦσαι.”

28 A. ΣΑΚΕΛΛΑΡΙΟΥ, *Μυκηναϊκή σφραγιδογλυφία* (1966) 16-24; N. ΒΑΣΙΛΙΚΟΥ, *Ο Μυκηναϊκός πολιτισμός* (1995) 286-288; L. KONTORLI-PAPADOPOULOU, *Aegean frescoes of religious character* (1996) 110-115.

29 ARAVANTINOS, GODART and SACCONI (*supra* n. 11) 29.

30 GODART and SACCONI (*supra* n. 11) 899.

31 ARAVANTINOS, GODART and SACCONI (*supra* n. 11) 29.

32 M. DEL FREO, “Mic. ke-re-na-i nei testi in lineare B di Tebe,” in *επί πόντον πλαζόμενοι, Simposio italiano di Studi Egei dedicato a L. Bernabò Brea e G. Pugliese Carratelli, Roma, 18-20 febbraio 1998*, V. LA ROSA, D. PALERMO, L. VAGNETTI (eds) 299-304. Recently Jean Louis Perpillou has reached independently the same conclusions with M. Del Freo about *ke-re-ne-i* in a paper recently published in *Chronique d'étymologie grecque* 4.

33 E. BEVAN, “Water-birds and the Olympian gods,” *BSA* 84 (1989) 163-169; ID. *Representations of animals in sanctuaries of Artemis and other Olympian deities*, Part 1, *BAR International series* 315 (1986) 29-31, 41, 45.

34 ΒΑΣΙΛΙΚΟΥ (*supra* n. 28) 237-239, 244, 281.

slaughtering table ready for sacrifice, while in few cases the knife or the dagger is represented, too.³⁵ In other cases animals are depicted in a heraldic position in connection with a column, which is probably an aniconic form of a divinity. Animals are also depicted in connection with a male or a female with special status.³⁶

From what has been mentioned above, it is clear that the animals are in a sense the focal point only in the case of their sacrifice. In all the other cases they either accompany the divinity or the priestess or play the role of the companions of the aniconic divinity. But even in the case when an animal on the slaughtering table comprises the only scene on a ring or gem, again we could argue that the honoured divinity, although not depicted, is the focal point of the scene and that sacrifice is a means of communion with the divinity. In no case processions and the bringing of offerings to an animal are clearly represented, on the contrary, animals *are* among the offerings. Maybe in the case of a fresco fragment from Tiryns representing a conical rhyton and an open mouth of an animal (?) a direct association of an animal with the religious sphere could be found.³⁷

As for the excavated Mycenaean cult places, although it is quite difficult to come to definite conclusions about the nature of the divinities that were worshipped in each place, we have no adequate evidence for the existence of theriomorphic gods. The numerous terracotta animal figurines which were uncovered in many cult places leave no doubt that they are votives. The most common terracotta animal figurine found is the bovine. It also occurs in the shape of bovine rhyta. There does not seem to be any indication for the worship of a divinity in the form of a bull or a cow, on the basis of the occurrence of clay bovines in cult places dated basically to Late Helladic IIIB and C period.³⁸ On the contrary, it seems more probable that the occurrence of clay bovines could be related to sacrificial substitutes. As for the 17, at least, free standing terracotta *snakes* from the Cult Centre at Mycenae, unique finds in the Bronze Age Aegean, it seems quite possible that they were associated with the large monochrome terracotta figures. If we accept that the figures represented divinities and that they were displayed permanently or just for ceremonies, we could interpret the snakes as attributes of these divinities or of one of them, displayed with them. If, alternatively, we accept that the figures functioned as representations of cult celebrants,³⁹ again the association with the religious sphere is obvious. It does not seem to be enough evidence to support the argument that the terracotta snakes in question were actually cult statues.

So, the iconography and finds in Mycenaean cult places leave no room for the theory that theriomorphic divinities existed in the Mycenaean pantheon. In addition, the evidence from burial customs does not support this argument, either. It is worth mentioning that a number of horse burials, usually in the dromoi of the tombs, is noticed from the end of Middle Helladic period onwards.⁴⁰ Furthermore, other domestic animals e.g. dogs were buried in tombs of the Late Bronze Age.⁴¹ However, we cannot argue that any of these tombs was built exclusively for the burial of an animal. The animals in question comprise part of the offerings to the dead and their sacrifice and burial was a part of the funeral rites. I do not believe that these burials of animals give us any information about the Mycenaean pantheon. What they do is to help us understand better the beliefs of the Mycenaeans regarding the afterlife and the way burial practices were used to express differentiation.

35 J.G. YOUNGER, *The iconography of Late Minoan and Mycenaean sealstones and finger rings* (1988) 176-177.

36 ΣΑΚΕΛΛΑΠΙΟΥ (*supra* n. 28) 70-72.

37 G. RODENWALDT, *Tiryns II. Die Fresken* (1912) Pl. XVI,4, cat. 226, p.157; E. MANTZOURANI, "Notes on the depiction of various types of vases and vessels in Aegean wall-painting," in *KLADOS, Essays in honour of J.N. Coldstream* (1995) 133. I would like to thank Pietro Militello for his constructive comment.

38 M. GUGGISBERG, *Frühgriechische Tierkeramik* (1996).

39 A. MOORE, "The large monochrome terracotta figures from Mycenae: the problem of interpretation," in *Problems in Greek Prehistory* 219-225.

40 E. KOSMETATOU, "Horse sacrifices in Greece and Cyprus," *JPR* VII (1993) 31-32.

41 ΒΑΣΙΛΙΚΟΥ (*supra* n. 28) 108; L. KONTORLI-PAPADOPOULOU, "Mycenaean tholos tombs: some thoughts on burial customs and rites," in *KLADOS (supra* n. 37) 120.

Taking all the above into consideration, how can we interpret the occurrence in the new tablets from Thebes of a considerable number of animals which receive offerings? Could they be considered as sacred or as divinities? The use of plural in the texts probably supports the argument that we have to do with sacred animals and not a group of divinities. The association of birds with the religious sphere has long been pointed out, as birds were considered in many cases as a form of the epiphany of the divinities.⁴² As for the snakes, the terracotta examples from Mycenae are actually the only proof that they did play a role in Mycenaean religion. The geese which receive offerings at Thebes are not a surprise. On an important number of sealstones they are companions of the Potnia Theron.⁴³ We could argue that geese are held only by females.⁴⁴ As for the long-robed male holding a waterbird on a seal in the Ashmolean,⁴⁵ it is possible that he is a priest who makes an offering since the pose is quite different from the females holding one bird in each hand, hanging down. Waterbirds (e.g. ducks) are depicted in Xeste 3 at Akrotiri, too, both on the necklace of the seated female (Pl. XCVIa), and flying in a marshy landscape.⁴⁶ Bearing in mind Professor Christou's suggestion that the Potnia's waterbirds are a personification of moisture⁴⁷ and of fertility associated with it and their presence both on the necklace of the goddess depicted on the north wall and the wall-painting on the west wall, Dr Marika Zeimbekis has argued that the divinity represented is associated with moisture and perhaps fertility.⁴⁸

The rest of the animals which receive offerings in the new tablets from Thebes are a great surprise. The only association that could be found between mules and cult in iconography is the small fragment of a wall-painting from the Cult Centre at Mycenae representing three genii with donkey heads carrying a pole over their shoulders.⁴⁹ As for the dogs, they are regularly represented in hunting scenes as well as on seals,⁵⁰ however they are not represented as an attribute of the Potnia Theron. We cannot find any evidence that they were treated as divinities, but their special status could be interpreted by the special role hunting played in the lives of the Mycenaeans. The new texts from Thebes also record offerings to the women "who lead the dogs" (*ku-na-ki-si*) together with officers associated with cult. We should also bear in mind that there is a unique example of a rhyton in the shape of a dog's head, which reinforces the argument that this animal did play a role in the cult.⁵¹ Finally, pigs occur in iconography mainly as victims of sacrifice, as in the case of a seal from Mycenae (Pl. XCVIb).⁵²

To summarize, the evidence for animals as recipients of offerings in the Mycenaean archives was until the mid 90's slight and doubtful. However this fragmentary and doubtful evidence formed the base for an argument proposed mainly by L.R. Palmer that in the Mycenaean pantheon theriomorphic divinities existed. The new texts from Thebes provide a variety of animals which receive offerings together with divinities and cult personnel. Animals that according to Palmer were treated as divinities, like horse and bull are not mentioned at

42 MMR² 330-340.

43 L. MORGAN, *The miniature wall painting of Thera. A study in Aegean culture and iconography* (1988) 63-65. Also CMS I 233b; IX 154; VII 134.

44 The gold pendant from the Aigina treasure according to the present data seems to be the only iconographical representation of a Potis Theron carrying warebirds. This feature consists another parameter in the discussion for the provenance of this object.

45 J. BOARDMAN, *Greek Gems and Finger Rings* (1970) pl. 102.

46 N. MARINATOS, *Art and Religion in Thera. Reconstructing a Bronze Age Society* (1984) 61-72; J. YOUNGER, "Representations of Minoan-Mycenaean jewelry," *EIKΩN* 265-266.

47 C. CHRISTOU, *Potnia Theron* (1968) 69.

48 M. ZEIMBEKIS, *The Typology, Forms and Functions of Animal Figures from Minoan Peak Sanctuaries with Special Reference to Juktas and Kophinas* (Unpublished thesis, University of Bristol) (1998) 249.

49 M. GILL, "The Minoan Genius," *AthMitt* (1964) 1-21, no. 25; KONTORLI-PAPADOPOULOU (*supra* n. 41) 116-117.

50 CMS I 255, 256.

51 R. LAFFINEUR, "Le rhyton égéen en forme de tête de chien des Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire," *BMusBrux* (1975) 291-300.

52 ΣΑΚΕΛΛΑΠΙΟΥ (*supra* n. 28) 69; Also CMS I 80. The role of the pig in the Bronze Age Aegean cult was reinforced recently by the uncovering at Agios Ioannis at Amari of an intact rhyton in the shape of a pig.

all. On the contrary, snakes, geese, pigs, dogs and mules are the recipients of offerings. The iconography and the archaeological finds from the Bronze Age Aegean do not support the argument that the animals in question were treated as divinities. However, it is hard to deny that they *did* play a role in the cult. It seems to be more possible that here we have to do with sacred animals, intermediate in status between humans and divinities, kept in cult places which were under the control and the financial support of the central administration.

Dimitra ROUSIOTI

APPENDIX: LINEAR B TEXTS DISCUSSED*

MY Fu 711*sup. mut.*

r. 1]V 2 [
 2]HORD V 2
 3 -a HORD T 7 V 3
 4] HORD V 2
 5] *vacant*
 6] *vacant*
 7] NI Z 2 ku-ne FAR Z 2
 8] 10 ka-ra-u-ja FAR Z 2 NI Z 1
 9] V 3 a-re-ke-se-[] NI T 2 [
 10] 3 Z 1 CYP+O T1 [[5]]
 11] NI 2

PY Fa 16

i-qo CYP+O 8 T 2 V 1 [[]]

PY Tn 316

r. 1 po-ro-wi-to-jo
 2 i-e-to-qe pa-ki-ja-si do-ra-qe pe-re po-re-na-qe
 3 pu-ro a-ke po-ti-ni-ja GOLD GOBLET 1 WOMAN 1
 4 ma-na-sa GOLD GOBLET 1 WOMAN 1 po-si-da-e-ja GOLD GOBLET 1
 WOMAN 1
 5 ti-ri-se-ro-e GOLD GOBLET 1 do-po-ta GOLD GOBLET 1
 v. 1 i-je-to-qe po-si-po-si-da-i-jo a-ke-qe wa-tu
 2 do-ra-qe pe-re po-re-na-qe a-ke
 3 pu-ro GOLD GOBLET 1 WOMAN 2 qo-wi-ja-na-[] ko-ma-we-te-ja
 4 i-je-to-qe pe-re-*82-jo i-pe-me-de-ja di-u-ja-jo-qe
 5 do-ra-qe pe-re-po-re-na-qe a pe-re-*82 GOLD GOBLET 1 WOMAN 1
 6 i-pe-me-de-ja GOLD GOBLET 1 di-u-ja GOLD GOBLET 1 WOMAN 1
 7 pu-ro e-ma-a₂ a-re-ja GOLD GOBLET 1 MAN 1
 8 i-je-to-qe di-u-jo do-ra-qe pe-re po-re-na-qe a-ke
 9 di-we GOLD GOBLET 1 MAN 1 e-ra GOLD GOBLET 1 WOMAN 1
 10 di-ri-mi-jo di-wo i-je-we GOLD GOBLET 1
 11 pu-ro

TH Av 100*supra mutila*

1] *vestigia*
 2] po-te-we si-to ku-na-ki-si GRA 2 V 2 Z 2
 3] -so/ si-to GRA 3
 a] VIR 1 MUL 1
 4 b] no pa-ro zo-wa e-re-u-te-ri
 5] wi-ri-ne-u VIR 1

TH Av 101*supra mutila*

1] *vest.* [
 2]-ro VIR 1 *vest.* [
 3] po-me-ne VIR 2 da[
 4] a-ko-da-mo VIR 2 T 6 V [
 5] V 2 ma-di-je T 6 V 4 ko-ru-we T 2 [
 a] MUL ku-su-to-ro-qa
 6 b] *vest.* si-to to-pa-po-ro-i [

* Reference is made only to up-to-date published documents.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- Pl. XCVIa Detail of the necklace of the seated female from Xeste 3.
Pl. XCVIb Seal from Mycenae depicting boar (?) sacrifice.