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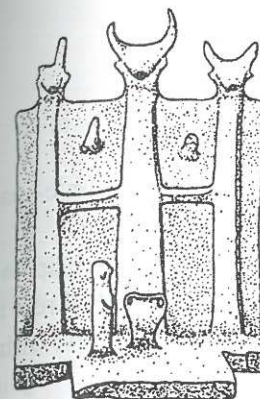
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Abbreviation for this journal: *JPR*

COVER PICTURES:

- Terracotta model from Kotchati (or Marki), Cyprus. Early/Middle Bronze Age, c. 1900 B.C. Cyprus Museum, Nicosia. See P. Åström, "A Cypriote Cult Scene", *JPR* 2: 5-11.
- Black Slip V *askos*, beginning of the Late Cypriote period. Staatliche Antikensammlung und Glyptothek, Munich. See K. Nys and P. Åström in this volume.



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Oil and Honey on Some of the Linear B-Offering Tablets from Knossos. Considerations about Their Possible Application*

Jörg Weilhartner

The sets Fp₍₁₎, Gg₍₁₎ and Gg₍₃₎ from Knossos have common features that differ them from other tablets. Those are (a) the relatively small quantities of oil and honey, (b) the frequent mention of month-names and (c) the large number of deities and cult-places included on the tablets. The particularity of these texts is emphasised by their findspots. In the Clay Chest as well as in the Gallery of Jewel Fresco, only tablets that record cult offerings have been found.¹

Until now the possible function of oil and honey has rarely been seriously considered. In most cases it was only stated that they were used for cult purposes or for the daily maintenance of the sanctuaries' personnel. On account of the form of the oil ideogram within Fp₍₁₎ Chadwick (1966: 26-28) supposed that the oil was used for ritual anointing, but along with this assumption other explanations have also been proposed (e.g. Baumbach 1979: 203). In regard to the exact use of the assigned honey, no theories have usually been suggested.

An important clue to the possible use of the two liquids may lie in the fact that on the three sets of Knossos, deities and sanctuaries are exclusively named as recipients.² This is contrary to various other oil- and honey-tablets from Knossos where apart from theonyms, cult-designa-

tions and anthroponyms also appear (cf. Fp₍₂₎, Fh-series, Gg₍₂₎). The exclusiveness of the beneficiaries in the three sets under discussion therefore implies a special use of the listed oil and honey. If one considers that the particularity of these sets might lie in the direct offering of the liquids to the respective deities a libation may be assumed.

Libations were very common amongst Indo-European peoples as well as amongst peoples of the Aegean-Mediterranean (Burkert 1977: 121-125; Meuli 1946: 192f.). Together with processions and communal feasting this ritual belonged to the most important elements of Minoan and Mycenaean official cult (Hägg 1990: 177-184). This is not only implied by numerous rhyta, libation jugs and table of offerings but also by devices in Mycenae, Asine and Berbati, that apparently point to the pouring of libations (Mylonas 1966: 165f; Hiller 1970: 82f.). A comparable installation seems to have existed in the throne-room of Pylos (Blegen-Rawson 1966: 88).

According to the above interpretation, a passage from Porphyrius can be quoted. In his work *περὶ ἀποχῆς ἐμψύχων* 2,20 he states in reference to (the unpreserved) work of Theophrastus' *περὶ εὐσεβείας* that besides libations of water the *μελίσπονδα* (libations of honey) and the

ἐλαιόσπονδα (libations of oil) belong to the *τὰ μὲν ἀρχαῖα τῶν ἱερῶν νηφάλια*. Proof of his view is found in a quotation of Empedocles in which he states amongst the oldest forms of worship, the offering of scented oil and the pouring of yellowish honey:

τὴν (= die Göttin Kypris) οἷ [...] ἱλάσκοντο [...] μύροισι τε δαίδαλεόμοις, [...] ξανθὼν τε σπονδὰς μελίτων ῥίπτοντες ἐς οὐδὰς (Empedocles, DK 128).

The special, sacred attachment to honey is suggested by the fact that in ancient times it was seen as food for the gods (Porphyrius, ant.nym. 16: Θεῶν τροφῆς ὄντος τοῦ μέλιτος cf. Diodorus 5,70). Further more it was believed that honey fell down from heaven (Theophrastus, frag. 190. Aristotle, nat.anim. 553b).

When honey was given as a single offering, in most cases it was explicitly called a libation. This is proven by inscriptions (IG 12. 5,2,1027: βωμὸς Διὸς Ε[νδένδ]ρο - - μέλιτι σπένδεται) as well as by Classical literature (Athenaeus 15, 693e: παρὰ δὲ τοῖς Ἑμεσηνοῖς θύοντες τῷ Ἡλίῳ [...] μέλι σπένδουσιν). Beyond that, the frequent use of oil for making libations in Classical Greek ritual is widely attested (Burkert 1977: 121-125).

Due to this, the supposition seems to be plausible, that in the Linear B tablets mentioned above honey and oil were given in form of a libation. Since the cult assignments were taken care of by the palace, the responsibility ultimately lay in the hands of the king. If these offerings were

indeed considered as libations they can be compared to numerous Hittite documents in which the libation performed by the king constitutes a fixed topos (Kammenhuber 1971).

According to other series' set Fp₍₁₎ lists quantities of oil. By contrast Gg₍₁₎ and Gg₍₃₎ register regularly honey not by volume but by the number of amphoras which are offered to the deities. Only tablet Gg₍₁₎ 7369 shows apparently a unit in liquid measure that records presumably the exact content of an amphora. This tablet also lists a certain amount of wool. As a passage of Sophocles' tragedy "Oedipus at Colonus" (461-493) suggests the wool was wound around amphoras: Oedipus asks how the craters whose content is to be poured out on earth for the purpose of reconciliation with the gods, should be decorated. The choir answers the following: οἶδς νεώρους νεοπόκῳ μαλλῶ λαβῶν (475). Three of the jars should be filled with holy water, the fourth with ὕδατος, μελίσσης (481).

In addition to this interpretation one could think of the term *po-re-no-zo-te-ri-ja* in connection with LANA 3 on PY Un 443 which may imply that wool was already used in Mycenaean times for its consecrating effect when wound around offerings and offering animals (Duhoux 1976: 127f.).

Oil and honey are recorded together in small fixed amounts with other vegetable foodstuff (barley, figs, flour and wine) within the KN Fs-series. This series contains 18 tablets that also come from the

Clay Chest. Its interpretation as offering tablets relies mainly on the following four points:

(1) All the tablets except Fs 3 are by hand 139. This scribe bears a very close resemblance to hand 140, who wrote mostly offering tablets (Olivier 1967: 84). This affiliation of scribal hands may be explained by comparable fields of activity.

(2) In the Clay Chest there were only found offering texts (Fs-series, Fp₍₁₎ and Gg 10). According to Foster, these tablets are associated with an administrative department that is located in the upper storey of the magazines in the West Wing of the palace.³ Its main purpose was the supervision of raw materials for the production of perfume manufacture and the supply of cult-offerings (Foster 1977: 35).

(3) The introductory words obviously name the recipient or the destination.⁴ There is evidence on other tablets of only three or four of these words. They all appear exclusively on offering tablets:

- Pa-de (Fs 8) is most likely to be seen as a theonym. He is also named in the sets Fp₍₁₎ and Ga₍₃₎ as a recipient of offerings.

- The reconstructed word da-da-re[-jo-de (Fs 32) is evidently to be transcribed as Δαίδαλειον-δε. There is a high probability that, in analogy to KH Gq 5 (di-wi-jo-[de), this word is a term for a sanctuary derived from the theonym *da-da-ro (Δαίδαλος). Like pa-de da-da-re-jo-de appears as recipient on set Fp₍₁₎.

- me-na is also a term that is solely found in offering texts. In analogy to a-mi-ni-so e-re-u-ti-ja on Gg₍₃₎ 705 and ?ti-

ri]-to a-pa-to[-re on Gg₍₃₎ 5185 the sequence me-na pa-si-te-o-i on Gg₍₃₎ 717 points out that me-na could be interpreted as a location, where the sanctuary of the pa-si-te-o-i was situated. me-na on E 842 was even seen as a theonym (Palmer 1983: 339). Since there is at least one obvious toponym on E 842 (me-a-de), the interpretation of this term as a location also seems to be plausible. The comparable structure of Fs 3 and Fs 9 likewise suggests that me-na on Fs 3 is most easily to be understood as a toponym. On both tablets the first word in larger script, that presumably denotes the recipient, is followed by a second word that on Fs 9 can surely be identified as a toponym due to the allative suffix -de. Killen (forthcoming), on the contrary, considers me-na to be the nominative of the word for „month“ (gr. μήν < *μήνς). Therefore, a definitive interpretation of the meaning of me-na is not possible yet. Nevertheless, it is clear that me-na is only mentioned in connection with gods and offerings.

- Assuming the reconstruction ki-ri-jo-de on Ga 953+955 to be correct (Weilharter forthcoming), ki-ri-jo-de (Fs 26) can be identified as another toponym found outside this series. As the named Ga-tablet shows, this place-name appears as destination of offerings next to pa-de-i and pa-si-te-o-i a-mi-ni-so-de.

(4) Amongst the recorded foodstuffs, only honey and oil are frequently mentioned as being used as offerings. Nevertheless, despite the basic similarity to the PY Ab-series an interpretation of the foodstuff as

monthly rations for palace-dependent workers seems not to be possible. Honey, oil and wine being provided to the lower social classes is not compatible with our idea of the social structure of the Mycenaean kingdoms. Furthermore, in comparison to the quantities of foodstuff listed on the Pylian ration-tablets those on the KN Fs-tablets are too small to be interpreted as monthly rations (Chadwick 1966: 32). The arrangement of six ideograms is another point against the interpretation as ordinary allocations of foodstuff. In general, there are not more than two types of food listed on the texts recording monthly food-rations.

Thus, an interpretation of this series as a delivery of foodstuff to deities and sanctuaries cannot be doubted. The entries that denote the recipients of the offerings seem to belong mainly to a prehellenic language (Duhoux 1989-1990: 94f.). Apart from the three or four exceptions mentioned above the entries only appear in this series. Therefore, they seem to be designations of deities and sanctuaries⁵ that were primary of local importance. In some cases at least they are to be related to archaeologically and iconographically proven natural sanctuaries (Hiller 1997: 207).

Due to the shorthand character of the texts it cannot be confirmed which ritual acts in detail are implied by the Fs-series. R. Palmer (1994: 134) suggests that the food in this series might represent palace maintenance of the priest or priestess of the shrine. On p. 142 she concludes that “the analysis of the proportions of the

foodstuffs in the Fs tablets suggests that these items represented a meal or series of meals, as would have been eaten by relatively prosperous individuals.” Nevertheless, it is also possible that the listed commodities were intended directly for the gods. Comparable groupings of such foodstuff are mentioned in classical literature. According to Sophocles (fr. 366) a θεοφιλῆς θυσία contains the following:

ἦν μὲν γὰρ οἶος μαλλός, ἦν δ' ἀμπέλου σπονδή τε καὶ ῥάξ εὐ τεθησαυρισμένη· ἐνὴν δὲ παγκάρπεια συμμιγῆς ὀλαῖς λίπος τ' ἐλαίας καὶ τὸ ποικιλώτατον ξουθῆς μελίσσης κηρόπλαστον ὄργανον.

The offering of foodstuffs in small quantities at sacred places corresponds to the cult-practice of giving the first fruits of the harvest. This kind of offering, along with the practice of libation, used to be considered the oldest in classical times. (Aristotle, *nik.eth.* 8,9,5: αἱ γὰρ ἀρχαῖαι θυσίαι καὶ σύνοδοι φαίνονται γίνεσθαι μετὰ τὰς τῶν καρπῶν συγκομιδὰς, οἷον ἀπαρχαί). Hence the fragment of a relief scene of a Late Minoan serpentine rhyton can be seen as an exact pictographic translation of the ritual acts of this series. The fragment shows (fig. 1) a person offering a basket filled with fruits at a tripartite peak-sanctuary.

Since the description of the Classical-Hellenistic primal offering contains all the elements typical of the Fs-series the interpretation of the listed commodities as first fruits offerings is worthy of consid-

eration (Burkert 1977: 116f: „Auch sonst gelten die Erstlingsopfer als bezeichnend für eine altväterlich einfache, bäuerliche Sphäre. Von allem, was die Jahreszeiten bringen, trägt der Fromme ein Weniges in ein Heiligtum, Jahresgaben (horaia), Getreideähren oder Brote, Feigen und Oliven, Trauben, Wein und Milch. Solche Gaben, an kleinen, ländlichen Heiligtümern geweiht sind ein beliebtes Thema hellenistischer Epigrammatik. Volkstümliche, kleine Götter werden



Fig. 1

genannt, [...] aber auch Heroen werden so geehrt“ [my emphasis]).

In summary, the naming of deities and sanctuaries as receivers of offerings throughout the series being considered and the small quantities of the registered foodstuffs points to the interpretation that the commodities mentioned above were directly offered to the gods. It is suggested that they were completely contributed to the deities without immediate gain for the donors. On the contrary, numerous other tablets list large amounts of animals and vegetables that were intended for consumption at ritual banquets (Killen 1994). These texts do not mention month-names or gods in honour of whom the feasts took place. They register foodstuffs that ultimately were of benefit to the participants of the banquet. From a religious history point of view there is no doubt that there were also offerings directly given to the deities, of which the donors had no share. Amongst the large number of Linear B offering tablets the special features of the sets Fp₍₁₎, Gg₍₁₎ and Gg₍₃₎ and of the Fs-series seem to point to such direct offerings.

NOTES

* My warmest thanks go to Stefan Hiller and Richard Firth for their valuable suggestions and corrections on former drafts of this paper. For their help in translation I am indebted to Angelika Baier and Bong Ho.

1. Along with the set Fp₍₁₎, the Fs-series and tablet Gg 10 were found in the Clay Chest. In the Gallery of Jewel Fresco different texts and sets were found that register honey (Gg₍₁₎; Gg₍₃₎; Gg 702, 709), oil (F 726), textiles (M₍₁₎ 720, 1645; M 719, 724; Oa 1808) and wool (Od₍₂₎) as offerings (Olivier 1967). Only for the two fragmentary tablets X 721 and X 722 no definitive cult context can be proven.

2. The only exception is a-ne-mo-i-je-re-ja, the priestess of the winds. The reason for that obviously lies in the extraordinary nature of these deities.

3. That the tablets found in the Clay Chest had originally been stored on an upper floor is doubted by Firth (2000: 118-120). In this paper he also mentions a bronze statuette of an adorant in the same room, which is consistent with the religious significance of the tablets. I would like to thank Richard Firth for making his paper

available to me before publication.

4. The allative suffix -de undoubtedly shows that something was sent from the palace to another place. It has been preserved on six tablets and can be restored in one more case with high probability: sa-na-to-de (Fs 3 and 22), o-ja-de (Fs 9), ki-ri-jo-de (Fs 26) and]de (Fs 25 and 29), as well as da-da-re[]jo-de (Fs 32). The theonym pa-de and the fragmentary]i (Fs 17) seem to suggest that the divine recipients or the cult personnel respectively were expressed in the dative according to the toponyms in the allative (Risch 1987: 291). Killen (forthcoming), however, has argued for taking pa-de as a nominative of rubric.

5. Due to the lack of parallel references the interpretation of the beneficiaries as theonyms or sanctuaries cannot be proven, but because of the cultic overall-impression of the series such an explanation seems plausible. Hence, a cultic interpretation of most of the occurring words is taken into consideration by Hiller (1981: 113), Chadwick (1985: 197) as well as Aura Jorro (1985/93: s.v.).

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The Fire of Life and the Fire of Death

G.R.H. Wright

And the Great Gods took in hand Fire...

Man has left a record of his innermost concepts, his essential human nature, in two fashions: the material remains of his ways which are often quite unwitting records; and also the direct statements he has made of his acts and thoughts. The former evidence is much more permanent and thus goes back to very remote periods of time — being an unconscious record it may even be the more revealing for that. It is nowadays much studied per archaeological investigation. The latter evidence, while explicit, is much more fugitive and is thus more recent; being to some degree conscious and self-conscious it is also liable to falsification through mistake and dishonesty etc. These matters form the study of religion, psychology, literature, art etc.

Each body of evidence is or can be made a supplement to the other. Dubious and uncertain explanations given by later man can be explained by the direct material remains of age old practices. Equally these ancient remains can be interpreted in the light of man's latter day accounts of his beliefs, understandings and intentions. This latter point is perhaps not so well born in mind by contemporary archaeologists as it once was. Obviously secondary evidence very remote in time cannot be forced on doubtful archaeological situations. However, when

the material evidence of the past seems clear yet difficult to explain, then corroboration from later explicit statements of man's imaginings is acceptable. It is in this light that an attempt is made to corroborate some findings of sepulchral archaeology which have often been more or less unclear in purport.

I. The Fire of Death

A recurrent theme in reports on excavation of ancient graves is evidence of burning. This is in various manifestations, but generally a puzzle since the conflagration indicated seems insufficient to effect any thorough going cremation. Nonetheless it is clear that fires of some intensity were set burning in graves. Why? Much ingenuity has been exercised in answering this question — burnt offerings to the dead; burning of cerements and accoutrements of the dead; fumigation whether ritual (in the interest of the dead) or sanitary (in the interest of the undertakers). Almost invariably however, the propounders confess to difficulties in squaring the explanation with the detailed facts.¹ To make a representative survey of this phenomenon would involve a lengthy *catalogue raisonné*. However, some indication can be given here drawn from the better investigated material.